The theme of the 1998 volume of Animus is "Early Modern Thought", covering the period c.1550 to c.1800. But what gives unity to this period of the intellectual history of mankind? There are obviously very significant developments in the period: the Reformation, the rise of the modern state, the foundations of modern science and technology, the birth of modern philosophy, the discovery and colonization of the New World. There is also as the period draws to a close a denouement of the early enthusiasm or at least a transformation of it into its secular expression.

The period begins with a recognition and assertion of human freedom, for what is the Reformation but the acknowledgement of the interior authority of conscience against the external authority of priests and bishops, and what is the Cartesian philosophy but a new beginning from thought alone, free from anything external or presupposed. The rise of modern democracies, the conquest of the New World and of nature, are themselves manifestations of man coming to his majority, knowing his freedom and determining himself. The period draws to a close in what is called 'Enlightenment', which superficially appears destructive of the earlier enthusiasms, of faith, of the elements of early modern philosophy now thought 'dogmatic'. But 'Enlightenment' is related to the earlier thought as its further development, a self-determination which sees in Protestant piety a servitude it will not tolerate, and in the earlier modern philosophy an incomplete subjective principle not known as its own.

Essential to Animus from its beginning has been the principle that in order to appreciate any argument drawn from our tradition whether poetical, theological or philosophical, there is the absolute necessity first to understand it on its own terms. In this our third issue we present nine articles on authors from Shakespeare to Kant written in accord with this principle. For this period our general principle has a peculiarly intense interest arising from the fact that many of our contemporary practical and theoretical judgments are based on misinterpretations of early modern thought. It is commonly assumed among left-wing Americans for example that the United States is a secular state and among certain conservatives that it is directly a Christian state. Peddle's article in this issue shows rather how Puritanism and Enlightenment converge in the Constitution. Again, in literary interpretation a self-subsistent individuality is commonly assumed to animate the dramas of Shakespeare. Epstein's article on his great tragedies shows rather that this individuality is only formed in relation to the state and to the Good, a poetic world therefore on the very eve of the early modern period.

The essays we present here, if they do not take up explicitly the theme of the underlying unity of this period, everywhere presuppose it and are written in relation to it. Thus, Kirby shows how Hooker can assimilate ideas of Aquinas concerning natural law and still remain a thoroughgoing Protestant reformer. Andrews shows the Cartesian philosophy beginning without presupposition from thinking alone, and Scott treats of the tension in Leibniz and the Occasionalists between God's absolute creativity and the self-subsistence of the monads.
Maxwell argues against the contemporary reduction of Hume to an unqualified skepticism and shows rather his significance as a serious metaphysician of the period. Stafford argues that Kant's confidence in the autonomy of ethical selfhood entails the subordination of Christian categories to the demands of rational subjectivity, and Kierkegaard offers no genuine alternative to this Enlightenment position.

The recovery of an accurate knowledge of the thought of this period is further rendered difficult by two kinds of anachronism. One would assimilate the thought of this period to its Medieval antecedents, evident in Stephen Menn's book on Descartes and Augustine, as Hankey's critical review makes clear; the other finds purely contemporary ideas and concerns in this period, as Robertson has shown that Leo Strauss has done in his interpretation of early modern political philosophy.
The Purgation Of The Hero In Shakespearean Tragedy

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The career of the hero in the great tragedies of Shakespeare reveals to the audience not only the limits of a self-assertion that would make itself master of an earthly realm that includes the state, family, and private friendships, but also the utter dependence on a primary Good of these institutions and any individual who would live rightly through them. The hero begins by attempting to make himself master of this realm through one of the great subjective passions, love, honour, ambition, revenge or the like; various subplots trace the same theme, although less comprehensively. The failure of this attempt in the hero and lesser characters then shows the dependence of the individual and of nature on a primary Good. Then the latter part of the play shows the hero or other characters making the great institutions actual or being destroyed in their incapacity to do this. Finally the death of the central characters indicates that only the transition from these instantiations of the Good to the Good is adequate to describe human individuality.

All the great tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*, begin with the hero's attempt to make himself the measure of his political and social world. This occurs with the greatest clarity in *King Lear*, where the King proposes to divide his kingdom amongst his daughters, in accord with their several expressions of love to himself. Macbeth's ambition leads him to kill the reigning King Malcolm and govern in his stead. Othello has such confidence in his virtue and position that he can venture to marry the daughter of a Venetian aristocrat. Hamlet, disgusted at his mother's hasty remarriage, hopes to flee Denmark, to enjoy the philosophic isolation and independence of Wittenberg. Whether it be love, ambition, honour or melancholy, each hero wishes to live through a subjective passion of his own.

This then reaches a certain completion. The result of King Lear's giving away his kingdom is his daughters' expelling him from home, into the storm. Hamlet contemplates taking his own life in the "to be or not to be" speech. Having killed his wife, Othello imagines the Last Judgement and his damnation. Macbeth, after having shed much innocent blood, realizes that a rule founded on the predictions of witches can have no stability.

In each play, when the hero has seen the failure of his subjective passion, the nature of the universal Good, upon which all goods, natural and human depend, begins to appear. Hamlet fears the punishment of God and gives up thoughts of suicide. Lear's madness and his buffeting by the storm show that a ruling reason lies not in him but
above. Othello sees that God as Judge is the measure of human behaviour, not his own love and honour. As Macbeth begins to fall, the rightful king and his supporters understand the providential ordering of the state. After this showing of the hero's dependence on a universal and stable Good, comes the hero's participation in this good, in a variety of forms. These forms range from a knowledge of the human dependence on the divine for felicity, to proper participation in the several communities of the state, family, and friendship. Thus Hamlet comes to know "there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will." (5.2.10-11) He exchanges forgiveness with Laertes, kills the corrupt king, gives his vote to Fortinbras as the new king, and prevents Horatio from committing suicide. For his part, Lear realizes that he is not the absolute fount of Justice but that this belongs properly only to the gods. Thus he can acknowledge, in his journey from madness to restored kingship, that he has not cared properly for the poor committed to his kingly care, that he must ask his daughter's forgiveness. Even when he has killed Cordelia's murderer and shown himself both a true father and true King, he experiences the finitude of these relationships, as death elevates him to their true source.

Othello rights his relation somewhat to the state when he kills himself; he recalls a time when he had killed an enemy of the state who had insulted a Venetian in Aleppo, and he says that in killing himself he repeats this earlier act. He can no longer live in the institutions of the Venetian state, and in his own act he acknowledges this and makes it real. Macbeth's defeat and the victory of the rightful heir to the throne accomplish together what was shown in the other plays through the hero alone. The stages are these: Macbeth realizes the falsity of the Weird Sisters and is thrown back only on his own self-assertiveness. This self-reliance proves deficient against the actions of those who know themselves as under a divine law and acting as God's vice-regents; thus Macduff, fighting for the true king, kills Macbeth in single combat and restores Malcolm to the throne.

Although each of the four tragedies has elements of the general pattern lacking in the others, King Lear most clearly exemplifies it. The King himself destroys his own kingship, and the remainder of the play shows the restoration of that kingship in him. Therefore, a consideration of this play will be the centre of this article, and the other plays will be treated less extensively, the main pattern having already been shown in King Lear.

While only the analysis below can show the adequacy of the general outline of the plays, two preliminary considerations can also illuminate the reasonableness of the proposed pattern. First, a comparison with the Tragedy of Sophocles can bring the salient points of Shakespearean Tragedy into sharper relief. Second, the deficiencies of certain prominent views of each play can also indicate how the pattern proposed is their necessary correction, a discussion which will precede the analysis of each play.

Like the Tragedy of Shakespeare, the Tragedy of Sophocles shows a discovery of the Good through the career of a tragic hero or of tragic heroes. In Sophocles, however, this collision can occur only through a certain division in Greek religion whereby the family and the gods whom it incarnates and the state together with the gods who underlie it are both deserving of equal respect, both civically and religiously. Tragedy shows through
human characters the collision between these equal realities, and only through this appears the unified Good of which the collision represents the division. Thus a Sophoclean tragedy can often have two equal heroes, as in Antigone both Creon and Antigone are equally necessary to the action. Even in the most far-reaching of Sophoclean dramas, Oedipus at Colonus, this radical unification occurs only with the death of Oedipus and at the end of the drama. The hero has been struggling with his family and state in the course of the play. At the end of the drama, when Oedipus is called to the gods, Theseus is seen to reverence both the gods above and the gods below in one prayer. Thus the spectator sees the radical unity of the gods and a unity of human ends prior to the division between State and Family.

Greek Tragedy, then, begins from a world where polytheism is assumed in religion, and an equality between family and state in the civic sphere. Shakespearean Tragedy, on the other hand, begins with an assumed monotheism in religion and a sovereignty beginning to be unified in the king; and for this reason, one main hero bears the central action.

An examination of some of the views held about King Lear will help to indicate the reasonableness of the view proposed here. Three views are of interest here: (1) that the play presents aspects of transcendent experience, (2) that the play reveals a non-transcendent but triumphant humanity, and (3) that the play subverts the genre of tragedy by offering a promise of fulfilment and yet delivering the opposite.

Until thirty years ago it was not uncommon for critics to find in the play a presentation of a transcendent humanity. This view rightly saw the attainment of an eternal human individuality as essential to the drama. However, such a view does not ground this individuality either in an absolute good or in the kingship and other institutions. The King, however, both begins and ends his career as king and father. Only when he acknowledges the "justicers" above can he discover his true individuality.

In reaction to this view arose one that could find no transcendent humanity but only a humanity that triumphed in its very endurance of suffering. This view reasonably sees the terrible loss suffered by both Cordelia and Lear. But it has two main limits. It cannot fully recognize the positive events just before the deaths of Lear and Cordelia, the fact that they die reconciled, and that Lear dies only after he has avenged his daughter's death and also received his kingdom back. Further, this view treats death only as a catastrophe and cannot see in it the rising to a deeper existence.

A contemporary view argues that King Lear designedly moves from "the ordered, ritually stylized, word-dominated world of its opening scene... and subtracts from it

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2 Such views are discussed by Jonathan Dollimore in King Lear and Essentialist Humanism, Modern Critical Interpretations King Lear, pp. 73-76, taken from his Radical Tragedy: Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries (Harvester Press, 1984)
towards nature as the chaotic immediate."\(^3\) The beginning of the play had implied, like its source *King Lear* "a just and satisfying conclusion."\(^4\) Instead we have the deaths of Lear and Cordelia at the end, returning us to the world of unordered nature. This view rightly presents a movement towards nature as essential to the play. However, it wrongly makes this the whole of the play, and not its first part. After King Lear has been exposed to the storm, he begins his return out of it by acknowledging the justicers above (3.6.56). Further, the deaths of Lear and Cordelia are only partially an assertion of mere nature and immediacy. Coming as they do after the reconciliation of Lear and Cordelia, they show not that this reconciliation is false but that in this world the relation between father and daughter is subject to contingency and ruin. Death is rather the limit of the earthly and the moment of ascent to the transcendent.

The pattern of the play proposed above can thus find an important truth in these widely different views. It can agree with the first that the play is a search for a transcendent human nature. With the second and third views, it can affirm the importance of encountering nature, suffering and death. The proposed view, however, also recognizes that the political and institutional roles of the main characters are essential, which none of the views discussed could do. Let us look then at *King Lear* in greater detail.

**King Lear**

At the beginning of the play we have the marvellous spectacle of a king who overthrows his own kingdom. He has resolved to "retire" from being King, while retaining the title; he proposes to divide the kingdom amongst his three daughters in accord with their declarations of their love for him. Lear thereby treats the kingdom as private property; while he keeps the property within the family, he does not leave it to his daughters according to an objective family bond, but he makes their stated regard for him the measure of what he owes them. Thus Lear makes both the political order and the family order dependent on his own private measure.

His daughters' reaction to Lear's decree marks both the further downfall of the kingdom and the beginning, in principle, of the undoing of that downfall. The first is the work of Goneril and Regan, the second that of his most beloved daughter, Cordelia. The two daughters cynically acquiesce in their father's request, and declare their love for him in terms perhaps better reserved for the love of an absolute Good. They receive their apportioned shares of the kingdom, thereby aiding their father in accomplishing his perverse plan. Cordelia, however, refuses to state that she loves her father above the bond that unites her to him. She loves him as a father, but asks what love her sisters have for their husbands if they love their father so entirely. As a result of her refusal her father deprives her of her share of the kingdom and declares that she is not his daughter.

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3 James L. Calderwood, *Creative Uncreation, in King Lear, Modern Critical Interpretations King Lear*, pp.121 -137, from *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37, no.1.
4 *op. cit.*, p.135.
Cordelia's taking her stand on the objective bond between herself and her father, and her adhering to that despite her father's action, marks not only her real alienation from her father, but her relation to a universal measure more stable than the kingly passion of her father. The discovery of this measure is the telos underlying the whole action; Cordelia is simply the first to arrive at this standpoint. She has attained it, however, only as a familial relation. The path by which Lear himself attains it politically and as a king determines the nature of the whole drama. His plan for dividing the kingdom according to his private measure is the beginning of the movement toward this end for all the characters.

Kent experiences an analogous alienation from the King and adheres to him in the same way that Cordelia does. When he tells Lear that the division of the kingdom and disinheritance of Cordelia are great errors, Lear banishes him from the kingdom. Then, just as Cordelia adheres to her father according to the objective bond of the family, Kent adheres to the King according to the objective bond that ties a subject to his sovereign, and a nobleman to his lord.

Thus the King and the two daughters' obedience to his perverse command make both the political order and the familial order dependent on subjective passion. Against this, both Cordelia and Kent, having suffered Lear's disowning of them, adhere rather to the objective bond that unites them to respectively father and king. This brings into view what Kantorowicz has called in another context, the King's two bodies, both the empirical King, who blusters, and disowns, and divides the kingdom against itself, and the King's political body, which is unchangeable, to which Cordelia and Kent both adhere. Only the whole action of the drama can re-unite these two bodies.

A sub-plot, introduced at the beginning of the play, just before the action above described, illustrates the same theme. The duke of Gloucester introduces his illegitimate son Edmund, speaking lightly of his being born out-of-wedlock, to the Earl of Kent. Gloucester mentions also a legitimate son, Edgar, but in such a manner as to imply that the difference between legitimacy and illegitimacy is primarily customary; Gloucester moreover, does not acknowledge any guilt or sin in his having begotten an illegitimate son. Like Lear, he is divided within himself between the bond of fatherhood and his own modification of that bond in a subjective and passionate way. Unlike Lear who has knowingly and deliberately divided the kingdom, Gloucester has been moved only by his passions to divide his being a father into legitimate and illegitimate parts. The further reaction of his two sons is not indicated at this stage of the action.

The further action of the main plot now shows Cordelia facing her two suitors, the Duke of Burgundy and the King of France, who had both come expecting that she would have a third of a kingdom as her marriage portion. Burgundy cannot imagine her as a wife without her dowry, while this very condition moves France to love and an offer of marriage. France has thus embarked on the highest form of friendship, one based neither on utility nor pleasure but a knowledge of the good present in the friend.

The first scene of King Lear thus sets forth both in the central action, that of Lear, and in the sub-plot revolving around the Duke of Gloucester, the essential collision of the
play between the institutions of the state and family, on the one hand, and subjective appropriation of these on the other. The King does not understand the nature of a kingdom and thus acts as if he were the true centre of that kingdom. While as sovereign he is indeed that centre, he acts as if he were king according to his private personality. Lear acts in relation to the family in a similar way; he mistakes his patriarchal autocracy for the true headship of a family. As a father and the head of an aristocratic house, Gloucester speaks slightingly of the difference between a legitimate and illegitimate child; he thereby disregards the nature of the family and looks rather to his own headship.

In the next scene, the development of the sub-plot is presented. Edmund announces that Nature is his goddess, and he inveighs against the distinction that makes him a bastard. While rejecting a distinction that civilization necessarily makes between a natural and a legal family, he nevertheless thinks himself entitled to his father's property, the inheritance of which also belongs to civilization and not to nature. Not conscious of this contradiction, he decides to embark on a plan to estrange his legitimate brother from their common father. To this end, he lets his father find him reading a forged letter from Edgar, in which he asks Edmund to join him in parricide, as a means swifter than nature by which they can share his lands. Gloucester, without thinking, grows enraged at Edgar; to complete his plot, Edmund, when Gloucester has left and Edgar appeared, tells the latter that Gloucester is angry at him and advises him to stay at a distance from him. Edgar accepts this advice without doubting its sincerity.

The first two scenes have shown us the central characters and their place in the collision between institutions and the subjective passions that animate the dramatic action. Lear experiences this collision most comprehensively, since he proposes to divide the kingdom amongst his children according to a private measure. Goneril and Regan acquiesce in this plan by giving fraudulent speeches of love. Edmund has his own plan to make Nature the measure of his relation to the social order as it defines inheritance. Gloucester has allowed his passions to define his fatherhood; he feels no guilt in having done so. Cordelia, Kent, the King of France and Edgar adhere to objective institutional bonds when confronted by the attempts of others to exercise their subjective passions. Cordelia adheres to her father, Kent to the King, France to marriage, and Edgar to the ties that bind him to his father and brother.

The consequences of this collision hereinafter determine the dramatic action as a whole. Since the collision is most comprehensive in Lear, his career determines the action. He experiences first the self-expulsion from civilization that results from his assertion of his subjective passion. Gradually, thereafter, he returns to a knowledge of kingship dependent on a knowledge of the absolute Good. The other characters experience their own collisions within the context of Lear's total career. Some move like him to a recovery of an objective order. Others, such as Cordelia, who have begun with the assertion of an objective bond, move toward the discovery of a subjective passion.

The next scene (1.3) shows how ill Lear has decided in trying to maintain the title of a king while planning to live first with one daughter, and then another. In Goneril's conversation with her steward, she shows that she is determined to be mistress in her own
household, while her account of the King's striking her gentleman in a dispute about his servant, the Fool, indicates that he is determined to rule as well. Goneril is determined to show less attention to her father, and more ominously, to his hundred knights; Lear had expressly stipulated that he would keep these, and his daughter here shows her disregard of that stipulation. Moreover, she would not at all be unhappy if he chose the only alternative to his current situation, removal to her sister's house.

This conflict between Lear and his daughter results from Goneril's criminal response to her father's monstrous contract. Having agreed to it in words, without the slightest regard to her father, but devoted only to what he can give her, she is now incapable of fulfilling it in fact. Unlike Cordelia and Kent, who answer Lear's wilfulness by serving what is objective and eternal in him, Goneril can answer her father's wilfulness only with her own. Just as her father has treated the kingdom as his property, she now treats what he has given to her as her own, and she treats her father as a tenant on it.

The scene immediately following (1.4) brings this sharp contrast into focus. Kent, in disguise, presents himself to Lear as his servant, telling the King that he can see authority in him. Lear accepts him, and even in the midst of Lear's decline into the savagery of nature, we see the re-formation of his kingdom. Kent, although banished, knows that he can serve the King in Lear despite his express commands. Lear finds in Kent not an hereditary supporter of the Throne, but a man whom he has consciously accepted.

After the appointment of Kent, the remainder of the fourth scene shows the developing contest between Lear and Goneril. After her steward Oswald has insulted Lear to his face as 'my lady's father,' the King and Kent treat him roughly. This incenses Goneril, who asks of Lear that he reduce his train of knights from one hundred to fifty and threatens that if Lear not do this himself, she will do it of her own motion. Lear, sensing that his daughter no longer treats him as a father, explodes. He speaks to her as if he does not know her and decides to leave, to stay instead with the woman he regards as still a true daughter, Regan. Sick at Goneril's ingratitude, he curses her and appeals to the goddess Nature that she not be allowed offspring. The fifth scene shows the confirmation of Lear's thoughts, as he sets out for Regan's residence.

Having surrendered the kingship, Lear has now almost totally deprived himself of fatherhood; first he has called Cordelia no child, and now Goneril. He has completed much of the journey toward that isolation in the world of unadorned Nature, which alone can mark his turning-point. That Lear above should appeal to Nature as a goddess indicates also the direction he is headed in.

The second Act shows the continued disintegration of the bonds that unite the various characters. Through a ruse, Edmund persuades his father that Edgar, having suggested parricide, and enraged by his protestations, has wounded him; in fact, Edmund, with the recklessness of a criminal, has wounded himself. Gloucester, without any evidence other than the word of Edmund, has had Edgar banished and announces that he will have Edmund legitimized and made capable of inheriting. Thus Edmund's criminal plan seems on the verge of success.
Then Lear's alienation from his daughters becomes complete. The Duke of Cornwall has Kent put into the stocks for assailing Oswald, the steward of Goneril, and the dishonouring of Lear continues. Worse, when Lear appeals to Regan to receive him at her house instead of Goneril's, she rebuffs him and directs him instead to return there and ask her forgiveness. Lear's remonstrances lead only to a declaration from both daughters that they will receive him only with gladness but not one of his followers; they allege that he has not need of any of his followers. Thus they treat Lear not as king nor as father, but as a kind of nursing-home patient whom they feel bound by previous ties to care for.

When Regan informs Lear that he has no need of any attendant, he bursts forth in a speech that shows his sense of his condition:

O reason not the need! Our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous.
Allow not nature more than nature needs
Man's life is cheap as beast's. (2.4.266-269)

While he realizes that he is on the brink of being thrust out of civilization, he had earlier said that he would prefer to live in the air than under the roof of an ungrateful daughter. Nature has begun to seem for him the solution to the complications of human relations.

The third act is the turning point for all the characters. Lear reaches the greatest alienation from his kingdom and begins to understand that dependence on an absolute Good that can alone restore him to kingship. Edmund's betrayal of his father makes him Earl of Gloucester in the new regime. Gloucester's adherence to the King leads to his blinding at the hands of this regime; he also learns that Edgar is his true son and Edmund his false. Edgar, while pretending to be mad, begins, through associating with Lear, to return out of his despair. The forces of France, Cordelia's husband, have landed in England to restore the King; Cordelia's love for her father has moved her to beseech her husband for him.

The situation of the King is of course central. At the very moment when Lear is least a king, when he invokes the storm to destroy the whole world, is also the beginning of the movement which will lead him to be "every inch a King." This turning occurs both in the external realm and in the soul of the King. Thus as the third act begins, Kent, still in disguise, relates to a gentleman belonging to the King that the two Dukes are divided, and that the forces of France, favourable to the King, have landed. The political structure that had earlier divided the kingdom is beginning to crumble.

When the King invokes the storm to utterly destroy the world, both nature and man, he has of course no thought of a return to kingship. Rather, the ingratitude of his daughters has brought him to the point where he wishes for the obliteration of nature and consciousness:

Blow, winds and crack your cheeks! Rage, blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drenched our steeples, drowned the cocks!
You sulfurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-carriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o’ the world!
Crack nature's mold, all germens spill at once
That makes ingrateful man! (3.2.1-9)

That this moment of nihilism is not final, however, but rather a turning-point for Lear is shown in two invocations that follow quickly upon this last. First he speaks to the elements as beings who while not owing him anything have joined with his ungrateful daughters to oppose him. Then he addresses the gods, who he says have caused the storm, and speaks of the storm as the means whereby they can find out malefactors. (3.2.49-51) His change of perspective here is significant. First, Lear regards the elements as supreme. Next he thinks of the elements and human action together as what govern. Then, however, he looks to the gods as the source of the storm and human action as subject to this judgement. He has thereby discovered the Good as the cause both of the sensible and intelligible worlds.

Shortly thereafter Lear says that his wits have begun to turn. He is beginning to be insane, because he has indeed lost the earthly and personal measure by which he has judged heretofore. He was King, and he had judged himself and his daughters by this relation to him. Now through his loss of that world, his assumption first of the primacy of nature, and then in the discovery of a Good which is the source both of nature and humanity, he has become radically disoriented. He must now ground the world he had earlier assumed to be self-sufficient in relation to the absolute Good he has discovered. Until he can do this, he is not in his right mind.

This wandering of mind shows itself in Lear's lack of fixity in his views. First, he reflects on his daughters' ingratitude (3.4.19-21), but he dismisses this as leading to madness. Then just before entering the hovel proposed to him as shelter, he considers the state of the poor, and his responsibility as king for this:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little cares of this! Take physic , pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
And show the heaves more just. (3.4.28-36)

Here for the first time Lear brings himself, the natural world and human society under the absolute measure he has just discovered. The commonwealth, in its raising man above the
level of the beast through the development of nature's bounty, has an obligation to heaven
to distribute some of that bounty to all its subjects.

Soon thereafter, however, upon meeting Edgar disguised as a madman out of
Bedlam, he looks to nature as the measure of human equality. He calls Tom
'unaccommodated man' and in desperate sympathy with him, he begins to tear off his
clothes. As united with Tom he can leave behind all the difficulties that a 'sophisticated'
man such as himself suffers.

Both Gloucester and Kent attempt to persuade Lear that he should leave his current
circumstances, and in doing so, the former expressly disobeys his master, the Dukes of
Cornwall and Albany, together with their wives. Lear, however, will not leave unless
accompanied by the disguised Edgar whom Lear calls a philosopher. Finally the two
others allow Edgar to accompany them and thus gain Lear's acquiescence.

That Lear should call Tom a philosopher is in one way a proof of his madness, and in
another of new insight. In his self-description, Tom has moved from having a position in
society to his current situation as an outcast. Edgar has of course undergone a similar
totality of experience. The man who has experienced both society and the natural world is
the man capable of a general view of the whole, in brief, a philosopher. Lear recognizes
in Tom-Edgar a soul-mate, just as he found a bond with the fool, who having no position
in society at all, is capable of deep, if riddling, insight into it.

Gloucester has also, without knowing it, taken the first steps that will lead to his
expulsion from society. Having depended on Edmund and the Dukes for protection from
the alleged malefactions of Edgar, he now befriends the King despite their orders. The
contradiction involved in looking to two sovereigns as the centre of the social order does
not occur to the not altogether thoughtful mind of a man who commits fornication in a
jolly spirit; the results of his imprudence will soon be brought home to him in a frightful
manner.

When Lear and his friends have gone into the house on Gloucester's property, the
King in his deepening madness decides to try his daughters Goneril and Regan. He
selects Tom and the fool as the judges, and when Kent appears he makes him too part of
the "commission." His madness, however, reveals Lear's beginning to develop into a true
king. Even in a case that touches him so closely, he does not presume to try the case
himself. He now imagines that an objective order of justice exists in this world, and he
will rely on it. As before, his madness does not allow him to stay fixed on one subject,
and he falls asleep. Gloucester, having heard a plot against Lear's life, arranges for the
King to be carried away. Edgar, moved by the sufferings of the King which are similar
yet deeper than his own, begins to take heart again.

As the King, both in himself and through his friends, moves toward restoration,
Cornwall begins his ineluctable fall to destruction. In one scene, he both learns of the
arrival of the forces of France and brutally punishes Gloucester for his alleged treason in
helping Lear to escape despite express orders. It is of course a contradiction, not present
to Cornwall's consciousness, that he should punish someone for disloyalty to himself, while not showing even a shred of humanity to the real king.

He indulges his anger by blinding Gloucester in his own house despite the latter's plea reminding him that he is their host. The collapse of the political order is further shown in a servant's severe wounding of Cornwall, and the servant's death at the hand of his wife. This destruction of Cornwall is accompanied by Gloucester's reaching a turning-point. Although he has suffered terribly, he also learns of Edmund's treachery to him, and that Edgar has been abused. His repentance and prayer for Edgar's well-being are part of the same return to order as the beginnings of the restoration of the King.

After the third act's turning point, the fourth act shows the continuing restoration of those capable of it, and the further disintegration of others. Albany has now been awakened to his wife's cruelty; he openly denounces her as a fiend and hopes to avenge Gloucester. This latter, thrilled with remorse, and led by Edgar in disguise attempts suicide out of despair; when his attempted suicide leaves him still alive, he realizes that an acceptance of the finitude of this world is necessary to his well-being.

The King is gradually being restored to sanity, after his friends have moved him to Dover, where Cordelia and the French forces have landed. He has gained in insight from his experience; he feels such guilt for what he had done to Cordelia that initially he cannot meet her. When they first see each other, he describes their relation as that of a soul in bliss to one in hell. For Lear at this point, his relations to his daughter are regulated by the universal heavenly measure of virtue and not by any earthly tie. Cordelia, however, regards the tie that binds her to her father and king as decisive, and thus a profound disagreement divides them. When the King seeks to kneel to her, as a penitent to one whom he has harmed, she does not allow him. She looks to the universal reason present in a king; he thinks of himself as a man who has sinned against his daughter.

This disagreement is a transformation of the collision that divided them at the beginning of the play. There Lear wished to extract from his daughter a declaration of love beyond her bond. Now he wishes to express a love that in a certain way transcends the bond that unites them. His subjective spirit has been so purged of mere self-assertion that he can occupy a ground more radically comprehensive than his dutiful daughter. Cordelia too has advanced beyond her original position. Originally she has held to an emotionless duty and even when she has seen her father's madness, she hoped to restrain her passions. Her direct encounter with him has brought forth tears. "Be your tears wet?" (4.7.73) asks her father as he comforts her. Like her father, she has attained a fullness of being that she had lacked before.

The beginning of the disintegration of those who plan to displace the King shows itself in various marital discords. Goneril and Regan have both become infatuated with Edmund, and each intends to make him her lover. Edmund, having inspired this attraction, does nothing to dispel it and thus contributes to the destruction of marriage as
an institution. Moreover, Edgar intercepts a letter from Goneril to Edmund plotting Albany's death and Goneril's marriage to Edmund.

The fifth act shows the destruction of the forces opposed to the King, and the restoration of those attached to him. Mutual jealousies destroy Goneril and Regan. The remainder are restored to the various communities of family and state from which they had been alienated. For Lear, Cordelia, and Kent, this earthly restoration is insufficient, and their deaths, catastrophic from an earthly standpoint, mark a deeper return to the Good. The fifth act sees Albany still willing to fight but only because the King of France has joined the forces favourable to Lear. Nevertheless, before the decisive battle, he receives a letter from Edgar's own hand, exposing Edmund's and his wife's treachery. As if to confirm this, Edmund, in a soliloquy, indicates that contrary to Albany's will he intends to have Lear and Cordelia murdered after the battle; moreover, he has accepted the attentions of both Goneril and Regan, nor is he opposed to Goneril's marrying him by arranging the death of Albany.

The victory of Albany's forces begins the final catastrophe. Lear and Cordelia, though about to be led to prison, are ecstatic in their restored relation; Lear looks forward to their contemplative enjoyment as "God's spies." Edmund, however, has given orders for the murder of Cordelia. Albany charges Edmund with treason, and he declares that if no other champion arises to prove it, he will himself fight Edmund. The latter accepts the challenge, and the still-disguised Edgar enters to fight him. Their combat having resulted in Edmund's being mortally wounded, Edgar reveals himself. They exchange forgiveness, and Edgar declares to Edmund that the cause of his father's losing his eyes lies in his dalliance outside of marriage; his punishment thus shows the justice of the gods. Edgar then goes on to speak, however, of his recent reconciliation with his father, which brought at once joy and death to the old man.

Edmund, suffering remorse, now reveals his order for Cordelia's death, but it is too late to successfully countermand it. Lear, however, has killed the man who killed his daughter, and Albany now resigns the kingdom to the old King. Lear, having acted to avenge his daughter, and restored to kingship, can live no longer. Kent cannot accept the offer of the throne to Edgar and himself, and the latter is left to govern.

Each character experiences true individuality to the extent that he has contributed to the proper restoration of King Lear. Goneril and Regan cannot play a role here and so perish through their mutual jealousies; Edmund can wish to do good only when mortally wounded by Edgar. The King experiences this most comprehensively, and then Cordelia and Kent to the extent that they have adhered to Lear.

The King has experienced first his self-alienation from kingship and even humanity. Then he recovers them both as known to be dependent on an absolute Good. His new spirit allows him both to fulfil his office as king and father, and to know as well a deeper spirit that transcends station, as when he asks his daughter's forgiveness. His death, therefore, represents not simply the loss of earthly good, but the overcoming of the difference between family and state as earthly presences of the Good and the Good itself.
Cordelia's heart-breaking death is necessary according to a similar logic. She has always served the king and father in Lear despite his personal deviation from these stations. She has not been able to know the division within her father sufficiently, and in her death she experiences the contingency belonging to his rule, which is the difference between his station and his particularity.

Kent must refuse the office of governing. He has identified himself not with the Crown but with Lear insofar as he is king. To surrender that relation and himself become king is not possible for him; he must follow his master. The office that Lear holds, the kingship, is in principle a definition of human individuality, uniting as it does the universal reason of the office with a particular person. The action shows first the division of these elements and then their re-unification. When Lear dies, he is not only "every inch a King" but every inch a man as well.

Hamlet

If we now turn to Hamlet, a look at some of the critics will show the need for a more comprehensive view. Three critics of Hamlet each touch on a different aspect of the play. One sees Hamlet as acting under God's Providence while another sees him as moved ultimately by evil impulses. A third sees a humanistic Hamlet, a man who learns to confront the world as it is.

The first view relies in large part on Act 5, where Hamlet says that there is a divinity which shapes our ends, and makes other similar observations. This view is of course accurate in seeing Hamlet as acting under providence. It does not properly understand how the whole dramatic action prepares Hamlet for this recognition. Hamlet must first lose confidence in himself, a process that ends with the speech, "to be or not to be." Nor does it see how Hamlet learns to act under providence through his relation to his mother and the King.

Another view sees Hamlet as acting wrongly when he finally kills the King, as acting under the influence of immediate impulse, and thus falling under the temptations of evil. In one way Hamlet does act under impulse to kill the King, after he has learned that the King has aimed at his life and accidentally taken his mother's. In another, this enables Hamlet, however, to finally unite thought and impulse properly. The King, whom he has earlier in Act 5 discovered to be a complete criminal, he can now legitimately kill. In so doing, he purges the kingdom of its cancer and thus dies in doing his political duty.

6 Harold Goddard, Hamlet: His Own Falstaff in Modern Critical Interpretations Hamlet (New York: Chelsea House, 1986), pp.11-28, taken from The Meaning of Shakespeare (University of Chicago Press, 1951)
The humanist Hamlet discovers himself only in the graveyard scene in Act 5. Here he meets the mysteries of human life, that of evil, that of reality, that of human limitations. Now Hamlet "accepts the world as it is, the world as a duel, in which...evil holds the poisoned rapier and the poisoned chalice waits; and in which, if we win at all, it costs not less than everything." Thus Maynard Mack describes Hamlet before he confronts the King.

Mack is right that the confrontation with death is central to the play. Yet death is not simply the place of mysteries. Rather it shows the limits of a merely natural humanity. In the scenes that follow the graveyard scene, we see the transcendence of a natural humanity. We see the characters confronting the prospect of salvation and damnation, and we see Laertes exchanging forgiveness with Hamlet, though the latter has killed the former's father. Death is the portal to a deeper life, and a limit only to a natural life.

The view proposed here will show with the first critic that Hamlet indeed acts under the divine Providence. With the second critic it will show that not only does Hamlet act on impulse to kill the King but that he must be educated to join impulse to reason. With the third critic, the view proposed will show a Hamlet prepared to confront the real world, one defined by the bonds that unite him to his family and state.

In Hamlet, the title character confronts the usurpation of the kingship by his father's murderer and the consequent disintegration of all the forms of community that fall within it, family, marriage, and friendship. This leads initially to great despair and the contemplation of suicide. Only the fear of God prevents his doing this. Then through his acceptance of a divine order Hamlet gradually becomes capable of being the providential agent in the removal of the usurping king. He kills the King, gives his voice to the selection of a suitable replacement, and as he dies, his friend Horatio can say, "Good night sweet prince and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest." While Hamlet cannot enjoy the order that he has restored, he returns to the absolute ground of that order.

The play begins with the indications of danger to the state both within and without. An invasion is feared, led by Fortinbras, nephew of the King of Norway, who wishes to regain lands earlier lost to Denmark. Internally, the ghost of the newly dead King walks the battlements at night, refusing to talk to anyone.

Prince Hamlet, son of the dead king and nephew to the new king, has sunk into melancholy. He is disgusted at the marriage of his mother to Claudius within two months of the old king's death, and when his friends have brought him to see the Ghost, he learns from his father, in private conversation, that Claudius has murdered him; the ghost implores Hamlet to avenge his death. Not only are the realms of state and family ruined for Hamlet. Polonius has ordered his daughter Ophelia to refuse all communication with him, and while the audience knows this as the cause of her sudden coldness, to Hamlet her sudden breaking-off of relation seems only to prove the caprice of women and the

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8 Ibid, p. 63.
impossibility of stable marriage. Finally, after the King has sent his old friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to spy on him, the ruin of all community seems complete.

Simultaneous with this is the arrival of a company of players. The ability of one of these actors to feel deep pity for Hecuba while he recites a speech from a play about the Trojan War causes Hamlet to despise himself. The actor can simulate deep emotion for a mythical character while he himself cannot summon up sufficient feeling to avenge a murder forcibly impressed upon his consciousness by the ghost of his father. Thinking about both his delay and the actors rouses him to the possibility of action. The ghost might be an appearance of the devil, and he must therefore test it. If he present a play depicting a murder similar to that of his father's, he can judge truly whether the current king have done it.

Now that he has a means to combat the evils confronting him, Hamlet must confront his total crisis. In the famous speech beginning "to be or not to be," Hamlet looks at the evils from every sphere of life that seem to make it intolerable; he asks whether it be nobler to oppose them or simply to remove oneself from this realm of woes. Only a fear of divine punishment after death dissuades him, he implies. (3.1.79-83). This is the turning point of the play. Now that he has reached this limit of his alienation Hamlet must find a kind of action compatible with the divine ground of all action. The remainder of the dramatic action shows his search for this kind of action, which he can attain only when he knows the necessity of cleansing Denmark both of its crimes and of the author of those crimes.

This development begins when Ophelia is sent by her father and the King to spy on Hamlet, to see if he is sane. He urges her to confine herself to a nunnery. This is the only way he can imagine that the changeability of women, especially as he has seen it in Ophelia, can be brought under the providential measure he has begun to make his own. Of course his advice to Ophelia is limited by his knowledge of Ophelia: he knows her mutability but not its cause.

This development continues in Hamlet's new relation to the King. In accord with his earlier plan, Hamlet presents a play that shows the murder of a king and the murderer's subsequent marriage with the king's wife; when Claudius disrupts the play, Hamlet concludes that the Ghost has spoken rightly and that the King is guilty. Although thoroughly convinced of this, Hamlet finds that it cannot lead to the revenge that the Ghost had demanded. After the play, although he is determined to kill the King, he comes upon him at prayer. The audience has just seen that the King cannot pray truly because he is not willing to give up the fruits of his crime, his throne and his wife. Hamlet thinks him, however, to be in a state of grace, and knows that he will not gain revenge by dispatching his uncle to heaven. His wrong view of the King's soul makes impossible for him action based on revenge.

Hamlet blunders again about the King during his interview with his mother in her apartments whither she has summoned him; Polonius has hidden behind an arras that he might hear their conversation. Gertrude misconceives Hamlet's way of talking and she
asks if he has come to murder her. Polonius cries out for help and Hamlet, mistaking him for the King, kills him. Hamlet repents when he discovers his error; he also says that God has appointed him to be their scourge and minister. Thus Hamlet knows both that he is God's agent and that he has erred in being so.

This movement towards ordering his actions to their divine origin also shows itself in the interview with his mother. He tries to show her the wickedness she has done in marrying the King and tries to dissuade her from living as his wife. In the three spheres, then, that are most important to him, with Ophelia, in relation to the King, and now with his mother, Hamlet has recovered from his earlier despair and moves toward action grounded in the only sure ground, the divine order.

As Hamlet moves toward concrete action, Claudius declines more and more into criminality. His turning-point occurred earlier when he attempted, and failed, to repent. His incapacity for action shows itself now both in his mania for indirectness and in his lack of justice. From fear of the mob, he determines to send Hamlet to England, rather than punishing him for his murder of Polonius. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are his guards, and they bear secret instructions to the King of England that Hamlet should be beheaded immediately.

As the King's criminality reaches closer to him, Hamlet becomes more capable of reasonable action. As he tells Horatio after his accidental escape from the guards and his return to Denmark, he discovered the orders that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were carrying and had their names inserted in the command directing immediate execution. He feels no remorse since he thinks that their unquestioning devotion to their job of spying for an unlawful king has reasonably brought their fate on them. Hamlet also sees in this attempt on his own life the final proof of the King's villainy; he realizes that he has a heaven-sent obligation to kill the king who "hath killed my king and whored my mother, Popped in between th'election and my hopes, Thrown out his angle for my proper life" (5.2.64-66).

The King for his part cannot respond directly to the return of Hamlet. Instead he makes a corrupt deal with the vengeful Laertes, who in defence of the family honour, is willing to kill Hamlet dishonestly in a duel. This pursuit of vengeance by Laertes highlights the development in Hamlet by which he has moved beyond it.

Ophelia's death seemingly by her own hand then sets the scene for Hamlet's ascent into immortality. Two humourous grave-diggers conclude that only her high birth allows her to be buried in Christian burial. Laertes imagines that family connection guarantees her salvation as well when he berates the priest for not granting her the full rights of Christian burial. Laertes's grief causes him to jump into the grave to declare a brother's love. Hamlet rightly thinks that the love he bore her as a potential husband exceeds this and rashly declares his own love to have been greater. An almost fight between the two spoils the burial service.
Hamlet, however, when he has accepted the King's invitation to duel with Laertes, follows his mother's advice that he be reconciled with Laertes. For the first time maternal authority and his own spirit agree. His affirmation of the objective bonds of institutions continues after the poison intended for Hamlet redounds on Laertes as well, and the drink poisoned by the King kills his mother rather than himself. Hamlet and a now repentant Laertes exchange expressions of forgiveness, and Hamlet, learning from Laertes the King's plot, finally kills him; he also pronounces the King to be damned. Hamlet then prevents Horatio from a wrongful suicide, to perform his final duty to his friend by telling his tale a-right. Hamlet gives his 'vote' to Fortinbras for the kingship and dies as Horatio says, "Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angel sing thee to thy rest." (5.2.361-362)

That this is not simply a pious hope is shown by Hamlet's having acted in accord with the divine providence in affirming the various institutions and friendships. He has cleansed the state of its usurping king and supported a valiant replacement. He can do so only in death, and Horatio's statement is a recognition of this. Only in leaving this world can Hamlet affirm its institutions. As in King Lear the hero finds his freedom in a career that includes his total alienation from the earthly kingdom, the discovery of an absolute ground of action, his acting in conformity with that ground and finally his death. Like Lear, Hamlet affirms the various bonds within the earthly kingdom as instantiations of that Good, and his death is the overcoming of the difference between the earthly kingdom and its source.

Unlike Lear, in Hamlet the disturber of the kingdom and its restorer are different. Claudius is a secret, not open, usurper of the Throne, and until the middle of the play, when he is seen at prayer, not even the audience can be sure. Hamlet's peculiar condition arises from his being a Prince confronting the actual possessor of the Throne.

Othello

We can begin to see that the career of Othello follows an analogous course, if we consider how the limits of certain views of Othello again help to indicate the need for a more comprehensive view. One of these views finds in the play the general limits of love. Another sees the play as representing the victory of a Venetian-Christian-Roman Othello over the Muslim Othello. A third view sees the play's centre psychologically, in Othello's hope to love Desdemona without committing adultery.

The first view finds in Othello "an acting out of the tragic implications in any love relationship." It is of course true that the instability of love is at the centre of Othello. However, the play cannot properly be seen as a treatment of love as its exclusive theme. In this play the treatment of love is inseparable from both that heroism out of which love arose, and that sense of honour that Othello brings with him from the military world, and

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which, violated in Othello's eyes, demands violent satisfaction. Love is also considered as being in collision with the actual society of Venice. When Iago reminds Othello that Desdemona has deceived her father in marrying, this is Iago's opening to implant doubt in Othello. One cannot therefore limit to a discussion of love, a play that can treat love only in relation to a total spiritual and social universe.

A second view\(^\text{10}\) sees the play in terms of a trichotomy within Othello; he is at once a Roman, a Christian, and a Muslim; he is a Muslim by birth, a Roman as a general, and a Christian by conversion. At the end of the play, this view argues, the first two elements together triumph over the third. That Othello is a Christian of Muslim background is true enough. To posit, however, a Roman element in him because he is a general, adds nothing to the drama; Desdemona's love for him as a hero shows that his generalship is thoroughly compatible with late Medieval Christian civilization. Emphasis on his Muslim background seems in one way more valid, since it is of course true that at the end of the play, Othello in killing himself, says that he does what he did many years ago when he killed a Turk who had insulted a Venetian. At the end of the play, however, he is a remorseful sinner killing himself. His crimes are not "Muslim" but those of a lover within a Christian state. He kills himself, moreover, because, as a result of his crimes, he cannot live within that state. He wants his history rightfully reported to the Venetian state because he has lived within that state, and he kills himself because he has divided himself from that state.

In a third view, Othello kills Desdemona so that she might become a "being incapable of pleasure, ... so that he will at last be able to love her without the taint of adultery..."\(^\text{11}\) On this view, Othello believes that sexual pleasure in marriage is wicked, and that this belief is the primary occasion for Iago's getting his hold on him. This view is right in seeing Othello's acceptance of Iago's deceit as perplexing. However, explanations of it lie nearer at hand. Iago plays on three realities. First, he persuades Othello that in marrying outside her nation, Desdemona has already shown a perverse will. Second, he intimates to Othello that as an outsider, he cannot understand the peculiar perversities of Venetian women. Third, he uses the fact of Desdemona's confirmed intercession for the cashiered Cassio as an indication of her excessive love for him. These indubitable realities are far more explanatory than a theory of psychology based on a horror of sexual pleasure that was never expressly stated by Othello.

This article acknowledges the valid aspects of all three views. With the first, it sees the limits of love as essential. It agrees with the second that there is a strong transcendent element. With the third, it finds Othello's being easily duped by Iago as in need of explanation. The view of this article, however, finds the fall of Othello in his relation both to the Venetian state and a higher Good.


Othello might seem initially not to agree with the pattern of the great tragedies indicated above: he is not a king, and the subjective passions of honour, love, and revenge that move him indicate more a man in a subordinate role than the all-encompassing dominion that a tragic hero seeks. Nevertheless, Othello has a position analogous to that of a king. As a Moor who has become an indispensable general in the Venetian state, he is a universal hero, generally admired, and his actions imply an individuality that would dominate his world.

Othello's heroic excellence has led a Venetian senator to invite him constantly to his house, there to hear the tales of his varied, dangerous and military past. The senator's daughter has also become his auditor, and moved by his tales has desired a similarly heroic life for herself. Her admiration and his love brought forth by it then lead to their marriage.

This brings on the first of several collisions with the various spheres of the Commonwealth's life that lead first to the overthrow and destruction of Othello's subjective self-assurance and then to a deeper grounding of it in the truly universal Good. Fearing disapproval, Othello and Desdemona have eloped, and her enraged father cannot imagine, in his bigotry, that his precious daughter could love a Moor; he hauls Othello before the Duke on charges of witchcraft. Although sufficient proofs of mutual consent lead to the dismissal of Brabantio's charges, his refusal to allow her in his house while Othello goes to Cyprus in defence of the state, means that their marriage begins with Desdemona's alienation from her father, and his from an important member of the Republic's government, on which together with his heroism he depends for his position.

Othello now lives both in the sphere of military honour and of love, and it is this duality that will lead to his catastrophe. The immediate occasion of it is through Iago, who hates Othello for promoting Cassio instead of himself to be his officer, and for the rumour that the Moor has been intimate with his wife. Despite the military obedience that he owes, he determines to ruin Othello by making him jealous and suspicious of his wife, and causing him to believe that Desdemona has been unfaithful to him with Michael Cassio. Othello's absolute trust in Iago arising from their respective place in the military hierarchy allows Iago to dupe him and make him believe the impossible.

The occasion for this is the cashiering of Cassio, which Iago engineers. He persuades him to drink too much, although Cassio knows himself to have a weak head. Then Iago arranges to have another of his dupes, Roderigo, pick a fight with Cassio, who, not in control of his senses, behaves very badly and is dismissed as officer by Othello. Iago then suggests that Cassio ask Desdemona to intervene for him with Othello. Desdemona's agreeing to act for him, and the way in which she does it, alone make the further insinuations of Iago plausible to Othello. The fact that she has sailed from Venice to Cyprus under conditions of war has elicited from Othello the greeting of 'fair warrior' and an ecstatic declaration of love. His deep sense of their union in heroic action is thus greatly disturbed when Iago draws Othello's attention to Cassio's leaving Desdemona in an apparently guilty manner and then by her proclamation of having taken
Cassio's part and her further determination to give him no peace until he restore Cassio to office and favour.

Although Desdemona acts from the best of motives, this interference is the occasion for Othello's accepting Iago's insinuations. It does not belong to her as the wife of Othello to make decisions belonging to his high military rank. Further her principle of love is not sufficient to undo the real incompetence that Cassio has shown in his drunken brawling. This well-intentioned partiality for Cassio provides the only basis for Iago's programme of encouraging jealousy in Othello that could possibly succeed.

While dropping obscure hints, Iago seems loathe to discuss Desdemona and thus appears only to acquiesce in Othello's questioning of him. He begins by stating the Venetian custom in wifely infidelity, "In Venice they do let God see the pranks They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience Is not to leave 't undone, but keep 't unknown." (3.3.216-218) This assails Othello at his weak point, and that in two ways. Othello knows himself to be a foreigner, not thoroughly versed in the ways of Venetians. Second, as Iago says, "she did deceive her father, marrying you..." (3.3.220) Moreover, he argues, it did not seem to Brabantio that she loved Othello, but he imagined only witchcraft had won her.

These reflections throw Othello into a perplexity. He thinks Desdemona honest, but wonders "how nature erring from itself...". (3.3.243) This gives Iago his opening, and he alleges that her decision not to marry within "her own clime, complexion and degree" (3.3.246) has shown an unnatural and perverse will. This collision between the ecstatic love of Desdemona for her heroic husband and the 'natural' tendencies that belong to her defines the dramatic action. It does not belong to Desdemona's reflections, but given Othello's ambiguous position at Venice, it belongs to his reflections about her. She has entered the universal realm of heroism but he has entered, as the reaction of Brabantio indicates, the social world of Venice.

Othello has already seen Cassio leaving Desdemona after their conference; he thus has in mind the particular candidate for the position of which Iago has spelled out the general grounds. Cassio, moreover, thoroughly fits the description of the man Desdemona would turn to after repenting of her original 'unnatural' choice. He is an elegant handsome Florentine and thus more like a Venetian of course than Othello. As a military man of some valour, moreover, he has enough of the heroic in him to make Desdemona think that she has not much abandoned her original grounds for the choice of a husband but simply modified them in the direction of what is 'natural.'

Having shown Othello the general grounds for Desdemona's infidelity, Iago has thrown him into a state of the greatest perplexity. He is enough convinced that he can proclaim farewell to military might and pomp, since his mind is now preoccupied with his jealousy. On the other hand, he is sufficiently not convinced that he demands proof of Iago.
Iago provides 'proof' in two ways. First, he arranges for Cassio to find the fancy-work handkerchief that Othello had given Desdemona in the early days of their courtship as a token of their love. Desdemona's not being able to produce it throws Othello into a rage. Iago also tells of Cassio's talking in his sleep about his love for Desdemona and the accompanying amatory gestures to him as if he were Desdemona. The culmination of the proof occurs when Othello looks at Iago talking to Cassio about the latter's relation to his mistress Bianca and imagines it to be a discussion of his relations with Desdemona. The horror of this is multiplied for Othello as he sees Bianca with the handkerchief that he had given to Desdemona.

Othello's sense of honour demands that both Cassio and Desdemona be killed for this 'crime' against him. Those like Othello who live in the worlds of military honour and of ecstatic love are dependent on others for their recognition, and they can greet their being deprived of honour and love only by destroying those who thus deprived them. The satisfaction of his honour has dominated Othello from the moment when Iago aroused his jealousy. Once he has seen the 'proof' of Desdemona's infidelity, it dominates him progressively more completely. By determining on the deaths of Desdemona and Cassio, he lays claim to the spheres of marriage and the military, making himself their measure. Next, when Ludovico, an agent of the state, arrives with orders for Othello, he does not scruple to slap his wife in Ludovico's presence and pays no attention to the remonstrances this noble Venetian makes. Finally, when Othello is on the verge of killing his wife, he asks her to repent, announcing that he does not wish to kill her soul. Othello thereby makes himself an arbiter not only of earthly but of heavenly justice as well. His sense of his honour causes him to seek to be master of all things; he imagines that he justly kills his wife.

This pinnacle of self-assertion cannot of course last long. When it is revealed that he has been duped by Iago, so far is he imagining that he has executed divine justice that he now imagines that at the final Judgment, Desdemona's innocent face will dispatch him to the depths of hell. A universal objective order of justice has now presented itself to Othello's mind, and he knows the magnitude of his wickedness by this measure.

After reaching this point, Othello experiences a certain clarification. When Iago has been exposed and arrested Othello wishes to know why Iago has thus ensnared him, although he receives no answer. When Cassio indicates that he had given him no cause for wanting to kill him, Othello begs his pardon. Finally in a speech that ends with his kissing his dead wife and killing himself, Othello explains himself,

Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know 't.
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous but, being wrought,
Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
 Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinable gum Set you down this;
And say besides that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by th' throat the circumcised dog
And smote him, thus. (5.2.348-366)

He asks that there be an objective report of what he had done to the Venetian state, and he himself gives that report. He prefaces his speech by saying that he has done the state some service which it recognizes. This supplies the general context; he has been a heroic military servant of the state. Within that, he has entered into an excessive love, and sensing himself strongly wronged in that, he has proceeded to violence, out of his sense of honour.

Thus since he has recognized himself as having become an enemy of the state, he must act to remedy this criminal relation. Once he had punished with death an external enemy of the state. Now he is both the enemy of the state and its supreme defender and thereby stabs himself. Before he dies he kisses his dead wife. Thus acknowledging the authority both of the Venetian state and his marriage that falls within it, he also shows that he cannot enjoy that which he now knows as the ground of individual life.

The tragic career of Othello has its roots in his being a military hero. This has gained him an adoring bride who wishes to join him in his heroic world. This has also then lead him to catastrophe, as his sense of military order allows him to be duped by Iago, and his sense of honour allows him to kill Desdemona in imagined justice. This sense of honour even allows him to think of himself as the arbiter of salvation and to usurp the position of Almighty God. Only the revelation of his horrible error shows him that he is the subject of God's law and not the arbiter. He can in this light further acknowledge his failure to live within the institutions of the family and state. In suicide, he seeks to act as an agent of the state in punishing what he has done as its enemy. By arrogating the office of avenger to himself, he simultaneously falls short of, and transcends, the individuality that belongs to those within the state.

Macbeth

As with the previous plays, certain critical views of Macbeth indicate the need for a more comprehensive view. One view sees Macbeth as a play in which moral law is known as the law of life. Another view sees the play as a descent into hell, showing the
form of evil. A third view interprets the play psychologically, in which Duncan represents a universal father-figure.

The first view treats the play morally. "Macbeth defines a particular kind of evil - the evil that results from a lust for power."\(^{12}\) While this view recognizes the deep concern for ambition that moves Macbeth, the limits of such a view lie in its neglect of the context in which the play treats ambition. We do not see ambition in general, but the ambition of a man who would wrongfully be king. Moreover, in the play, neither morality nor kingship is self-subsistent but is grounded in an idea of God. Those who primarily overthrow Macbeth, Malcolm and Macduff, know a total dependence on the divine will before they attempt a war against him.

A second view treats Macbeth as not only a descent into hell, but also a spring myth. "For what is the tyranny of Macbeth between the reigns of Duncan and Malcolm but winter come back after the promise of spring, only to be overcome in turn by spring itself?"\(^{13}\) Macbeth is surely a study in evil, and this evil is of course overturned at the end of the play. Yet the play is not concerned primarily with earthly conditions, but rather with their absolute ground. Macbeth fails not because of some ineluctable cycle, but rather because he has wrongly tried to make earthly kingship equal to an heavenly. The failure of his attempt shows that true kingship must be grounded in a knowledge of God and in fact, those who overthrow him are so grounded.

A third view treats the play as a kind of allegory of man, in which Duncan represents the father-figure.\(^{14}\) Such a view, of course, overlooks the political setting of the conflict and treats it directly as a symbol of the psychological. This destroys the actual movement and reality of the dramatic action.

The view of this article will correct the purely psychological approach by stressing the political setting of Macbeth's career. It will show that the vice of ambition is treated within a political and theological context: Macbeth is both a king who loses his kingdom and a man who loses his soul. Similarly, it will show that his descent into hell occurs and is corrected within that same context.

In Macbeth, the title-character, spurred to ambition by his own thoughts, his wife, and the predictions of the Weird Sisters, kills his king himself and mounts the throne. He knows that his ambition entails the loss of heavenly good but so desirous is he of an earthly kingdom that he wittingly chooses the latter at the expense of the former. He then aims at equalizing his earthly kingdom with the heavenly by murdering the man predicted to be a father of kings. The incompleteness of this attempt marks the reversal of his

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fortune, as the oppressed people, convinced at first that his tyranny has an unopposable stability, gradually unite to oppose him. The rightful king, son of the murdered Duncan, knows that kingship cannot be self-sufficient but must be dependent on heaven's will and the possession of the Christian virtues. He leads the forces opposed to Macbeth. Gradually, Macbeth loses that for the sake of which he has sacrificed his soul's good. The very existence of a kingdom and a kingship held independent of heaven is proven illusory. Macbeth is slain in battle, and the rightful king is restored to the kingship that had earlier been usurped.

The play begins with a meeting of three witches, who plan to encounter Macbeth shortly. The fact that the audience sees them first and apart from any other character shows their objective reality, whose purpose appears not long after. News has reached Duncan, the King, that Macbeth has been one of his staunchest defenders in the recent battles against enemies foreign and domestic. The King orders the execution of the traitorous thane of Cawdor and the transfer of his title to Macbeth. Soon after this, Banquo and Macbeth encounter the three witches, who greet the men with surprising announcements. They hail Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor and one who will be king hereafter. To Banquo's questioning, they answer that while he himself will not be king, his children will be kings.

The arrival of two messengers from the King confirms part of what Macbeth has just heard. Ross and Angus declare him in fact to be Thane of Cawdor. The reactions of Banquo and Macbeth are somewhat different. The first realizes that "the instruments of darkness tell us truths" (1.3.124) only to mislead us thereafter. Macbeth feels the truth that Banquo has enunciated as a general rule. He feels that the communication of the witches has been good insofar as it has told the truth about a fact already accomplished, but bad in that it has aroused the fantasy of murder in him as the means whereby to achieve what they have predicted. From the beginning Macbeth knows that the killing of a king is evil, however attractive it might seem.

Macbeth's receiving the congratulations and thanks of the King in person provides both motive and opportunity for his developing ideas. The King announces both that he will soon name his son heir-apparent and that he will now visit Macbeth's castle. The first rouses Macbeth's determination by putting an obstacle in the way of his ambition, while the second provides the occasion for his realizing that ambition.

The next scene shows Lady Macbeth's reaction to her husband's letter announcing the visit of the witches. Unlike her husband, who has partly shrunk from the imaginings that can fulfil their prophecies, Lady Macbeth has no doubts. She is determined that her husband achieve that which has been promised to him. She fears that her husband is not equal to what is necessary, "what thou wouldst highly, That would thou holily; would not play false, and yet wouldst wrongly win." (1.5.20-22) She knows that her encouragement is necessary if he will do the deed that shall make him king. Only the hyper-masculine cruelty that she prays for, as she also asks attending spirits to "unsex me here," (1.5.41) can supply sufficient ambition to carry the ambitious but divided Macbeth in its train.
We can see the division in Macbeth's soul when he considers whether to commit the deed that alone can lead to his being king. If it were a question of killing Duncan and no more, he says, "we'd jump the life to come." (1.7.7) That is, he knows the wrongness of killing the king and that it would result in his eternal damnation. If he could attain this finite end easily, he would choose it in place of eternal life. What he fears, however, is judgement in this life, by his fellows. Macbeth knows that the Scots will condemn him for killing a kinsman and a Sovereign, who is moreover his guest. Duncan has been such an excellent king that all shall despise his murderer. The murder of Duncan will redound on Macbeth, and it is this, not the fear of the loss of heaven, that moves Macbeth at this point.

These considerations all persuade Macbeth not to do the deed. Not only has Duncan honoured him but he has gained the respect of many. Only the intervention of Lady Macbeth who tells her husband that his being a man depends on killing Duncan persuades him. Relying on her planning and exhortation, he can declare that he is ready for the terrible deed. He does the deed, and Lady Macbeth puts blood on the King's servants, to cast the blame on them. Then when the murdered king is discovered, Macbeth murders these servants, pretending to be unable to contain his anger against them. The King's sons, utterly frightened, flee, acquiescing in Macbeth's regicide.

Even Banquo, who has deeper knowledge, does nothing. All Scotland imagines that it must live under King Macbeth. Yet the imagined stability of his rule first proves illusory not to his subjects but to Macbeth himself. He reflects on the promise of the witches to Banquo that kings will arise from him. This brings on the bitter consideration that he has risked eternal damnation to secure a kingdom not for his own heirs but those of Banquo. He resolves to be rid of him and engages murderers for the purpose.

In this resolve Macbeth not only extends the scope of his crimes but he also imagines that his actions can overreach the predictions of the Weird sisters. While they have accurately all-hail'd him as both Thane of Cawdor and as King, they have always from the beginning set a limit to his kingdom. While he will be King, Banquo will beget kings. Now Macbeth thinks that he can be master both of this world and the infernal world of the witches as well.

The failure of Macbeth's attempt to wipe out the line of Banquo is the turning-point of the play. For the first time, there begins to be resistance to Macbeth's rule. Not only does Fleance, unlike his father, escape the murderers; the ghost of Banquo also appears to Macbeth at a gathering of all the nobles, and this ghost's influence on Macbeth is sufficient to derange both Macbeth and the gathering about him. Further opposition to Macbeth's rule shows itself in a conversation between Lennox and another lord. The former speaks of Macbeth's doings as crimes and calls him a tyrant. He also indicates that Macduff has earned Macbeth's displeasure by refusing to attend the feast. The lord says also that the rightful King, Malcolm, son of Duncan, has taken refuge at the English court, being held in great respect by Edward. Macduff has gone to Malcolm to propose that under God's aegis he raise an army to overthrow Macbeth. Macduff has, moreover, directly refused Macbeth's request that he aid him against his enemies. Thus the
opposition to Macbeth is gathering, under the leadership of the rightful king, and trusting in God for the success of their enterprise.

When Macbeth soon thereafter visits the Weird Sisters, they have news both seemingly re-assuring and horrible for him. Although they warn him against Macduff, they tell him that no man of woman born can harm him, and that he shall be safe until Burnham wood be come to Dunsinane. This Macbeth wrongly receives as evidence of his own security. However, when at his insistence, he is shown the future, he learns that the line of Banquo will be kings almost to the end of time.

Macbeth is only partly stopped by this latest news. Although extremely agitated, he still determines to do what he can against his enemy Macduff, sure, as he imagines, in his own kingship. However, in his own mind, as well as for us, his visit to the Witches has resulted in a severe contraction of his earlier plan for endless dominion for both himself and his heirs. From now until his beheading, the play shows the progressive narrowing of the realm for which he fights.

The remainder of the act shows Macbeth's vengeance on Macduff and Macduff's response. Murderers surprise his castle and kill his wife and children. At the English court, he is trying to persuade Malcolm, the dead king's son, to lead an expedition against Macbeth. Malcolm at first is not encouraging. He maintains that he is full of vice and thus unworthy to be king. This brings Macduff to a cry of despair; only then can Malcolm indicate that he was testing Macduff. Now he knows that Macduff wants a virtuous king. Since Macduff had praised Duncan for being a religious man, Malcolm knows that Macduff wishes a king who knows his dependence on the divine order.

The fifth act shows the final contraction of Macbeth's intended earthly empire, until, with his beheading, its nothingness is revealed. He himself is conscious of this contraction. He contrasts the usual joys of old age, being surrounded with friends and heaped with honours, with what he experiences, being attacked and reviled on all sides. Further, in the middle of his preparations for battle, his wife dies, and in a well-known speech he reflects on the meaninglessness of life. In so far as one attempts to regard the realm of this life as complete in itself, it reveals its meaninglessness.

When finally, as the opposing soldiers carry branches cut from Burnham Wood, indeed it is come to Dunsinane, and one of Macbeth's last defences has vanished. Then in his encounter with Macduff, Macbeth learns that Macduff, born by Caeserean section, is not of woman born. Then he knows that the Weird Sisters have no truth in them, and that all the dreams of earthly splendour that they encourage are false. Nevertheless, he cannot accept doing homage to the rightful king and determines to fight; he does and is slain by Macduff.

With the complete overthrow of Macbeth, Malcolm determines to be crowned at Scone. The idea of a kingship founded on human ambition alone has been nullified. Only that kingship that knows itself as dependent on God can triumph.
Macbeth has known from the beginning that the ambitious pursuit of the kingship will entail damnation. His tragic career, then, indicates the radical instability of that pursuit. He can attain that kingship for a season, at the price of murder and tyranny, but he cannot pass it on to the heirs of his body; he cannot maintain it or even his own particular life against those who know the deep dependence of kingship upon an absolute Good. The death of Macbeth is at once his temporal and eternal destruction; having tried to equalize man's temporal with his eternal good, he can enjoy neither.

Conclusion

The great tragedies of Shakespeare show the clarification of human individuality through a clarification of ends. A king or similar figure lives in an assumed finite realm; this awakens in him a subjectivity that would possess this realm. This reveals rather the total dependence of individuality on an absolute Good. In *Hamlet* and *Lear*, the hero then can find himself through the affirmation of family and state as instances of this Good and then in a death that overcomes the difference between these instantiations and their ground. The incapacity of Othello and Macbeth to live in these finite forms shows also their destruction as individuals.

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Richard Hooker's Discourse On Natural Law In The Context Of The Magisterial Reformation

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Richard Hooker's theory of natural law has long been the subject of controversy. In his famous pulpit exchange with the eminent Puritan divine Walter Travers in the Temple Church at the Inns of Court, and later in A Christian Letter of certaine English Protestantes, Hooker was accused of promoting "Romishe doctrine" and "the darkenesse of schoole learning" in his attempt to maintain intellectual continuity with the natural law tradition (FLE 4:23.10-24.8; 4:65.1). His contemporary critics sought to impugn his theory as incompatible with the doctrine of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the

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1 I owe thanks to the Princeton Center of Theological Inquiry for the fellowship that made this research possible. This essay will appear as a chapter in a monograph entitled The Theology of Richard Hooker in the Context of the Magisterial Reformation, Princeton, NJ: Studies in Reformed Theology and History, Princeton Seminary Press, 1999.


4 See the introduction to ACL, FLE 4:7.24-9.14: "Shew unto us and all English Protestantes, your owne true meaning, and how your wordes in divers thinges doe agree with the doctrine established among us. And that not onelie for avoyding of offence given to many godlie and religious Christians: but also that Atheistes, Papistes, and other hereticques, be not encouragd by your so harde and so harsh stile (beating as it were, as we verilie thinke, against the verie heart of all true christian doctrine, professyd by her Majestie and the whole state of this Realme) to despise and set light by, her sacred Majestie, the reverend Fathers of our Church and the whole cause of our religion . . . And for the better ease herein, and our more readie satisfaction, we have compared your positions and assertions in your long discourses, unto the articles of religion sett forth Anno Domini 1562. and confirmed by Parliament the 13. of her Majesties most blessed and joyfull reigne . . ." On the theology of the Articles, see Oliver O'Donovan, On the Thirty-Nine Articles:
Church of England as well as with such standards of sixteenth-century Protestant orthodoxy as Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and the confessions of "the best reformed churches" on the continent. Since the mid-nineteenth century, commentators on Hooker's thought have commonly allowed the truth of these accusations largely owing to their consistency with the prevailing hypothesis of the so-called Anglican *via media*. This interpretation of Hooker's thought rests on the assumption that the doctrine of the Church of England occupies a theological middle ground between Roman Catholicism and continental Protestantism. Hooker has been pointed to frequently as one of the originators and chief proponents of this Anglican way of theological compromise. In general, the interpretation of the doctrine and institutions of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Church in recent historiography has tended to dismiss the *via media* hypothesis as inappropriate and anachronistic. This widely accepted revision has yet to secure a foothold in contemporary Hooker scholarship. Indeed the *via media* hypothesis continues

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to hold widespread authority as a hermeneutical paradigm in the most recent studies of his theology. Thus a premise of our present inquiry is that the continued use of this paradigm presents an impediment to the critical interpretation of Hooker's thought.

It is within this context of interpretation that the question needs to be asked once again: where does Hooker's appeal to the authority of natural law in matters of religion place him with respect to the continental reformers? Does such an appeal distance his thinking from the norms of Protestant orthodoxy? Or, alternatively, can the tradition of natural law theory be reconciled with the central teachings of the magisterial Reformation? The initial premise of our approach to these questions involves the abandoning of the anachronistic hypothesis of the Anglican via media. An alternative interpretation is here offered and is based on the proposal that Hooker shares considerable theological ground in his account of natural law with four leading representatives of the continental magisterial Reformation: Martin Luther, Phillip Melanchthon, John Calvin and Heinrich Bullinger. Central to our proposed revision to the received reading is the contention that far from initiating a theological compromise between Rome and continental Protestantism, Hooker is really a proponent of the principles of magisterial reform in England. This revised interpretation of Hooker's basic theological orientation is built upon a careful reading of the main apologetic purpose of his treatise Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie. Briefly stated, Hooker frames his discourse as an irenic appeal to the hearts and minds of the "moderate puritan" critics of the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559. Hooker addresses his discourse directly to disciplinarian but non-separating puritans who seek reformation of the ecclesiastical law of England (Lawes I.1.3; 1: 57.33-58.19). He endeavours to persuade his audience by an

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9 See William Haugaard's Introduction to Hooker's Preface to the Lawes in the new commentary FLE 6 (1) Elizabeth's Reign: Crucible for an Emerging Anglicanism, pp. 2-22. A recent and very important exception to this interpretation is proposed by Nigel Atkinson in Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason: Reformed Theologian of the Church of England? (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997). Atkinson directly challenges the traditional consensus of Hooker as a representative of via media Anglicanism.

10 There is, of course, no single theological current which can be called "the magisterial Reformation." In the course of the sixteenth century a variety of distinct confessions emerged. Four main branches of protestant reform are normally recognized: Lutheran, Genevan, Zurich and Radical Reform. The first three branches are commonly classified as the "magisterial" Reformation over against the fourth. The Preface to the Lawes makes clear Hooker's concern that the promoters of the disciplina have adopted certain features of the radical protestant agenda. This continental backdrop of confessionalisation is of crucial significance to the interpretation of Hooker's thought. For a clear discussion of these distinctions see Konrad Repgen, "Reform," in the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation, gen. ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), vol. 3, pp. 392-95.


12 This category is adopted from the important study by Peter Lake, Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church (Cambridge: The University Press, 1982); see especially pp. 1-15. On Hooker's irenicism see Lawes Pref. 9.3.4 (1:52.12-53.15) References to Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie (Lawes) cite book, chapter and section followed by the volume, page and line numbers of FLE in brackets.
appeal to standards of doctrinal orthodoxy, acknowledged by them as authoritative, that a complete reformation has in fact already been achieved. By a concerted appeal to "theological reason" he hopes to secure conscientious acceptance of the Settlement by such disciplinarist-puritan critics as Walter Travers or Thomas Cartwright. In the course of the Admonition Controversy of the 1570s Travers and Cartwright articulated their support for a scripturally prescribed form of ecclesiastical polity or disciplina, and are the representative authorities for the disciplina cited by Hooker in the Lawes. The comparative stability enjoyed by the Jacobean Church and Cartwright's own eventual conformity to the established church in the late 1590s provide some evidence of success in this irenical purpose. Hooker's overriding apologetic aim as set out in the Preface to the Lawes is, at any rate, inconsistent with an attempt to construct an ecclesiological tertium quid somewhere between Geneva and Rome. In order to persuade his audience that a complete Reformation of the church had been achieved in and through the doctrine and institutions of the Elizabethan Settlement, one of Hooker's chief tasks is to justify the authority of natural law in handling matters of religion. The only possibility of success in this apologetic aim is to offer a demonstration proceeding from the ground of theological assumptions shared by those whom he intends to persuade. Thus it should come as no great surprise when, in his account of natural law, he relies upon arguments and authorities employed by Calvin, Luther and other magisterial reformers.

Interpretations Of The Role Of Natural Law In Hooker's Theology

John McNeill argued fifty years ago, perhaps too sanguinely, that there is "no real discontinuity between the teaching of the reformers and that of their predecessors with respect to natural law." It must nevertheless be acknowledged that there is a genuine dialectical difficulty in reconciling the authority of the natural law with the core assumptions of Reformation soteriology and scriptural hermeneutics. As we have already noted, Hooker's advocating of natural law to defend the constitution of the Elizabethan Church met with strong opposition from some of his contemporaries. To the anonymous authors of A Christian Letter he appeared to overthrow the very foundation of the doctrine of the reformed Church of England by setting a qualification on the perfect

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13 Master Hooker's Answer to the Supplication that Master Travers made to the Counsell, FLE 5:255.4-15. Luther distinguishes between "theological reason" and mere "human reason" in his Disputationen (1535-45), WA 39,1.180; LW 34.144.
14 On the Admonition Controversy of the 1570s, see Peter Lake, Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Confirmist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988).
15 See Pref. 1.3 (1:3.1-6): "Thinke not that ye reade the words of one, who bendeth him selfe as an aduersarie against the truth which ye have alreadie embraced; but the words of one, who desireth even to embrace together with you the selfe same truth, if it be the truth, and for that cause (for no other God he knoweth) hath undertaken the burthensome labour of this painefull kinde of conference." Cf. Hooker's marginal note on ACL in FLE 4:68.12-16.
17 Lawes I.14.5 (1:129.10-14): "It sufficeth therefore that nature and scripture doe serve in such full sort, that they both joyntly and not severallye eyther of them be so complete, that unto everlasting felicitie wee neede not the knowledge of any thing more then these two [and] may easily furnish our mindes with on all sides . . ."
KIRBY: RICHARD HOOKER'S DISCOURSE ON NATURAL LAW IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MAGISTERIAL REFORMATION

sufficiency of scriptural authority. In his debate with Archbishop John Whitgift earlier in the 1570s, Cartwright had argued that the dictum sola scriptura constituted a universal rule of human action and that whatever is not done in accord with God's revealed written word is sinful. In the Lawes Hooker responds to Cartwright's four scriptural proofs of this position with an invocation of wisdom theology:

Whatever either men on earth, or the Angels of heaven do know, it is as a drop of that unemptiable fountaine of wisdom, which wisdom hath diversely imparted her treasures unto the world. As her waies are of sundry kinds, so her maner of teaching is not meereely one and the same. Some things she openeth by the sacred bookes of Scripture; some things by the glorious works of nature: with some things she inspireth them from above by spirituall influence, in some things she leadeth and trayneth them onely by worldly experience and practise. We may not so in any one speciall kind admire her that we disgrace her in any other, but let all her waies be according unto their place and degree adored (Lawes II.1.4; 1:147.23-148.6).

The authors of A Christian Letter interpret Hooker's theology openly to challenge to foundational teaching on the perfect sufficiency of the scripture (sola scriptura). His appeal to diversity of access to the divine wisdom is construed as an affirmation that the "light of nature" teaches a knowledge necessary to salvation and that scripture, therefore, is merely a supplement to the natural knowledge of God. The compatibility of natural law theory with such primary doctrines as justification by faith (sola fides) and salvation by Christ alone (solus Christus) is also called into question. Hooker's appeal to natural law tradition, the light of reason, the authority of philosophy in general and Aristotle in particular is thought to pose such a serious breach with the Articles of Religion that, as the Letter puts it, "almost all the principal pointes of our English creed [are] greatlie shaken and contradicted." In short, against Hooker's protestations to the contrary, the

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18 Lawes I.14.5 (1:129.10-14); compare II.8.3 (1:188.4-7): "The unsufficiencie of the light of nature is by the light of scripture so fully and so perfectly herein supplied, that further light then this hath added there doth not neede unto that ende." - " "
20 See The Wisdom of Solomon 11:4. Compare Calvin, Inst. 1.1.1: "Those blessings which unceasingly distill to us from heaven, are like streams conducting us to the fountain."
21 See ACL §3. The Holye Scripture contayneth all thinges necessarie to salvation. FLE 4:11.1-14.9. See especially 4:11.22.
22 FLE 4:14.4-7 and also ACL §6. Of fayth and workes. FLE 4:19.17-23.9.
23 Hooker refers to Aristotle as "the Arch-Philosopher" and "the mirror of humaine wisdom." Lawes I.4.1 (1:70.20) and I.10.4 (1:99.28) For Luther Aristotle is synonymous with reason and philosophy and is often referred to as the "light of nature." WA 7.738.31; 7.739.23; 2.395.19; and 2.363.4. See B.A. Gerrish, Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 32-42.
24 ACL §20. Schoolemen, Philosophie, and Poperie. FLE 4:65.16 - 68.19: "yet in all your discourse, for the most parte, Aristotle the patriarch of Philosophers (with divers other human writers) and the ingenuous [sic!] schoolemen, almost in all pointes have some finger; Reason is highlie sett up against holie scripture, and reading against preaching; the church of Rome favourablie admitted to bee of the house of God; Calvin
authors of *A Christian Letter* regard the appeal to the authority of reason and natural law in theological discourse as simply irreconcilable with "all true christian doctrine."

Present-day scholarly evaluations of Hooker's thought are more inclined to agree with the assessment of these sixteenth-century critics than with Hooker's own avowed apologetic intent. William Speed Hill, for example, maintains that Hooker's defence of natural law leads away from Protestant orthodoxy in the direction of the Anglican *via media* and that it was precisely "the doctrinal implications of this position - specifically its apparent proximity to Rome - that the authors of *A Christian Letter* feared and opposed." With respect to the specific charges made in *A Christian Letter* concerning Hooker's appeal to the authority of natural law, H.C. Porter argues that they were entirely justified. According to Porter, Hooker's critics perceived correctly that "the whole of Hooker's work . . . was a celebration of our natural faculty of reason," and that therefore he had indeed deviated from the path of Protestant orthodoxy. By upholding the authority of reason and natural law Hooker had abandoned the magisterial reformers' insistence upon the principle *sola scriptura*, and had in fact embraced the Thomist dictum "grace comes not to destroy nature but to fulfill it, to perfect it." In his recent Introduction to the first book of the *Lawes*, Lee Gibbs adopts much the same view when he observes that Hooker is closer to a Thomistic "conjunctive view" of the relation between grace and nature, scripture and reason than he is to "the more disjunctive perspective of his Calvinist antagonists (*FLE* 6(1): 97)." Gibbs points out that Hooker's emphasis on the rationality of law depends on a teleological perspective derived from Aristotle and Aquinas while the magisterial reformers adhere to a nominalist, voluntarist emphasis on the essence of law as command rather than reason. By this account a rationalist, realist account of law like Hooker's is by definition incompatible with the assumptions of Reformation theology. According to Gibbs, Hooker's more optimistic view of human nature enabled him to close the breach between reason and revelation, nature and grace which had been opened by the magisterial reformers and maintained by

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26 H.C. Porter, "Hooker, the Tudor Constitution, and the *Via Media*," in *SRH* p. 103.
the more radical disciplinarian puritans (FLE 6 (1): 124). In this fashion, Hooker's theological position is identified as essentially neo-Thomist. To regard natural law as a revelation of the divine nature is, on this view, to depart from the established bounds of Protestant orthodoxy into the territory of scholastic divinity or, as the authors of A Christian Letter put it, "the darknesse of schoole learning (FLE 4.65.1)." Hooker's contemporary critics and present-day scholarship are agreed at least on this point: the theology of disciplinarian puritanism with its rejection of natural law theory is more consistent than the theology of Hooker with the teaching of the magisterial reformers. In what remains of this discussion we shall argue that such a portrayal of the role of natural law in Hooker's theology is questionable; on the contrary, we shall seek to demonstrate that his embrace of the natural law tradition is in fact consistent with a well-established pattern in the practical theology of the magisterial reformers.

**Natural Law In The Theology Of The Magisterial Reformers**

*Martin Luther*

According to Martin Luther there is a paradox in the Scriptures with respect to the knowledge of God. On the one hand, Paul testifies to the Romans that man is able to know God by nature (Rom. 1:19, 20). On the other hand, John's Gospel plainly affirms that God can only be known as revealed in Christ: "if the Son, whom the Father embraces in His divinity, had not come to reveal God to us, no one would ever know him." Luther goes on to ask how these apparently contrary claims can be reconciled and notes with remarkable prescience that someday this question is going to cause trouble! The reconciliation rests on a distinction between two kinds of knowledge of God, one through the law and the other through the gospel. Reason knows God through what Luther calls a cognitio legalis, a legal knowing, while the saving knowledge of the gospel is by definition inaccessible to reason. This twofold knowledge of God according to the distinction between the law and the gospel in turn provides the basis for the crucial distinction of ethical doctrine, namely the twofold use of the law. For Luther the law and the gospel are two distinct species of word or preaching (tzweyerley wort oder predigt). Indeed the ability properly to distinguish between the two is the essential task of theology.

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29 "For Hooker, as for Aquinas, law is grounded on reason (aliquid rationis)." FLE 6(1): 97. Gibbs emphasises Hooker's dependence on Aquinas throughout his Introduction.
30 For a significant critique of this prevailing consensus, see Nigel Atkinson, Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason, pp. 1-33.
The individual Christian lives simultaneously in the two orders of creation and redemption; the one is natural, temporal and earthly while the other is spiritual, eternal and heavenly. There is distinction between the two realms but not disjunctive separation. In the former man lives externally in relation to the world while in the latter life is internally directed towards God. Corresponding to the two kingdoms are two distinct modes of discourse and two corresponding uses of the law. In temporal matters (coram hominibus) the rational man is self-sufficient; in this realm the law rules externally and is directed principally by the natural light of reason. This is the usus politicus of law which is naturally accessible to all rational creatures. Here in the forum politicum the authority of Aristotle is altogether worthy of praise.

In spiritual matters which have to do with the soul's immediate, internal relation to God (coram Deo), on the other hand, reason is blind and man is incapable of acceptable ethical action. In matters of salvation the power of reason is simply "death and darkness." In this realm of discourse and action the law functions to show up all human ethical striving as null, and drives the conscience to rely solely upon the divine grace. This so-called usus theologicus seu spiritualis of the law can be discerned only through the revealed light of the gospel. So far as the gospel is concerned, that is to say in the forum theologicum, all Aristotle is to theology as darkness to light.

According to Luther, God rules through the gospel as redeemer and through the law as creator. A twist enters into this dialectical construct when the political or external use of the law is shown to be necessary for those under the dispensation of the gospel. Within this structure of divine governance, the Christian is viewed as both justified and sinful (simul justus et peccator) and therefore simultaneously no longer under the law and yet still in need of the law's correction. Thus, according to the usus theologicus, natural law demonstrates the futility of any human effort to live justly; at the same time, according to the usus civilis, the law demands full obedience. Thus the law imposes no soteriological necessity upon the believer justified by faith but does establish an ethical measure for the good works which proceed from the "indicative" of divine grace. It is only with the emergence of the tertius usus legis that a divine legal "imperative" is asserted in Phillip Melanchthon's theology of law and in later Lutheran formulations.

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33 See Luther's Introduction to his Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, WA 40 (1).37-51.
34 "Aristoteles est optimus in morali philosophia; in naturali nihil valet." Tischreden 1.226.10.
38 See Luther's explanation of the necessity of regeneration and the subduing of the flesh in this life, Kirchenpostille (1537) Epistle for the Nineteenth Sunday After Trinity, WA 45. 161-64.
39 On Melanchthon, see p. 17 below. I am grateful to Dr. Niels Gregerson for drawing my attention to the doctrine of the tertius usus legis in the Formula of Concord of 1577, the Solid Declaration, Article VI. "The Third Function of the Law" in The Book of Concord: The Confession of the evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 563-568. See especially p. 565: "But in this life Christians are not renewed perfectly and completely. For although their sins are covered up through the perfect obedience of Christ, so that they are not reckoned to believers for
For Luther the Decalogue and the golden rule of the New Testament are both expressions of the natural law commanded in the scriptures. Thus the legal authority of nature and scripture coincide. The law inscribed on human hearts by the law of nature, but obscured by sin, is reestablished by revealed command.

Hooker's account of natural law appeals to Luther's distinction of the twofold use of the law, although his formulation of doctrine is potentially misleading on a terminological level:

> The lawe of reason doth somewhat direct men how to honour God as their Creator, but how to glorifie God in such sort as is required, to the end he may be an everlasting Saviour, this we are taught by divine law, which law both ascertayneth the truth and supplyeth unto us the want of that other law. So that in morall actions, divine lawe helpeth exceedingly the law of reason to guide mans life, but in supernaturall it alone guideth.

(Lawes I.16.5; 1:139.3-10)

It is important to observe here that Hooker's "divine law" is a category which embraces both the gospel and the moral law revealed in scripture. Owing to the primacy of the gospel-law antinomy in his theology, Luther never applies the terminology of "law" to the teaching of the gospel. The antinomy is affirmed by Hooker, but within the broader categorical distinction between revealed law and natural law. Thus in "supernaturall actions," the revealed word alone is a guide. In the mystical realm of salvation, reason is incapacitated, and for Hooker "without belief all other things are as nothing (Lawes I.11.5,6; 1:118.11-30)." Within the order of creation, on the other hand, natural law rules. As a result of man's fallen condition, the law of nature requires some kind of coercive "public regiment (Lawes I.10.4; 1:100.11)." By means of this political use of law in the external realm, it is possible, says Hooker, to furnish ourselves with "a life fit for the dignitie of man (Lawes I.10.1; 1:96.10)." On this level, namely the order of creation, the discourse has every appearance of humanism. At the same time, however, the need for such external regiment is taken as evidence of God's remedy for human depravity (remedium peccati). The external order of political law and the revelation of a supernatural way of salvation both arise out of disruption of the natural order. In a manner similar to the Christian individual the Church also falls within the distinction of the two orders of creation and redemption. As the mystical body of Christ, the Church is altogether above natural knowing. Yet in so far as the Church falls within the external, political realm it too is subject to the directives of positive human law and thus ultimately to the authority of the Christian prince as the "uncommanded commander" in the

damnation, and although the Holy Spirit has begun the mortification of the Old Adam and their renewal in the spirit of their minds, nevertheless the Old Adam still clings to their nature and to all its internal and external powers. . . Hence, because of the desires of the flesh the truly believing, elect, and reborn children of God require in this life not only the daily teaching and admonition, warning and threatening of the law, but frequently the punishment of the law as well, to egg them on so that they follow the Spirit of God." Robert Kolb, Confessing the Faith: Reformers Define the Church, 1530-1580 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991).

40 See Commentary on Galatians 5:14, WA 45(2).66,67; LW 27.53; Commentary on the Gospel of John, LW 22.150.
external, political realm. Throughout his discussion of the authority of natural law in the governmental realm, Hooker depends upon the dialectical paradigm established by Luther in the doctrine of the two kingdoms.

Phillip Melanchthon

Phillip Melanchthon observes in his *Loci Communes* that the law of nature is a "divine light" implanted in human intellect and agreeable in content with the law of Moses. Reason would be incapable of marvelling at the glorious works of the creator if it lacked what Melanchthon calls a preconception or "proleptic" knowledge of God. Indeed the divine image shines in man as the knowledge of God; this similitude of the divine mind shows itself in a capacity for moral discrimination which is, of course, dependent upon a knowledge of the natural law. Thus the natural knowledge of God and practical wisdom are bound tightly together. Melanchthon extends Luther's doctrine of law to include a *tertius usus* whereby the law, natural or revealed, serves as a permanent instruction for holiness to those justified by faith. Hooker adheres to this third use of the law in his insistence upon the necessity of the ethical regeneration of sanctifying righteousness while, at the same time, he continues to uphold the original distinction between the *usus civilis* and the *usus theologicus*. It has been suggested that Melanchthon stresses the pedagogical function of the law in the ethical realm owing to the humanistic bent of his thought.

It has been suggested that Melanchthon's humanism, like Hooker's, is erected on the foundation of the distinction between the two orders or kingdoms. In the context of the *tertius usus legis*, the study of Aristotle's *Ethics*.

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41 See chapter III below for a discussion of Hooker's doctrine of the Church in the context of patristic Christological discourse.


44 Similarly for Hooker human rationality and volition are the highest expression of the divine likeness in creation: "man being made according to the likenes of his maker resembleth him also in the maner of working; so that whatsoever we worke as men, the same we doe wittingly worke and freely . . ." *Lawes* 1.7.2 (1:77.20-23)

45 *Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes of 1555*, translated and edited by Clyde L. Manschreck (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.127: "Although God now dwells in these [believers] and gives them light, and causes them to be conformed to him, nevertheless, all such happens through God's word, and in this law in life is necessary, that saints may know and have a testimony of the works which please God. Since all men in this mortal life carry in themselves much weakness and sin, daily penance before God ought to increase, and we ought even more to lament our false security and impurity."

46 See my discussion of Hooker's soteriology in chapter III below.

becomes an explicitly Christian undertaking; there is a communication of idioms (comunicatio idiomatum) as it were between the realms of Gospel and Law. The third use of the law emphasises the performance of good works as the fruit of faith and thus allows for a restoration or baptism, as it were, of pagan moral science. Hooker's frequent appeals to the authority of pagan practical wisdom, whether it be to Aristotle, Sophocles, Cicero or to later Christian neoplatonic sources, can be better understood in the light of Melanchthon's tertius usus legis. There is no need whatever for Hooker to abandon the theological ground of the magisterial reformers in order to reconcile the practice of Christian virtue with natural law. Lee Gibbs has observed that Hooker follows Aquinas in defining law as "something pertaining to practical reason (FLE 6(1):495)." It can be said equally fairly that Melanchthon and Luther follow Aquinas in their account of practical reason according to the doctrine of the usus civilis.

Heinrich Bullinger

Heinrich Bullinger, the reformed leader of Zurich, interprets natural law chiefly in terms of the conscience. In his exegesis of Romans 2:15 in the Decades, Bullinger maintains that God has placed the law of nature in the mind in order to instruct it and direct it in its judgement between good and evil. This law also imprints general principles of religion and justice on the soul in such a fashion that they can be said to be born with us, and are therefore naturally in us. Like Luther and Melanchthon, Bullinger insists on the virtual identity of content and purpose of the natural law and the moral law revealed in scripture. The fault of the Gentiles lies not so much in ignorance of God's purposes but rather in a perverse turning away from the knowledge they possess. Thus the will rather than the intellect is at the root of their failure to observe the law. For Bullinger the disobedience of the Gentiles to the law "engraven in our minds" is expressed typically in the worship of the "graven image." By virtue of its failure to recognise the true imago dei in the rational soul, idolatry is a violation of the natural law as well as the revealed law of scripture. Hooker regards idolatry in much the same way. As does Bullinger he sees it as exemplary of "the like kind of generall blindnes [which] hath prevailed against the manifest laws of reason." Prevalence of "the grosser kind of heathenish idolatrie" is

48 These collected sermons were formally authorised by Archbishop Whitgift for the theological study of the clergy of England in 1586, not long after Hooker's appointment to the Mastership of the Temple. See W.P.M. Kennedy, Elizabethan Episcopal Administration (London: Alcuin Club, 1924), vol. 2, pp. 45-46.
49 Heinrich Bullinger, Decades, ed. T. Harding, (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1849-51), 1.2:194,195: "The law of nature is an instruction of the conscience, and, as it were, a certain direction placed by God himself in the minds and hearts of men, to teach them what they have to do and what to echew. And the conscience, verily, is the knowledge, judgement, and reason of a man . . . and this reason proceedeth from God. . . Wherefore the law of nature [is so called] because God hath imprinted or engraven in our minds some knowledge, and certain general rinciples of religion, justice, and goodness, which, because they be grafted in us and born together with us, do therefore seem to be naturally in us. . . We understand that the law of nature, not the written law, but that which is grafted in man, hath the same office that the written law hath." See Edward A. Dowey, "Heinrich Bullinger's Theology: Thematic, Comprehensive, Schematic," in Calvin Studies V, ed. John Leith (Davidson, NC: Davidson College, 1990), pp. 41-60 and John T. McNeill, "Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers," pp. 178,179.
evidence of the inherent weakness of human reason and the consequent need for perpetual divine aid (Lawes I.8.11; 1:91.25-93.16).

John Calvin and the duplex cognitio dei

In the 1559 edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin formulates a classic summary of the twofold knowledge of God:

It is one thing to perceive that God our Maker supports us by his power, rules us by his providence, fosters us by his goodness, and visits us with all kinds of blessings, and another thing to embrace the grace of reconciliation offered to us in Christ. Since, then, the Lord first appears, as well in the creation of the world as in the general doctrine of Scripture, simply as Creator, and afterwards as a Redeemer in Christ, a twofold knowledge of him arises.\(^5^1\)

This distinction of the *duplex cognitio dei* proves to be most significant in the systematic ordering of Calvin's theology and is highly influential in later reformed doctrine as well.\(^5^2\) In another well known passage in the *Institutes*, he observes that the knowledge of God is naturally implanted in the human mind.\(^5^3\) It is interesting to note that, unlike most discussions of this question by the magisterial reformers, Calvin does not appeal here to the *Epistle to the Romans*. He refers rather to two passages where Cicero argues that knowledge of the divine is engraved on the minds of men.\(^5^4\) Employing language similar to Cicero's, although to a different purpose, Paul argues at the outset of his *Epistle to the Romans* that God reveals himself to the gentiles through the works of creation (Rom.

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\(^5^1\) John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, transl. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1979). Cited thus: *Inst.* 1.2.1. For most of this century there has been considerable controversy over the right interpretation of Calvin's natural theology; whether Calvin had a natural theology at all has even been doubted. For a succinct account of this controversy and a summary of the extensive body of critical literature, see William Klempa, "Calvin and Natural Law," *Calvin Studies IV*, ed. John H. Leith and W. Stacy Johnson (Davidson, NC: Davidson College, 1988), pp. 1-23.


\(^5^3\) *Inst.* 1.3.1: "That there exists in the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, some sense of Deity, we hold to be beyond dispute, since God himself, to prevent any man from pretending ignorance, has endowed all men with some idea of his Godhead, the memory of which he constantly renews and occasionally enlarges, that all to a man, being aware that there is a God, and that he is their maker, may be condemned by their own conscience when they neither worship him nor consecrate their lives to his service. . . . But, as a heathen [Cicero] tells us, there is no nation so barbarous, no race so brutish, as not to be imbued with the conviction that there is a God." Compare *Lawes* V.1.3 (2:20.4-9) for the concept of the "*semen religionis.*"

\(^5^4\) *Inst.* 1.3.1. The two passages cited from Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* are as follows: "Intelligi necesse est deos, quoniam insitas eorum vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus.--Quae hobs natura informationem deorum ipsorum dedit, eadem *insculptis in mentibus* ut eos aeternos et beatos haberemus." (I.17) The second reference is from Bk. II.4: "*Itaque inter omnes omnium gentium summam constat; omnibus enim inanimam est, et in animo quasi insculptum esse deos.*" [my italics] Calvin also cites the "Christian Cicero" Lactantius, *Divinarum Institutionum*, liber III.10, *Opera* (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1570).
1:20) and that his law is inscribed upon their hearts (scriptum in cordibus suis). In his commentary on this passage Calvin interprets the created world as a mirror (speculum) of the invisible deity and man himself is the principal image in which the divine majesty shines forth. Calvin asserts furthermore that human reason is naturally able to discern eternal power and divinity through a contemplation of the splendour of the natural order with the rational creature as its principal glory. The proper image of the divine glory is displayed in the rational human soul. Calvin quotes Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

> While the mute creation downward bend
> Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,
> Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes,
> Beholds his own hereditary skies.

In yet another passage in the second book of the *Institutes*, Calvin weighs the power of human reason with respect to actual knowledge of the kingdom of God. He concludes that pagan spiritual discernment is limited and "men otherwise most ingenious are blinder than moles (Inst. 2.2.19)." While they can have no knowledge of God's paternal favour, and hence of salvation, nevertheless they are able to attain to a certain limited knowledge of God. To know God as Father requires the revelation of the divine law whereas the divinity existence, eternity and power are accessible to the unaided power of human reason. There is a natural knowledge of God as Maker of all things but not as Redeemer. Thus the Christian is simultaneously subject to the conditions of blindness and sight. There are also two ethical concepts of nature at work here. On the one side, human nature is endowed with a sense of natural justice and equity which is not completely obliterated by sin, although it is severely impaired (Inst. 2.2.13). As a consequence of the usus civilis legis fallen man is able to discern the natural law and is thereby able to construct an ethical-political order even though this external observance of the law can accomplish nothing whatever in the economy of salvation. On the other side, from the viewpoint of the usus theologicus, man as fallen is utterly blind to the knowledge of God's kingdom and his fatherly grace. The mysteries of redemption can be apprehended solely by the illumination of divine grace (Inst. 2.2.20). Calvin's account of the twofold knowledge of

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55 Compare Hooker, *Lawes* I.8.3 (1:84.7-16) and III.9.3 (1: 238.25-239.4).
56 See Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans*, translated and edited by John Owen, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1948), pp. 67 ff. See especially the comment on Rom. 1:20: "God is in himself invisible; but as his majesty shines forth in his works and in his creatures everywhere, men ought in these to acknowledge him, for they clearly set forth their Maker: and for this reason the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews says, that this world is a mirror, or representation of invisible things. He [Paul] does not mention all the particulars which may be thought to belong to God; but he states, that we can arrive at the knowledge of his eternal power and divinity; for he who is the framer of all things, must necessarily be without beginning and from himself..."
58 *Inst.* 1.15.2. The translation is John Dryden's.
59 *Inst.* 2.2.18. See also 2.2.22: "If the Gentiles have the righteousness of the law naturally engraven on their minds, we certainly cannot say that they are altogether blind as to the rule of life."
God adheres closely to Luther's distinction between the orders of creation and redemption.

In his exposition of the moral law Calvin maintains that the revealed law of the Decalogue is naturally inscribed on every heart (Inst. 2.8.1) such that the law of scripture and the natural law are united in content (Inst. 4.20.14,15). Calvin goes even further than Melanchthon in upholding the third use of the law. For Calvin it is the principal use and is most closely connected with law's proper end (Inst.2.7.12). The Pauline abrogation of the law by no means abolishes law simply; rather the law loses its power of constraining the conscience. In the regeneration of the will the law becomes a teacher and commander. This restoration or "baptism" of law in the third use has significant consequences for the role of natural law. Thus growth in ethical virtue, or sanctification as it is called, is achieved in large part through the study of the moral law revealed by both nature and scripture.

Hooker And The Authority Of Magisterial Doctrine

In A Learned Sermon on the Nature of Pride, Hooker defines law in general as follows:

... an exact rule wherby humane actions are measured. The rule to measure and judge them by is the law of god ... Under the name of law we must comprehend not only that which god hath written in tables and leaves but that which nature hath ingraven in the hartes of men. Els how should those heathen which never had bookest but heaven and earth to look upon be convicted of perversnes? But the Gentils which had not the law in books had saith the apostle theeffect of the law written in their hartes. Rom. 2 (FLE 5:312).

61 Inst. 2.7.14: "Christ came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it, that until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or tittle shall remain unfulfilled."
63 The Sermon on Pride is one of seven tractates by Hooker first published postumously in 1612. It has recently been reedited and published in FLE, volume 5, ed. Laetitia Yeandle with commentary by Egil Grislis (1990), pp. 309-361. For a textual introduction see FLE 5: 299-308.
64 Compare with the definition of law in general at Lawes I.2.1 (1:58.26-29): "That which doth assigne unto each thing the kinde, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the forme and measure of working, the same we tearme a Lawe." See Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Ia Iae, q. 90, art. 1, reply 1 in The Treatise on Law, ed. R.J. Henle (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), p.119: "lex sit regula quaedam et mensura, dicitur dupliciter esse in aliquo. Uno modo sicut in mensurante et regulante; et quia hoc est proprium rationis idea per hunc modum lex est in ratione sola. Alio modo sicut in regulato et mensurato; et sic lex est in omnibus quae inclinantur in aliquid ex aliqua lege. . ." The same formulation of law as "measure" is adopted by Heinrich Bullinger, Decades, ed. T. Harding, (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1849-51), 1.2:209.
The passage quoted from Paul's Epistle to the Romans is the crucial scriptural text cited by Hooker in support of the authority of natural law.\(^{\text{65}}\) This is hardly surprising since Romans 2:15, as we have seen, is the locus classicus for virtually all discussion of natural law throughout the history of Christian thought.\(^{\text{66}}\) It is important here to note the derivation of the natural law. In this definition Hooker represents the idea of law as fundamentally threefold. First there is the law of God as simply given. Elsewhere Hooker identifies this undifferentiated principle of law as the rule "which God hath eternallie purposed himself in all his works to observe (Lawes I.3.1; 1:163.7)." This "eternal law," as he calls it, is the "highest welspring and fountaine" out of which all other kinds of law proceed.\(^{\text{67}}\) Strictly interpreted, the eternal law itself is "laid up in the bosom of God" altogether above human understanding and our safest eloquence concerning it is silence.\(^{\text{68}}\) With marked apophatic emphasis Hooker avers that "we confesse without confession that his glory is inexplicable (Lawes I.2.2;1:59.17)." At the same time, however, there is a kataphatic need to draw attention to the fact that the eternal law "reads itself" to the world. Thus there is the paradox of keeping this invisible, unknowable law "alwayes before our eyes (Lawes I.16.2; 1:136.4-15)." The eternal law, though unknowable in itself, is the highest source of all other kinds of law and is made known to us under two primary aspects: on the one hand, it is revealed by God's word written in the scriptures and, on the other, it is manifest in creation and known by the law inscribed on human hearts by nature. These two primary modes or summa genera whereby the one eternal law is made accessible to human understanding are termed respectively by Hooker the divine law and the law of nature.\(^{\text{69}}\) Although we are "neither able nor worthy to open and looke into" the book of the eternal law, the books of scripture and nature reveal its contents in a manner adapted to our finite capacity.\(^{\text{70}}\)

Hooker is certainly not alone among Reformation theologians in holding that the knowledge of God, and thus also of the eternal law, is attainable by means of both scripture and reason. It is furthermore a commonplace of the exegesis of the reformers

\(^{\text{65}}\) Rom. 2:14,15: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the means while accusing or else excusing one another." Hooker's refers to this passage frequently. See Lawes I.8.3 (1:84.7-16), I.16.5 (1:138.27-139.8), II.8.6 (1:190.11-16), III.2.1 (1:207.14-21), III.7.2 (1:217.30-218.3) where he refers to the "edicts of nature," III.9.3 (1:238.31-239.4) and V.1.3 (2:20.4-9) for the concept of the "semen religionis."

\(^{\text{66}}\) On this see J. Bohatec, Calvin und das Recht (Feudinger: Buchdruckerei u. Verlagsanstalt, 1934), p. 5.

\(^{\text{67}}\) I.e. the "fountaine of wisdom," Lawes II.1.4 (1:147.24) and "the author fountain and cause of our justice" in A Learned Sermon on the Nature of Pride, FLE 5:341.3-9.

\(^{\text{68}}\) Lawes I.3.1 (1:63.15) and I.2.5 (1:62.10) Hooker adopts the approach of neoplatonic apophatic theology in his insistence upon the unknowability of the divine simplicity: "Dangerous it were for the feeble braine of man to wade farre into the doings of the most High, whom although to knowe be life, and joy to make mention of his name: yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know him not as in deed he is, neither can know him: and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confesse without confession that his glory is inexplicable, his greatnes above our capacitie and reach." Lawes I.2.2 (1:59.12-19)

\(^{\text{69}}\) See Lawes I.1.3 (1:58.11-19). See I.8.3 (1:84.9) and I.8. passim for the identification of Natural Law with the law or light of reason. Compare III.11.8 (1:253.15-20).

\(^{\text{70}}\) See Lawes I.2.5 (1:62.10); I.2.2 (1:59.12-20); and V.56.5 (2:237.18-25). "Now amongst the Heathens which had noe booke whereby to know God besides the volumes of heaven and earth . . . " Grace and Free Will, § 12, FLE 4:111.21-23.
that the twofold obligation to honour God and deal justly with one's neighbour is taught by both natural and divine law. The interplay between the natural and the revealed knowledge of God gives shape to the magisterial reformers' complex, dialectical approach to the authority of natural law; and the theory of natural law in turn constitutes a critical link between theology and ethics in their thought as well. Hooker's account of the twofold manifestation of the eternal law through the *summa genera* of natural law and divine law, the *duplex gubernatio dei*,\(^\text{71}\) gives practical expression as it were to Calvin's epistemological motif of the *duplex cognitio dei*. Just as for Calvin the Lord reveals himself both through the creation of the world and by the revelation of the redeeming Grace of Christ, so also Hooker's eternal law manifests itself in the realm of creation as natural law and in the realm of redemption as divine law. While the eternal law in itself "cannot be compassed with that wit and those senses which are our owne," it is nevertheless manifest in the "glorious workes of nature (Lawes I.11.5; 1:116.21)." In Hooker's claim that the pagan philosophers were able to attain to a knowledge of the nature of God and of his Law, there is a distinct echo of Calvin's natural theology:

> the wise and learned among the verie Heathens themselves, have all acknowledged some first cause, whereupon originallie the being of all things dependeth. Neither have they otherwise spoken of that cause, then as an Agent, which knowing *what* and *why* it worketh, observeth in working a most exact *order* or *lawe*. . . . all confesse in the working of that first cause, that *counsell* is used, *reason* followed, a *way* observed, that is to say, constant *order* and *law* is kept, wherof it selfe must needs be author unto itselfe (Lawes I.2.3; 1:59.33-60.14).

Quite remarkably, Hooker seems to suggest in this passage that a *Logos* theology can be discerned in the pagan understanding of Law as the divine first principle and perhaps also, by implication, an adumbration of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Homer, Plato, the Stoics, and no less an authority than Thrice-great Hermes are all enlisted in support of the proposition implicit in these expressions of *Logos* theology, namely that God is Law,\(^\text{72}\)

> For Hooker, as for Luther, Melanchthon, Bullinger and Calvin, the foundation of a theological reflection on ethics is the twofold knowledge of God. Knowledge of the creator is not to be confused with knowledge of the redeemer, yet a complete account of

\(^{71}\) Hooker employs this expression in his treatment of the divine operations *ad extra* in *Notes toward a Fragment on Predestination*, Trinity College Dublin, MS 364, folio 80, printed in *FLE* 4: 83-97; see esp. pp. 86, 87.

\(^{72}\) Lawes 1.2.3 (1:60.4-11): "Thus much is signified by that which *Homer* mentioneth, (*Jupiter's Counsell was accomplished*). Thus much acknowledged by *Mercarius Trismegistus. μ μ* (*The creator made the whole world not with hands, but by Reason*). Thus much confest by *Anaxagoras* and *Plato*, terming the maker of the world an Intellectual worker. Finallie the Stoikes, although imagining the first cause of all things to be fire, held nevertheless that the same fire having arte, did μ (*Procede by a certaine and a set Waie in the making of the world*). " All translations are Hooker's own. In the *FLE* Commentary on Book I, it is observed that Hooker derives his references to Anaxagoras, Plato and the Stoics from the fifth-century Stobaeus's *Eclogues*. See P.G. Stanwood, "Stobaeus and Classical Borrowing in the Renaissance," *Neophilologus*, 59 (1975): 141-146.
Christian virtue demands both species of knowing. Hooker's credentials as a reformer stand forth when he maintains that only through the supernatural revelation of the scriptures is it possible to hope for a participation of the divine nature. Scripture alone can reveal the supernatural way of salvation:

The light of nature is never able to finde out any way of obtayning the reward of blisse, but by performing exactly the duties and workes of righteousnes. From salvation therefore and life all flesh being excluded this way, behold how the wisedome of God hath revealed a way mysticall and supernaturall . . . concerning that faith hope and charitie without which there can be no salvation; was there ever any mention made saving only in that lawe which God him selue hath from heaven revealed? (Lawes I.11.5,6; 1:118.11-15,119.12-15).

Only by divine grace can the soul attain to a saving knowledge whereby it might participate in the divine nature and "live as it were the life of God (Lawes I.11.2; 1:112.20)." Owing to man's wilfull rejection of the order of creation, the natural law by itself is insufficient to secure the unity of the cosmos under God. With a marked Augustinian emphasis Hooker notes that fallen humanity continues to possess a natural desire to be happy (Lawes I.11.4; 1:114.8-10), and thus to be reunited with the eternal source of order; yet, on account of original sin, man is "inwardly obstinate, rebellious and averse from all obedience unto the sacred lawes of his nature . . . in regard of his depraved mind little better then a wild beast (Lawes I.10.1; 1:96.26-29)." Thus observance of the natural law is no longer effectual in preserving the divinely constituted order of creation. According to Aristotle "it is an axiome of nature that naturall desire cannot utterly be frustrate."73 Reason cannot escape the predicament of desiring both a participation of the divine nature while, at the same time, being constitutionally incapable of finding its way to the consummation of its own deepest longing.74 While nature demands a "more divine perfection,"75 the means whereby this perfection is attained cannot themselves be natural. Thus the redemption or mystical "return" to God of all creation can only be by supernatural means. In Notes toward a fragment on Predestination, Hooker distinguishes between the two species of the divine governance:

Government is that work of God whereby he sustains created things and disposes all things to the end which he naturally chooses, that is the greatest good which, given the law of creation, can be elicited. For, given the law of creation <is the rule of all> it was not fitting that creation be violated through those things which follow from creation. So God does nothing by his government which offends against that which he has

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74 The classic discussion of this predicament is Augustine's Confessions. See the account of the "natural weight" of the soul in Conf. XIII.i.x.10,11 (Oxford: The University Press, 1991).

framed and ratified by the very act of creation. The government of God is:
general over all; special over rational creatures. There are two forms of
government: that which would have been, had free creation not lost its
way; that which is now when it has lost its way.⁷⁶

Throughout his discourse on the *duplex gubernatio dei* Hooker adheres strictly to the
magisterial reformers' dialectical exposition of the two realms of creation and redemption
and their respective uses of the law.

In Hooker's view strife within the Elizabethan Church over constitutional forms
ultimately stems from disagreement over the interpretation of the proper relation between
the two *summa genera* of law, especially with respect to the precise delineation of their
proper spheres of authority. Epistemologically the struggle turns on the precise manner of
interpreting the proper functions of natural and revealed theology. Hooker sees the debate
over the ecclesiastical constitution in terms logically linked to the *duplex cognitio dei,*
and thus to one of the crucial distinctions of reformed theology. In this approach to the
question of law he follows a pattern of discourse already well established by other
magisterial reformers. In *A Learned Sermon on the Nature of Pride* he acknowledges the
difficulty of making the distinction between the "waie of nature" and the "waie of grace
(Pride, 5:313.7)." For Hooker, this is the great question of sixteenth-century theological
discourse: "the want of exact distinguishing between these two waies [viz. of Nature and
Grace] and observing what they have common what peculiar hath bene the cause of the
greatest part of that confusion whereof christianity at this daie laboureth (Pride, 5:313.19-
23)." The question whether Hooker's theology exemplifies a conjunctive rather than a
disjunctive view of the relation between Grace and Nature is a great deal more
complicated than twentieth-century criticism has frequently allowed. As with the thought
of the Reformation theologians we have considered, Hooker's position is dialectically
complex. In his theology, as in theirs, there is simultaneously disjunction and conjunction
in the relation between the two kingdoms, the two kinds of discourse and the two ways of
righteousness. The knowledge of God as creator must be kept distinct from the
knowledge of God as redeemer; yet these two forms, although distinct, are by no means
separable, and thus they cannot be denoted as simply "disjunctive." By analogy, the
natural law and the revealed law of scripture are distinct modes or aspects of the eternal
law, yet they are nonetheless inseparable in origin. Both are expressions of the one
eternal law. The orders of nature and grace are very clearly distinguished by the
magisterial reformers, Hooker included. Yet these distinct orders or realms of law are
understood to be united in the simplicity of their common divine source as well as in our
knowledge of them. For all of the magisterial reformers whose theology we have

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⁷⁶ John Booty's translation of Hooker's original Latin notes in *FLE* 4: 86.28-87.12: "Gubernatio est ea Dei
operatio qua res creatas sustentat disponiturque omnia in finem ab ipso naturaliter expetitum id est maximum
bonum quod posita creationis lege potest elici. Etenim posita creationis lex <est regula omnium> per ea
quae secuta sunt creationem violare non decuit. Nihil itaque operatur Deos [sic] gubernando contra id
quod creando fixum ratumque habuit. Gubernatio Dei: Generale super omnia; Speciale super creaturas
rationales. Gubernationis duplex modus: Qui fuisset si creatura libera non exorbitasset; Qui nunc est cum
exorbitatir." ⁷⁷ For further discussion by Hooker of the relation of Nature and Grace, see the Dublin Fragment on *Grace
considered, knowledge of God is granted through a contemplation of both the splendour of creation and the written word of the scriptures. For Hooker just as for Luther, Calvin and the others, there is necessarily a conjunction of the orders of Grace and Nature, both in their divine author and in the souls of rational creatures. To uphold the doctrine of *sola scriptura* is not to denigrate the authority of the light of reason. Hooker can be taken as speaking for the principles of these reformers collectively when he states:

> Injurious we are unto God, the Author and giver of humane capacity, judgement and wit, when because of some things wherein he precisely forbiddeth men to use their own inventions, we take occasion to disauthorize and disgrace the works which he doth produce by the hand, either of nature or of grace in them. We offer contumely, even unto him, when we scornfully reject what we list without any other exception then this, the brain of man hath devised it.⁷⁸

In the marginal notes penned on his own copy of *A Christian Letter*⁷⁹ and in the incomplete theological tracts which comprise the beginning of a formal response,⁸⁰ we see clearly that the most pressing theological question Hooker faced was the need to justify continuity with the natural law tradition within the limits of Protestant orthodoxy. In one of his comments scrawled on his copy of *A Christian Letter*, Hooker invokes "Calvins judgment of philosophie" in a letter to Martin Bucer:

> As truth is most precious, so all men confess it to be so. And yet, since God alone is the source of all good, you must not doubt, that whatever truth you anywhere meet with, proceeds from Him, unless you would be doubly ungrateful to Him; it is in this way you have received the word descended from heaven. For it is sinful to treat God's gifts with contempt; and to ascribe to man what is peculiarly God's is a still greater impiety. Philosophy is, consequent ly, the noble gift of God, and those learned men who have striven hard after it in all ages have been incited thereto by God himself, that they might enlighten the world in the knowledge of the truth.⁸¹

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⁷⁸ *Laws* VII.11.10; 1:210.27-211.6. Compare Calvin, *Inst.* 2.2.15 where he argues that to despise the admirable light of truth displayed in the profane authors is to insult their divine Creator and Giver.

⁷⁹ See John Booty's Introduction to "Hooker's Marginal Notes", *FLE* 4: xxviii-xxxiii. The autograph notes on *ACL* are transcribed from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 215b.


⁸¹ Calvin, *Letters*, edited by Jules Bonnet and translated by David Constable, 2 volumes (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1855-57), 2:198,199; *Epistolarum et responsorum* (Lausanne: Excudetab Franciscus le Preux, 1576), pp. 179,180; *CR*, 48:530. The attribution to Calvin is not entirely certain. This passage from
Hooker's appeal to Calvin is intended as a vindication of continuity with the tradition of natural law theory by an authority acceptable to his disciplinarian-puritan critics. In this he seeks to identify his own theology with the magisterial reformers' repudiation of the biblical literalism and exclusivism of the Radical Reformation. Consistently with his wider apologetic aim, Hooker demonstrates to the disciplinarian opponents of the Elizabethan Settlement that vilification of the practical reason upon which the ecclesiastical constitution rests is in fact at odds with Protestant orthodoxy as interpreted by these magisterial reformers. Here I have argued that, together with Luther, Melanchthon, Bullinger and Calvin, Hooker maintains an orthodox, dialectical balance between the claims of natural law and the doctrine of sola scriptura, each within its proper sphere. Indeed the law of nature is to be upheld as an indispensable instrument in theological discourse for reasons which Hooker demonstrates on the basis of a sound interpretation of the scriptures.

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God, The Evil Genius And Eternal Truths: The Structure Of The Understanding In The Cartesian Philosophy

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Descartes' *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, perhaps the most widely read text in philosophy,∗ comes under scrutiny in every age and from every prejudice and point of view. Some would take it as the canonical text in the Cartesian architectonic, the authoritative statement of Cartesian philosophy. Martial Gueroult, finding in Descartes' philosophy a thoroughly unified and consistent system, regards the *Meditations* as its definitive statement. "...all interpretations of Cartesian metaphysics must rest above all on the little treatise of the *Meditations*." Nothing must be interpreted to weaken its teachings, nothing essential is omitted and therefore whatever seems to augment can only be regarded as further implications or extensions but not properly accretions. "The *Meditations* is constantly invoked by Descartes, now as breviary, now as the truly demonstrative introduction to the whole of his philosophy ... it is on it that he comments to the end of his life without ever changing anything in it."²

Ferdinand Alquié, Gueroult's contemporary, accords no privileged position to the *Meditations*. Rather he exhorts us to read the Cartesian texts, all the texts, in chronological order, imposing the rule "never to illumine a text through a text chronologically posterior, thus forcing oneself to read each work of Descartes as if one would ignore those which, in time, must follow."³ More recently, the autonomy of the *Meditations*, its integrity and self-sufficiency, have been put to the question. As is observed, the edition of 1641 was not the simple text itself "in its terse, beautifully

* In accordance with current practice, I use the following abbreviations for the standard editions of Descartes' works:


² Ibid.
wrought six movements" but "a compendium: introductory remarks that set the text in relation to questions already raised about the Discourse four years earlier, the six meditations themselves, and then objections from other scholars, together with the author's replies to those objections." Jean-Luc Marion would find the integrity in just such a compendium:

... the strict corpus of the six meditations ought to be read, indissolubly, as an ensemble of replies to the scattered objections made to the Discourse on Method and as a text itself destined from the first - even before its (regular) publication - to be submitted to objections, to which Descartes would reply. Not only would it be illegitimate to read the Meditations in abstraction from the Objections and Replies, with which they intentionally form an organic whole, but it would also be wholly illegitimate to read them otherwise than as replies to the objections evoked by the Discourse on Method. Far from being soliloquy or solipsism, Cartesian thought, in so far as it obeys the logic of argumentation, is inscribed in its very origin in the responsorial space of dialogue.

More troubling for a just appraisal of the purpose and import of the Meditations is the charge of subterfuge and insincerity: the work as read by some commentators does not represent Descartes' true doctrine and therefore is not to be taken at its word. Perhaps this misrepresentation is unintended and simply a function of having to express his thoughts in the language of medieval scholasticism, as Heidegger thought; but perhaps there is a more sinister reason, a deliberate deception. Charles Adams, co-editor of Oeuvres, wrote that Descartes' metaphysics is "a drape to cover the goods", that is, his scientific work; Stephen Gaukroger in his recent intellectual biography of Descartes holds that the Meditations is "subterfuge", not a genuine metaphysics but arguments for a particular audience, utilizing their categories and methods, for the purpose not of elucidation but

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5 "The Objections in Cartesian Metaphysics" in Ariew and Grene, 19-20. One is reminded here of the scholastic dialectic which reached full development in the literary form of quaestiones. Marion characterizes Descartes' argumentative technique as "theses, objections, replies", ibid., n.26. Against this, Descartes reminds us, "this is why I wrote 'Meditations' rather than 'Disputations', as the philosophers have done, or 'Theorems and Problems', as the geometers would have done. In so doing I wanted to make it clear that I would have nothing to do with anyone who was not willing to join me in meditating and giving the subject attentive consideration." Rep. II Obj., AT vii, 157; CSM, II, 112. Although quaestiones clearly differ from disputaciones, the remarks of Descartes could apply, mutatis mutandis, to Marion's "theses, objections, replies" model. Interestingly, Stephen Gaukroger, "The Sources of Descartes' Procedure of Deductive Demonstration in Metaphysics and Natural Science" in John Cottingham ed., Reason, Will and Sensation: Studies in Descartes' Metaphysics, Oxford, 1994, 47-60, thinks Descartes' procedure has definite parallels with the disputaciones model, in spite of Descartes' protestations.
7 AT xii, 306.
obfuscation. Hiram Caton is far more severe: not only was Descartes' metaphysical justification of science redundant and hence was done only to secure the acceptance of an unsuspecting religious and political audience assumed to be hostile to it, but he actually employed arguments patently invalid to prove God's existence for the purpose of undermining the intellectual grounds for theism. To achieve this, Caton says, Descartes employs "double-talk" (mollifying the authorities in the language of their familiar prejudices while revealing its true meaning only to those strong minds for whom it was intended), dissimulation and the use of arguments which would conciliate Aristotelians while at the same time destroy the foundations of their philosophy.

Finally there is Louis Loeb: more cautious than Caton, he recognizes the difficulties of sustaining an interpretation of a work under a hypothesis of dissimulation -- difficult, he grants, but not impossible. Writing under the assumption that Descartes is lying, he offers what he thinks is a coherent account under such an assumption. It begins with the observation that everyone admits, or should admit, the so-called "circle" in the proof that "what is clear and distinct is true", as well as the "notorious weakness" in the proofs for the existence of God in Meditation 3; then he adds the suggestion that Descartes was aware of the deficiencies in the argument, that is, that he didn't accept the proofs himself, and this because he saw no need of a guarantee that "what is clear and distinct is true". The two arguments for the existence of God in Meditation 3 were constructed simply as appeasement. Loeb's argument is intended to show that there can be a unified explanation under a dissimulation hypothesis, and thus to elevate, as he says, the dissimulation hypothesis as a legitimate interpretation of Descartes. Although the interpretations of Caton and Loeb might seem extreme, it is commonplace to find elements of the 'dissimulation' hypothesis in current literature on Descartes, especially from those whose interest is in Descartes' scientific work, for frequently these scholars themselves see no need for a foundation for Descartes' scientific work.

But there are certain pertinent biographical details. In late 1630, Descartes wrote to Mersenne of a "little treatise of Metaphysics, which I began in Friesland, in which I set out principally to prove the existence of God and of our souls when they are separate from the body..."[To Mersenne, 25 Nov. 1630. CSMK 29; AT i, 182] This is the first extant reference to a metaphysical treatise, although earlier in the year he had written that all men have an obligation to use their reason principally to know God and to know themselves, and then he added, "That is the task with which I began my studies; and I can say that I would not have been able to discover the foundations of physics if I had not looked for them along this road."[To Mersenne, 15 Apr. 1630, CSMK 22, AT i, 144] Descartes' preoccupation with such metaphysical questions and its relation to his physics

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from at least 1630 is well documented.\textsuperscript{11} Equally well known is his own exclusive engagement with mathematical and scientific work which he accomplished in relative obscurity prior to 1629. As he reports himself, "Those nine years [1619 - 1628] passed by, however, without my taking any side regarding the questions which are commonly debated among the learned, or beginning to search for the foundations of any philosophy more certain than the commonly accepted one."[\textit{Discourse} III, CSM I, 126; AT vi, 30]

What issue or problem, it might be asked, did he encounter which demanded as response the metaphysics which engaged him from 1629 or 1630?

There is also from this time Descartes' first statement of the "creation of eternal truths", in a letter to Mersenne, 15 April 1630: "In my treatise of physics I shall discuss a number of metaphysical topics and especially this: that the mathematical truths that you call eternal have been established by God and are completely dependent upon Him, just as any other of His creatures are."\textsuperscript{12} As Emile Bréhier remarks in his analysis of the doctrine, Descartes first wanted Mersenne to "proclaim it everywhere", but when Mersenne reminded him that such a thesis would meet with opposition from the theologians - - there was thought to be a close connection between the question and the production of the Word --, Descartes thereafter suppressed it. "...not a word of it is breathed in the \textit{Discourse}, not in the \textit{Meditations} and \textit{Principles}..."\textsuperscript{13} In spite of its relative obscurity in the Cartesian corpus, it is a source of considerable debate and prominence in current Cartesian scholarship.

The "insincerity" thesis in all its forms presumes that Cartesian science needed no such foundation as Descartes is thought to have produced in the \textit{Meditations}, either because it was thought to be already well-founded or because the \textit{Meditations} as a philosophical work is itself a failure. Thus, a rehabilitation of the \textit{Meditations} as authentic Cartesian philosophy must show what was wanting to Cartesian science prior to 1630 when Descartes first indicated he was engaged in "metaphysical studies"; it would show the deepening of the problem of a foundation for a science of nature in the full-blown doctrine of the "creation of eternal truths"; finally it would read the \textit{Meditations} as engaged precisely in the solution of that problem, the \textit{Meditations} providing the foundation for the structure and limits of human understanding. The work then would be seen in its true unity and as canonical -- all other enterprises coming from it as the tree from the roots.

\section*{1. The "Crisis" Of 1628-30}

\textsuperscript{11} See Gaukroger, \textit{an Intellectual Biography}, Chap. 6, "A New Beginning, 1629-30", esp. 195-203. Then there is Descartes' own account in \textit{Discourse}: he reports that he settled in Holland "exactly eight years ago" , that is, in early 1629, and he continues, "I do not know whether I should tell you of the first meditations that I had there..." CSM, 126; AT vi, 31.

\textsuperscript{12} CSMK, 22-23; AT i, 145.

"Descartes was a scientist before he was a metaphysician"—an incontestable observation. But what moved Descartes from the study of music, mathematics, optics and mechanics to the study of God and the soul, the "metaphysical turn" as Hatfield calls it, is controversial. It had been assumed, following Richard Popkin's work, that Descartes was gripped by the threat of the *crise pyrrhonienne*, the skepticism that was all around him in Paris in that period;15 "...the evidence of the autobiographical sections of the *Discours* and of Descartes' letters, indicates that around 1628-9 he was struck by the full force of the skeptical onslaught, and the need for a new and stronger answer to it."16 But Stephen Gaukroger's studies of the period reveal no such evidence of a concern with skepticism, either in accounts in the *Discours*, correspondence from the period or Descartes' interests and preoccupations before the 1630's.17 Descartes was keenly interested in "certainty", which is the end of method in the *Regulae* as stated in its first rule; its two elements "intuition" and "deduction" are the mental activities which achieve certainty, and the primary objects of intuition and deduction are "simple natures" and their combinations.18

The *Regulae*, it is now conceded, was composed in stages between 1619 and 1628, stages in the text corresponding to the development of Descartes' thought requiring modification and reformulations of the text itself, especially in Rules 8 and 12 to 21.19 These later modifications reflect a growing concern with a "universal mathematics" which would comprehend not only mathematical interests proper but "physico-mathematics" involving objects of his corpuscular-mechanical philosophy.20 To achieve certainty, his method demanded that all be brought to intuitions of simple natures, but as soon as he tried to apply the method to physical phenomena, for example the study of magnetism, the method failed him. The empirical element could not be confined wholly under the paradigm of mathematics.21

The later Rules also fail him in their application to the theory of algebraic equations, for in the *Regulae* he demanded an intuitive grounding of mathematics in the imagination,22 as though all that can be thought in mathematics can be imagined. In Rule 18, for example, his expression of algebraic quantities is naively identified with geometrical figures such as lines, rectangles, squares. But these images, though easily pictured, allow no extension to higher powers or to the extraction of roots, matters which

15 *The History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*, Berkeley, 1979, Chap. IX.
16 *Ibid.*, 174. But the passage Popkin quotes from the *Discours*, although it mentions the immunity of the *cogito* argument to skeptical attack, is not primarily contra Academicos.
17 Gaukroger, *Intellectual Biography*, 12, 184. Hatfield concurs: "And although Descartes no doubt was pleased that his *Meditations* contained an answer to skepticism, answering the skeptics was the least of his concerns.", *op.cit.*, 261.
18 *Regulae*, Rules 3, 6, 12.
are completely revised and accommodated in his *Géometrie* of 1637. The inadequacy of the later *Regulae* is evident finally in the manner in which it ends abruptly with the mere titles of Rules 19 to 21, just as Descartes was about to begin a treatment of a theory of equations.  

The *Regulae* is concerned simply with 'certainty' and produces a "way of clear and distinct ideas". But is this enough? Those who hold to the "dissimulation thesis" implicitly think it is sufficient, since they regard doubt about Descartes' scientific procedure and any attempt to overturn the doubt mere elements of the strategy to camouflage his atheistic, materialistic physics. But the "way of clear and distinct ideas" of the *Regulae* was showing cracks. Its abandonment in the late 1620's (and he never returns to it again) was not a ruse but an impasse. Gaukroger notes that Descartes' interest in mathematics greatly diminished, and even though he returned to it to produce the *Geometry*, his principal work had already been done. Beeckman reports that when Descartes visited him in October, 1628, Descartes said that he had nothing more to accomplish in arithmetic and geometry, having done in the previous nine years all that was humanly possible.[AT x, 331] And on 15 April 1630, he wrote to Mersenne, "As for Problems [i.e. mathematical problems], I would send you a million to propose to others if you desire it; but I am so tired of mathematics and now hold it in so low esteem that I could no longer bother to solve them myself."[AT i, 139]

The *Regulae* was not enough for Descartes: the "way of clear and distinct ideas" was not a sufficient foundation for his scientific work, both because its uncritical application to a natural world with an empirical element did not work, revealing the need for a firmer foundation than mathematical certainty, and because a mathematics grounded in the imagination failed him, undermining his confidence and interest in what formerly had been the paradigm of clear and distinct knowledge. Descartes was now confronting the empirical, and would soon recognize that mathematical certainty was itself not enough for truth.

2. The Creation Of Eternal Truths

The initial statement of the theory of "the creation of eternal truths" in the letter of 15 April 1630 reflects on God as lawgiver: God establishes mathematical truths in nature after the manner of a king laying down laws for his kingdom. They depend on Him no less than the rest of his creation. But our relation to these truths is quite otherwise: there is no single one that we cannot grasp if our minds turn to consider it, for they are all inborn in our minds, much as a king would imprint his laws in the hearts of his subjects if he had the power to do so. "But" one might ask "could He not change these eternal truths as the king might change the laws of his kingdom?" Only if God's will can change, and we understand God's will to be eternal and unchanging. God's will is indeed free and his

23 Schuster. 77-8.
24 Gaukroger, *Intellectual Biography*, uses this phrase. The *Regulae* speaks of "intuiting the truth distinctly and clearly" (Rule 9) and "clear and distinct propositions" (Rule 11).
power beyond our grasp.[AT i, 145-6] In this first statement mathematical truths are understood as the products of God's absolute power, and from that side God is above everything and is absolutely free.\textsuperscript{26} Taking this element by itself, one might conclude that Descartes is a voluntarist.\textsuperscript{27} But such an interpretation is hard to sustain in the face of the other side, for the eternal truths are wholly necessary for our understanding, and possess an immutability and eternality from the divine immutability itself.\textsuperscript{28}

The doctrine on the surface is theological (Descartes calls it 'metaphysical', which it is). It is an explicit reaction to two positions concerning eternal truths which were then current and known to him. Cardinal Bérulle, founder of the Oratory, he who had been impressed at hearing Descartes and had encouraged his research\textsuperscript{29}, reviver of such Augustinian doctrines as the need for divine illumination, used that doctrine to explain the nature of eternal truths: they emanate from God as rays from the sun. In the subsequent letter to Mersenne, Descartes expressly rejects that position: "I do not conceive [eternal truths] as emanating from God like rays from the sun."[To Mersenne, 27 May 1630, CSMK 25; AT i, 152] It is abundantly clear why he must reject this view when his thoughts achieve philosophical expression, for eternal truths depend on God for their truth and could never themselves be used, as they were in St. Augustine, as grounds for affirming God's existence.\textsuperscript{30} As he explained in the same letter, eternal truths are true or possible only because God knows them as true or possible; they are in no way true independently of Him. Then he add the rich theological statement that in God will and knowing are one thing "in such a way that by the very fact of willing something [God] knows it, and it is only for this reason that it is true."[To Mersenne, 6 May 1630, CSMK 24; AT i, 149] "In God willing, understanding and creating are all the same thing without one being prior to the other even conceptually."[CSMK 25-6; AT i, 153] This being the case, the immutability of the eternal truths is well-founded: if God's will could change, then the divine understanding, one with the divine will, would also change; that is, the divine understanding would have earlier been in error, or at least incomplete.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{27} Gaukroger, \textit{Intellectual Biography}, 206, interprets Descartes as having "an extreme view of God's powers", which would support a view of God as completely transcendent. "What was at stake was not the existence of God \textit{per se}, even the God of Christianity, but whether there was a compelling form of rational argument, independent of faith, which showed the existence of the \textit{right kind} of God." (p.196), a God who is not tied in any way to His creation. This is assuredly interpreting Descartes as a voluntarist.  
\textsuperscript{28} Osler uses the medieval distinction of the absolute and ordained powers of God to characterize Descartes' views. She says, p. 130, "It is with regard to his ordained power that Descartes was an intellectualist: he accepted the existence of some necessity in the world, something that voluntarists could never accept because of their emphasis on the utter contingency of the world."  
\textsuperscript{29} Both were present at a lecture given by an alchemist, Chandoux, where Descartes attacked the speaker and the audience who applauded his views, for being willing to accept probability as the new standard of truth. The original account of the lecture and Descartes' response is given by his early biographer Baillet, and recounted in Popkin, 174.  
\textsuperscript{31} Cf. Osler, 131.
Mathematical truths are described as perfectly comprehensible to a finite understanding, thus not in content superior to human thought. But God, infinite, eternal, immutable, creator of all things, is spoken of as "cause whose incomprehensible power surpasses the bounds of human understanding". This recognition of the complete disparity of eternal, mathematical truths and the divine "cause" of those truths signifies an absolute break with the Neo-Platonic past which saw essences of created things as 'participations' of the divine essence and these truths as 'attenuations' of the divine understanding, where God, in contemplating them, does nothing but contemplate Himself. This account reigned for well over a thousand years - we find it from St. Augustine\textsuperscript{32} to Bérulle \textsuperscript{33} - and Descartes here sweeps it away.

The other view of eternal truths which Descartes rejected was more extreme, the position of Suarez: "These propositions are not true because they are known by God, but rather they are only known by God because they are true, independently of whether one could explain why God knows them to be true."\textsuperscript{34} Descartes rejects this position in that same letter to Mersenne, 6 May 1630:

As for eternal truths, I say that they are true or possible only because God knows them as true or possible, and they are not known as true by God in any way that would imply that they are true independently of Him. And if men understood the meanings of their words properly, they could never say without blasphemy that the truth of something is prior to the knowledge that God has of it.\textsuperscript{35}

In the subsequent letter, God is described as the "efficient and total cause" of the eternal truths, "the author of the essence of created things no less than of their existence; and this essence is nothing other than the eternal truths."[To Mersenne, 27 May 1630, CSMK 25; AT i, 152] Here again let us note the break with the past. The recognized view was the familiar Neo-Platonic one of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: essences as forms were properly thought of as participations of the divine essence. It follows therefore that creation was the free divine act of bringing [some of] these eternal essences into existence (as in the case of angels), of embodying some others, thus bringing many individual things having the same essence or form into existence; God is the creator of existences, but not of these eternal essences. Essences might be thought of as possible beings, beings that could possibly exist, and creation the actualizing of such possible beings. Here Descartes is saying that God is the free creator of the possibilities.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} St. Augustine moves to a knowledge of God's existence through the eternal truths of mathematics, for him higher than the changing human subject, to the unchangeable God. \textit{De lib. arb.} II, iii7-xv39; \textit{De vera relig.} xxix, 52-58.
\item \textsuperscript{33} See J.-L. Marion, \textit{La theologie blanche}, Paris, 1981, 140-159, for a full account of the 'exemplarism' of Bérulle in its relation to Descartes.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Quoted in Stephen Gaukroger, \textit{Descartes, an Intellectual Biography}, Oxford, 1995, 205.
\item \textsuperscript{35} AT i, 149. The italicized words, as noted in Jean-Luc Marion, \textit{La theologie blanche}, 27-8, are in Latin in a letter otherwise in French, and stick closely to the syntax and terminology of the Suarez text quoted above, clearly and deliberately reversing the thought expressed in Suarez. It is said that Suarez adds elsewhere, even more radically, that even if God did not exist, the eternal truths would still be true.
\end{itemize}
themselves, the free creator of essences. God is prior to and determines what is possible. Descartes draws the Augustinian term 'eternal truths' and the Scholastic term 'essence' into an identity - the eternal truth that 'lines drawn from the center to the circumference are equal' is the essence of the circle.\(^\text{36}\)

God was as free "to make it not true that all the radii of the circle are equal - just as he was free not to create the world," [To Mersenne, 27 May 1630, CSMK 25; AT i, 152] -- a significant statement in two respects. First of all, the truths of mathematics are drawn into relation to the created world. Amos Funkenstein explains this mutual relation:

Mathematical relations (and geometry, for Descartes, is throughout quantifiable) constitute all that is known and all that can be known about matter...In the light of the interchangeability of geometry and matter, Descartes's belief that God could have abstained ... from creating mathematics may be given a minimal and most conservative interpretation: God could have abstained from creating matter. This interpretation rests on the assumption that the eternal truths (e.g.mathematics) do not exist Platonically in and of themselves, but are always truths in reference to existent things ...\(^\text{37}\)

There is also the interesting and careful way in which Descartes puts the matter. He did not say that God could have made a circle with unequal radii. Nor does he do so in later discussions of the Divine freedom. Although Descartes will grant that God could ordain things we do not understand [Rep.II Obj., AT vii, 436-7], still he never suggests that God could have brought it about that twice four was, say, nine, or that the three angles of a triangle were equal to, say, three right angles. He says rather, "God could have brought it about that it was not true that twice four makes eight" [Rep. II Obj., CSM II, 294; AT vii, 436] and God could have "made it false that the three angles of a triangle were equal to two right angles."[To Mesland, 2 May 1644, CSMK 235; AT iv, 118-9]

This careful manner of stating these possibilities is too little noted by commentators,\(^\text{38}\) and as a result they attribute to Descartes a radical voluntarism bordering on incoherence.

What is the significance of this theological position on the creation of eternal truths? It is universally agreed that the doctrine is original to Descartes.\(^\text{39}\) Étienne Gilson says it is

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\(^{36}\) Cf. Bréhier, p.194.


\(^{38}\) Hide Ishiguro in "The Status of Necessity and Impossibility in Descartes", in Rorty, *op.cit.*, 459-471, addresses fully the significance of the difference. She provides an account of even the most radical statements of Descartes concerning God's freedom, e.g. that God was free to have made it not true that contradictions are incompatible, and finds Descartes' position consistent. But others do not make the distinction. Gaukroger, *Intellectual Biography*, for example, says, "God could have created a world in which the radii of a circle were unequal but which was identical to the present one in every other respect." (p. 205) ; Daniel Garber, *Descartes' Metaphysical Physics*, Chicago, 1992, 154, makes the error Ishiguro condemns, and Funkenstein notes the difference but considers the matter in Descartes ambiguous.

\(^{39}\) See the evidence in Marion, *La théologie blanche*, 11-12.
"perhaps the most original"; Alquié recognizes in it "the key to Cartesian metaphysics"[^41], but as Marion observes, "...to recognize it as a key is not enough: a key opens, but the opening accomplished, it loses all essential interest...the opening [overture] in philosophy as in music must cease for the act to begin."[^42] It is the "key" surely in this sense, that it reveals the problematic which the later metaphysics must address. Descartes abandoned the *Regulae*[^43] with its naive confidence in the mathematical method he described there, for reasons we have already explored. We might ask how it came to pass that he began to reflect on these divine matters? Modest suggestions are offered -- was it, in composing *Le Monde*, that he wanted to avoid theological difficulties by counterbalancing his theory of the impossibility of a vacuum with a strong theological assertion of Divine omnipotence?[^44] Was it a desire to situate his sense of the necessity of mathematical truth into a suitable theological framework?[^45] Was it, as Gaukroger suggests, to bolster the idea of an utterly transcendent God, the "right sort of God" suited to a mechanistic science of nature?[^46]  

There is no need to look further for the reason Descartes turns to a consideration of these matters in 1630. The logic of the situation is clear enough: the impasse he had reached in his mathematical and methodological studies is enveloped, comprehended and overcome in the doctrine of the "creation of eternal truths", in his religious or theological consciousness. God who freely creates all things -- the universe and mathematics which embodies its truth, has also freely created finite minds to understand those very truths. All the elements of a foundation for a Cartesian science of nature are there, but in the form of theological doctrine and faith. How shall they achieve philosophical form? The doctrine of the "creation of eternal truths" is a true revelation for him who had been forced to abandon the naive confidence of the *Regulae*. That same doctrine is the problematic which he must address philosophically in the *Meditations*.

### 3. A Philosophical Foundation For Human Understanding

There is in the Cartesian philosophy a set of interrelated theses and suppositions revolving around the fundamental principle "Whatever is clear and distinct is true". Any

[^40]: La liberté chez Descartes et la théologie, Paris, 1913, 157  
[^41]: Alquié, 90.  
[^42]: Marion. La théologie blanche, 13.  
[^43]: Jean-Luc Marion argues that the *Regulae* is not abandoned. Rather, it has a nascent metaphysics in its account of simple natures, an account which is brought to fruition in the *Meditations*. See his "Cartesian Metaphysics and the role of the Simple Natures" in John Cottingham ed. The Cambridge Companion to Descartes, Cambridge, 1992, 115-139. Together with his account of the *Meditations* as essentially related to the objections raised against the *Discours* and to the Objections and Replies, there emerges a view of the Cartesian corpus as one of continuous reference forward and backward.  
[^44]: Garber's hypothesis, 149-154, somewhat undermined by his 'voluntarist' interpretation of Descartes' doctrine. See n. 53.  
[^45]: Osler suggests this, p. 126, but does not offer any explanation of what this might mean.  
[^46]: Intellectual Biography, 196-99.
one of these theses therefore involves the others and cannot really be clarified without reference to them. Hyperbolic doubt pushed to the limit with the 'demon' hypothesis, the relation of that hypothesis to God's omnipotence and His creation of eternal truths, the proof of God's existence as guarantee of those same eternal truths and the problems of circularity surrounding that proof, are so entwined that a proper treatment of one clarifies much about the others.

Here I shall weave these theses around the hypothesis of the Evil Demon, the genius malignus, the supposition Descartes employs to push doubt to its extreme point, "substituting", as Gilson said, "for a simple critique of our knowledge a critique of our means of knowing." The genius malignus makes its appearance as the last stage and culmination of doubt in Meditation I, after Descartes has employed well-used skeptical devices such as the illusions of the senses, the possibility of madness, of dreaming. He claims a certain originality for the hypothesis of a deceiving demon, and it is only in the Meditations that he employs the device.

Descartes' employment of the supposition of an evil demon manipulating our minds on the one side, or changing the truth itself on the other, so that what was true yesterday might no longer be true today, is the work of no ordinary demon. In that hypothesis, which has a certain appeal to the imagination, Descartes initiates a critique of the understanding itself. It is immediately aimed at "eternal truths", that is, mathematical truths which for Descartes are properly truths of the understanding. It is an easy step from the doctrine of the "creation of eternal truths" to a requirement for a Divine guarantee of them. It is even easier to understand why the Evil Demon hypothesis can highlight their dubitability without that guarantee. We shall turn our attention to the Divine guarantee first, together with the proof for God's existence in Meditation Three, and then to the scope of the deception emanating from the Evil Demon after that, for the latter will take us to the full discussion of the relation of the Evil Demon to the Divine omnipotence.

(a) The Requirement of a Divine Guarantee

For mathematical truths to be redeemed after the hypothesis of the Evil Demon has rendered them dubitable, it is required that we prove the truth of the principle of the understanding, "What is clear and distinct is true." For this to be established we must have a valid proof that God exists and is no deceiver. But from the beginning, commentators were concerned that Descartes' proof was not valid, that he was guilty of circular reasoning. The matter is addressed twice in the Objections and Replies which were published with the Meditations and also in the Conversation with Burman. Descartes' responses have proven challenging to contemporary analysis.

47 Discours de la Methode, Texte et Commentaire, Paris, 1925, 290.
48 In Descartes' Conversation with Burman he says, "This is why he raises not only the customary difficulties of the Sceptics but every difficulty that can possibly be raised; the aim is in this way to demolish completely every single doubt. And this is the purpose behind the introduction at this point of the demon, which some might criticize as a superfluous addition." CB, 4.
Arnauld's difficulty in Fourth Objections is directed at the proof in the Third Meditation:

I have one further worry, namely how the author avoids reasoning in a circle when he says that we can be sure that what we clearly and distinctly perceive is true only because God exists. But we can be sure that God exists only because we clearly and distinctly perceive this. Hence, before we can be sure that God exists, we ought to be able to be sure that whatever we perceive clearly and evidently is true." [CSM II, 150; AT vii, 214]

In response to Arnauld, Descartes distinguishes what we perceive clearly [clare percipimus] and what we recall having clearly perceived before [recordamur nos antea clare percipisse]. He refers Arnauld to what he answered in the Second Set of Replies. The objectors had more or less the same problem as Arnauld, and to them he replied:

I expressly declared that I was speaking only of knowledge of those conclusions [quoting indirectly from Med. 5] which can be recalled when we are no longer attending to the arguments by means of which we deduced them [quarum memoria potest recurrere, cum non amplius attendimus ad rationes ex quibus ipsas deduximus]" [CSM II, 100; AT vii, 140]

These two responses have convinced some commentators [W. Doney, "The Cartesian Circle", Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol.XVI (1955), 324-38; Bernard Williams in his article on Descartes in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1967 (but not in his Descartes, The Project of Pure Enquiry, Pelican, 1978) that God is used as the guarantor of the memory. As Cottingham explains, "According to this view, when I clearly and distinctly perceive P, I can know the truth of P even if I do not yet know that there is a God; after I have proved God's existence, however, I can know the truth of P even if I merely 'remember' that I once clearly and distinctly perceived it."[49] This would be an odd claim if taken literally, since memory is notoriously fallible.

But there is another way to interpret Descartes' explanation, one which gathers the former into itself as we shall see. This interpretation is more easily available in the responses of Descartes to Burman. Burman says there seems to be a circle in the third Meditation, because the author proves that God exists through axioms, even though he is not yet certain about not being deceived about these [probat auctor Deum esse per axiomata, cum sibi nequad conset se in iis non falli]. To this Descartes answers that he

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[49] CB, xxvii. Cottingham's explanation is confirmed in a letter to Hyperaspistes, August 1641, where Descartes says: "Certainly I have never denied that the sceptics themselves, as long as they clearly perceive some truth, spontaneously assent to it. It is only in name, and perhaps in intention and resolve, that they adhere to their heresy of doubting everything. But I was dealing only with things which we remember having clearly perceived earlier, not with those which we clearly perceive at the present moment, as can be seen on pages 84 and 344 [AT,vii, 69, 245]." AT iii, 434.

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proves and knows he is not deceived in them because he is attending to them [\textit{quoniam ad ea attendit}]; as long as he does it, he is certain that he is not deceived, and is compelled to assent to them [\textit{quamdiu autem id facit, certus est se no falli, et cogitur illis assentiri}]. Cottingham draws attention to the express reference here to the mind focussing on and attending to a proposition, and in that light he interprets Descartes' references to memory. Since we cannot attend to an unlimited number of propositions at one time (we can attend to more than one proposition, Descartes says in CB, AT v, 148), there would be no possibility of systematic knowledge without some guarantee that our discursiveness is not an ultimate ground for doubt about such systematic knowledge.

In other passages too it is clear that the issue is whether what we knew clearly \textit{when we attended to it} can be said to be true when we're no longer attending directly to it. Common principles and axioms, for example "It is impossible that one and the same thing should both be and not be" cannot be denied by anyone who carefully focuses his attention on them (\ldots\textit{quoniam ea ab eo, qui attente ad illa animadvertit, negari non possunt}.) And perhaps the clearest passage is later in CB: "If we were ignorant that all truth has its origin in God, then however clear our ideas were [\textit{quamvis tam clarae essent ideae nostrae}], we would not know them to be true or that we were not mistaken, that is to say when we were not paying attention to them and [only] recalled having perceived them clearly and distinctly. [\textit{scilicet cum ad eas non adverteremus, et quando solum recordaremur nos illas clare et distincte percepis}.] [CB, 49-50, AT v, 178.]

It is also asserted that before we know God exists we can be certain of common notions, of the \textit{cogito}, even of the truths of mathematics \textit{while we are thinking of these matters}, but we cannot know they are true without knowledge of God. If we turn our attention away from them even in the self-conscious reflection on what we are contemplating, we can doubt them, through an Evil Demon perhaps, so long as we do not know God exists. In this account, certainty is of simple apprehension: immediate, passive, available to an attentive mind. Truth is in judgment, an act of will, is therefore mediated and only properly available to us after we know God exists. This view is supported by the texts too. Consider, for example, the several places where Descartes denies true knowledge to the atheist, especially revealing in this passage:

The fact that an atheist can be said to 'know clearly that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles', I do not deny; but I affirm that this cognition is not true science because no cognition that could be rendered doubtful seems fit to be called science; since we are supposing him to be an atheist, he cannot be certain that he is not deceived even in those things which are most evident to him, as has been shown sufficiently; and even if this doubt does not occur to him, it can nevertheless occur, if he examines [the matter] or if someone else proposes it; neither will he ever be free of doubt unless he first acknowledge God. [Rep. II Obj., CSM II, 101; AT vii, 141]
The moment of certainty, as prior to the knowledge of truth, is nowhere more dramatically stated than in Meditation Three. There Descartes looks from one side to the other, from the simple considerations of mathematics to the possibility of a deceptive god, then back again.

But what about when I was considering something very simple and straightforward in arithmetic and geometry, for example that two and three added together make five, and so on? Did I not see at least these things clearly enough to affirm their truth? Indeed the only reason for my later judgment that they were open to doubt was that it occurred to me that perhaps some God could have given me a nature such that I was deceived even by matters which seemed most evident. And whenever this presentiment of the highest power of God occurs to me, I cannot but admit that it would be easy for him, if he so desired, to bring it about that I err even in those things which seem to me I see most evidently with the mind's eye. Yet when I turn to the things themselves which I think I perceive very clearly, I am so convinced by them that I spontaneously declare: let whoever is able to deceive me, he can never cause me to be nothing while I shall think myself something; or make it true that I have never been since I now in truth exist; or even more strongly that two and three are more of less than five, or similar things in which I see a manifest contradiction. [Med.III, CSM II, 25; AT vii, 36]

Can he be deceived in all these things which seem to him most manifest? So long as he does not know whether God exists, and whether he can be a deceiver, then Descartes can be deceived: "For if I do not know this, it seems that I can never be quite certain about anything else."

The texts support two positions on the subject of what precisely it is that is wanting prior to the proof for God's existence: on the one hand, without that proof, there is only the certainty of the moment and no possibility of a systematic knowledge, no possibility then of science; on the other hand, without that proof, there is no knowledge properly speaking. So it would seem justifiable to say that the movement from the cogito to the proof for God's existence is a movement from certainty to truth.

(b) The Proof of God's Existence in Meditation Three

If Descartes would know that anything exists other than his own ego, in particular if he would know that God exists, he can only appeal to his knowledge of himself, that is, of his own mind and its contents. The argument he constructs in the Third Meditation does not violate this restriction. Moreover, proceeding in this manner reveals a new kind of knowledge of God quite beyond the methods of medieval speculation. To move to a knowledge of God through the sensible world is only possible by a via negativa: God is not what His creatures are, not finite, not mutable, not corruptible. Knowing only what
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God is not is the price that must be paid if our knowledge must ascend to God from our experience of the sensible world.

The elements of Descartes' first argument that God necessarily exists as cause of the idea of God in Descartes' mind are: (1) that he has (and we have if we attend to it) an idea of God, "an infinite substance, eternal, immutable, independent, most powerful, and from whom I myself and whatever else, if anything else exists, is created." [CSM II, 31; AT vii, 45] (2) and that he has this idea requires a cause possessing as much perfection and reality as the object of the idea, that is, that the cause of the idea must be no less than "infinite substance, eternal, immutable, independent, most intelligent, etc." Both elements have been criticized more or less severely ever since the Meditations appeared. Hobbes in the third set of Objections denies that there is an idea of God in us [AT vii, 180], Gassendi in the fifth set asks how Descartes could know that God is represented by the idea he has as "supreme, eternal, infinite, omnipotent and the creator of all things" -- indeed, God is infinitely beyond anything we can grasp, and when we try to contemplate him, "it is not only in darkness, but is reducible to nothing." [CSM II, 199-201; AT vii, 287-8]

The contemporary challenge concerning Descartes' idea of God is provided by Jean-Luc Marion. From the backdrop of the medieval discussion of "divine names" Marion finds in the Cartesian idea a concatenation of incompatible attributes: God spoken of as "infinite substance" amounts to an assertion of the "radically unknowable" transcendence of the divine essence, and asserts an "incommensurable gap" between God and creatures; the a priori proof of Descartes characterizes God as summe perfectum carrying to perfection "every quality finite beings possess imperfectly and therefore on a continuum with them." In the former denomination, God "escapes all finite representations" and, Marion concludes, "the old via negativa of theology repeats itself..."; but the latter manner of conceiving God's essence, insofar as it denies the incommensurable gap between God and creatures, is in opposition to the former.

But this reading of the a posteriori proof is anachronistic and entirely opposed by Descartes. The idea of God for which Descartes seeks the cause in Meditation Three is a positive idea as Descartes clearly states. There is no return to the via negativa of medieval theology -- no derivation of the idea of God from finite things, and no

50 "...from Descartes on, metaphysical discussions of the characteristics and attributes of God consist in transposing and translating, so to speak, into purely philosophical terms theological debates on the divine names as they arise until [sic.] the Scriptures, through the intermediation of the formulations given to them by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (fifth century?) in his celebrated De divinis nominibus."
52 "And I must not think that...my perception of the infinite is arrived at not by means of a true idea but merely by negating the finite. On the contrary, I clearly understand that there is more reality in an infinite substance than in a finite one, and hence that my perception of the infinite, that is God, is in some way prior to my perception of the finite, that is myself." CSM II, 32; AT vii, 45. Marion cannot connect the finite and the infinite in any other way than by "analogy", the via negativa which he attributes to Descartes. Descartes himself finds that knowledge of the finite has its foundation directly in the infinite.
movement, therefore, to God from the finite world, a route obviously barred when once
the whole sensible world has collapsed under the doubt. In the idea of God which he
finds within himself, Descartes regards the attribute "infinite" in the same positive sense
in which he later takes the attribute "most perfect". It is fundamental to modern
philosophy that it proceed from thought alone, and not from an externality prior to
thought. Descartes identifies the idea of God in us as "innate", a poorly chosen word
perhaps, but required to distinguish it from medieval derivations. "Now any elements in
our thought which do not resemble external objects manifestly cannot have originated in
external objects, but must have come from the cause which produced this diversity in our
thought." [Rep. III Obj., CSM 132; AT vii, 188] Just as the Protestant reformer knows the
moral law as "written in his heart" and not given externally, so Descartes knows this idea
of God to be his "innately".

But is the idea of God which Descartes describes in various ways, sometimes leaving
out one or more attributes which he includes elsewhere, non-contradictory? It remains for
subsequent seventeenth century philosophy to take up this issue directly, Leibniz in
particular, who observes that "we cannot safely infer from definitions until we know that
they are real or that they involve no contradiction." But Descartes himself recognized
the need for some way of knowing the idea to be consistent: he reflects on the question
"could this idea of God be materially false and thus come from nothing?" To this he
answers "whatever I clearly and distinctly perceive as being real and true, and implying
any perfection, is wholly contained in it."[Med. III, CSM II, 32; AT vii, 46] It might
have taken centuries for men to come to know this idea which is theirs simply in their
rationality, but it is no mere figment: "It is very striking that metaphysicians unanimously
agree in their descriptions of the attributes of God (at least in the case of those which can
be known solely by human reason)."

The second element in the proof of Meditation Three which raises objections is the
requirement for the cause of the idea in us. There is initial discontent with the sudden
appearance of the causal principle itself, "Now it is manifest by the natural light that there
must be as much reality in the efficient and t
otal cause as in the effect of that
cause."[Med. III, CSM II, 28; AT vii, 40] The principle appears gratuitous and therefore

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53 This is obvious further in Meditation Three, where he identifies the two attributes as primary in his idea
of God: "This idea of a supremely perfect and infinite being is, I say, true in the highest degree..." CSM II,
31; AT vii, 46.
54 "Meditations on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas", in Leroy Loemker ed., Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz:
55 Compare this to Leibniz's demonstration that the idea of ens perfectissimum is not contradictory, having
it only qualities which admit of a greatest degree, and all such qualities are compatible since they are all
simple forms absolutely considered. To Elizabeth, Gerhardt, Philosophischen Schriften von Leibniz IV,
296.
56 Rep. II Obj., CSM II, 99; AT vii, 138. He continues, "No one can possibly go wrong when he tries to
form a correct conception of the idea of God, provided he is willing to attend to the nature of a supremely
perfect being."
suspect.\textsuperscript{57} But such principles as "Nothing comes from nothing", or the principle of contradiction, commonly called (at least in Descartes' day) "first principles" are principles of thinking itself,\textsuperscript{58} known as Descartes puts it by "natural light": they are as indubitable as thinking because they are simply what constitutes our thinking. As Descartes says, "Now some of these perceptions are so transparently clear and at the same time so simple that we cannot ever think of them without believing them to be true. The fact that I exist so long as I am thinking, or what is done cannot be undone, are examples of truths in respect of which we manifestly possess this kind of certainty. For we cannot doubt them unless we think them. But we cannot think them without believing at the same time that they are true, as was supposed. Hence we cannot doubt them without at the same time believing they are true; that is, we can never doubt them."\textsuperscript{59} Thinking, after all, is a rational activity and is conducted through rational principles of thought.

This principle "There is nothing in the effect which was not previously present in the cause" is the same, Descartes says, as the common notion "Nothing comes from nothing". From that principle we may easily grant that "All the reality or perfection which is present in an idea merely objectively must be present in its cause either formally or eminently", for as Descartes reminds us, "This is the sole basis for all beliefs we have ever had about the existence of things located outside our mind" -- what else could explain why we suspect that sensible things exist except that we refer our ideas of them to a cause. It is patently obvious that we make use of the principle in ordinary experience, but refuse, inconsistently, to extend the use of the principle to non-empirical ideas.\textsuperscript{60}

There remains the last objection that we shall consider: why does an idea require a cause which possesses either formally or eminently what is objectively the content of that idea? It is a matter Descartes took up in detail in his reply to Caterus, for Caterus had argued that a thing existing in the mind by means of an idea is not the same as an actual thing, that is, a being located outside the mind. But "since it is merely conceived and is not actual" there is no causality at work here. Descartes agrees that it does not require a cause enabling it to exist outside the mind, "but" he adds, "it surely needs a cause enabling it to be conceived, which is the sole point at issue."\textsuperscript{[Rep. I Obj. CSM II, 75; AT vii, 103]} Then Descartes gives the apt example of the idea of a machine "of a highly intricate design". It would surely be a fair question to ask where the idea came from -- whether

\textsuperscript{57} Louis Loeb, 244, remarks, "Unfortunately, it is difficult to see what there is to recommend this principle other than its suitability for Descartes' argumentative purposes. One wonders how a figure of Descartes' intelligence, who has undertaken 'to withhold...assent from matters which are not entirely certain and indubitable'... and who includes beliefs about mathematics within the scope of doubt, could nevertheless unhesitatingly embrace the principle about causation as a deliverance of the light of nature."

\textsuperscript{58} Spinoza states that all of the Cartesian philosophy comes from the principle "Nothing comes from nothing" -- even the cogito itself, for if something could come from nothing then thinking could come from non-being.

\textsuperscript{59} Rep. II Obj., CSM II, 104; AT vii, 145-6. These principles are distinguished from mathematical propositions, truths which are perceived very clearly in our minds as long as we attend to the arguments on which our knowledge of them is derived. Thus these kinds can fall under the hyperbolic doubt.

\textsuperscript{60} Marion questions this extension: "This implies a perhaps enlargement of the domain of causality, in so far as God is represented as the cause of His own idea in the ego."

there was a real machine of this design which had been seen previously, whether the possessor of the idea, having extensive knowledge of mechanics or a particularly acute mind, might have himself invented the idea. It is a fair question to ask whose "intellectual property" the idea is. We would not be satisfied unless "all the intricacy which is to be found merely objectively in the idea" was found "either formally or eminently in its cause."[Rep. I Obj, CSM II, 75; AT vii, 104] These questions, this requirement, of the cause of the idea are easily granted in ordinary applications, but are, inconsistently, rejected when applied to the idea of God.

We must let the matter rest here, noting finally Descartes' resignation regarding the matter:

Those who give the matter their careful attention and spend time meditating with me will clearly see that there is within us an idea of a supremely powerful and perfect being, and also that the objective reality of this idea cannot be found in us, either formally or eminently. I cannot force this truth on my readers if they are lazy, since it depends solely on their exercising their own powers of thought.[Rep. II Obj., CSM II, 97; AT vii, 135-6]

(c) The Scope of Deception emanating from the Evil Demon

It is argued by some that, contrary to what appears to be the case, the fictional Evil Demon is really quite effete and is not even powerful enough to cause us to doubt the truths of mathematics. And here we see a kind of literalism which might or might not add anything to the understanding of the Evil Demon hypothesis. Richard Kennington gives some interesting textual analysis to support his views that mathematics never succumbs to Cartesian doubt and that texts of the *Meditations* "by no means establish that the Evil Demon is omnipotent".

To support his first claim, that mathematics never succumbs to Cartesian doubt, Kennington notes the following: (1) God "who can do everything" is mentioned as a reason for doubting arithmetic and geometry in Meditation I; then God is withdrawn from the argument as a reason for doubt and replaced by the Evil Demon; (2) No form of mathematics is mentioned after the introduction of the Evil Demon hypothesis in Meditation I and in the recital of those matters which have succumbed to doubt prior to the *cogito* argument in Meditation II. In both places the specific list of dubitables all pertain to bodily things, including Descartes' own body; (3) Only God is offered as a possible reason for doubt about mathematics in *Principles of Philosophy*, I, 5-7: once atheism is considered (there is no Evil Demon mentioned in the *Principles*) the brief list of dubitables does not include mathematics, for again they are restricted to the external in general, to body in particular. This is confirmed in Reply IV Objections, where hyperbolic doubt, which includes doubt about mathematics, is based on "the author of my origin."
What is problematic about the Evil Demon are the ways in which Descartes variously characterizes its power. He, as fully in possession of his philosophy, is perfectly aware that to speak of the Evil Demon as omnipotent and malignant is contradictory. Commenting to Burman on his supposition of the genius malignus in Meditation I, which he characterized there as `of utmost power and cunning' [eundemque summe potentem & callidum], he notes that what he said in Meditation I is contradictory, since malice is incompatible with supreme power.61 And later in the same discussion he comments on the same contradiction appearing in Meditation II, where even in the meditation itself he expresses a reservation about conjoining 'highest power' with wickedness.62 In the Meditations, Descartes characterizes only God as a being qui potest omnia, or as omnipotens. The Evil Demon is described as summe potens (on the two occasions noted above) and once as potentissimus, which can mean either a very high degree of power, or "highest power".63 We may conclude that Descartes was at pains to suppose in the Evil Demon sufficient power to deceive us in fundamental ways, but not ultimate power which would render the whole fiction a contradiction.

Could such a deceiver, of great but limited power then, deceive us regarding mathematics? But more important for the matter at hand (the scope of the doubt) is mathematics subject to hyperbolic doubt? Kennington says, "No", and offers as his argument the relative impotence of the Evil Demon. But whether the Evil Demon, or "some God", or "a deceiving God", or "some other being whatever name we call it", it is nonetheless undeniable that mathematical truths, eternal truths in general, fall under the hyperbolic doubt of the first meditation, and such truths are not recovered until the structure of the understanding is established in Meditation IV, and its principle, "Whatever is clear and distinct is true", laid down now indubitably in Meditation V. The reason for ambiguity about the scope of the power of the Evil Demon is this: if the concept of the Evil Demon is to be regarded as non-contradictory, his power must have limits. Then there might be some doubt as to his capacity to deceive us, regarding eternal truths specifically. But there could be no question of the power of God to deceive us if He so willed it. Or could there be?

And that brings us to a discussion of the Divine omnipotence, whether anything is impossible to the omnipotent God, whether in short God could, if he so willed, be an Evil Demon himself.

(d). The Evil Demon and Divine Omnipotence

This problem has been considered in detail by Martial Gueroult in his masterpiece, Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons. He states the problem this way:

61 "...quia cum summa potentia malignitas consistere non potest." AT, v, 147.
62 "...suppono deceptorem aliquem potentissimum, &. si fas est dicere, malignum..." AT, vii, 26.
63 These characterizations are given in Richard Kennington, "Descartes' Evil Genius", in Willis Doney, ed., Eternal Truths and the Cartesian Circle: a Collection of Studies, New York, 1987, 442.
The hypothesis of the great deceiver, or the fiction of the evil genius, which constitutes the instrument of metaphysical doubt, poses a problem - that of its origin or its foundation. Is it based, at least in part, on the nature of things, having its roots in some truths of Cartesian philosophy? Or is it, on the contrary, an artifice entirely alien to these truths, such that once these truths are discovered they radically abolish the pretext in whose name it was invoked?  

Some scholars, Gueroult names Gouhier and Bréhier, are persuaded that the Evil Demon is grounded in the nature of Divine omnipotence abstractly considered. Descartes says that God does not make the world to exist because he saw that as good; rather it is good solely because he made it. And $2+3=5$ is true solely because God made it true. They reason further that God was as free to deceive us as he was free to create truths other than those we recognize as true. What saves us from universal deception, on this account, is God freely choosing to limit his omnipotence through his goodness. This is a decidedly nominalist reading of Descartes, where God's *potentia absoluta* can do anything at all, but what he does, through his *potentia ordinata*, is good and true simply in the doing. Peter Geach reads Descartes as possessed of this doctrine of absolute omnipotence, and shows the doctrine to be incoherent. Stephen Gaukroger also expresses this radical interpretation of Descartes on divine omnipotence:

In his correspondence with Mersenne on the question of eternal truths, we saw that Descartes maintains that God's transcendence is such that he is not bound by empirical or even mathematical truths. He has created truths and could have created them differently, in a way that completely surpasses our understanding. Or, to put the matter in epistemological terms, He could have made all our beliefs false ... The epistemological correlate of the complete transcendence of God's powers takes the form of the introduction of hyperbolic doubt.

But this is to look upon Divine omnipotence as arbitrary and capricious, or as Gueroult puts it, "God's power would thus conceal in its foundation something irrational and anarchical."

What other interpretation is available to us which is both faithful to the texts and theologically sound? The Divine omnipotence must be shown to ground the doctrine of the creation of eternal truths while suppressing the Evil Demon hypothesis, that is, omnipotence properly understood would itself defeat deception. And so the texts will testify: "...and although the ability to deceive appears to be an indication of cleverness or power, the will to deceive is a mark not only of malice, but of weakness [imbecilitas]."[Med. IV, AT vii, 53] Omnipotence is radically opposed obviously to

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64 Ibid., Vol I, 21.
66 Intellectual Biography, 316-7.
67 Gueroult, I, 22.
imbecilitas, and itself also excludes malice: "...malice is incompatible with supreme power."[CB, 4] It is Descartes' constant and established position that deception is wholly excluded from the Divine Being; "the assertion that it is self-contradictory that men should be deceived by God is clearly demonstrated," he says, "from the fact that the form of deception is non-being, toward which the Supreme Being cannot tend." [Rep. VI Obj., AT vii, 428]

Then the God who could, if he would, "make it not true that all the radii of the circle are equal" [To Mersenne, AT i, 152], who could have "made it false that the three angles of a triangle were equal to two right angles" [To Mesland, 2 May 1644, AT iv, 118], who "could [perhaps] have commanded a creature to hate him, and thereby made this a good thing to do" [CB, AT v, 160], who "could have made it false that contradictories cannot be true together" [To Mesland, AT iv, 118], this same God cannot deceive us, and it is his omnipotence which suppresses deception. Clearly a deeper understanding of the Divine omnipotence is demanded if these matters are to be drawn together coherently.

There is already identified something that the omnipotent God cannot do: he cannot be the source in us of deception, for the reason that the Supreme Being "cannot tend to non-being". This which God cannot do can be generalized: whatever would limit the Divine omnipotence, or stands opposed to it, is absolutely impossible. Thus, "it is repugnant that God should deprive himself of his own existence, or that he should lose it externally." [AT v, 546]. Again, it is impossible to make beings independent of himself: "It is not the case that God would be showing the immensity of his power if he made things which could exist without him later on; on the contrary, he would thus be showing that his power was finite, since things once created would no longer depend on him." [To Hyperaspistes, August 1641, AT iii, 429]. Because of God's immutability, it is absolutely impossible for God to undo what has been [To More, 5 Feb 1649, AT v, 273], or to undermine causal relations: "Whatever is in God is not in reality separate from God himself; rather it is identical with God himself. Concerning the decrees of God which have already been enacted, it is clear that God is unalterable with regard to these..." [CB, AT v, 348].

There are, as Gueroult identifies, two orders of impossibility and two orders of truth in Descartes' system.68 We have discovered a realm of absolute impossibility founded on the uncreated truth of the omnipotent Divine Being. Then there is the region of impossibility referring to our understanding, the realm of created "eternal truths". In our world, "there cannot be a mountain without a valley" [Med. 5; also to Arnauld, 26 June 1648, AT v, 223], the sum of the angles of the triangle are equal to two right angles, and in general "contradictories cannot be true together". But these are not absolute impossibilities, or at least are not known quoad nos as absolutely impossible.

I do not even dare say that God could not make it the case that a mountain be without a valley or that one and two not make three. I say only that God

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gave me a mind such that I cannot conceive a mountain without a valley or a sum of one and two which should not be three. [To Arnauld, 29 July 1648, AT v, 224]

There is a letter to Henry More in which Descartes muses about these two orders of impossibility. More could not accept that God could not create a vacuum, and his difficulty prompts this answer:

But you are quite ready to admit that in the natural course of events there is no vacuum: you are concerned about God's power, which you think can take away from the contents of a container while preventing its sides from meeting. For my part, I know that my intellect is finite and God's power is infinite, and so I set no limits to it; I consider only what I am capable of perceiving, and what not, and I take great pains that my judgement should accord with my perception. And so I boldly assert that God can do everything which I perceive to be possible, but I am not so bold as to assert the converse, namely that he cannot do what conflicts with my conception of things - I merely say that it involves a contradiction. And so, since I see that it conflicts with my way of conceiving things for all body to be taken out of a container and for there to remain an extension which I conceive in no way differently than I previously conceived the body contained in it, I say that it involves a contradiction that such an extension should remain there after the body has been taken away. I conclude that the sides of the container must come together...In the same way I say that it involves a contradiction that there should be any atoms which are conceived as extended and at the same time indivisible. Though god might make them such that they could not be divided by any creature, we certainly cannot understand that he might deprive himself of the power of dividing them. Your comparison with things which have been done and cannot be undone is not to the point. For we do not take it as a mark of impotence when someone cannot do something which we do not understand to be possible, but only when he cannot do something which we distinctly perceive to be possible. Now we certainly perceive it to be possible for an atom to be divided, since we suppose it to be extended; and so, if we judge that it cannot be divided by God, we shall judge God cannot do one of the things which we perceive to be possible. But we do not in the same way perceive it to be possible for what is done to be undone - on the contrary, we perceive it to be altogether impossible, and so it is no defect of power in God not to do it.

Descartes here distinguishes what is absolutely impossible from what is impossible to our understanding. If he does not say it here explicitly, it is nonetheless true and everywhere implied that in the Cartesian philosophy, what is impossible quoad nos is drawn into relation with the realm of absolute impossibility, created "eternal truths" with uncreated
truth. It is absolutely impossible that God could deceive. Therefore, what is clear and distinct is true.

But there is a wider, more comprehensive "circle" in the Cartesian philosophy, which expresses the ultimate limit of human understanding. By the "natural light" of the understanding, a faculty created by God, we come to know not only created eternal truths but uncreated truth: that God exists, that God is not a deceiver, that God is immutable, a necessary being, causa sui. But God is not subject to the limits of our understanding, and we only have access to these uncreated truths through a faculty given to us by Him. If our understanding seeks some unconditional verification of God's existence and truthfulness, through means outside the scope of God's creative will, it seeks in vain. Human understanding cannot itself escape this "circle". But it finds in that embrace no grounds for doubt about its powers, every reason for exercising them in a science of nature, and every confidence that when it achieves clarity and distinctness, it finds truth. "What is it to us," Descartes exclaims, "that someone may make out that the perception whose truth we are so firmly convinced of may appear false to God or an angel, so that it is, absolutely speaking, false? Why should this alleged 'absolute falsity' bother us, since we neither believe in it nor have even the smallest suspicion of it? For the supposition which we are making here is of a conviction so firm that it is quite incapable of being destroyed; and such a conviction is clearly the same as the most perfect certainty." [Rep. II Obj., CSM II, 103; AT vii, 145.]

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69 Cf. Hatfield, 276-7.
Leibniz's Model Of Creation And His Doctrine Of Substance

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The subject of creation has long been recognized as central to Leibniz's philosophy.1 In general, the tendency has been to understand Leibniz's view of the creation of the universe as the actualization of a set of possible substances which stand together in a relation of pre-established harmony.2 From there, scholarly interest generally seems to shift to questions concerning Leibniz's views on such related subjects as, e.g. the reasons behind God's choice to create one set of possibles rather than another, or the nature - necessary or contingent - of the relation between the possibles which God creates or actualizes. Undoubtedly these are all areas of serious and absorbing interest. Still, one concern which appears to have been overlooked is the quite literal question of how Leibniz views God's action in the creation of possibles in the first place. What does God actually do when he creates? What does this actualization of possibles actually amount to? In what follows I wish to detail the specifics of Leibniz's account of God's creation/actualization of the world. My main purpose in doing this is to draw attention to a little-noted but important feature of Leibniz's metaphysics. This is that Leibniz's view of creation is one which he uses specifically and intentionally to support his well-known view that existing things have their own force or power which is the source of their activity.

2 This is the standard account. There is at least one other account, according to which possible substances somehow actualize themselves by striving toward existence. For a useful discussion, cf. Catherine Wilson, Leibniz's Metaphysics. A Historical and Comparative Study (Manchester: University Press, 1989), 275ff.
There is plenty of evidence in Leibniz's writings that he has an account of God's creation of the universe which he intentionally employs to explain how substances are inherently active beings. This is especially apparent whenever Leibniz discusses the causal doctrine of his chief metaphysical rival, Malebranche, whose occasionalism directly opposes Leibniz's view that things possess their own force of action. For Malebranche, the actions of things do not derive from any force within things themselves, but derive instead from the divine will. In his criticism of occasionalism and in his arguments for his own view of substances as inherently active beings, Leibniz frequently rests his argument on a certain view he has of how God creates the universe. For instance, consider how he elucidates his criticism of occasionalism to Arnauld: "God first created the soul in such a way that ordinarily he has no need of these changes; and what happens to the soul is born to it in its own depths, without its having to adapt itself subsequently to the body, any more than the body to the soul." Against occasionalism, Leibniz claims that the activity of things arises 'in their own depths,' by which he means that the activity of things is inherent to them. Note, however, that this occurs in virtue of the fact that "God first created the soul in [a certain] way."

Other passages bear out this connection between God's creative act and the fact that substances are active beings. To Foucher, Leibniz remarks that "God, having at the outset created the soul in such a way," ensures that all its actions are born to it from its own depths. In unpublished notes on Bayle's Dictionary, Leibniz further notes that "[i]t is necessary that he [i.e. God] gives [corporeal substances] the means" to obey the soul. Replying more formally to Bayle he claims that "all that happens must also be explained through the natures which God gives to things." In a letter to Basnage Leibniz speaks of "the natural laws which God has given to things at the outset," and he claims that "God

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3 Malebranche was regarded as the chief occasionalist of Leibniz's day. It is worth noting that in his critique of occasionalism Leibniz seeks to undermine the system of the philosopher whom, on the central metaphysical issue of the source or cause of the actions of created beings, he regards as his chief if not only rival. Roughly midway through his career Leibniz puts it to the Cartesian Burcher de Volder (in an undated reply from 1699) that the only real contenders, in terms of providing an account of the metaphysics of causation or the ontological basis of the laws of motion, are his [i.e. Leibniz's] own doctrine of the pre-established harmony on the one hand, and the Cartesian doctrine of occasionalism on the other: "the rules of force and action cannot be derived from these notions [of matter, motion and substance held by the Cartesians] and we must either take refuge in *a deus ex machina* or hold that there is something higher in bodies themselves" (L 323, G II 195). The point is made again five years later, in a letter dated June 30, 1704 (L 538, G II 271). It is not surprising that Leibniz chooses the discussion of occasionalism as his opportunity to argue for force in substance. He himself believes that the main difference between his own system and the system of occasional causes concerns the issue of substance. In a letter to l'Hospital (14/24 June 1695) he claims that his own system differs from Malebranche's "because of the notion I have of Substance" (OC XIX 625). Specifically, there is a force of action in Leibniz's substance, whereas there is no such force in Malebranche's substance.

4 Leibniz to Arnauld, 4/14 July 1686 (Mason 65, G II 58).

5 Leibniz to Foucher, 1686 © 232, G I 382-83). In *On Nature Itself* Leibniz writes: "I consider it sufficient that the mechanism of the world is built *with such wisdom* that these wonderful things depend on the progression of the machine itself, organic things particularly, as I believe, evolving by a certain predetermined order" (L 499, G IV 505).

6 Sketch of Leibniz's examination of Bayle's article "Rorarius", R 323, G IV 533.

7 "Clarification of Bayle's Difficulties", L 494, G IV 520.

8 R 313, G III 122.
gives to each one a nature whose laws themselves bear these changes. That is, God creates things 'in such a way', i.e. he gives them a 'nature', 'means', 'natural law', etc. that renders them active substances. Clearly, then, all of these passages point to the idea that a certain vision of creation underlies Leibniz's doctrine of substances as active beings.

I. Introduction

Leibniz's model of creation and its connection to his doctrine of active substance are both subjects which feature prominently in On Nature Itself (1698), and for this reason I shall focus mainly on that work. One of Leibniz's special concerns there is to evaluate critically the view of those - the occasionalists in general but Johann Christoph Sturm in particular - who deny that substances possess their own causal power. When it comes to the occasionalists, Leibniz's main point of disagreement concerns the notion of force. He believes that it is a force (vis) within created beings which primarily explains the activity of those beings. That is, because created substances possess their own force of action, their actions can be distinguished from the actions of God.

This view stands in stark contrast to the position of the occasionalists, who explain the activity of things ultimately with reference to supernatural or divine rather than natural power. The most well-known of the occasionalists, Malebranche, agrees with Leibniz that force serves a causal role in the activity of created things, but - and this is the vital difference - the cornerstone of his occasionalism is that causation is a divine prerogative. Therefore force or genuine efficacy is in God, not in nature. As he expresses this in respect of physical things, "the motive force of a body is but the efficacy of the will of God, who conserves it in successively different places." Leibniz's position, by contrast, is expressed in the Discourse on Metaphysics in the dictum 'actions belong to things' [actiones sunt suppositorum]. That is, the force behind a thing's action is in and

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9 Ibid.
10 For an excellent discussion of this work which raises many of the themes to be addressed below, cf. Wilson op. cit., 165-73.
11 Cf. R 310ff., and Loemker's "Introduction" (L 498). Malebranche and Sturm are mentioned throughout this work, and in Leibniz's private writings of the period the ideas of Malebranche and Sturm are often regarded as being of a piece. Consider, for example, Leibniz to Schuelenburg, 17 May, 1698 § 322). Cf. Leibniz to de Volder, 10 January 1703 (L 532, G II 257); and Leibniz's analysis of Lamy's On Self-Knowledge, 30 November 1702 § 374, G IV 589). For a brief discussion of the relation of Leibniz's early philosophy to the philosophy of Sturm, cf. C. Mercer and R.C. Sleigh, 'Metaphysics: The Early Period to the Discourse on Metaphysics' (The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz, ed. N. Jolley, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 69-70
12 Leibniz writes (to Jaquelot, on 22 March 1703): "Motion is not the cause, but the effect or result of force" (® 359, G III 457); cf. Discourse §18 (G IV 444). Typical of Malebranche's position is the following in the Search After Truth: "since motion and its communication is a general effect on which all others depend, it is necessary in order to be a philosopher, to have recourse to God, who is the universal cause, because His will is the motor force of bodies" (LO 662, OC III 213).
13 Discourse on Metaphysics §8 (G IV 432-33).
14 DMR 117, OC XII 161.
15 Discourse on Metaphysics §8 (G IV 432).
belongs to that thing. For Malebranche, on the contrary, actions belong not to things but to God. Where Leibniz affirms that a moving body's action belongs to that body (and thus that body possesses its own force of action), Malebranche responds: "But what is a moving body? It is a body transported by a divine action. The action which transports it can also transport that body which it meets, if it is extended to it. Who doubts this? However, this action - this motive force - does not in any way belong to body." For Malebranche, a thing's actions belong to God rather than to the thing itself because the force behind a thing's action is nothing other than God's will: "By whatever effort of mind I make," he writes, "I can find force, efficacy, or power only in the will of the infinitely perfect Being." Precisely for this reason Malebranche holds that to ascribe force to created substances is - theologically speaking - a form of paganism: it is ascribing divine qualities to finite, created things.

In many respects, Leibniz's debate with the occasionalists over the status of force in things is a debate about the ultimate adequacy of the emerging mechanical picture of nature. Leibniz contrasts his own world view, the pre-established harmony, with the purely mechanical view either of those who disregard as unimportant the question of dynamics, i.e. of nature's force or motor, or of those who place this force or motor outside of nature. Against either position Leibniz is out to demonstrate the necessity that nature

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16 DMR VII 119, OC XII 164.
17 LO 658, OC III 204. Pierre Bayle is one of the first to appreciate this central occasionalist tenet, as can be seen in the Nouvelles de la république des lettres, art. III, 1389-90.
18 "We therefore admit something divine in all the bodies around us when we posit forms, faculties, qualities, virtues, or real beings capable of producing certain effects through the force of their nature; and thus we insensibly adopt the opinions of the pagans because of our respect for their philosophy" (LO 446, OC II 309). The most notorious of the pagans is, of course, Aristotle, who "talks a lot and says nothing" (LO 440, OC II 300). For Malebranche the supposed force or nature of created substances, being nothing other than the divine will, is indeed best understood that way. Consider: "It is clearer to say that God created the world by His will than it is to say He did so by His power. The latter word is a term from logic; it evokes no distinct and particular idea in the mind" (LO 640, OC III 175). Metaphysically speaking, Malebranche is following Descartes' lead, when Descartes identifies God's volitions with the laws of nature, or, more generally, nature itself. Cf. Meditation III (AT VII 80). For Malebranche, force considered in these pagan terms is, in strict Cartesian terms, an obscure and confused idea, or a mere term of logic. To this group of obscure and confused ideas belong "these lovely words: genus, species, act, potency, nature, form, faculties, qualities, cause in itself, and accidental cause" (LO 443, OC II 305). Compare Descartes' use of 'nature' as "simply a label which depends on my thought" (AT VII 85, CSM II 59); and compare further especially Hume: "I begin by observing that the terms of efficacy, agency, power, force, energy, necessity, connexion, and productive quality, are all nearly synonymous" (A Treatise of Human Nature, Part III, Book I, Sect. xiv [Selby-Bigge edition, 157]). Cf. L 519, G II 183, for Leibniz's response (of 23 June 1699) to de Volder's view that these terms are but terms of logic.
19 L 498, G IV 504.
20 Leibniz's opening statement of the pre-established harmony reads: "I consider it sufficient that the mechanism of the world is built with such wisdom that these wonderful things depend on the progression of the machine itself, organic things particularly, as I believe, evolving by a certain predetermined order" (L 499, G IV 505). There is more to this statement than a cursory reading might suggest. Leibniz is talking about the world's mechanism, and the way he puts it, the intelligence or wisdom behind the machine involves extra-mechanical considerations, so the mechanism here is much more than a mechanism. His
itself contain the force for or basis of the changes that go on within it. In the first instance he gives Robert Boyle's work of the same name only 'superficial approval', for if nature is regarded solely along mechanical lines (in the manner of Boyle's work), and if first or metaphysical principles are not distinguished from "derivative matters", then "mechanical explanations of natural things" are "carried to abuse."\textsuperscript{21} The abuse which Leibniz considers Boyle to perpetrate is in respect of nature itself: nature is left dangling without any metaphysical support, and matters which are primary or substantial are rendered 'derivative' or merely phenomenal. Leibniz discerns the same abuse in the second instance, in "the opinion of those who deny a true and proper activity to created things." Those listed in this regard are Malebranche, Robert Fludd, and the early occasionalists Cordemoi and La Forge.\textsuperscript{22}

This, then, is how Leibniz draws the line at the outset of On Nature Itself between his own position and that of the occasionalists on the issue of the ultimate status of nature. The dispute does not take place on the level of physics. Rather, the dispute is metaphysical; it has to do with the reality behind or the cause of motion, not motion itself.\textsuperscript{23} Occasionalists agree with Leibniz that there is something involved in the actions of things which is beyond mere mechanism. They also agree that this 'something' is real, in the sense that it is a metaphysical source or origin. The disagreement between the two approaches is over the status and location of this source or origin, and consequently over the ultimate reality of the mechanism itself. Leibniz searches within nature for the basis of mechanical relations, while Malebranche looks to God. And where Leibniz finds the autonomy of nature in force, Malebranche finds nature's dependency on the divine will. Obviously, the most important philosophical questions concern the reasons we have for accepting one route (inward to nature) rather than the other (outward to God). Let us now see how Leibniz employs a certain doctrine of creation specifically to support the path inward to nature.

**II. Leibniz's 'Mechanical' Or 'Vestige' Model Of God's Creative Act**

The path inward to nature is paved by Leibniz in part by the doctrine of creation which figures prominently in On Nature Itself. The essence of Leibniz's position is captured in the idea that God creates things in such a way that they are capable of carrying out his decrees. Leibniz's main argument is that if things were not capable of carrying out God's decrees, God would lack the wherewithal to effect his decrees.

\textsuperscript{21} L 499, G IV 505.
\textsuperscript{22} L 502, G IV 509. For the differences between the doctrines Cordemoi, La Forge, and Malebranche, cf. R. A. Watson's The Downfall of Cartesianism 1673-1712, ch. V.
Therefore, the capacity for action on the part of created substances is a consequence of God's having to create in a certain way in order to realize his decrees:

[Sturm] admits that motions now taking place result by virtue of an eternal law once established by God, which law he then calls a volition and command, and that no new command or new volition of God is then necessary I ask whether this volition or command, this divine law once established, has bestowed upon things only an extrinsic denomination or whether it has truly conferred upon them some created impression which endures with them, an internal law from which their actions and passions follow. The former view seems to be that of the authors of the system of occasional causes, especially of the ingenious Mr. Malebranche; the latter is the accepted view, and I believe the truest. For since this command in the past no longer exists at present, it can accomplish nothing unless it has left some subsistent effect behind which has lasted and operated until now, and whoever thinks otherwise renounces any distinct explanation of things, if I am any judge, for if that which is remote in time and space can operate here and now without any intermediary, anything can be said to follow from anything else with equal right.  

In this passage, Leibniz clearly distinguishes his own position on how God creates from the position of Sturm. Sturm's position is effectively the same as the occasionalist's, insofar as both regard motion simply as God's continual creation of things in differing spatio-temporal relations to one another. For Sturm and, e.g. Malebranche, natural motion is the result or effect of the only true or real cause, namely God's will; thus Leibniz aptly characterizes the fundamental tenet of occasionalism when he claims that for Sturm the law governing nature's motion is a divine command or volition, and an eternal one at that. On the other hand, it is important to note that Leibniz's quarrel with occasionalism is not with there being a divine law or command "once established", but with the very nature of this law and its effects. The main contrast is between occasionalism's view of the divine law or command, which Leibniz says involves the 'extrinsic denomination' of nature, and Leibniz's view of the divine law or command, which involves a created 'enduring impression' upon nature. Leibniz's idea is that God bestows upon things an enduring impression, law, force or power. 'Law' and 'impression' are identified here, which is to say that Leibniz's laws of nature in some sense involve their own execution. In this manner they serve as the 'means' by which God realizes his plans.

In a sense, the model of creation we are dealing with here has 'mechanical' undertones of a sort. By this I mean simply that the relation which Leibniz conceives

24 L 500, G IV 506-07.
25 Supra n. 14.
26 For a useful discussion of the difference this may or may not make in interpreting occasionalism in its relation to the pre-established harmony, cf. S. Nadler's "The Occasionalism of Louis de la Forge", in Nadler, S. M. (ed.) Causation in Early Modern Philosophy (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 57-73.
between God and God's decrees appears to involve a medium, intermediary, means or instrument, which serves to link the relata, i.e. God's decrees and the effects of those decrees. The mechanistic tone of Leibniz's account of creation here is especially clear from what he has to say about God's initial decree. As he sees it, God's "command in the past no longer exists at present." From there he moves to the idea that since the moment of divine creation all the world's actions are essentially the consequent effects of the initial divine act of will. The underlying image is that of the domino effect, a mechanistic image par excellence. Of course, Leibniz's monadology prevents him from believing that this is literally what happens within the created universe once it exists, but it is the image on which his account of God's creative act rests.27 Clearly, in his talk of the necessity for an 'intermediary' between things remote in time and space Leibniz is envisioning a kind of mechanical means; he is positing the necessity for an intermediary between a past divine will and a present natural motion. Such an intermediary allows for the continued transmission of God's initial 'push' or act through the successive moments of creation's existence right down to the present. Only in this way, Leibniz reasons, can sense be made of the idea that a past cause has present effects; that is, only in this way can sense be made of the idea that God's past decrees continue to operate. This seems to be a mechanical view of 'sense', and thus we can speak of Leibniz's's mechanical model of divine creation.

Effectively, this view of how God creates explains how created substances come to possess a force of their own. On this model of creation, nature is what discharges the causative functions which God discharges, external to nature, on the occasionalist view. Leibniz's metaphysics of creation dictates that the execution of these causative functions by nature itself is the distinct effect of God's initial command, and nature's own independent discharge of this causal function is the result of God's literal transfer to nature or to things of an efficacious impression, law or force. The result is an independence for created things predicated upon their possession of force or power. In other words, the effect of God's creative act is to provide creation with autonomy. Elsewhere he expresses this by saying that "the effects of God have subsistence, not to say that even the modifications and effects of created beings have permanence in some way."28 But in On Nature Itself Leibniz puts the matter so:

If the law set up by God does in fact leave some vestige of him expressed in things, if things have been so formed by the command that they are made capable of fulfilling the will of him who commanded them, then it must be granted that there is a certain efficacy in things, a form or force such as we usually designate by the name of nature.29

For Leibniz, the efficacy of God's command resides in the efficacy of those things created by that command, and in this sense Leibniz's God is like the general of an army whose soldiers carry out their general's orders. They can do this because they have been

27 On Leibniz's mature view, force is not 'passed on' from one being to another, but is permanently resident within each substance which acts spontaneously on its basis.
29 L 501, G IV 507.
"so formed" or so trained by their general that they are capable of fulfilling his orders. Leibniz's use of the expression "so formed" here is in fact better understood as 'so informed'; for by the verb 'to form' Leibniz does not mean anything less than 'bestow force or efficacy upon,' as is explicit in this passage. By the same token, 'form' and 'efficacy' are equated: they are what Leibniz understands by the word 'nature'. Nature is primarily force, and these terms are all merged in the text: "there is a certain efficacy in things, a form or force such as we usually designate by the name of nature." In the end, therefore, the forms in things are active and efficacious principles which ensure that created substances are adequate means to God's ends.

### III. Problems With The Leibnizian Model

On Leibniz's mechanical model of creation (which might equally well be termed his 'vestige' view of creation), if existing substances were not endowed with a force of action (as the impressed vestige or effect given at creation), God would not be able to carry out his decrees. This assumes that God needs instruments of some kind to effect his volitions, an assumption which cues the occasionalist response. Again we shall let Malebranche be the occasionalist spokesperson: "God needs no instruments to act; it suffices that He wills in order that a thing be, because it is a contradiction that He should will and that what He wills should not happen." The contradiction Malebranche finds is in the idea of an all-powerful being willing something which does not then occur. Did God need the instruments which Leibniz claims he needs, he would contradict the omnipotence that defines his nature. Another way of understanding the occasionalist's objection here is to consider that Leibniz's view of creation presupposes exactly what the occasionalist thinks that God, in the exercise of his volition, effects rather than requires for the exercise of his will. What Malebranche's God institutes are law-governed, finished mechanistic relations in nature, and these relations are the necessary effects of God's determination, not the independent conditions of it (as Leibniz would have it). To think otherwise, i.e. to make necessary connections between things in nature the conditions of the exercise of God's will rather than the result of divine volition is, again, to violate or contradict the omnipotent nature of the divine.

Other problems attend Leibniz's use of a quasi-mechanical account of creation to explain how substances come to be endowed with force. For instance, it seems to assume a kind of spatio-temporal contiguity between God and creation. That is to say, the

30 LO 450, OC II 316.
31 Hume deals with this argument from omnipotence as follows: "As to what may be said, that the connection betwixt the idea of an infinitely powerful being, and that of any effect, which he wills, is necessary and unavoidable; I answer, that we have no idea of a being endow'd with any power, much less of one endow'd with infinite power. But if we will change expressions, we can only define power by connexion; and then in saying, that the idea of an infinitely powerful being is connected with that of every effect, which he wills, we really do no more than assert, that a being, whose volition is connected with every effect, is connected with every effect; which is an identical proposition and gives us no insight into the nature of this power or connection." A Treatise on Human Nature, Bk.I, Pt. IV, Sect.v, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. P.H.Nidditch, Oxford, 1978, 248-9.
account implies that God's past command is linked to the present activity of created substances through a series of intermediary links; again the domino effect comes to mind. On the other hand, despite what Leibniz says about God's command 'in the past', it is not clear that this should be taken literally to imply that God's creative act occurs at a certain moment in history. Time itself, on Leibniz's account, is a function of and hence consequent upon the existence of monads; therefore it cannot precede them by being something in which God creates.\footnote{Cf., e.g. G VII 363-65.} To impugn Leibniz's theory of creation on that account, therefore, seems to involve an overly literal reading of the text.\footnote{Nicholas Rescher (\textit{Leibniz: An Introduction to his Philosophy}, Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1979, 73) indicates his agreement with Bertrand Russell (\textit{A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz} [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900; second edition, London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1937], vi) "in holding that it is difficult to find a place in Leibniz' cosmology for an historical 'act' of creation; Leibniz' creation can in no sense be an historical event. There was no moment of time when the universe was not, for time itself is logically posterior to the existence of the universe. Further, an act of creation would seem to require a first instance in the history of the thing created, and Leibniz, though he inclines toward the view that there is a first moment in time, is by no means dogmatic on this point. [For Leibniz] [t]o speak of anything as prior to the existent universe is to use the term in a purely logical, not temporal sense." For Russell's doubts about Leibniz's non-literal understanding of God's act of creation, cf. \textit{op. cit.}, 128.}

These issues notwithstanding, however, Leibniz's vestige view of creation seems to ignore an important point which Leibniz himself notes about occasionalism (and which should apply equally well to his own position). Initially he describes occasionalism as a doctrine according to which "motions now taking place result by virtue of an eternal law once established by God." Leibniz himself accepts that God's decrees are eternal, which means that this eternal law by definition continues to exist in the present. But if this is the case, then the need for substances to act as the means for the present execution of God's past decrees seems to be obviated. As a matter of fact, Bayle raises just this point against Leibniz's critique of occasionalism, and Arnauld raises the same point in defence of that doctrine.\footnote{For Bayle's assessment, cr. "Clarification of Bayle's Difficulties", L 494, G IV 520. For Arnauld's criticism, cf. \textit{Arnauld to Leibniz}, 4 March 1687 (G II 84ff.).} On the other hand, for the reasons just urged against the objection that Leibniz's vestige view may involve placing God in temporal (if not spatial) proximity to creation, Bayle's and Arnauld's objections may ultimately miss their mark.

Nonetheless, from the occasionalist's viewpoint perhaps the single most significant problem with Leibniz's vestige view is the theological one implied by the notion of a divine vestige in non-divine things. Taken literally, the vestige of which Leibniz speaks is a vestige of God, and for the occasionalist this fact dooms Leibniz's position on active substance to a paganism or an occultism. In the eyes of these Cartesians, Leibniz's attempt to provide nature with autonomy goes too far: it leads, effectively, to the divinization of nature. As Malebranche puts this point:

\begin{quote}
For were they to continue existing though God no longer continued willing them to be, they would be independent; and indeed, it should be
\end{quote}
noted, they would be so independent that God could no longer destroy them.\(^{35}\)

Recall that the divinization of nature is precisely the danger which at the outset of *On Nature Itself* Leibniz reports as the chief concern of the occasionalist. It now appears as if he himself may succumb to that danger, at least in respect of his account of God's act of creation of the world. If Leibniz's vestige view of creation holds and God creates things with the degree of autonomy which Leibniz wishes for his creatures, then for occasionalism this is *de facto* paganism.

### IV. The Vestige View vs. Continual Creation

So far we have shown how Leibniz's vestige view of God's creative act is employed to support his view of substance as an inherently active being possessed of its own dynamic force. Let us now contrast the vestige view with the doctrine of creation espoused by Leibniz's chief metaphysical rivals on the issue of force-in-substance, the occasionalists. As I hope to show, seeing how ill-accommodated their view of creation is to Leibniz's doctrine of substance serves to reinforce how well suited the vestige view really is to Leibniz's position.

Underpinning Leibniz's metaphysics of active and autonomous substance is a view of creation as a singular or one-off event which, once complete or past, fades away in the explanation of the actions of things and is replaced by a resident force within substances. In stark contrast, Malebranche makes the denial of a one-off act of creation in the past the very cornerstone of his denial of force within substances. In effect he repudiates the position contained in Leibniz's vestige view that creation is a once-for-all event of which there are consequent inevitable effects: "Creation," Malebranche writes, "does not pass, because the conservation of creatures is - on God's part - simply a continuous creation, a single volition subsisting and operating continuously."\(^{36}\) On the occasionalist doctrine, the moment of creation never passes; for since no being (other than the infinite God) can ever entail its own existence, any being (other than God) that continues in existence must be being continually re-created by another being. Thus, any 'new' moment of a thing's existence is tantamount to its creation anew or its re-creation by God.

\(^{35}\) DMR VII 114, OC XII 158.

\(^{36}\) DMR VII 115, OC XII 160. Further: "'The moment of creation has passed!' But if this moment does not pass, then you are in a spot, and will have to yield. Therefore take note. God wills that a certain kind of world exist. His will is omnipotent, and this world is thus created. Let God no longer will there to be a world, and it is thereby annihilated. For the world assuredly depends on the will of the creator. If the world subsists, it is because God continues to will its existence. Thus, the conservation of creatures is, on the part of God, nothing but their continued creation. I say on the part of God who acts. For on the part of creatures there appears to be a difference, since by the act of creation they pass from nothingness to being, whereas by the act of conservation they continue to be. But in essence the act of creation does not cease, because in God creation and conservation are but a single volition which, consequently, is necessarily followed by the same effects" (DMR VII 112, OC XII 156-57). This is effectively Descartes' account of creation's relation to finite existence, cf. *Meditations on First Philosophy* III (AT VII 48-49).
How does Leibniz regard the doctrine of continual creation? Anyone familiar with his writings knows that he frequently talks about it. It certainly appears in *On Nature Itself*, where it is presented as follows:

Motion, [Sturm] says, is merely the successive existence of the thing moved in different places. However, it does not hereby exclude a moving force. For in the present moment of its motion, a body is not merely in a place of the same size as itself, but it also has a tendency or urge toward changing its place, so that its future state follows from its present one, *per se*, by the force of nature. Otherwise the body A which is in motion would be no different at the present moment from the body B which is at rest, and it would follow from the opinion of the distinguished man that there would be no way of distinguishing between bodies.\(^{37}\)

At least as far as this passage goes, Leibniz does not in fact reject continual creation. Supposing it were true that motion is "merely the successive existence of the thing moved in different places," he writes, this would still not "exclude a moving force." To exclude the notion of a moving force in created things considerations beyond continual creation are needed. For whatever the merits of that doctrine, for Leibniz it leaves untouched the question of the very identity of the existing substances which are in motion and are continually being re-created. This argument against Sturm is based on the very impossibility of there being things on the Cartesian account of matter as the 'dead' or non-force-endowed continuum of extension. Leibniz argues that in the Cartesian notion of matter as a fundamentally undifferentiated continuum of extension there is no criterion of identity for things, and thus there are no things that could be capable of motion. As Leibniz sees the issue, force is what satisfies this identity requirement. It is not clear, however, how or that this argument works. Leibniz simply fails to spell out exactly how the possession by X of a force or tendency at any given moment helps identify or distinguish X from any other thing in the continuum. Rather, he simply states the location of force within nature automatically provides creation with an identity, form, nature, and thus with thinghood; but the logical connection between force and identity remains obscure.\(^{38}\)

These considerations aside, however, the fact remains that on continual creation existence from one moment to the next is effected by God,\(^{39}\) whereas on the vestige view future moments of a substance's existence follow from an initial 'state' of that substance which is 'big' with that future. This fundamental discrepancy seems to be ignored by

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\(^{37}\) L 505, G IV 512-13.

\(^{38}\) Loemker puts this point as follows: "Leibniz's argument that we have no criterion for individual differences and change without an intrinsic force seems to have full effect against all purely logical and mathematical analyses of the physical world. But it is not clear how it establishes an internal force in addition to motion" (L 508 n. 13).

Leibniz in this (rather typical) attempt to accommodate his own vestige position to a position radically opposed to it.\(^{40}\) Still, let us follow him in his endeavour to square his doctrine that substances contain their own principles of change with the doctrine of continual creation. In *On Nature Itself*, his next move is his claim that a thing's existence "here and now" is as much "due to God" as it is to that thing's existence prior to the here and now, though he adds the important qualifier that this existence is due to God "insofar as [a thing] involve[s] some degree of perfection:"

[Sturm] adds that the existence of matter through different moments of time is to be ascribed to the divine will; why not then, he asks, also ascribe to the same being the fact that it exists here and now? I reply that this is undoubtedly due to God, as are all other things insofar as they involve some degree of perfection. But just as that first and universal cause which conserves all things does not destroy but rather supports the natural permanence of a thing which comes into existence and the perseverance in existence once bestowed upon it, so this same cause will not destroy, but rather confirm, the natural efficacy of a thing which is set in motion, and the perseverance in action once impressed upon it.\(^{41}\)

This further attempt at reconciling continual creation and the vestige view appears to fail, for this statement - especially if taken literally - lands Leibniz deeply in the occasionalist camp. After all, it is a fundamental Leibnizian tenet that the 'degree of perfection' of a thing is the extent to which that thing acts.\(^{42}\) Thus, if a thing's perfection or action is "due to God" (as opposed to itself) then we have a *de facto* occasionalism in which God does all the work. The question here is what sense can be made of the idea that God's conservation is a "support" for the "natural permanence of a thing which comes into existence." On the one hand, it is clear that this "support" is not be identified with a thing's "natural permanence". On the other hand, does it make any sense to speak of a natural permanence requiring 'support'? The expression 'natural permanence' already implies the independence for nature which Leibniz believes he has already established; it is an expression designed, as it were, to keep God at a distance.\(^{43}\) This we contrast with the occasionalist view, by which God's support, in the form of eternal volitions, is precisely what is 'natural' and permanent in nature.\(^{44}\)

40 Despite the fact that he embarks on a *de facto* treatment of continual creation, Leibniz actually claims to forestall discussion of that view in *On Nature Itself*. He writes: "Motion, [Sturm] says, is merely the successive existence of the thing moved in different places. Let us concede this for the present, though it is not entirely satisfactory " (L 505, G IV 512). Later we are told simply that "this is not the place to discuss [continual creation]" (L 506, G IV 515).

41 L 506, G IV 514.

42 Cf., e.g. *Discourse* §15, where Leibniz defines action as the exertion or exercise of power or virtue.

43 This distancing of God from nature is definitive of Leibniz's deism. The Malebranchean response is as follows: "It is God Himself who is now in our midst, not as a mere onlooker or observer of our good and bad actions, but as the principle of our society, the bond of our friendship, the soul, as it were, of the exchanges and discussions we have with one another" (DMR VII 121).

44 Cf. LO 662, OC III 212-13, where Malebranche says that the pagan's 'nature' or 'natural law' is in fact God's action. Cf. Descartes' similar use of 'nature' at AT VII 80.
Does Leibniz's apparent desire to accept the doctrine of continual creation jeopardize his attempts to keep divine incursions into nature at bay? I believe that the notion of God supporting the natural permanence of things is a contradiction in Leibnizian terms, resolvable only if a greater, occasionalist-like dependence of nature upon God is admitted. And to this Leibniz appears to be led. God, he continues, supports the continuation or "perseverance" of a thing once existence has been bestowed upon it. Next, "just as" God supports all this, so he "confirms" the "natural efficacy of a thing." In this passage, 'support' can, one assumes, be taken to mean "confirm", for God's operation either in the case of a thing's natural permanence, or in the case of that thing's natural efficacy, is said to be the same, given that a thing's natural permanence just is its natural efficacy. Earlier, Leibniz claims that both of these aspects of the 'thing', i.e. permanence and efficacy, are the very nature or substance of the thing which make that thing a conservable thing in the first place. In other words, on the vestige view these 'aspects' (for want of a better word) are deemed by Leibniz to be the conditions of God's conserving act; for this reason alone they cannot now be stated to be what God conserves.

So much for Leibniz's treatment of continual creation in On Nature Itself. Casting our nets beyond that work, in order to obtain a more general sense of Leibniz's position on continual creation, we find that the problems attending his attempt to square his own view of substance with occasionalism's view of creation become even more pronounced. Consider two further encounters with occasionalism and its doctrine of continual creation. This first is with Malebranche's spokesperson Lelong:

By the force which I give to substances, I understand nothing else but a state from which another state follows, if nothing prevents it. But I admit that one state does not follow another, without God intervening through a continual production of perfections. And force is one of the principle perfections which, if removed, would leave almost nothing behind, or rather nothing at all. And I dare say that without force there would be no substance and one would fall into the opinion of Spinoza, according to whom creatures are but fleeting modifications.

T.M. Lennon, in his "Philosophical Commentary" on Malebranche's Search After Truth, goes so far as to state that this passage "seems to add nothing beyond occasionalism." In many respects, it is hard to avoid such a conclusion. Leibniz begins, characteristically, with the assertion that X₂ follows from X₁, i.e. a substance's state '2' follows from that substance's state '1', "if nothing prevents it." But then comes the admission that X₂ follows from X₁ only if God intervenes! What is more, God does this continually, through the continual production of force! Now, this clearly places the burden of efficient causality on God's shoulders, not on X. X₁, in other words, lacks the productive agency which gives rise to X₂. This admission clearly contradicts the vestige view which affirms just the opposite, namely, the independence of force from God.

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45 For Descartes' view of the 'natural permanence' of substances, cf. his "Synopsis of the Meditations" (AT VII 14); and his Principles of Philosophy II §37 (AT VIII A 62).
46 Leibniz to Lelong, 5 February 1712 ® 421).
47 LO 848, n.34.
Towards the end of his career Leibniz attempts once again to square his doctrine of pre-established harmony with occasionalism. Yet again, however, he grants too much:

When I speak of the force and the action of creatures, I understand that each creature is presently big with its future state, and that there follows naturally a certain train, if nothing prevents it; and that Monads, which are the true and unique substances, cannot be prevented naturally in their internal determination, since they contain the representation of everything external. But I do not say by this that a creature's future state follows from its preceding state without God's concourse, and I am rather of the opinion that conservation is a continual creation, with changes conforming to order. Thus, Father Malebranche could perhaps approve the pre-established harmony without renouncing his hypothesis, which holds that God is the sole actor.48

Here, Leibniz claims that he and Malebranche find themselves on common metaphysical ground in virtue of his (Leibniz's) acceptance of continual creation. But close examination reveals the high price Leibniz must pay for this common ground. The presence of force in a substance, he says, is equivalent to that substance's being 'big' with its future, and it is in a substance's 'bigness' with its future that we best grasp Leibniz's idea that a substance possesses force. By a substance's or monad's being big with its future Leibniz means that the monad is fundamentally a vibrant and dynamic thing actively realizing its own existence, as it were; it is not a static or dead and dependent entity. We just saw this expressed in On Nature Itself: "in the present moment of its motion, a body is not merely in a place of the same size as itself, but it also has a tendency or urge toward changing its place, so that its future state follows from its present one, per se, by the force of nature." The parallel of this in the present context is Leibniz's claim that from any substance's present state "there follows naturally a certain train [of future states], if nothing prevents it." Therein lies its autonomy or force, and it is not difficult to grasp how easily all of this accords with the vestige view of creation. However, what Leibniz grants to substance in one breath, he concedes to occasionalism in the next. For he next tells us that something other than nature itself is required if a substance's future states are to follow from its present one. This additional element is God's concourse or continual creation. Evidently, then, the activity of things requires divine activity. Leibniz goes on to define that activity:

I think that God is the sole substance who is the immediate external object of minds, and who is capable of acting on them, in metaphysical rigour These modifications in our minds are always a natural consequence of those already in us, as the present modifications of matter are a natural consequence of the preceding modifications of matter. But the passage

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48 Leibniz to Bourguet, 22 March 1714 ® 471-72, G III 566-67).
from one state to the other occurs always through the intervention of God, who produces all perfection in us.\footnote{Sketch of a letter by Leibniz on Malebranche's \textit{Dialogue Between a Christian Philosopher and a Chinese Philosopher on the Existence and Nature of God}, 1715 [R 490, Bod. LHS 105-06].}

Once again, this talk of "the intervention of God" as a requisite for the activity of created substances seems to land Leibniz too much in the occasionalist camp. This passage, and most of the others just cited in this section, appear in Leibniz's later writings. Clearly they are all attempts to reconcile his view of substance with the view of continual creation underpinning occasionalism. But it does not appear as if these attempts ultimately succeed. Continual creation entails simply too great an incursion into nature by God. By contrast, despite the problems of the vestige view of creation, it seems far better suited to Leibniz's doctrine of active, autonomous substance.\footnote{Catherine Wilson (op. cit. 4) puts this point in even stronger terms: "The scholastic doctrine of continual creation, which says that the world does not persist but is recreated from moment to moment in slightly different configuration, is the central prop of this doctrine [of theo-mechanism]; it constitutes as well one response to the continuum problem. And the entire apparatus of Leibniz's metaphysics, with its forms, forces, natures, and continuities, is directed against this artifice." To this we might add that, given that the doctrine of continual creation is central to occasionalism, therefore "the entire apparatus of Leibniz's metaphysics, with its forms, forces, natures, and continuities, is directed against" occasionalism.}

\section*{V. Conclusion}

I shall not attempt to unravel further Leibniz's 'real' creationist metaphysics as he attempts to define it in the face of the doctrine of continual creation. \textit{On Nature Itself} does not really provide much further assistance in clarifying the precise nature of God's creative activity. At best, that and other works teach us that Leibniz has what we have called a 'vestige' view of creation, and that this model underpins a world of force-endowed substances. This model of creation clearly stands in an uneasy relation to the doctrine of continual creation underpinning occasionalism's world of force-deprived substances.\footnote{For a different view, which holds the doctrine of continual creation to be an essentially unproblematic point of convergence for Malebranche and Leibniz, cf. Jacques Jalabert's "Leibniz et Malebranche," in \textit{Les études philosophique} 3 [1981], 285-86.} As for Leibniz's pronouncements on continual creation in other writings, they do little to clarify the issue and much to confuse it. In fact, were we to pursue the matter in greater detail, there is evidence to suggest that Leibniz does not have any consistent position on the relation of his own to the occasionalist account of creation.\footnote{Others have noted Leibniz's ambivalent relation to this doctrine. Loemker (L 104, n. 25), for instance, notes its favorable reception in Leibniz's early period (cf. Leibniz's letter to Jacob Thomasius, April 20/30 1669 [G IV 174]), and contrasts it with Leibniz's subsequent disdain in his correspondence with de Volder (cf. letter of March 24/April 3 1699 [G II 168-69]).} Insofar as generalization on this subject is possible, then, what the foregoing considerations point to is the conclusion that continual creation is not a doctrine which Leibniz can easily accept, and that the vestige view which we have discerned in his writings is much more in concert with the general thrust of his philosophy. On the vestige model force-in-substance is an impressed vestige or effect of God that exists, endures,
and operates outside the ambit of God's creative activity. This picture seems to accord too much with Leibniz's fundamental belief in the autonomy of nature not to qualify as the doctrine of creation which best supports his metaphysics of active substance.

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The Great Connexion: Hume's Metaphysical Logic Of Belief-
Constructed Causation

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I. Introduction

It is a commonplace that Hume the philosopher\(^1\) is essentially Hume the sceptic. Hume deploys his skeptical arguments in both epistemology and ethics.

In the epistemological context, Hume argues that we can have no rational knowledge of matters of fact, reason in its strict or a priori sense yielding intuitive or demonstrative knowledge only of relations among ideas. Rather, our knowledge of matters of fact involves our applying a psychologically constituted relation of causal necessity to empirical elements. And while these elements, impressions and ideas\(^2\), manifest relations of contiguity, succession and repetition, they do not reveal that crucial relation of power or necessary connection essential to causal inference, and to its mental source and form, 'belief'. Accordingly, the relation of power or necessary connection is somehow formed and felt by the mind, and applied adventitiously to experience hence articulated as cause-to-effect or effect-from-cause, as the idea of 'effect', or 'cause', is inferred from a 'present impression' of the other, respectively. As Hegel puts it, "Necessity is thus not justified by experience, but we carry it into experience; it is accidentally arrived at by us and is subjective merely."\(^3\) While we regard the empirical causal relation as necessary, whether

\(^{1}\) Hume's definitive work is, of course, his *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Here, we shall use the Oxford second edition of the *Treatise*, edited by L.A. Selby-Bigge and revised by P.H. Nidditch, reprinted in 1985. We shall follow scholarly practice, referring to the Treatise as, bracketed 'T' + page number of quotations and references, e.g., (T 103). Also, we shall use the combined edition, *David Hume: Enquiries concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 1902. We shall refer to these Enquiries as bracketed '(EU 95)' and '(EM 207)' noting page numbers as illustrated. Paragraphs are numbered in square brackets.

\(^{2}\) Hume, but neither Locke nor Berkeley, distinguishes 'impressions' from 'ideas'. Indeed, Hume claims thereby to "restore the word, idea, to its original sense, from which Mr. Locke had perverted it, in making it stand for all our perceptions". And by the term 'impression' Hume "would not be understood to express the manner, in which our lively perceptions are produced in the soul, but merely the perceptions themselves; for which there is no particular name in the English or any other language, that I know of" (T2, n.1). Suffice it at present to note that by impressions Hume means perceptions entering our consciousness "with most force and violence" (T1), by ideas "the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning".

of 'outer sense' and physical or of 'inner sense' and mental, its 'necessity' is not intrinsic, but psychological and customary or habitual: we can never perceive either bodies or minds to act from an inherent power binding them to their effects in an absolute tie. Hence, from the side of the empirically given, Hume says, any 'cause' can produce any 'effect' and any 'effect' can proceed from any 'cause'. In this way, all empirical or causal judgments are synthetic (e.g., 'fire burns wood') and can be denied without contradiction. And accordingly, this constructed causal necessity is itself contingent as empirically applied to the atomistic sequences of impressions and their ideas.

In the ethical context, Hume again argues that reason, restricted a priori to relations among ideas and empirically to relations among matters of fact, cannot either motivate ethical conduct or yield moral judgment. Only feelings of approbation or disapproval, deriving from a universal sympathy, can move us to act; and these feelings themselves, taken as focussed on matters of fact, constitute our moral judgments. Reason is both passive and merely auxiliary in moral life: it can identify situations calling for ethical response, and yield causal knowledge. But reason cannot yield knowledge of the moral 'ought', 'right' or 'wrong'. These, with causal necessity, are felt or believed.

Hume completes his scepticism with this rejection of both material and spiritual substance, taken as objective and subjective substrata respectively grounding 'outer' and 'inner' sense. Proof here would be empirical; and no sense impressions of substrata exist to give meaning to ideas of such substances. But we do have sense impressions of collections of impressions of 'outer' and 'inner' sense. And so, in each case, the idea of substance is only the idea of a collection or 'bundle' of sense impressions. Notwithstanding, we believe in the existence of objective continuants or bodies, and of subjective continuants or minds/persons.

What, then, is the dynamic of Humean scepticism? It is surely the opposition generated as Hume argues that, against reason, we stubbornly believe that constructed causality is independently real, that moral judgment and conduct are objective, and that bodies and mind/persons are real entities in themselves. Hume thinks this opposition to be both incomprehensible and beyond remedy, although irrationally we do and must believe as he explains. Hume the philosopher is baffled by this opposition; but Hume the man accepts it. In this way, Hume distinguishes and separates the theoretical life of the

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4 Hume paid dearly for his scepticism to which he was and is reduced. Even Mill, his great disciple, wrote this: "Hume possessed powers of a very high order; but regard for truth formed no part of his character. He reasoned with surprising acuteness; but the object of his reasonings was, not to obtain truth, but to show that it is unattainable. His mind, too, was completely enslaved by a taste for ... that literature which ... seeks only to excite emotion". And Dr. Warburton wrote to Hume's publisher that "a wickeder mind, and mor obstinately bent on public mischief, I never knew". Several contemporary works, treating Hume holistically, would move Hume beyond unleavened scepticism. Notable among them are Barry Stroud's Hume Routledge: London and New York, 1977), Donald Livingston's Hume's Philosophy of Common Life (University of Chicago, 1984), and Fred Wilson's Hume's Defence of Causal Inference (University of Toronto, 1997). But none of these scholars arrives at the causal metaphysics argued here, and in particular at the causality of the crucial impression - idea relation. We shall discuss them, and others, as relevant and in due course.
philosopher from the practical life of the man of affairs: "Be a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man".

Our question now is this: can Hume the philosopher be reduced to Hume the sceptic, the psychological epistemologist, whose accounts of causality and belief seem utterly mentalistic, and to relate these philosophical categories only contingently to something 'objective' or otherwise real? The answer is surely no: it would be strange if Hume, a great philosopher and the greatest of the classical empiricists, could not provide resources at least to enlarge the context in which we might place, understand and even assess his scepticism. For, as will be argued here, it cannot stand alone, or indeed prevail.

We must invoke Hume the metaphysician, but not dogmatically to impose metaphysics on the archetypal 'anti-metaphysician' as so many, like A.J. Ayer⁵, treat him. Rather, Hume thinks himself a metaphysician who "must cultivate true metaphysics with some care, in order to destroy the false and adulterate".⁶ Thus, while, Hume rejects the transcendentalism of Plato, and the rationalism of Spinoza, he imparts an unfailling sense of the universal as borne by his principle Custom. But more directly and concretely, Hume regards his enquiries into necessary connection or causality as metaphysical: "There are no ideas which occur in metaphysics more obscure and uncertain, than those of power, force, energy, or necessary connection of which it is at every moment necessary for us to treat in all our disquisitions. We shall, therefore, endeavour, ... to fix, if possible, the precise meaning of these terms, and thereby remove some part of that obscurity which is so much complained of in this species of philosophy" (EU 61-2).

Now, if Hume's constructionist or belief doctrine of causality does, or is intended to remove some of the "obscurity" of these ideas, obscurity yet remains. However, while he does not or cannot elaborate, Hume does give that obscurity an import and distinctive metaphysical structure, to which even the best of current scholarship is oblivious. Moreover, a certain causal, and hence metaphysical, precision here can be drawn from a careful reading of Hume's texts, that precision being intended by Hume, as the above excerpt from EU clearly shows.

We mean this: it is a mistake, made commonly by philosophers and scholars, to think that causality in Hume reduces at once to belief or constructed causality alone. Ayer conspicuously thinks this, for example.⁷ And we shall see that Hume himself misleadingly promotes this reduction. However, as we argue in Parts III and IV of this paper, we find in Hume at least two kinds and levels of causality that stand as conditions for the possibility of his doctrine of causality as constructed from belief. These we may

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⁵ A.J. Ayer, Hume (Oxford, 1980). The words 'being', 'existence', 'metaphysics' do not appear in Ayer's index, although Hume has doctrines concerning all of them.
⁶ (EU 12).
⁷ Ayer (Ch. IV., "Cause and Effect"), trying to explain why Hume, having claimed that "there can be no such thing as chance in the world", thereby contradicts "his having been at considerable pains to show (T78ff.) that the generally received maxim that 'whatever begins to exist, must have a cause' is neither intuitively nor demonstratively certain", writes this: "The only explanation seems to be that the propositions that 'every event has a cause' and that 'the course of nature continues always uniformly the same' were regarded by Hume in the light of natural beliefs. They cannot be proved, but nature, is so constituted that we cannot avoid accepting them" (pp. 70-71, "beliefs" italicized).
call *original* causality -- 'impression-to-idea' -- and *aboriginal* causality -- 'Custom' or 'Nature' -- such that Custom/Nature grounds impression-to-idea which in turn grounds belief-constructed causality. Metaphysically, then, we have the cause (aboriginal) of a cause (original) of a cause (belief-constructed). Now, as in Hegel's words we "carry it [belief-causality] into experience", the meeting of the subjectively constructed causality or necessity with the atomic sequences of impressions ('outer' and 'inner') and their ideas (which empirical sequences as such can manifest *no* inherently necessary connection) is alone the focus of causal contingency, synthetic causal propositions, and thus of Hume's scepticism. But, we shall argue, no contingency or scepticism infects either original causality (impression-to-idea) or aboriginal causality, the metaphysical ground of original and of constructed causality. Hence, while contingency in Hume has a certain nature and scope, it is also contained and limited by the metaphysical necessity of original and of aboriginal causality, which indeed it presupposes.

II. The Nature, Scope And Limits Of Contingency

This paper will place great weight on original causality as manifested in the impression-to-idea relation. The reader will have noted that, in making our preliminary claim of three levels of causation in Hume, we place original causality between aboriginal and belief-constructed causation. Evidently, then, original causation *mediates* the determination by Custom of the great plurality of beliefs, 'customs' or 'habits' informing what Livingston emphasizes as our 'common life'. As Hume, in the opening section (Pt. I) of Book I of the *Treatise* moves to establish the causality of impression-to-idea, he claims that their "constant conjunction, in such an infinite number of instances, can never arise from chance; but clearly proves a dependence of the impressions on the ideas, or of the ideas on the impressions" (T4-5). In view of our denying above that contingency and scepticism apply to either original or aboriginal causation, it now behooves us to determine briefly the nature and scope of contingency as functions of belief-constructed causation.

In his *Treatise*, Hume identifies contingency with chance, and defines chance as "nothing real in itself ... merely the negation of a cause" (T125). But in his *Enquiry*, he

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8 Distinguishing impressions of "Sensation" from those of "Reflection" (T7-8), Hume claims that the "first kind arises in the soul originally from unknown causes", which latter Hume leaves to anatomists and natural philosophers (T8). Since, for Hume, all ideas arise ultimately from impressions of sense, we call the impression-to-idea relations "original causality". Now, while Hume leaves the physical origins of sense impressions to anatomists and physicists, it is abundantly clear that 'Custom' or 'Nature' metaphysically grounds the impression-to-idea relation and thus belief, its effect. Hence, to adopt a word where "original" is pre-empted, we call Custom/Nature "aboriginal" cause to capture Hume's sense when he speculates that "Perhaps, we can push our enquiries no farther or pretend to give the cause of this cause [Custom]; but must rest contented with it as the ultimate principle, which we can assign ... (EU 75). Finally, we capitalize 'Custom' and its equivalent 'Nature' to distinguish this cause in its aboriginal sense from Hume's use of custom(s) and habit(s) (uncapitalized) to mean the many 'beliefs' by which we live at the level of constructed causality. In so doing, we follow Hume who himself at times uppercases CUSTOM (and HABIT).
writes: "Though there be no such thing as chance in the world, our ignorance of the real cause of any event has the same influence on the understanding and begets a like species of belief or opinion" (EU 56). Chance, then, involves the apparent negation of a cause where, nevertheless, the mind is determined to believe in, or to expect, equal outcomes. Hume accordingly discusses both chance and causality within probability or the quantifying and proportioning of belief in respect of two or more possible outcomes. Thus, whether the mind is determined by the apparent negation of a cause (chance), or by constructed causes, it *is* determined to believe in outcomes probabilistically. Since belief involves the feeling of power or necessary connection involved in the constructionist ascription of causality to experience, it is evident that, for Hume, contingency or chance is not ultimate, but is enclosed within belief itself. Contingency is hence subject to the conditions of belief given by original and aboriginal causality as proposed in Part I. We shall pursue them in Parts III and IV.

For Hume, probability involves a mix of chance and of causality: in chance, the mind is determined to believe indifferently in equally possible outcomes; in causality, the mind is determined to believe in terms of relative frequency of actual causes. Let us elaborate, using Hume's example of throwing a die.

The die has six sides; we assume that the die is not loaded, and that four sides have identical dots or patterns. Now the mind is determined by chance to believe indifferently that each of the sides has, as such, an equal chance with each of the others of turning up. The indifference of the belief, which here is sum of six beliefs, lies in the negation, in each case, of a cause (or loading) which added to the side, would make it turn up, and destroy the indifference of the chance belief. But note that the chance belief occurs within the causal beliefs that: (i) The die is thrown or caused to fall by its gravity, solidity, etc.; (ii) the die falls in a form of trajectory; (iii) the die falls so as to turn up one side. Hence, the contingent belief that any side can turn up is made possible and bounded by the causal belief that one side must turn up in the throw.

Of course, other factors enter to qualify the contingent belief in terms of probability. From the standpoint of the sides of the die taken *only* as sides, no probability can arise. Hence, the belief in pure chance is the sum of six equal beliefs, each 'negating' a (loading) cause. But when we consider the sides in terms of an identical pattern on four sides, and another identical pattern on two, the causal principle which previously directed us to all six sides with equal force, each side yielding one-sixth of the total, now directs us to pit two force-sums, 4/6 (1/6+1/6+1/6+1/6) and 2/6 (1/6+1/6), against each other: the inferior belief destroys the superior belief by half its force. In this way the summed belief in pure chance divides and proportions into the probabilistic belief that, 2:1, a side bearing the prevailing pattern will turn up. As Hume says, we cannot know which side will turn up; but we *do* know that a side bearing the prevailing pattern is twice as likely to turn up as is another side of the die.

What, then, is the scope of contingency or chance? Since Hume first defines chance as the "negation" of a cause and later, denying chance, clarifies "negation" as "ignorance" of a cause, contingency appears where we do not and cannot perceive a cause or
necessary connection. Two domains are involved here: first, we have the domains of sense impressions (outer and inner) in atomic sequences (spatial/temporal for outer, temporal for inner sense) thus excluding inherent causal necessity. Second, we have the domains of ideas which exactly copy their original impressions of outer and inner sense, except for having a lesser force, and hence also arise in a temporally atomistic sequence likewise excluding inherent causality or necessary connection. But contingency, for Hume, does not and cannot arise in the domains of original and aboriginal causality per se or as themselves causally related, these denials being argued in Parts III and IV of this paper. Rather, contingency or chance appears to confront only belief or constructionist causality as carried into the domains of atomistic experience, outer and inner. Finally, here note this: when Hume denies the reality of chance, and clarifies 'negation' as 'ignorance' of a cause, he has to mean that a cause, though unperceived, does exist. In claiming this, he violates and exceeds metaphysically his otherwise relentless and rigorous application of Berkeley's thesis that 'to be is to be perceived'. For he now clearly implies that a causal or necessary connection, though not perceived in the atomistic domains of sense impressions and their corresponding ideas, exists and is nonetheless somehow present. This connection Hume ultimately invokes as a 'pre-established harmony':

Here, then, is a kind of pre-established harmony between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas; and though the powers and forces by which the former is governed, be wholly unknown to us; yet our thoughts and conceptions have still, we find, gone on in the same train with the other works of nature. Custom is that principle, by which this correspondence has been effected; so necessary to the subsistence of our species; and the regulation of our conduct, in every circumstance and occurrence of human life.  

In this passage, Hume (i) states a direct relation between his ultimate principle, Custom, and the entire human fabric of belief and action, including morality as "the regulation of our conduct"; (ii) states this relation causally, such that Custom is, for the human intellect, the ultimate cause "by which this correspondence has been effected".

Hume also invokes "powers and forces", which though "wholly unknown to us", nevertheless govern "the course of nature" such that "our thoughts and conceptions [go] on in the same train with the other works of nature". These powers are those of bodies

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9 Hume's view of contingency is remarkably similar to that of Spinoza, to whom Hume is increasingly related and compared. Spinoza holds that "a thing can be called contingent only in respect of a defect in our knowledge" (Eth. II, Prop. 33, Sch. 1), clarifying this later in Df. III of Eth. IV: III. "Particular things I call contingent in so far as, while attending to their essence alone, we find nothing [no cause] which necessarily posits their existence, or which necessarily excludes it". And metaphysically, Spinoza rejects contingency (Eth. I, Prop. XXIX), as does Hume. For those interested in Spinoza - Hume, the journal, Hume Studies, founded in 1975, contains several papers: R. Popkin's "Hume and Spinoza" (Vol. 5, No. 1); W. Klevers "Hume contra Spinoza?" (Vol. 16, No. 1); F.J. Leavitt's "Hume Against Spinoza and Aristotle" (Vol. 17, No. 2); A.C. Baiers "David Hume: Spinozist" (Vol. 19, No. 2). We shall return briefly to Hume-Spinoza, a longer treatment exceeding our scope here.

10 Hume, (EU 55-56).
affecting bodies and minds (as when we, looking, involuntarily perceive fire to burn wood), and of minds affecting bodies (as when we will to move a limb) and minds (as when we will to calculate, or to convince another mind). These are the physical and mental domains where activity is expressed in synthetic propositions, and where Hume lays bare what Russell calls the "tragic" problem of induction. In short, these are the domains into which we carry belief-constructed causality, the ultimate cause of which is, for man, Custom. As noted above, however, we shall argue that original causality (impression-to-idea) mediates the ultimate metaphysical action of Custom in generating the entire fabric of belief-constructed causation. In so arguing, we hope to shed light on the metaphysical relation of Custom to beliefs (e.g., that wood augments flame), and hence to illumine somewhat the "secret powers" which Hume repeatedly attributes to bodies and minds even though these powers be "wholly unknown to us".

Now, before we go on to investigate belief-constructed causality in Part III, we should ask why scholars typically reduce all causality in Hume to belief. We have seen Ayer, writing relatively late, doing just this (n.7). Gasking, writing earlier, generally discusses what Hume would understand as synthetic causal beliefs when he considers "some typical statements of causal connection - 'The train-crash was due to a buckled rail; 'Vitamin B deficiency causes beri-beri'...") Gasking does not struggle with impression-to-idea or Custom at all in his paper. McNabb, writing the Hume article in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, tells us: "Hume found that all inferences from the existence of one object to that of another are non-demonstrative and based on the relations of cause and effect. An exception to any causal connection is clearly imaginable; so is a pure fluke or a sudden change in the course of nature. Only by experience can we know whether any of these occur". McNabb does consider impression - idea, but he mistakenly treats this distinctive relation as non-causal, as we show in Part IV. Several articles on Hume's two definitions of 'cause' (to be noted shortly) thereby restrict themselves to belief (or sceptical) causality. We need not multiply illustrations of this scholarly reduction of Humean causation to belief as a posteriori synthetic.

To answer our question, at least in part, Hume himself is significantly responsible for his reduction by scholars to philosophical sceptic par excellence. He himself often writes as though all causality is not more than psychological association carried into resisting atomistic domains of outer and inner sense: the elements of these domains in their contiguity, succession and (especially) repetition, somehow externally cause that association as our belief in their (the elements') causal nature.

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For example, it is well known that Hume divides relations into two classes: "such as depend entirely on the ideas, which we compare together, and such as may be chang'd without any change in the ideas" (T69). These relations are a priori and empirical, respectively. In the first class, Hume places "resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality and proportions in quantity or number" (T70). In the second class he places "identity, the situations in time and place, and causation" (T73). As Livingston says, "Relations of the first sort are internally connected to the relata: ... Relations of the second sort are externally connected to the relata: ..." The first are "[t]he only infallible relations" (T79), and are alone "objects of knowledge and certainty" (T70), thereby constituting "the foundation of science" (T73). And the second, in Livingston's words, are "contingent, and propositions describing them are vulnerable to empirical test."14 Clearly, then, Hume here characterizes all causality as empirically contingent, such that all causal propositions are synthetic, confutable and hence merely hypothetical.

Again, Hume's famous two definitions of 'cause', given in both Treatise and Enquiry, taken together, characterize causality as essentially belief-constructed. In the Treatise, Hume introduces these definitions: "There may two definitions be given of this relation, which are only different, by their presenting a different view of the same object, and making us consider it either as a philosophical or as a natural relation; either as a comparison of two ideas, or as an association betwixt them." Hence:

[1] We may define a cause to be 'An object precedent and contiguous to another and where all the objects resembling the former are plac'd in like relations of precedency and contiguity to those objects that resemble the latter.'

Hume continues: "If this definition be esteem'd defective, because drawn from objects foreign to the cause, we may substitute this other definition in its place viz":

[2] 'A CAUSE is an object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it, that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other.' (T169-70).15

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14 Livingston, p. 49. We are indebted to Livingston for having marshalled these texts conveniently for our purpose here.
15 In his Enquiry, Hume renders these definitions as follows: "[Df. 1] Suitable to this experience, therefore, we may define a cause to be an object followed by another, and where all the objects, similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second. Or, in other words, where, if the first object had not been, the second never had existed." [Df. 2]. We may, therefore, suitably to this experience, form another definition of cause; and call it, an object followed by another, and whose appearance always conveys the thought to that other" (EU 76-7). Between these two, Hume makes a direct reference to the operation of belief: "The appearance of a cause always conveys the mind, by a customary [or "instinctive"] transition, to the idea of the effect. Of this also we have experience". As others note, Hume simplifies and abridges his thought and language in the Enquiries. The articles listed in n.13 debate the logic and equivalence of these definitions. Our concern is strictly to show Hume to mislead here by reducing metaphysical to psychological or belief-
We may say that Df. [1] presents the constant conjunction and succession of 'objects' (impressions and their ideas) necessary to generate the impression of a powerful 'cause' enlivening the idea of an 'effect', and thus producing belief in the relation as expressed in Df. [2].

And, finally, we shall go to the Abstract of Hume's treatise for an excellent summary statement of this reductionist tendency in Hume:

Were a man, such as Adam, created in the full vigour of understanding, without experience, he would never be able to infer motion in the second [billiard] ball from the motion and impulse of the first. It is not anything that reason sees in the cause, which makes us infer the effect. Such an inference, were it possible, would amount to a demonstration as being founded merely on the comparison of ideas. But no inference from cause to effect amounts to a demonstration. Of which there is this evident proof. The mind can always conceive any effect to follow from any cause, and indeed any event to follow upon another; whatever we conceive is possible, at least in a metaphysical sense: but wherever a demonstration takes place, the contrary is impossible, and implies a contradiction. There is no demonstration, therefore, for any conjunction of cause and effect. And this is a principle, which is generally allowed by philosophers.

Now, by "experience" here Hume means what he always means: the atomic or divisible sequences of outer and inner impressions and their ideas, manifesting the external relations of contiguity, succession and constant conjunction, and generating that belief which articulates them as 'cause' and 'effect', and is itself adventitious.

In concluding this Part, we note once again two sentences in the above text: (i) "But no influence from cause to effect amounts to a demonstration"; (ii) "There is no demonstration, therefore, for any conjunction of cause and effect". Now, these claims notwithstanding, we shall argue in Part IV that Hume's doctrine of original causality (impression-to-idea) "amounts to" just such a demonstration. And, since original causality functions crucially to generate belief as "revivified" idea, we shall consider it as so functioning, thus working back to impression-to-idea in itself, and then finally as grounded in Custom. Proceeding thus, we can see how belief-constructed causality, applied to 'contingent' phenomena and hence the focus of Hume's scepticism, is made possible and thus limited by original causality itself grounded in aboriginal causality, or Custom.

constructed causation. Hence also note an unmediated Custom rendered as "customary" above, and elsewhere, and having the sense of psychological instinct.

16 Moreover, having stated his two definitions of 'cause' in the Enquiry, Hume writes: "But though both these definitions be drawn from circumstances foreign to the cause, we cannot remedy this inconvenience, or attain any more perfect definition, which may point out that circumstance in the cause, which gives it a connexion with its effect. We have no idea of this connexion' nor even any distinct notion what it is we desire to know, when we endeavour at a conception of it" (EU 77).

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III. Belief-constructed Causality

For Hume, constructed causality is psychological in that the mind's or 'soul's' building of belief, the feeling of power or a necessary connection among phenomena, leads us to call one phenomenon (or impression of 'outer' or 'inner' sense) a 'cause' and another its 'effect'. In a careful analysis found mainly in the *Treatise* (Bk. I, Pt. III), but also in the *Enquiry* (Section VII), Hume arrives at four relations pertaining to apparently contingent phenomena or impressions and their ideas. These relations, taken together, supply the necessary and sufficient conditions generating that belief leading us to ascribe causality to the phenomena: (i) The impressions (e.g., 'fire' and 'burning wood') must be perceived as contiguous or close together; (ii) The impressions must be perceived in temporal succession; (iii) The impressions must be repeatedly perceived as both contiguous and in succession; (iv) The impressions must be perceived as necessarily connected. The three relations of contiguity, succession and repetition pertain to the atomic or discrete phenomena themselves; but, while necessary, they are not sufficient to generate our attributing designations of 'cause' and 'effect' to them. What alone adds sufficiency to these conditions, and enables us to ascribe causality to the impressions, is the feeling of power constituting the relation of necessary connection now applied to the phenomena: 'fire' (cause) - 'burning wood' (effect). That feeling of power is the relational feeling of necessary connection, and it occurs as belief, to which we now turn.

Hume thinks himself the only philosopher in history to ask and to answer the question: What is belief? For Hume definition is the analysis of a whole into its parts: "Complex ideas may, perhaps, be well known by definition, which is nothing but an enumeration of those parts or simple ideas, that compose them" (EU 62). Thus we may understand belief to be a kind of whole, or complex idea, such that to define it is to exhibit its parts. We can say, then, that belief has four parts: (i) an impression; (ii) an idea; (iii) a causal relation between an impression and an idea; (iv) the revivifying of the idea as somehow the effect of the causal relation. Now, the mind must already possess the idea such that when an associated impression forces the mind to think the idea more strongly than was the case, the mind believes the idea in what a commentator calls a "reality feeling". Hume illustrates with the idea of home: I have the idea of home; and when, nearing home, I actually see a landmark (have a present impression of sense), my idea of home is revivified such that I now believe home to be real and imminent. Or, seeing a match applied to wood, I find my mind forced to the idea of the wood's burning such that the idea is strengthened, and I thereby believe that the wood will burn.

17 Of course, 'mind' and 'soul' in Hume are indeed problematic, in as much as he denies the existence of spiritual substance (Treatise, Bk. I, Pt. IV: VI) and material substance (Treatise, Bk. I, Pt. IV: II). Hence, just how the 'mind' or 'soul' can act is a crucial question, and, as such, beyond our scope here. Livingston attributes the 'force and vivacity' of perceptions to mental acts: "Since force and vivacity is an act of the mind and since some degree of force and vivacity is internal to every perception, it follows that all perceptions are internal to acts of mind" (p. 57). We shall criticize Livingston's claim in Pt. IV.

Hume is both careful and consistent in denying that the difference between our believing x and disbelieving y lies in our thinking x to exist, and y not to exist. In the Treatise (Bk. I, Pt. II: VI), Hume clearly anticipates Kant's denial that existence is a property or predicate. Holding that esse est percipi, he denies that any particular impression gives rise to the idea of existence. Hence,"that idea when conjoin'd with the idea of any object, makes no addition to it. Whatever we conceive, we conceive to be existent. Any idea we please to form is the idea of a being; and the idea of a being is any idea we please to form" (T66-67). Moreover, Hume argues that if our believing x were to add a property, we could never believe x, since x would thereby change and cease to be x: "When you wou'd any way vary the idea of a particular object, you can only encrease or diminish its force and vivacity. If you make any other change on it, it represents a different object or impression" (T96). Accordingly, he concludes that "... as belief does nothing but vary the manner, in which we conceive any object, it can only bestow on our ideas an additional force and vivacity" (T96). It follows that to believe x and to disbelieve y is to think them in a different manner, such that they remain x and y: "Nothing is more evident than that those ideas to which we assent, are most strong, firm and vivid, than the loose reveries of a castle builder" (T97). We add now, and emphasize, that belief always occurs in relation to a present impression, outer or inner, as the belief involved concerns, for example, fire burning wood or one's willing to cross the room. Thus belief, whatever it fully is, expresses a kind of inference from what is present to what is absent, from a present impression (fire) to the revivified idea of what is absent, but hence believed (burning wood). And, of course, the inference moves from a present cause to an absent but expected effect, or from a present effect to an absent but remembered cause, temporal succession and precedence being elements in belief as a defined whole.

To continue, Humean belief is a construction leading us to ascribe causality to experience or phenomena in these way: (i) The mind repeatedly experiences the contiguity and succession of phenomena ('fire'-burning wood') moving repeatedly from impression (fire) to impression (burning wood), and then from impression (fire) to idea - note the change - (burning wood) as an association of increasing force, increasingly revivifying the idea. (ii) From repeated associations, in which the mind moves with increasing force from impression to idea, there arises an original impression of power or necessary connection; this arises subjectively, since mere repetition of contiguity in experience cannot generate an original impression. (iii) From that original impression of power or necessary connexion there arises, as its 'copy', the idea of power or necessary connection which is then carried into outer and inner phenomena or experience as the 'cause-effect' relation.

It is now appropriate to let Hume speak for himself on belief causation, and thus we quote a crucial summation from the Enquiry:

It appears, then, that this idea of a necessary connexion among events arises from a number of similar instances, which occur, of the constant

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19 For Hume, the association of present impression with present impression is experience, but not belief. And the association of idea with idea is, if intuitive or demonstrative, reasoning a priori, otherwise memory or arbitrary imagination.
conjunction of these events; nor can that idea ever be suggested by any one of those instances, surveyed in all possible lights and positions. But there is nothing in a number of instances, different from every single instance, which is supposed to be exactly similar; except only that after a repetition of similar instances, the mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant, and to believe that it will exist. This connexion, therefore, which we feel in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression, from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion. Nothing farther is in the case. Contemplate the subject on all sides; you will never find any other origin of that idea. This is the sole difference between one instance, from which we can never receive the idea of connexion, and a number of similar instances, by which it is suggested. The first time a man saw the communication of motion by impulse, as by the shock of two billiard balls, he could not pronounce that the one event was connected: but only that it was conjoined with the other. After he has observed several instances of this nature, he then pronounces them to be connected. What alteration has happened to give rise to this new idea of connexion. Nothing but that he now feels these events to be connected in his imagination, and can readily foretell the existence of one from the appearance of the other. When we say, therefore, that one object is connected with another, we mean only, that they have acquired a connexion in our thought, and give rise to their inference, by which they become proofs of each other's existence: a conclusion, which is somewhat extraordinary; but which seems founded on sufficient evidence. (EU 75-76)

What stands out in this text is Hume's psychological rendering of original causality (impression-to-idea) in belief: "This connexion, therefore, which we feel in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion. Nothing farther is in the case". Note also Hume's psychologizing of his ultimate metaphysical principle and our 'aboriginal cause', Custom, as "this customary transition ...". As well, we stress Hume's characterizing (i) the generation of belief(s) by original causation as "extraordinary" (EU 76) and (ii) the "correspondence" of impression-to-idea as "remarkable" in original causation itself, taken as his "first principle" (T3). Clearly, then, we must distinguish and relate metaphysical and psychological senses of impression-to-idea in original causality: the metaphysical sense of original causality indwells and grounds its generation of belief(s).

To this end, we shall trace a crucial movement in Hume's doctrine of belief-constructed causation as this movement reveals itself in a series of definitions, explicit and implicit, of belief. These occur in the Treatise (Bk. I., Pt. III: VII-VIII), the two sections being entitled "Of the nature of the idea, or belief" (VII) and "Of the causes of belief" (VIII), respectively. All agree that Hume's Treatise is definitive; and he clearly argues the nature of belief more rigorously there than in the later and derived Enquiry
MAXWELL: THE GREAT CONNEXION: HUME'S METAPHYSICAL LOGIC OF BELIEF-CONSTRUCTED CAUSATION

(Sect. V-VII). The same is true for Hume's doctrine of original causality (impression-to-idea) as such, this manifesting itself in our Pt. IV.

Hume first defines belief (or 'opinion') at T96:

So that as belief does nothing but vary the manner in which we conceive any objects, it can only bestow on our ideas an additional force and vivacity. An opinion, therefore, or belief may be most accurately defin'd.

A LIVELY IDEA RELATED TO OR ASSOCIATED WITH A PRESENT IMPRESSION. (Def. 1)

In this definition, Hume asserts a 'relation' or 'association' of an idea with a present impression, but without specifying the nature of that relation at all or as bearing on the idea as 'lively'. Hence, and because further definitions and discussion follow, belief is not "most accurately defin'd" here: the relation is not presented as causal, and moving from impression (cause) to idea (effect). Next, and beginning Section VII ("Of the causes of belief"), Hume grounds belief and this relation causally:

I wou'd willingly establish it as a general maxim in the science of human nature, that when any impression becomes present to us, it not only transports the mind to such ideas as are related to it, but likewise communicates to them a share of its force and vivacity. (T98) (Causal Principle).

Here, in a metaphysical principle lying behind belief, original causality becomes evident as impression-to-idea, such that the '-' here means that the present impression (i) 'transports' the mind to related ideas and (ii) 'communicates' to them a part of its force. This principle passes into what we can term a second definition of belief because of how Hume renders it:

This phenomenon clearly proves, that a present impression with a relation of causation may enliven any idea, and consequently produce belief or assent, according to the precedent definition of it (T101) (Def. 2).

Here, the relation between present impression and idea becomes explicitly causal such that, by enlivening the idea, the impression generates our belief in it. The "phenomenon" by which Hume illustrates is that whereby "the relicts of saints and holy men [present impressions]' 'inliven their [superstitious or religious persons'] devotion [idea], and give them a more intimate and strong conception [idea] of those exemplary lives, which they desire to imitate." Note also that Hume claims more than illustration for this "phenomenon": it "clearly proves" belief as expressing original causation in a virtually intuitive or self-evident form, its logical modality being ,not that of contingency, but of a priori necessity, as we shall argue in Pt. IV.

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In any belief, then, we discern the form of original causation in that a present impression stands in causal relation to an idea of x hence believed. What we may call Def. 3 claims this relation to be "certain":

'Tis certain we must have an idea of every matter of fact which we believe. 'Tis certain, that this idea arises only from a relation to a present impression. 'Tis certain, that the belief super-adds nothing to the idea, but only changes our manner of conceiving it, and renders it more strong and lively. (T101) (Def. 3) (we italicize "certain")

Note the words "arises only from" here. What can they mean at this stage of Hume's thinking? Hume reminds us that: "When we are accustom'd to see two impressions conjoin'd together, the appearance [present impression] or idea of the one immediately carries us to the idea of the other" (T102-103). He also reminds us of "my [first] principle, that all our ideas are deriv'd from correspondent impressions" (T105). Now belief requires constant conjunction such that: "We must in every case have observ'd the same impression in past instances, and have found it to be constantly conjoin'd with some other impression. This is confirmed by such a multitude of experiments, that it admits not of the smallest doubt" (T102).

Before returning to our question about the words "arises only from", let us illustrate the impression - idea relation as Hume intends it in these three latter texts. The "two impressions conjoin'd together" are those of 'fire' and 'burning wood' respectively, occurring such that the impression of fire produces the idea of 'fire', and the impression of 'wood burning' produces the idea of 'wood burning', each idea "correspondent" with its impression. Moreover, we have observed repeated impressions of 'fire' and of 'wood burning' to be "constantly conjoin'd" such that their ideas are constantly conjoined as their respectively corresponding effects.

Returning now to our main text in paragraph 29, let "present impression" = 'fire' now burning, and let "idea" = idea (or image) of 'wood burning'. It is clear from paragraph 29, and from our entire discussion of belief so far, that the idea(s) of 'wood burning' has(have) been caused by repeated impressions of 'wood burning'. Hence, when Hume writes that "this idea [wood burning] arises only from a relation to a present impression [fire now burning]", by "arises only from" he must mean not "is caused by" but "is recalled by" the association, through constant conjunction, of the repeated impressions of 'fire' and 'wood burning', each producing its 'correspondent' idea. All along, and especially in his definitions, Hume has argued that, in every case of belief, the 'present impression' merely or strictly enlivens or revivifies an idea (or ideas) already present and previously caused by its(their) impressions. The present impression does not cause the idea believed. Thus, in every case, the present impression "only changes our manner of conceiving it [the idea], and renders it more strong and lively" (T101, Def. 3). In this way, the present impression makes us believe the idea (or matter of fact), here 'wood burning', which idea has, however, been caused by impressions of 'wood burning' over repeated instances. Again, to invoke Hume's own example of our belief in home, we note that the idea(s) of 'home' has(have) been caused by repeated impressions of 'home':
the present impression (a nearby landmark) strictly recalls and enlivens, then, the idea of 'home' already present and caused by repeated impressions of 'home'. And so it is for every case of belief.

This notwithstanding, we argue that something metaphysically deeper is moving in Hume's thought and texts. Discussing belief "in a fuller light" (T101), Hume writes:

Here 'tis evident, that however that object, which is present to my senses, and that other, whose existence I infer by reasoning, may be thought to influence each other by their particular powers or qualities; yet as the phaenomena of belief, which we at present examine, is merely internal, those powers and qualities being entirely unknown, can have no hand in producing it. *Tis the present impression, which is to be consider'd as the true and real cause of the idea and of the belief which attends it. We must therefore endeavour to discover by experiments the particular qualities, by which 'tis enabled to produce so extraordinary an effect. (T102, italics added).

Now, having here separated psychologically the "internal" phenomenon of belief from the external domains of impressions and their ideas to which belief adventitiously applies, Hume metaphysically unites belief with those domains: he attributes "so extraordinary an affect" to the "present impression". But exactly what is its effect? In that italicized full sentence, Hume now and astonishingly claims that the present impression not only enlivens the idea hence believed, but also causes that very idea: "... the present impression ... is to be consider'd as the true and real cause of the idea and of the belief which attends it." (italics added). Until now, as noted, Hume presents the present impression as only affecting the idea (previously caused by impressions of which it is the 'copy') so as to enliven it and make us believe it. Cumulatively, the previously cited belief-definitions, explicit and implicit, show this feature and moment of Hume's thought clearly and beyond doubt. But now, equally clear and beyond doubt, is Hume's moving to the insight that the present impression both causes the idea believed and causes our believing that idea.

This crucial movement in Hume's thought and texts passes into what we may call his fourth definition of belief:

Thus my general position ... [is] ... that an opinion or belief is nothing but a strong and lively idea deriv'd from a present impression related to it (T105) (Def. 4).

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20 Strictly, Hume's 'first principle' implies as many ideas of x as impressions of x, hence the awkwardness of idea(s) and 'its/their', etc. But, as others note, Hume means by impressions "all our sensations, passions, and emotions" (T1), and hence the same for ideas, except for their force and vivacity. Hence, it is plausible to think of repeated impressions as reinforcing an originally caused idea (e.g., of 'wood-burning') or state of mind. And since Hume simply works with impression(s)-idea, we return to that form.
Note the words "deriv'd from": as will be shown in Part IV, Hume argues such that 'deriv'd from' = 'caused by'. That is to say, in every case of original causation, the 'corresponding' idea is 'caused by' or 'deriv'd from' a present impression. In Def. 4 above, Hume presents belief, not as the enlivening of the idea believed, but as the relation of derivation or causality itself wherein the believed idea arises from the present impression. In this way, Def. 4 brings to unity the present impression's causing both the idea itself "and" the belief attending it. In Part V, we shall argue so as to clarify this relation.

As emphasized above, then, Hume moves crucially from claiming that the present impression "only" revivifies the attending idea, thus making us believe it, to the claim that the present impression causes both that very idea itself and our belief in it. Let us now cash out Hume's metaphysical 'cheque' in exemplary causal currency, to realize "so extraordinary an effect": the present impression is of 'fire', and the attendant idea is that of 'wood burning'. These relate, in belief causality, as present 'cause' to believed and expected 'effect'. Hume is thus claiming here that the present impression of 'fire' is "the true and real cause" (T102) not just of the idea of 'fire' as his 'first principle' determines psychologically, but also of the idea of 'wood burning', as that principle now determines metaphysically. These domains of cause and effect now unite, by original causality (impression-to-idea), in the present impression itself, and a priori.

For empirically, what we have in Hume is this: (i) repeatedly, the impression of 'fire' causes the idea of 'fire'; (ii) repeatedly, the impression of 'wood burning' causes the idea of 'wood burning'; (iii) the constant conjunction of these respective impressions (and their ideas) affects the mind with a burgeoning impression of their associations; (iv) the impression is that of power or necessary connexion, and it causes the idea of power in the mind; (v) a present impression (of 'fire:') now readily carries the mind to an idea (of 'wood burning') over against that present impression and caused by the atomic and discrete impression of 'wood burning'; (vi) then, in belief, we schematize 'fire' and 'wood burning' as 'cause' and 'effect' respectively. Let Hume distill the empirical process for us:

But when one particular species of event has always, in all instances, been conjoined with another, we make no longer any scruple of foretelling one [idea] upon the appearance of the other [present impression] and of employing that reasoning, which can alone assure us, of any matter of fact or existence. We then call the one object, Cause; the other, Effect. We suppose, that there is some connection between them; some power in the one, by which it infallibly produces the other, and operates with the greatest certainty and strongest necessity. (EU, 74-75, "then" and "suppose" we italicize)

Note the words "then" and "suppose": after a time of constant conjunction of impressions and their ideas in succession, we come to "suppose" a power in the 'cause' to produce the 'effect' with "the greatest certainty and strongest necessity". A repeated 'conjunction' becomes, in belief, an hypothetical 'connexion'. But belief remains 'internal'; and the elements believed remain 'external' to it whether they be of 'external' or 'internal' sense, physical or mental: the present impression "only" enlivens the believed idea; it does not
cause that idea. Empirically, that idea is caused by its own present impression, as when the actual or real impression of 'wood burning' causes the idea of 'wood burning'.

Yet now, as our paragraphs 32 and 33 with their Hume texts show, Hume advances to the metaphysical insight that the present impression causes both its own idea and, in generating belief, the idea believed. To recall our illustration: the present impression of 'fire' causes both the idea of 'fire' and the idea of 'wood burning'; it generates within itself the ideas, here, of both cause and effect, in original causation, thus: present impression as cause of [idea-A (cause) as causing idea-B (effect)]. Since constant conjunction and hence memory are required here, and are given in the ideas, the present impression ('fire') must produce its own idea ('fire') in relation to those of past conjoined impressions ('fire' - 'burning wood'), in order to produce the idea of the effect ('burning wood'). Here, we speculate, since Hume does not himself offer an explicit analysis of "so extraordinary an effect" of the present impression. It follows, however, that in belief generally the present impression of the cause produces the idea of the effect. And, conversely, the present impression of the effect produces the idea of the cause. For, clearly, the present impression can be either cause or effect, leading inferred belief either 'forward' in time to effect or 'backward' in time to cause.

We have put the temporal 'forward' and 'backward' in single quotes in order to elicit another crucial movement in Hume's doctrine of belief. Heretofore, Hume has emphasized the role of time in the schematizing of 'cause' and 'effect' as adventitiously carried into experience: past experience in the forms of temporal succession and constant conjunction he has presented as necessary (though not sufficient) for belief to arise. In the atomic sequence of impressions-ideas constituting experience, the cause precedes the effect in time. But now, later in his text (T102-104), Hume arrives, astonished, at the non-temporal immediacy with which the present impression produces belief "by so extraordinary an effect":

> From a second observation I conclude, that the belief which attends the present impression ... that this belief, I say, arises immediately without any new operation of the reason or imagination. Of this I can be certain, because I never am conscious of any such operation, and find nothing in the subject on which it can be founded. Now as we call everything Custom, which proceeds from a past repetition, without any new reasoning or conclusion, we may establish it as a certain truth, that all the belief, which follows upon any present impression, is deriv'd solely from that origin. (T102, our italics).

Before noting Hume's illustration of this belief-immediacy, and using relevant texts, let us relate the italicized in the above text: (i) the belief attending the present impression arises immediately; (ii) it is certain; (iii) it derives solely from Custom. Unfortunately, Hume does not relate these claims explicitly to his remarkable claim, just above this text, that the present impression "is to be consider'd as the true and real cause of the idea, and of the belief which attends it" (T102, our italics). Instead, he simply invokes Custom as the remote, because unmediated, cause of this immediacy of belief.
Hume illustrates the immediacy of belief with a person's meeting a river and foreseeing his drowning if he does not stop at its bank. To argue amply, we must again quote at length:

A person, who stops short in his journey upon meeting a river in his way [present impression], foresees the consequences of his proceeding forward, and his knowledge of these consequences is convey'd to him by past experience, which informs him of such certain conjunctions of causes and effects. But can we think, that on this occasion he reflects on any past experience, and calls to remembrance instances, that he has seen or heard of, in order to discover the effects of water on animal bodies? No surely; this is not the method in which he proceeds in his reasoning. The idea of sinking is so closely connected with that of water, and the idea of suffocating with that of sinking, that the mind makes the transition without the assistance of memory. The custom operates before we have time for reflexion [i.e., remembering]. The objects seem so inseparable that we interpose not a moment's delay in passing from the one to the other. But as this transition proceeds from experience, and not from any primary connexion betwixt the ideas, we must necessarily acknowledge, that experience may produce a belief and a judgement of causes and effects by a secret operation, and without being once thought of. (T103-104, our italics).

Let us note first that Hume's profound text concerns immediate belief. Hence the primary relation is that of present impression to idea. But here the relation is complex, and involves the relation of the primary impression (meeting the river) to several ideas, those of 'water' - 'sinking' - 'suffocating', all of which stand in immediate relation to the present impression and to one another. We add, of course, the idea of 'stopping short' to the ideational complex, obviously a causal series.

To continue, Hume again reminds us that, while past experience is necessary, it is not sufficient for belief: - As he says in a neighbouring text, "A present impression, then, is absolutely requisite to this whole operation, ..." (T103, our italics). - He continues that "we must necessarily acknowledge" that experience has within it "a secret operation" by which it produces "a belief and a judgement of causes and effects". Now, inasmuch as a present impression "is absolutely requisite" to immediate belief, the 'secret operation' [or elsewhere 'power(s)'] to which Hume here and often refers, must be that impression's immediately producing "the idea, and ... the belief which attends it" (T102, italics added) in that "great connexion" (T4) by which Hume understands the relation of impression-to-idea in original causation, and which we pursue in Part IV. Moreover, here, the original (present) impression (meeting the river) immediately causes, in causal sequence, the ideas 'water' (to) 'sinking' (to) 'suffocating' (to) 'stopping short' and the belief which attends each of these as they together constitute the whole belief stopping that person short at the riverbank.
It now follows that original causality (as the present impression causing the idea and belief in it in "so extraordinary an effect") mediates Custom as aboriginal cause of particular beliefs, simple and complex. Thus Hume misleads, and obscures his metaphysical thought, in claiming that "all the belief, which follows upon any present impression, is deriv'd solely from that origin [Custom]" (T102, our italics). One scholar writes for many when he remarks that, while Hume is clear "locally", he is vague "globally". Here, we at least clarify Hume's vaguely invoking Custom, by arguing that ultimate principle's mediation in original causation through its extraordinary power: that the present impression (cause or effect) causes both the idea(s) (effect or cause, respectively) and belief in it/ them, mediates the logical form by which Custom causes particular, synthetic beliefs and the 'contingent' propositions expressing them.

As we conclude Part III, one problem remains: it now results that the idea believed has two causes: its own past impression(s) (in Hume's earlier and widely accepted view), and the present impression (in Hume's later "extraordinary" doctrine). (i) Thus, the idea believed ('wood burning') is caused by past impressions of 'wood burning', such that the present impression ('fire') "only" enlivens that idea, making us believe it. (ii) And, the idea believed ('wood burning') is caused both as such and as immediately believed by the present impression ('fire'). Or, complexly but identically: (i) the ideas believed [water (to) 'sinking' (to) 'suffocating' (to) 'stopping short'] are, each respectively, caused by past impressions of these, such that the present impression ('seeing the river at hand') "only" enlivens these ideas, making us believe them, and stop short. (ii) And, these same ideas believed immediately are caused both as such and as immediately believed by the present impression ('seeing the river at hand').

Now, it is clearly not a matter of our choosing between these two causes of the idea(s) believed. For constant conjunction, involving the repeated generation of ideas by past impressions, is necessary, and the present impression is "absolutely requisite" now in its "extraordinary" effect, for simple or complex belief to arise. Let us take the simple cause of fire burning wood: the idea as effect ('burning wood') is caused both by past impressions of 'burning wood' and by the present impression 'fire' as cause of the effect - idea and belief in it. Since past impressions of 'wood burning' and the present impression of 'fire' both cause the believed idea of 'wood burning', these impressions themselves are inherently related as effect and cause. By containing and grounding within itself as idea of 'fire' (cause) (to) idea of 'burning wood' (effect)], the present impression ('fire') takes up into itself, in its own presentness, the past, present and future of temporal belief-causality. It thus overcomes metaphysically both the temporarily atomic succession of 'cause' (to) 'effect' in synthetic and hence 'contingent' empirical relation, and the adventitious character of 'internal' belief carried into 'external' empirical fact.

This "extraordinary" and astonishing power in the present impression is more evident in complex belief, as, for example, the present impression ('seeing river at hand') causes immediately the ideas in causal sequence ('seeing river at hand' (to) 'sinking' (to) 'suffocating' (to) 'stopping short') and belief in them. We thus again arrive at Hume's doctrine of the "pre-established harmony":

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Here, then, is a kind of pre-established harmony between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas; and though the powers and forces, by which the former is governed, be wholly unknown to us; yet our thoughts and conceptions have still, we find, gone on in the same train with the other works of nature. Custom is that principle, by which this correspondence has been effected; so necessary to the subsistence of our species, and the regulation of our conduct, in every circumstance and occurrence of human life. (EU 54-55).

Hume's profound claim comes just after he treats belief as "the whole operation of the mind". He thus treats "custom" in a more psychological manner; and, again, he presents its effecting "this correspondence" in a vaguely direct and hence unmediated way. We have argued, however, that original causality in its "extraordinary" effect mediates the universal form and form of Custom in a modality by which it overcomes time and hence expresses, in Hume's beautiful words, "the eternal establish'd persuasions founded on memory and custom" (TA 632). We turn now to consider the logic of original causation (impression-to-idea) as such.

IV. Original Causation (Impression-To-Idea)

Defining logic, Hume stresses that "The sole end of logic is to explain the principles and Operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas ..." (TA 646). Hence, it is clear that this paper restricts itself to an investigation of Hume's logic, and its metaphysical foundations. And just as Hume calls the causal origins of sense impressions "unknown", and leaves the corporeal aspects of this matter to the physicists and anatomists, so we too must put them aside. It follows that, working backward, we must ground impressions of sense, as original causes of their ideas, in Custom, Hume's ultimate metaphysical principle. Hence, they stand in immediate relation to Custom. More precisely, original causality, wherein the impression causes the idea, stands in immediate relation to Custom. It thus expresses the universal power of Custom.

But we have now to establish the causal nature of the impression-to- idea relation. It will now seem obvious in light of Pt. III where we find that the present impression of the cause or effect not only revivifies the idea of the effect or cause, but produces that very idea as well, in Hume's metaphysical logic expressed as a "pre-established harmony'. But, as we shall now see, contemporary scholars either do not treat the impression - idea relation as causal, despite Hume's undeniably presenting it as causal in Section I ("Of the Origin of our Ideas") of Pt. I of Bk. I of the Treatise. - Or else they read back into impression-to-idea belief- or constructed - causality wherein the atomic and sequential domains of impressions with their ideas are sceptically schematized as contingent 'cause' and 'effect', such that the impression is contingent 'cause' of the idea, its 'effect', causal propositions being here synthetic.
To wit, Anthony Flew thinks the impression-to-idea relation to be a "contingent generalization", despite Hume's claim that this original relation "can never arise from chance" (T4). Again, H.H. Price, reducing causality to believed 'cause' and 'effect', states flatly and in error that "... the causal relation is not a sense-given relation ...".22 To the contrary, the causal relation is categorically "sense-given". For, as we shall soon see, in original causation, impressions of sense Hume presents as the causes of their own ideas, which hence are their effects. Likewise reducing causality in Hume to believed 'cause' and 'effect', D.G.G. MacNabb calls the impression-to-idea relation an "exhaustive" and "cramping" "dichotomy".24 W. Waxman, writing in the journal, *Hume Studies*, also dichotomizes impressions and their ideas in two "axes of description: the first to represent the qualities proper to perceptions themselves ... and the second to represent phenomenological qualities of our consciousness like veracity/verisimilitude ...".25 Hence, "a further dichotomization of perceptions as 'impressions' and 'ideas' was necessary".26 Clearly, then, dichotomizing impression-to-idea, neither MacNabb nor Waxman grasps their relation as causal at all, let alone as extraordinarily causal. Yet again, Gilbert Ryle presents Humean ideas as "traces, copies or reproductions of impressions" but not as their effects in an expressive causal relation to which, as we argue, no real exception exists, or is conceivable.

Barry Stroud, a distinguished Hume scholar, does present the impression-to-idea relation causally. Yet he, too, can be fairly judged to read belief or constructed causation back into original causality, i.e., to reduce original causality to the schematized 'causality' produced by belief. For he finds "evidence that he [Hume] regards the principle as contingent".28 Certainly, Hume does not: "The full examination of this question

21 Anthony Flew, "Private Images and Public Language", in Human Understanding: Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume, ed. Sesonske and Fleming (Wadsworth Publishing, 1965), p. 39. Flew continues mistakenly to claim that the impression-to-idea relation is "open to falsification by the production of a recalcitrant negative instance". We shall briefly discuss Hume's own famous example of the missing shade of blue as not a significant 'negative instance' here.

22 H.H. Price, "The Permanent Significance of Hume's Philosophy, ibid, p. 7

23 MacNabb, p. 80. He writes that: "Hume found that all causal inferences from the existence of one object to that of another are nondemonstrative and based on the relations of cause and effect ... An exception to any causal connection is clearly imaginable; so is a pure fluke or a sudden change in the course of nature. Only by experience can we know whether any of these occur".

24 MacNabb, p. 76. We do not deny that the impression-to-idea relation is "exhaustive" and "cramping", and indeed "dogmatic", these claims being here irrelevant. More to the point, we do deny that the relation is a "dichotomy".

25 Wayne Waxman, "Impressions and Ideas: Vivacity as Verisimilitude", in Hume Studies, Vol. XIX, No. 1, April 1993, pp. 77-78.

26 Waxman, p. 77. An earlier article by Saul Traiger entitled "Impressions, Ideas, and Fictions" (Hume Studies, Vol. XIII, No. 2, Nov. 1987, pp. 381-99) refers to "simple and complex ideas which are derived from antecedent and resembling impressions" (p. 395). But Traiger does not really interpret "derived from". Hence, no causal relation appears in his analysis.


28 Barry Stroud, Hume (Routledge: London and New York), 1977. Stroud writes: "If we never get our impression of the necessary connection between cause and effect in any particular instance of causality; it would seem that Hume's main methodological principal must be abandoned. The idea of causality appears to be a counter-example to the principle that all ideas arise in the mind as the result of their corresponding earlier impressions. Hume is aware of the threat this poses, and admits, albeit somewhat disingenuously,
[perception-causality] is the subject of the present treatise, and therefore we shall here content ourselves with establishing one general proposition, that all our simple ideas in their first appearance are deriv'd from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent" (T4, we italicize "establishing one general"). In short, Hume establishes his general proposition in order eventually to explain its power to generate belief-constructed causation.

Donald Livingston, pre-eminent among Hume scholars, grants that somehow "Impressions are causally prior to ideas but are not prior in the order of intelligibility". By this latter claim Livingston means Hume's point that sensation (impressions of sense) "arises in the soul originally from unknown causes" (T7), Hume thus leaving its origin to anatomists and natural philosophers. Livingston therefore dissociates causality from impression-to-idea and shifts it problematically to an "act of the mind" where he locates the "force and vivacity" of impressions and ideas: "Since force and vivacity is an act of the mind and since some degree of force and vivacity is internal to every perception, it follows that all perceptions are internal to acts of the mind". Quoting, Hume in support, Livingston italicizes Hume explaining belief as "that act of the mind which renders realities more present to us than fictions ...", and his passage comes from TA269, where Hume also (and more accurately) presents belief "something felt by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgment from the fictions of the imagination." Note here that while Livingston italicizes "act of the mind" Hume does not, but Hume does italicize "felt" in his later characterizing of belief, where the 'mind' is carried by the force of the present impression to the hence given and revivified idea thus believed. We speak of "mind" here because the utter passivity of the 'mind' in Hume echoes his rejection of it that the principle will have to be given up if the impressions from which the idea of causality is derived cannot be found ([T] p. 77). This gives some further evidence that he regards the principle as contingent" (p. 45). At T77 Hume writes: "Shall the despair of success make me assert, that I am here possest of an idea [of "necessary connexion"], which is not preceded by any similar impression? This wou'd be too strong a proof of levity and inconstancy; since the contrary principle has been already so firmly established, as to admit of no farther doubt; at least, till we have more fully examin'd the present difficulty" (later italics added). Hume's concluding caveat refers to the careful and ordered argument by which he reaches the impression grounding the idea of necessary connexion, having shown that contiguity, succession and constant conjunction in experience are necessary but not sufficient for the ascription of causality. Hume never really doubts his methodological principle of original causation, as indeed Stroud's word "disingenuously" shows. We add that Hume's reaching the impression of necessary connexion is hardly evidence that he "regards the principle as contingent".

29 Livingston, p. 55.
30 Livingston, p. 57.
31 This passivity of mind, is especially evident in Hume's moral theory, where Hume reduces "The calm and indolent judgments of the understanding" (T457) to mere auxiliaries of the moral feelings of approval and disapproval really moving us to act, and deriving from universal sympathy. Behind this passivity is, of course, Locke's tabula rasa. Hume presents the passivity of the mind in many different ways and contexts, including his famous ethical claim that "reason is, and ought to be, the slave of the passions". So, again, discussing belief, and hence the original causation producing it, in the Appendix to the Treatise, Hume emphasizes the mind's passivity: "They [ideas believed] strike upon us with more force; they are more present to us, the mind has a firmer hold of them, and is more actuated and mov'd by them. It acquiesces in them; and, in a manner fixes and repose itself on them" (TA624). This matter of the mind's passivity is currently being debated in Dialogue. Cf. Martin Gerwin's "Natural-Agency Theory as an Alternative to Hume: A Reply to Andrew Ward" (Dialogue, Vol. XXVII, N. 1, 1998) pp. 3-12.
as spiritual substance, and his reducing the mind to his odd and inconsistent reification of the imagination (T,Bk.I, Pt. IV, VI "Of personal identity"). We repeat here that our subject in this paper is Hume's causal logic, not his problematic psychology. Accordingly, force and vivacity occur primarily in impressions of sense as causing their ideas, and not in essentially passive 'acts' of the 'mind'. This fact is absolutely clear as Hume begins his "Of the Origin of our Ideas", wherein he establishes his "one general proposition" concerning original causality:

All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS. The difference between these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence we may name impressions. ... By ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reason; (T1)

In this pivotal Section, Hume does not at all discuss acts of the mind. It follows that, instead of claiming that "all perceptions are internal to acts of the mind", Livingston should have claimed the reverse, that 'acts' of the 'mind' are internal to all perceptions, where force and vivacity essentially dwell.\(^{32}\)

Clearly, then, the best Hume scholars either exclude causality from the impression-to-idea relation or, by reading belief or constructed causality back into it, reduce original causation to the sceptical schematizing of 'cause' and 'effect' which is externally applied to experience, outer or inner. Briefly, we propose two main reasons for superior scholarship's having failed in the face of strong textual evidence (i) that the impression-to-idea relation is causal and (ii) that its causality "amounts to" (Hume's words) demonstrative knowledge. The first reason is the fact that, as we have shown in Pt. III, Hume himself repeatedly (but misleadingly) denies that any causal relation is a priori or demonstrably known. The second is this: since, as we have also shown in Pt. III, the present impression generates both the idea and the belief in it, and this very belief leads us to schematize one empirical event as 'cause' and the other as 'effect' (as Hume says, "we then call the one object, Cause; the other, Effect" [Ecl, 74-75]), we cannot strictly characterize as causal the power by which belief (impression-to-idea) renders our calling one object 'cause' and the other object 'effect' irresistible; and yet this power shows itself as a prior kind and order of causation. In short, the a priori causality whereby belief (impression-to-idea) causes empirical 'causality' gets paradoxically lost in its effect: the empirical 'causality' which it causes a priori. Accordingly, as we document above, scholars might (mistakenly) or might not read empirical or belief 'causality' back into the impression-to-idea relation, original causation as we argue.

\(^{32}\) Dissociating causality from original impressions, Livingston writes that what Hume means by impressions "is 'the perceptions themselves' independent of all causal understanding of them. Hume has left entirely open the question of whether perceptions are produced passively in the mind, whether they are produced by the mind, or whether they are independent of the mind"(p. 49). Livingston is right when Hume treats impressions as effects, but quite mistaken to reduce "causal understanding" of them to their being considered effects only: very clearly, now they are original causes of their ideas.
Let us now go directly to Hume's crucial "Of the Origin of our Ideas", where the causal nature of the impression-to-idea relation readily appears as undeniable. First, Hume makes it very clear that impressions manifest force: "Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions; and under this name I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions as they make their first appearance in the soul" (T1, "force" and "violence" we italicize). He then tells us that "By ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning, such as ... all the perceptions excited by the present discourse ..." Immediately, then, Hume asserts a relation of force, or even violence, between impressions and ideas. The relation involves power, and quite in advance of functioning belief - constructed causality. Now, having distinguished simple and complex impressions and ideas (in both cases, complexes being compounded divisibly of simples), Hume writes: "Let us consider how they stand with regard to their existence, and which of the impressions and ideas are causes and which effects (T4, italics added), adding later that "the existence of the one has a considerable influence upon that of the other" (T4). This "influence", involving a "constant conjunction" over "an infinite number of instances", cannot be contingent, "but clearly proves a dependence of the impressions on the ideas, or of the ideas on the impressions" (T4-5, italics added). Citing the "order of their first appearance" (85) as decisive here, Hume claims importantly that "constant experience" reveals that "the simple impressions always take the precedence of their correspondent ideas, but never appear in the contrary order" (T5, italics added). Hence the simple impressions are indisputably the causes of their corresponding ideas: the precedence of impression over idea then clearly proves a dependence ... of the ideas on the impressions" (T5, italics added). Who now can doubt that Hume understands the impression to cause its correspondent idea? This causal dependence works not just in simple cases, but "as the complex are formed from them, we may affirm in general, that these two species of perception are exactly correspondent (T4, italics added).

But what kind of causal connexion prevails, then in what we have called throughout original causality (impression-to-idea)? As promised earlier, we shall now argue that original causality manifests what "amounts to" (Hume) demonstrative knowledge; indeed, it is self-evident a priori. Livingston rightly notes and brilliantly exploits Hume's commitment to 'common life', in his narrative approach to the development of Hume's thought. So, right at the start, Hume invokes something immediately known in common life: "Everyone of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt feeling [impression] and thinking [idea]" (T1-2, italics added). He next emphasizes both the difference and the virtual identity of "feeling" and "thinking": first, he tells us that "they are in general so very different, that no-one can made a scruple to rank them under distinct heads, and assign to each a peculiar name to mark the difference [n.1: "impression and idea"]" (T2, italics added). Hume next tells us that "the first circumstance, that strikes my eye, is the great resemblance betwixt our impressions and ideas in every other particular, except their degree of force and vivacity" (T2, italics added). In view of the pivotal text which follows, we have here what is surely an identity-in-difference between impression and idea:
The one [ideas] seem to be in a manner the reflexion of the other; so that all the perceptions of the mind are double, and appear both as impressions and ideas, when I shut my eyes and think of my chamber, the ideas I form are exact representations of the impressions I felt; nor is there any circumstance of the one, which is not to be found in the other. In running over my other perceptions, I find still the same resemblance and representation. Ideas and impressions appear always to correspond to each other. This circumstance seems to me remarkable and engages my attention for a moment (T2-3, italics added).

Now, since the impression-idea relation is indisputably both causal and non-convertible, the impression as cause differentiates into itself as effect. Hence, while Hume calls both impressions and ideas "perceptions", we can now affirm that the terms 'perception' and 'experience' refer properly or rigorously to the reflexive unity-in-difference expressed as original causality (impression-to-idea). They are, so to speak, two sides of the same coin. In short, original causality is the condition a priori through which perception or experience is made possible, and actually occurs.

The language of unqualified certainty pervades Hume's understanding and presentation of impression-to-idea. This the reader has already encountered as Hume explains the certainty of immediate belief in texts cited in paras. 36 and 37 of this paper. But in the present section of the Treatise, where the causality of impression-to-idea as such is "established", we find that a prioristic certainty. Speaking of simple perceptions, the elements of our experience, Hume writes: "After the most accurate examination, of which I am capable, I venture to affirm, that the rule here holds without any exception, and that every simple idea has a simple impression which resembles it; and every simple impression a correspondent idea" (T3, italics added). Now, while Hume grants that "tis impossible to prove by a particular enumeration of them" that such is the case with all our impressions and ideas, he does virtually deny the necessity of such an exhaustive enumeration:

Every one may satisfy himself in this point by running over as many as he pleases. But if anyone should deny this universal resemblance, I know no way of convincing him, but by desiring him to show a simple impression, that has not a correspondent idea, or a simple idea, that has not a correspondent impression. If he does not answer this challenge, as 'tis certain he cannot, we may from his silence and our own observation establish our conclusion (T3-4, italics added).

From the standpoint of common life, then, Hume effectively claims here that a causal relation (metaphysically) self-evident (though a pre-established harmony) gradually emerges as one satisfies himself "by running over as many [instances] as he pleases". No scepticism and no problem of induction are present here.

We come now to the text which has inspired the title of this paper. Having enunciated his "one general proposition", Hume writes that:
In seeking for phaenomena to prove this proposition, I find only those of two kinds; but in each kind the phaenomena are obvious, numerous and conclusive. I first make myself certain, by a new review, of what I have already asserted, that every simple impression is attended with a correspondent idea, and every simple idea with a correspondent impression. From this constant conjunction of resembling perceptions I immediately conclude, that there is a great connexion betwixt our correspondent impressions and ideas, and that the existence of the one has a considerable influence upon that of the other. (T4, italics added).

Now, apart from the infinitive "to prove", what stands out in this text as italicized is Hume's claim that "I immediately conclude that there is a great connexion betwixt our correspondent impression and ideas..." But in none of the best recent literature on impression-to-idea in Hume is the immediate concluding of "a great connexion" at all recognized or taken up. Note as well that the word here is "connexion", and not "conjunction", and that, as explained in Pt. III, constant conjunction is necessary but not sufficient to establish necessary connexion or belief, for the schematizing of experience as 'cause' and 'effect': original causality alone as impression-to-idea suffices to generate necessary connexion or belief. Clearly then, and despite the scholarship as documented, original causality as such grounds and expresses that necessity as a "great connexion" to which Hume grants no real exception.33

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33 Hume is widely thought to provide an exception or counter-example to this great connexion between impression and idea: that famous, missing shade of blue "which may prove, that "tis not absolutely impossible for ideas to go before their correspondent impressions" (T5). If we suppose a person to have experienced colours generally, and all shades of blue but one in particular, most will agree that "tis possible for him, from his own imagination, to supply this deficiency, and raise up to himself the idea of that particular shade, tho' it had never been conveyed to him by his senses ...". Thus, somehow, one can interpolate the idea (or image) of that missing shade of blue without have it caused by an original impression. Now, in denying any real importance to this exception to impression-to-idea, we are assisted first by Hume himself and then by Karann Durland's article, "Hume's First Principle, His Missing Shade and His Distinctions of Reason", Hume Studies, (Vol. XXII, N. 1, Apr. 1966) pp. 105-121. First, Hume himself dismisses "the instance [a]s so particular and singular, that "tis scarce worth our observing, and does not merit that for it alone we should alter our general maxim" (T6). Next, Durland argues admirably that the missing shade is such that "any new simple idea not (ultimately) derived from a corresponding precedent impression is constructed entirely from elements encountered in precedent simple impressions" (pp. 116-117). Yet this construction is not such as to make the "new simple idea" inconsistently divisible. Rather the imagination, discriminating the content of the impressions as 'distinctions of reason' otherwise inseparable from that context, "runs on" (as Hume puts it) with a kind of inertia, and blends these together to form the idea of the missing shade. But what about Hume's suggesting it possible for such interpolated ideas "to go before their correspondent impressions"? We reply in terms of Hume's distinction between impressions of sense and impressions of reflection: when ideas arising from impressions of sense "produce the images of themselves" they produced and "go before" impressions of reflection, such as would happen here with the interpolated idea of the shade of blue. Thus Hume is not here inconsistent as we interpret him, since "as the first ideas [here, that of the blue-shade] are supposed to be derived [here, by construction] from impressions [of sense], it still remains true, that all our simple ideas proceed either mediately or immediately from their correspondent impressions" (T7). In summation, then, the simple idea of the missing blue-shade proceeds mediately, and by construction, from sense impressions of other blue-shades, producing in turn its own impression of reflection, that of the missing shade of blue.
It is true that, in the text above, Hume does appear to derive this great connexion from "constant conjunction", and hence to suggest a contingent relation between impression and idea, i.e., he seems here as elsewhere to reduce original to belief-constructed causation. But that is not really so: for the universal certainty which he ascribes to this relation is now manifest. And, in para. 51, above we see him virtually deny the necessity of an exhaustive enumeration of instances: one may enumerate as many instances "as he pleases". But we cite here a text which consolidates our point:

The constant conjunction of our resembling perceptions, is a convincing proof, that the one are the causes of the other; and this priority of the impression is an equal proof, that our impressions are the causes of our ideas, not our ideas of our impressions (T5, italics added).

This text complements that in para. 51 above, precisely, "constant conjunction" here equalling "as many [instances] as he pleases" there. In this fact, Hume is saying that a constant conjunction of impression-to-idea is sufficient but not necessary to establish impression-to-idea, but also that the "[a]-priority of the impressions" equally proves the causal relation in any one or more instances of it. In other words, as forcefully "a reflexion", the relation is essentially self-evident. Its necessity thus contrasts with the context in which Hume explains the role of constant conjunction in the arising of the original impression (and hence idea) of power or necessary connexion. There constant conjunction is necessary but not sufficient to produce that idea. Only the arising of the original impression of power (as the mind repeatedly associates one object with another in constant conjunction) is there sufficient to produce, as its own a priori, the idea of power.

Before putting original causation and belief causation (its product) into direct relation, let us remark briefly on Hume's treatment of time here. In arguing for a causal relation between impression and idea, Hume does claim, it seems, a temporal priority of impression to idea, in relation to their distinctness. For example in his Abstract to the Treatise he writes that "Priority in time, is therefore another requisite circumstance in every cause" (TA 649). But in the definitive treatment of impression-to-idea (T1-7), Hume is ambiguous about the "order" of impression and idea. It is not clearly temporal, but appears on balance to have a more logical character:

That I may know on which side this [causal] dependence lies, I consider the order of their first appearance; and find by constant experience that the simple impressions always take the precedence of their correspondent ideas, but never in the contrary order. To give a child an idea of scarlet or orange, of sweet or bitter. I present the objects, or in other words, convey to him these impressions' but proceed not so absurdly as to endeavour to produce the impression by exciting the ideas (T5, italics added).

Here, neither "order" nor "precedence" nor "contrary order" is said to be temporal, or implied to be so. Note also the words "not so absurdly": for Hume, absurdity is contradiction. Elsewhere, he writes that "wherever a demonstration takes place, the
contrary is impossible, and implies a contradiction" (TA 650). In this present case, it is absurd or contradictory that impression and idea appear in "the contrary order", such that the idea of scarlet or orange could produce the original impression of scarlet or orange. Now to this argument we add a final point: when Hume distinguishes impression and idea in their relation, he insists, repeatedly and without exception, that they have a "great resemblance", and this "in every other particular, except their degree of force and vivacity" (T2, italics added). He never adds "and their temporal order". Since we may now infer that "except their degree of force and vivacity" refers to the causal and logical differentiation of original impression into its idea, it is persuasive that time itself disappears into that differentiation, into that immediate relation of identity-in-difference. It is fitting, then, that what now "amounts to" a logical relation of impression-to-idea should as such manifest "the eternal establish'd persuasions" (TA 632) which we earlier attributed to belief as thus generated (para. 42).

Let us now compare original and belief or constructed causality more directly. First, original causality is immediately concluded rather than mediately applied, as is belief causality, through belief to phenomena in themselves atomistically related and in temporal sequence. Second, original causality is logically necessary, rather than psychologically 'contingent' as is belief causation. In these ways, impressions must cause their ideas; and ideas, as such, must be effects of their impressions. Again, in original causation, we have identity-in-difference: the original impression differentiates causally, by causing its idea as identical in content but different in order and form as shown in lesser force and vivacity only. Hence, where in original causation, the impression differentiates logically into its idea, in belief or constructed causality, the 'cause' divides into the 'effect' in the sense that the 'cause' (impression of fire) is atomistically succeeded by the 'effect' (impression of wood burning), their ideas doing likewise. And here, a necessary connexion a priori is externally imposed through subjective belief, and is not perceived as present in the 'outer' or 'inner' phenomena themselves. Hence, Hume can and does say here that any 'cause' can 'produce' any 'effect', and that any 'effect' can arise from any 'cause'. But, and this is crucial, Hume never says or implies that any original impression can cause any idea, or that any idea can be the effect of any original impression: hence, an original impression of 'red' cannot conceivably produce an idea of 'blue'; nor, more generally, can an idea of sound be caused by an original impression of sight.

In terms of judgments or propositions, then, we can say that all propositions asserting original causality (or indeed belief itself where the present impression of the cause, e.g., not only enlivens but causes the idea of the effect) are analytic. And, accordingly, all propositions asserting constructed or belief causation are, as Hume himself virtually says, synthetic, and can be denied without contradiction. But note that the analyticity in original causation is, as forcefully reflexive, expressive and not tautological or inert. Hence, the proposition "All original impressions produce representing ideas" we cannot deny without contradiction, since by nature, essence or definition, impressions impose themselves by producing their representing ideas. But the proposition 'Bread always nourishes us', being synthetic, we can deny without contradiction, since we can here perceive no necessary connexion: bread can conceivably choke us or make us ill.
It follows from the entire argument that original causality is prior to constructed causality, and of a different and metaphysical level. Moreover, original causality cannot be reduced to constructed causality; for it supplies belief itself and the idea of power or necessary connexion without which constructed causality would be impossible a priori. Once again:

We then call the one object, Cause; the other, effect. We suppose that there is some connexion between them; some power in the one, by which it infallibly produces the other, and operates with the greatest certainty and strongest necessity (EU 75, italics added, except for Hume's own "cause" and "effect").

Here, we see, though externally applied, the figure or form of original causality present within constructed 'causality'. Although the necessity here is synthetically supposed, rather than analytically and expressively certain though forceful "reflexion", the language and content of infallible production, greatest certainty and strongest necessity metaphysically irradiate this passage. For while Hume here denies rational necessity to the schematized or constructed 'cause' 'effect' relation, of original causality (impression-to-idea), or belief itself, he claims this:

We infer a cause immediately from its effect; and this inference is not only a true species of reasoning, but the strongest of all others, and more convincing than when we interpose another idea to connect the two extremes. What we may in general affirm concerning these three acts of the understanding ["conception, judgment and reasoning"] is, that taking them in a proper light, they all resolve themselves into the first [conception], and are nothing but particular ways of conceiving our objects. Whether we consider a single object or several; whether we dwell on these objects, or run from them to others; and in whatever form or order we survey them, the act of the mind exceeds not a simple conception; and the only remarkable difference, which occurs on this occasion, is, when we join belief to the conception, and are persuaded of the truth of what we conceive (T97, n.1, italics added, except for the square-bracketed).

In this passage, Hume reduces the "judgment" ("the separating or uniting of different ideas") and "reasoning" (the use of mediating ideas to show how others unite or separate) "of the schools" to belief itself in the conception. That is, he reduces rational "acts" of mind to original causation itself. In original causation, generating belief, as we argued above, the present impression of the cause (or effect) not only enlivens the idea or conception of the effect (or cause), but produces that idea, hence uniting reflexively or a priori "the two extremes", cause and effect. Moreover, he presents original causality here as "not only a true species of reasoning", but as "the strongest of all others". In this reduction of all rationality to original causality as belief, which Hume clearly venerates as most rational, the impression-to-idea relation more than "amounts to" demonstrative knowledge or "reasoning": as belief, original causation replaces "reasoning" in as much
as an immediate cognition replaces "reasoning", which for the "schools" and logicians involves the use of "other ideas" to mediate "the separating or uniting of different ideas ... [by showing] the relation they bear to each other". Clearly then, Hume identifies true reason with belief as such, and grounds it metaphysically in original causation.

In concluding this Part, we shall note certain matters concerning original causation, and consolidate our claims in relation to Hume's doctrine of "the pre-established harmony". In Part V we shall briefly focus on original causation as it mediates Custom and belief-constructed causality.

There are two forms of original causation, one generating belief, the other not. When an original impression reflexively generates only its own idea, we do not have belief: we have belief only as this relation moves from what is present to what is absent, from cause to effect or the reverse. Thus belief is not present when the impression of 'fire' generates reflexively its idea of 'fire'; nor is it present as the impression of 'wood burning' causes reflexively its idea of 'wood burning'. Belief occurs only as the present impression of 'fire' reflexively causes both its idea of 'fire' and the idea of 'wood burning', which reflexively is its own also, within the pre-established harmony thus revealed.

Now, keeping the illustration of 'fire'-to-'wood burning' before us, let us note that the non-believed (as effect) idea of 'wood burning' comes originally from the impression(s) of 'wood burning': but the believed idea of 'wood burning' as the effect of 'fire' is both caused and enlivened by the present impression of 'fire'. And, as we have just seen in para. 57 above, belief, having taken demonstrative reasoning into itself, is a priori. We therefore have this situation metaphysically: the idea of 'wood burning' is originally caused by both the impression(s) of 'wood burning', and by the present impression of 'fire'; and as not-believed effect of 'wood burning'), and as believed (effect of 'fire'), respectively. It follows, therefore, that this original commonality through which the idea of 'wood burning' is caused by both the impression of 'wood burning' and the present impression of 'fire', puts the impression(s) of 'fire' and the impression(s) of 'wood burning' into a metaphysically (though not psychologically) and expressively analytic relation. That is to say, the "irradiation" (para. 57) by original causation of belief-constructed causation prevails as, in the latter, "We suppose ... some power-in the one ['cause'], by which it inallibly produces the other ['effect'], and operates with the greatest certainty and strongest necessity" (EU 75, italics added). Psychologically, then, the sequences of 'inner' and 'outer' impressions and of their ideas as such remain in external relation as causally schematized; and the propositions expressing them as so schematized remain synthetic and hence deniable without contradiction. Hume's scepticism thus focusses psychologically on the 'causality' of original discrete impressions as such and of their discrete ideas as such, as these arise in parallel sequence taken as temporal and/or spatial order. But, metaphysically, and concerning original causation as such in its two forms, Hume evinces no real scepticism at all: the causal relation whereby, in either form, original impression imposes itself with reflexive force as idea on the 'mind', remains logically sacrosanct for him.
In this Part IV, then, we have argued the logic of original causality (impression-to-idea) as such to involve a reflexive identity-in-difference. This identity-in-difference confirms the same found in Part III as we found Hume's doctrine of belief to arrive remarkably at the insight that the present impression (cause or effect) both causes and enlivens the hence believed idea (effect or cause) as well as causing its own idea in an immediacy that astonishes Hume. Moreover, we interpreted Hume's example of one's meeting a river suddenly (paras. 37 and 38 above) to show a cross-section of the pre-established harmony: the present impression 'river' immediately causes and enlivens the hence believed ideas of 'water' (to) 'sinking' (to) 'suffocating' (to) 'stopping short'. But since, as we have just argued, belief now pre-empts or constitutes demonstrative knowledge, a sublime cross-section and illustration of this harmony avails us. Hume cites it when explaining abstraction in mathematics as a function of belief:

For this is one of the most extraordinary circumstances in the present affair, that after the mind has produc'd an individual idea, upon which we reason, the attendant custom, reviv'd by the general or abstract term [present impression], readily suggests any other individual, if by chance we form any reasoning, that agrees not with it. Thus shou'd we mention the word, triangle [present impression], and form the idea of a particular equilateral one to correspond to it, and shou'd we afterwards assert, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to each other, the other individuals of a scalenem and isosceles, which we overlook'd at first, immediately crowd in upon us, and make us perceive the falsehood of this proposition; tho' it be true with relation to that idea, which we had, form'd (T21, Hume italicizes "that the three, etc."); we italicize the other texts).

We note crucially that Hume solves the problem of false belief here, and by implication elsewhere: beliefs which accord with the pre-established harmony are true, beliefs disaccording with that sublime harmony are false.

The argument for original causality (as metaphysically distinct from both Custom and belief-constructed causation) is now complete. That original causation mediates Custom's causing or necessitating belief-schematized causality is now quite evident as well. In a very brief Part V, however, we shall conclude by consolidating this mediation as it relates to a cognate issue in recent scholarship.

V. Aboriginal Causation: Custom-To-(Impression-To-Idea)-To-(Belief-Constructed Causality).

Scholars variously observe that Hume reveres Custom. The reader will now agree that Hume also reveres original causation as it generates belief directly and belief-constructed causation indirectly. Indeed, Hume marvels at the power of the present impression (whether in mathematics, poetry, history, etc.) to summon a virtual infinitude of ideas along with the ideas immediately believed, that infinitude confirming, denying or
qualifying the belief(s) in question. Hume's common reverence for Custom and original causality, in relation to the generation of the totality of 'beliefs' expressed under belief-constructed causality, can be explained only as original causation's mediating Custom's generating the entire fabric of 'beliefs' which themselves underwrite our common life. For we have seen that, while original causation causes belief which articulates as the causally schematized 'beliefs' of common life, Hume also repeatedly appeals to Custom as the obscure and seemingly ultimate cause of 'beliefs' themselves. Hence we may now call Custom the remote cause, and original causation as impression-to-idea the mediating cause, of belief-constructed causality and the multitudinous 'beliefs' culturally expressing it.

This rendering is more than speculatively plausible; it is surely true. For assuming it now established that original causation forces us to schematize atomistic experience as 'cause' and 'effect' in multitudinous 'beliefs', let us consider the Custom-side of original causation: Hume presents the original impressions, causing ideas believed, as not just the causes of such ideas and their enlivening, but also as effects themselves. Thus, while original impressions cause their ideas in forceful reflexion, they do not cause themselves. As impressions of sensation, they arise "in the soul originally, from unknown causes" (T7, italics added). These causes cannot be bodies (for 'outer sense') or minds (for 'inner sense'), since Hume critically rejects these two as material and spiritual substances or substrata respectively, and as continuants in any real sense. And since he rejects these, his leaving the origins of original sense impressions to natural philosophers and anatomists is indeed problematic. But metaphysically, the causes of original sense impressions cannot it seems, be plural: they must be one and universal, namely Custom, which Hume always presents as a "principle of human nature, which is universally acknowledged, and which is well known by its effects" (EU 43).

In Part III, we promised to offer a later clarification of Hume's claim, regarding belief, that the original impression (cause or effect) revivifies or enlivens the idea (effect or cause) thus believed. Recall that we traced in Part III, a crucial development wherein Hume advances from the claim that the original or present impression merely enlivens an idea otherwise caused by its original impression(s) (as when the impression(s) of 'wood burning' cause the idea of 'wood burning') to the doctrine that the original impression ('fire') causes both the idea itself ('wood burning') and the enlivening of it, such that we cannot but believe it, and the idea believed remains utterly self-same as believed. Our clarification of Hume's developed doctrine is, therefore, what it now must be: the expressively reflective and analytic character of impression-to-idea in original causation as such (impression 'fire'-to-idea 'fire') carries metaphysically into impression-to-idea in original causation as generating belief itself, such that: (present impression 'fire'-to-idea 'fire' and idea 'wood burning' - hence necessarily believed). Belief, then, uniting cause and effect a priori, is self-evident as "not only a true species of reasoning, but the strongest of all others" (T97, n. 1). And as self-evident, it justifies itself under Custom.

Our concluding that belief qua self-evident justifies itself brings us at once to this very question as treated in current scholarship. Since even the best Hume scholars recognize only Custom on the one hand and belief-constructed 'causation' on the other,
the question of justifying belief becomes acute as the question of the relation of a remote and obscurely invoked Custom to individual 'beliefs'. In a new article, entitled "Human Justified Belief", John W. Carroll pursues this issue by reference to Hume's "Rules by which to judge of causes and effects" (T, Bk. I, Pt. III:XV)\textsuperscript{34}. Also, he critically engages Beauchamp and Rosenberg, who in a recent work, pursue this matter as well.\textsuperscript{35} Carroll also cites, for those interested, an article by M. Costa: "Hume and Justified Belief".\textsuperscript{36} Against Beauchamp and Rosenberg, who hold that Custom alone without justification "by application of the rules" is capricious, Carroll invokes Hume's "great reverence for custom and simple inference. This reverence is at odds with any claim to the effect that unsupplemented custom is epistemically poor".\textsuperscript{37} Carroll proceeds to link Custom with the application of the rules, and not to separate them, hence not discrediting Custom alone, as do Beauchamp and Rosenberg. For the latter, who put Custom to one side, there is no mediation of Custom with the multitude of 'beliefs' hence needing justification. Rather, they simply apply Hume's rules to the sequences of experience as these atomistically occur, doing so externally, of course. But Carroll betters the approach of Beauchamp and Rosenberg by seeking a mediation: he argues correctly that Custom is somehow present in the application of the rules to experience, and cites Hume's claim in rule 5 that "like effects imply like causes" (T. 174). Yet Carroll's effort fails as he continues: "When we apply the rules, we are just as much reasoning on animal faith and instinct as in simple causal inference."\textsuperscript{38} For here, on the one hand, he sounds like Hume himself grounding 'beliefs' on an obscurely invoked and remote Custom presented as "instinct". And, on the other hand, he here tends to make of the rules as applied, just a set of 'beliefs' at the belief-constructed level of the 'beliefs' to be justified by the very application of the rules themselves. His effort to mediate Custom and our multitudinous 'beliefs' thus flies apart in both directions; and we are left again without a causal mediation. Now, these scholars, who to their credit would move Hume beyond that stereotyped scepticism dogging him, clearly place their hopes and efforts in applying Hume's rules to 'beliefs' themselves. In this, they are joined by Fred Wilson, who, in his new book, takes essentially the same approach. Let us therefore look briefly at Hume's "Rules by which to judge of cases and effects", and their context:\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{37} Carroll, p. 375.
\textsuperscript{38} Carroll, p. 375.
\textsuperscript{39} Wilson's massive study follows the positivism of Ayer and others cited throughout: he does not consider the impression-to-idea relation as such, and neither term appears in his index. Nor do the terms 'Custom', 'metaphysics' or even 'belief' appear there. Wilson does quote Hume: "There is a NECESSARY CONNEXION to be taken into consideration; and that relation is of much greater importance than any of the other two above mention'd' (Ti.III.ii, T7)." But Wilson treats necessary connexion very briefly, reducing it to the psychology of belief-constructed causation and citing Hume's second definition of cause at that level as "An object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it in the imagination, that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other' (T172)" (p. 16). He concludes here that "The idea of necessary connexion, which is an ingredient in the idea of cause, is therefore, the propensity of the mind to make inferences in
Soon into Section XV ("Rules, etc.") we find its context to limit decisively the application and the value of Hume's rules. The context is such that "Any thing may produce anything" (T173), namely the domain of synthetic impressions and their ideas occurring in paralleled atomic sequence, temporal and/or spatial. Moreover, it is clear that the most that the empirical application of these rules can do is to establish constant conjunction, which itself falls short of establishing belief. Yet, in setting constant conjunction as the end of the rules' application, Hume himself misleads: he first claims "that the constant conjunction of objects determines their causation". He then states that "where objects are not contrary, nothing hinders them from having that constant conjunction, on which the relation of cause and effect totally depends" (T 173, italics added). Now these statements imply that a constant conjunction in experience is both necessary and sufficient to produce belief-constructed causation. We need not now explain, but merely note however, that constant conjunction is necessary but not sufficient to generate that belief which is sufficient to produce the 'cause' and 'effect' of thus schematized experience: the idea of necessary connexion generated only by a present impression of the mind's constantly associating one 'object' with another (original causation) alone adds sufficiency to constant conjunction. In this Section, Hume makes no mention of original causation generating belief, but instead proceeds to list his rules, the first four of which confirm our critical point:

1. The cause and effect must be contiguous in space and time.
2. The cause must be prior to the effect.
3. Their must be a constant union [i.e., conjunction, not connexion] betwixt the cause and effect ...
4. The same cause always produces the same effect, and the same effect never arises but from the same cause ... (T173).

the case of causal connections which is absent in the case of accidental generalities(T167)". Wilson's note 26 here simply recalls, in this context, the difference between constant conjunction as inadequate, and necessary connection as adequate, for "The assertion of causal ... generalities" (p. 371). But what is "the idea of cause" for him? Wilson tells us that "the idea of 'cause' is really two abstract ideas, one of a natural relation, one of a philosophical relation. Now, for Hume, an abstract idea is a resemblance class of ideas and impressions with which a general term has been associated (T20)." Here Wilson mistakenly reduces all causality in Hume to classes of ideas and impressions, when, in fact, causality is about power in Hume, especially in the relation (impression-to-idea) generating belief and hence belief-constructed 'causality'. Moreover, Wilson seriously misunderstands abstraction in Hume. Very briefly, and following Berkeley, Hume asserts abstraction as the relation of a particular idea, signified by a term, to a host of other individual ideas summoned by belief, as we illustrate by the river and triangle examples above: "A very material question has been stated concerning abstract or general ideas, whether they be general or particular in the mind's conception of them. A great philosopher, [Berkeley], has disputed the receiv'd opinion in this particular, and has asserted, that all general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals, which are similar to them. As I look upon this to be one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that has been made ... I shall here endeavour to confirm it by some arguments, which I hope will put it beyond all doubt and controversy" (T 17). All of these other individuals are present "in power" such that we "keep ourselves in a readiness to survey any of them, as we may be prompted by a present design or necessity" (T 20). Here, Hume's dynamism in presenting abstraction as a most powerful and belief-founded method, is obvious.
Clearly, the first three rules simply list contiguity, succession and constant conjunction as therefore necessary but not sufficient to cause belief-constructed causality. Rule 4 simply restates "constant conjunction" in Rule 3 as "always". The remaining rules, presupposing rules 1-4, simply offer experimental cautions, and refinements of the rules, such as Bacon had proposed much earlier.

It follows that a set of rules, the application of which cannot itself yield belief, can hardly be understood to justify belief, and to do so externally, since the synthetic orders to which these rules apply are such that belief is brought adventitiously to them. Belief, then, as the causally reflexive relation of present impression-to-idea (original causation) justifies itself as grounded in a pre-established harmony; and Hume thereby escapes an infinite criteriological regress. In this, Hume resonates with Spinoza's doctrine of philosophical method as the causally reflexive knowledge - the knowing that one knows - of adequate and true knowledge.40

It also follows that Hume's criterion of the meaning of ideas - a criterion leading to the verification principle of A.J. Ayer and other logical or empirical positivists - grounds itself in the impression-to-idea relation of original causation as it mediates Custom and belief-constructed causality:

Accordingly, whenever any idea is ambiguous, [one] has always recourse to the impression, which must render it clear and precise. And when he suspects that any philosophical term has no idea annexed to it (as is too common) he always asks from what impression that pretended idea is derived? And if no impression can be produced, he concludes that the term is altogether insignificant ... and it were to be wished that this rigorous method were more practiced in all philosophical debates (TA649, central italics are Hume's, others are ours).

Hume's criterion of meaning, where ideas as validated refer to any content of thought proceeding from original impressions, is thus metaphysical and a priori. As we have argued it, this conclusion can be rejected only by rejecting, as Ayer does, the question of the origin of ideas as (positivistically) misguided. And it is now clear that original causation (impression-to-idea), in distinctively mediating Custom's metaphysically causing belief-constructed causality, mediates the human and common universe of

40 Spinoza, in a doctrine which we cannot pursue here, founds philosophical or deductive method on adequate and true ideas of which the mind, within the divine intellect, is the full or 'adequate' cause. Cf. V. Maxwell: "The Philosophical Method of Spinoza", Dialogue, XVIII (1988) pp. 89-110, for this. Now, while the 'mind' is problematic in Hume, the causal relation of impression-to-idea as it generates belief is closely analogous to the mind's conceiving adequate and true ideas in Spinoza's conception of method. And, the causal relation of impression-to-idea in Hume's doctrine of original causation clearly grounds his method of verifying true ideas through their meaning. To that resonance, we add this: (Custom)-(original causation)-to- (belief-constructed causality) can be seen as standing in relation to Spinoza's three levels of knowledge: (scientia intuitiva) - (ratio) - (imaginatio), but with this difference: Spinoza's monism yields an explicit continuity of these levels of causal knowledge. But Hume's atomistic pluralism renders a continuity of his three levels of causality implicit in their mediation, original causation. However, as Hume would say, we insinuate all of this, but without insisting on the matter.
effective meaning as well. This mediation, as both productive and semantic, is lost to the scholars reviewed above, whether they treat impression-to-idea causally or not: if they do, they collapse its causality into the 'causality' which is belief-constructed, and hence they collapse the mediation into one causal pole to be mediated. If they do not, what they do not treat causally (impression-to-idea) cannot a fortiori causally mediate Custom and belief-constructed 'causality'.

Against Wilson and others, then, our "Prussian" Hume stands forth as a serious, if constrained, metaphysician. As such, Hume proposes a "true" metaphysics. Moreover, as argued here, the causal role of original causality (impression-to-idea) insofar as it imposes belief on what "then" become the 'causes' and 'effects' of human experience, anticipates the role of the Kantian concept or category of 'cause-effect' as it analogically schematizes experience. In his article, "Hume's Playful Metaphysics", Moses\(^\text{41}\) elicits that sceptical and self-amused Hume who writes that "my [speculative] follies shall at least be natural and agreeable". But, soon after, and defending philosophy against superstition, Hume claims that: "Where reason is lively, and mixes itself with some [speculative] propensity, it ought to be assented to" (T270, italics added). We argued above, in part IV, that reason is most "lively" as, through original causation, it generates that belief which causes the "beliefs" sustaining common life. Hence, we reply to Moses that Hume's doing metaphysics is half fun, but whole earnest.

Concluding, we ask: Does Custom, Hume's "ultimate" principle, itself have a cause? Since he grants that possibility, we shall let Hume answer our question in a beautiful text:

> The order of the universe proves an omnipotent mind; that is, a mind whose will is constantly attended with the obedience of every creature and being. Nothing more is requisite to give a foundation to all the articles of religion, nor is it necessary we should form a distinct idea of the force and energy of the supreme Being (TA 633, n. 1; we italicize "proves" and "obedience").

It here follows that, in Hume's metaphysical logic, original causation mediates Custom, and belief-constructed causality, by creating a priori that belief which is itself obedience to that divine mind.

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Puritanism, Enlightenment And The U.S. Constitution

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Much contemporary thought tends to obscure the relationship between the Christian religion and the political institutions of the United States. On the one side, one finds liberals who see the birth of toleration in a collapse of religious hegemony and who treat religion as a matter of subjective will, as one among many ends the liberal consumer may choose. ¹ On the other side, one finds conservatives of various stripes who treat religion as a datum of conscience, as a source or expression of objective imperatives which limit choice. ² Neither of these alternatives fully comprehends the dialectic which obtains between religious and political consciousness in the United States.

The political life of the United States is rooted in a religious consciousness through which individuals achieve within themselves a more or less rational ordering of their desires and thus achieve in various forms an undivided union of rational and natural interests. In religious image and doctrine individuals have before them an ideal representation of the reconciliation of their particular desires within a divine order. While rooted in religion, however, the ethical life of the state cannot be reduced to religion. Religious life is fundamentally inward and in all forms related to representation. By contrast, civic life in its laws and traditions makes explicit the objective rationality of the subject, the fundamental principle and right of an enlightened self-consciousness.

In America the religious roots of the state are given explicitly rational form in Enlightenment thought. One finds a remarkable transition from a Puritanism born of a strict and exclusive adherence to a particular faith to a tolerant Enlightened constitution.

One finds in the American Constitution a concrete universality: a union of the particular and sectarian interests and needs of individuals with their more universal moral/legal nature -- the democratic will of individuals informed by the common will of the nation. In the Constitution, the interests expressed in the legislature gain rational form by public debate, by their relation to law and by their relation to the operation of the

whole state. In short, the plurality of subjective interests is informed by its relation to an objective common good.

This essay suggests that if the United States is to bring about a resolution to the contradictions inherent in revolutionary individualism which pose a threat both to ethical institutions and to the satisfaction of human needs, it must find a common good beyond the economic advantage of individuals, a good which degenerates neither into spiritless bureaucracy nor into a coercive moralistic enthusiasm. Further, it must seek this good not in the abstraction of what "ought to be" but in the ethical spirit which has animated its history and successfully wedded revolution and stability in its Constitution.

The present argument thus sketches the logic of the development from the Calvinism at the heart of American Puritanism to the Enlightenment thought which underlies the U.S. Constitution in order to clarify the relationship between religion and state in America. The course of this development is from a subject whose freedom is accomplished for him through the religious representation of divine activity, specifically grace, to a subject who knows this freedom as the inward principle of his own self-consciousness and its political enactment.³

In this development Puritanism transforms the Calvinist emphasis on the divine reconciliation of particular desire and universal law by making explicit the free activity of the human subject in conversion. Here the Puritan subject, confident in his own inward freedom, becomes a religious reflection of Enlightenment subjectivity, free in its relation both to its own rationality and to its natural desires. This forms the subjective pole of the development.

The objective pole likewise begins with a religious paradigm but has as its concern not only individual freedom but also its communal expression. The inward relation of the individual to the divine will (initially conceived as total submission and obedience) provides a religious paradigm for the political order. Absolute surrender, the content of faith, is held to provide the model for the relation between the religious community and the secular realm: as the individual submits to the divine, so too the secular realm must be governed by the religious order.

From this starting point, the upshot of the participation of the individual conscience in the divine plan comes increasingly to be conceived in terms of the individual himself and his finite communal relations; the common good no longer is seen to demand the sublimation of particular individual interests but can be achieved through their expression.

The proceeding sections have the following content and logical form:

³ A fuller treatment than permitted by the confines of this essay would show the transformation as it occurred in various colonies, especially Virginia.
(1) Calvinism -- Human subjective freedom is subsumed by the divine will and this union is upheld as an ideal from which we have fallen. This conception of subjectivity has as its political correlate institutions the source of whose authority is extraneous to the individual will in that they exist only to correct it.

(2) Puritanism and Covenant Theology -- The covenant theology makes explicit the importance of the individual's free assent in the reception of grace. The development in the Puritan "covenant theology" asserts the free assent of religious subjects as the finite moment of religious and political legitimacy and establishes an explicitly rational basis for both realms.

(3) The Collapse of Puritanism and the Transition to Enlightenment Within Puritanism there occurs a division between reason and nature which is manifest in a general way in the division between the practices and doctrines of Massachusetts and Connecticut. What is crucial in this development as in Enlightenment thought is that the object of faith has been thoroughly inwardized and thus an object of reason and experience.

(4) The American Revolution -- The human subject confident of itself as the rational source of political legitimacy overturns arbitrary monarchic rule but as revolutionary spirit finds expression in unstable institutions.

(5) The U.S. Constitution as Concrete Universal -- The revolutionary will turns back on itself in a 'Calvinistic' reflection on its own limits. This will is given stable form in a constitution which secures in political form the reconciliation of the particular interests of free individuals with an objective communal good. The Constitution is thus a rational sovereignty, the free adherence to which overcomes the divisive technological and moralistic moments which threaten the political life of the U.S.

(6) Conclusion: the Spirit of the Religious Clauses of the First Amendment -- The present argument concludes with reflections on the First Amendment which suggest that there is an establishment of religion in the United States and that properly conceived this is consistent with the Constitution. Further it is argued that in this light the free exercise clause should be interpreted as granting religious exemptions from generally authoritative laws.4

1. Calvinism

Calvinism it must be noted is not a destruction of reason but its subordination, with nature, to necessity in the form of divine predestination.5 It develops a concrete knowledge of God. In Calvin's words: "not that knowledge which, content with idle

4 The 'religious clauses' of the first amendment state: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."
5 Cf. Calvin, Inst. I,1,2 where it is argued that knowledge of self and nature result from God's grace.
speculation, merely flits in the brain but that which will be sound and fruitful if one duly perceive it and if it takes root in the heart." On this view, the unity of the rational and the natural, of head and heart, results in a practical or moral wisdom, piety. For Calvin, it is idle to question what God is; what is required is not speculation but reverence grounded in recognition and worship of the divine majesty. This recognition is the result of reflection upon divine law as expressed in the Commandments. In such reflection, the Calvinist becomes aware not only of the sovereignty of God as the giver of law but also of the poverty of the subject, in himself utterly unable to fulfill the divine commands, the legacy of original sin which corrupts heart and mind.

For the subject thus estranged, the expression of God's mercy in Christ amounts to a reward which is completely undeserved. According to Calvin, human sinfulness casts us into the role of debtors, a debt which we attempt to repay through obedience and faith. Thus: "he [God] therefore yields his own right when he offers a reward." This reward manifests God's covenant with his people. In Calvinism the formula of this Covenant is expressed in Leviticus: "I will be your God and you will be my people." Further, "He is our God on this condition: that he dwell among us as he has testified to Moses." Thus, the Calvinist conception of the covenant gives rational form to the relationship between an austere deity and his elect. On the objective side, the covenant expresses the universality of God's promise and the eternal significance of his relation to humanity. On the subjective side, there is the nascent sense of being chosen or elect.

So by contrast with Augustine's view that human memory, will, and understanding are the image of God, Calvin finds the human reflection of God's image in obedience: "God has so depicted his character in law that if any man carries out in deeds whatever is enjoined there, he will express the image of God as it were in his own life." On the one hand, this represents a purification of the subject's relation to the divine through merely finite image. On the other hand, however, because such definition does not make explicit the rational element of the human relation to God, it portrays the subject's relation to God in a less than comprehensive manner. On Calvin's account, in the moment of reconciliation with the divine both reason and will are passive. The union with God then is merely immediate, involving the dormancy of human reason and will in the divine activity. As such, grace does not comprehend the rational and natural aspects of human subjectivity but restrains them. Whereas Augustine's conception of the divine image as memory, will and understanding contains, in the understanding, a moment of rational reflection on conversion and the relation of mind and will to God, Calvin, in asserting passivity, de-emphasizes the significance of rational comprehension.

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6 Calvin, Inst. I.V,9.  
7 For Calvin: "[the mind] conceives desires and undertakes only that which is impious, perverted, foul, impure and infamous. The heart is so steeped in the poison of sin that it can breathe out nothing but a loathsome stench. (Inst.II,V,19) Cf. also Inst.II,viii,3.  
8 Calvin, Inst. II, viii,4.  
9 Calvin, Inst., II,x,8; Lev.26.12.  
10 Calvin, Inst. II,x,8; Lev. 26.11.  
11 Inst., II,viii,51. Cf, also Inst. I, xv,4 and Augustine The Trinity, X, 11- 12; XIV,4,6,8; XV,21.
Nevertheless, Calvin, without infringing the primacy of the divine will and predestination, indicates through the content of obedience an objective criterion of one's reconciliation with God. He states: "because a man does not easily maintain love in all respects unless he earnestly fears God, here is proof also of his piety." Further, "our life shall best conform to God's will when it is in every respect most fruitful for our brethren." However, the objective limit of this conception is that it finds institutional expression in a church which inadequately recognizes the importance of the individual's rational assent and which thus asserts itself as an authority over both the individual and the community.

On the subjective side, then, the moment of grace exhibits a less complete appropriation of God's will than does man's state before the fall; it is thus an abstraction from a prior more realized state. Likewise, on the objective side, the divine will itself achieves only abstract determination: its spiritual doctrine achieves incomplete institutional enactment. Hence, as Calvinist doctrine is not comprehensive of finite individuality, so the church is not comprehensive of diverse human ends. As such, the attempts by the church to govern the state will meet with resistance, with rational rebellion against an authoritarian institution.

Accordingly, the state thus conceived exists in a merely instrumental relation to the divine providence in which the subject finds his truth: it is used to correct and punish the sinful individual. As such, the state exists in an external relation to the human subject and the subject finds his true relation to God, himself, and nature outside the state. It will thus be unclear to individuals why they should subordinate themselves to a state which is external to their inward relation to the divine. Thus a real political spirit cannot be cultivated in this situation.

What is of great interest for the present argument is the sense of individuality implicit in this Calvinistic inwardness. The dignity of the individual consists in an ethical principle prior to all institutional relations. While in its initial and abstract form this principle has the shape of obedience, it also indicates the primacy of the individual conscience, so far as the individual will is given over to the divine will.

2. Puritanism And Covenant Theology

Calvinism's abstract reconciliation of the rational and natural interests of humanity breaks down into a division between Arminianism and Antinomianism. Arminians,
Arminius himself in Holland and Laud in England, criticized Calvinism for its destruction of moral rationality. On their view, absolute predestination cannot ground moral obligation. If the spiritual destiny of individuals is eternally preordained, what reasons, other than those of the casuist, can ordinary people be given to perform their duties? Arminians, then, asserted that the correct operation of human reason and will is prerequisite to the reception of grace.

Antinomians, for example, Anabaptists, Quakers, Ranters, and Levellers, criticized Calvinism because it provided no means by which individuals could be assured they were elect. They asserted therefore that union with God was immediate and did not require a special act of grace. Thus, whereas Arminians downplayed the corruption of human reason and will, Antinomians downplayed the corruption of human nature.

Puritanism as it developed in England and New England drew these subjective moments back into relation to an objective divine providence. However, the Puritan concept of the relation between God and humanity achieved a more determinate comprehension of reason and nature than did Calvinism, conceiving this relation, in its 'federal' theology, in terms of covenant. Perry Miller puts it as follows: "Arminianism was a kind of ethical rationalism that had lost a sense of piety, and Antinomianism was an uncontrolled piety without the indispensable ballast of reason; Puritanism looked upon itself as the synthesis of piety and reason, and the federal Puritans looked upon the covenant theology as the perfection of that synthesis."

The covenant theology transformed the Puritan conceptions of: (1) the relation of the individual to God -- The Covenant of Grace; (2) the relation of the individual to the church -- The Church Covenant; (3) the relation of the individual and the church to the state -- The Social Covenant and; (4) the relation of God the Father to God the Son -- The Redemption Covenant. Here the individual is recognized as a source of the legitimacy of the relation to God in (1) and (4) and to institutions in (2) and (3).

The covenant of grace makes the activity of the individual an essential element in conversion or regeneration. Though humanity has fallen from an original and perfect relation to the divine, it is not thoroughly vitiated. Prior to regeneration humans have at least that amount of goodness which allows them voluntarily to accept divine grace. As Richard Sibbes puts it: "Though God's grace do all yet we must give our consent." Also John Preston in his The New Covenant (1629) states: "Take heede of refusing the acceptable time ... Beloued, there is a certaine acceptable time, when God offers Grace, and after that hee offers it no more ...." Individuals thus have a voluntary and active role in obtaining their own salvation. Covenant theology thus conceived conversion as a contract on equal terms between parties in all other respects unequal. The covenant is a

16 New England Mind I, 373.
17 The present argument does not consider the covenant of redemption which stresses Christ's voluntary acceptance of his 'cross' and the Father's pledge to discharge humanity of its sin. Cf. New England Mind I, 407-9, 411, 419.
19 Errand: 85.
free gift of God's mercy and is freely accepted by the individual. Further, both God and the individual are bound by the covenant. John Preston states: "You may sue him of his own bond written and sealed and he cannot deny it."  

No longer is sin conceived in ontological terms as an essential corruption of human nature. Rather it is more explicitly defined in terms of the moral activity of the free will. Whereas Calvin thoroughly subordinates reason to divine predestination, finding in human nature innate corruption, Preston, for example, finds in human nature an innate goodness. On his view, both sense and reason are unpolluted. He states: "faith teaches nothing contrary to reason, for sense and reason are God's works as well as grace...."

Puritanism thus achieves a practical reformulation of the divine-human relationship emphasizing, to a greater degree than Calvinism, the freedom, rationality, and moral capacity of individuals and the perceivable regularity of the divine will circumscribed by the covenant. Human activity does not therefore lie outside the divine principle but is the finite prerequisite of the individual's relationship with the divine. Moreover, abiding by the terms of the covenant gives the individual rights against God himself and thus assurance of salvation.

In the individual's active participation in the divine work of his own salvation is achieved a more determinate union of divine and human than is available on strict Calvinism. Nevertheless, the Calvinist spirit though modified is not overturned. For the Puritan, God is still conceived as sovereign and in Himself unknowable but no longer appears arbitrary or tyrannical in relation to humans. Further, while humanity continues to be seen as fallen and sinful, it is not without rational and moral capacity. And finally, while grace remains a special dispensation, it is thought not to be opposed to human reason but rather to be its elevation.

The finite activity of individuals is thus more completely reconciled with the divine will. As a result, the Puritan has a more determinate sense of his own inwardness as the essential spirit of religious and political life. The individual recognizes in his own regenerate moral will the foundation and legitimation of all practical institutions. Thus, the individual in the finitude of his particular interests is not simply corrupt and a mere falling away from the divine principle but contains within himself the potential for more universal relations. Whereas the corrupt individual of Calvinism can, in principle, welcome correction from an external political order, which would impinge only upon a fallen particularity, the Puritan, whose individuality is conceived as a concrete union of reason and nature, finds in political coercion an infringement of the universality implicit in the subject's own self-relation.

The development of the sense of human freedom through the Covenant of Grace and the Church Covenant is at the heart of the Puritan conception of political life in the Social

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21 In Errand, 76.
Covenant. Congregationalism was the most unique feature of New England Puritanism.\(^{23}\) On this format, each town was centred around a church whose membership was constituted by those who had given proof that they were regenerate, who were party to the Covenant of Grace. Church membership represented only one-fifth of the population - four-fifths of the town were not church members.\(^{24}\)

The Church Covenant was limited, then, to those who had visibly accepted the Covenant of Grace and who were judged as sincere through principles of rational charity. The Church Covenant is thus an institutional expression of the inward covenant. Miller quotes a telling axiom of Puritanism: "the Covenant of Grace is clothed with Church-Covenant in a Politicall visible way."\(^{25}\) The Church Covenant gives institutional recognition to the moral will of regenerate individuals.

The moral will, therefore, is seen as the source of church powers and those elected by regenerate individuals are placed in charge of the community at large. On the subjective side, individual freedom is thought to be a necessary condition of political legitimacy. As John Winthrop states: "No common weale can be founded but by free consent."\(^{26}\) John Cotton expresses the objective corollary: "It is necessary, therefore, that all power that is on earth be limited, Church power or other."\(^{27}\) Thus, the moral will of the regenerate individual is no longer defined by obedience alone but by political activity. In his inward self-reflection, the subject participates not only in the divine will but in worldly institutions whose objective basis is divine law and whose legitimation and limit is grounded in the subject's moral will.

Nevertheless, the supreme political virtue for Puritans is obedience. However, the power of the magistrate to whom obedience is due comes not only from God but from the people. Moreover, as Winthrop argues in *A Modell of Christian Charity* the magistrates are limited in three ways: (1) as members of the church they are bound by the church covenant; (2) as freemen they are bound by the social covenant to which they had sworn and; (3) As rulers they are bound by the oaths of office and party to a covenant with the people.\(^{28}\)

### 3. The Collapse Of Puritanism And The Transition To Enlightenment

The "federal" (or covenant) theology thus conceives divine-human and individual-community relations in terms of contract. The communal covenants of church and society

\(^{23}\) *New England Mind I*, 433.

\(^{24}\) It is remarkable that only one-fifth offered themselves as regenerate. Miller contends that "They were honest people and found it difficult to romanticize about themselves -- even when they desperately wanted to." *Errand*, 158.

\(^{25}\) *New England Mind I*, 447.

\(^{26}\) In *New England Mind I*, 408.

\(^{27}\) In *Errand*, 43.

\(^{28}\) *New England Mind I*, 424.
are fundamentally subordinate to the subject's inward relation to God in the Covenant of Grace. In this sense, there remains a division between the individual and the determinate ethical order such that institutional life is rendered unstable by the contingency of adherence. The migration to Connecticut, May 1636, expresses this inherent contingency: an element of society breaks away forming its own order, external to that of Massachusetts. This renders Massachusetts one among many orders and as such not the universal fulfilment of God's plan. This fragmentation was not compatible with its place as a "city on the hill".

In the division between the Massachusetts and Connecticut communities, a division which originates in the contractual division between the individual will and the social order, one finds a development of the implicit democratic tendencies of Puritanism. Thomas Hooker, pastor of the Newtown congregation which moved to Connecticut, developed the notion of preparation to include virtually all inhabitants. Whereas John Cotton would restrict church membership to those who were found worthy, upon examination by magistrates, Hooker emphasized that one could not tell who was reprobate and who was not.\textsuperscript{29} Hence, in the \textit{Survey}, Hooker defined the qualifications for church membership with generous latitude. He argued that if one professes faith, does not live openly in sin, has some knowledge and can give some reason of his hope, "these be grounds of probabilities, by which Charity poised according to rule may and ought to conceive, there be some beginnings of spiritual good."\textsuperscript{30}

Nevertheless, dwindling church membership drew both sides of the New England spirit together in acceptance of an expansion of the Church Covenant, what is called the \textit{Half-Way Covenant}. In the Half-Way Covenant, the Synod of 1662 changed earlier restrictive requirements for church membership. While New England had admitted the children of adult members to baptism, assuming they would later "own" the covenant through a profession of faith, it had required of adult members understanding, good behaviour and, most importantly, an experience of conversion. But this left many outside church membership, the children of those who were baptised but had not yet received faith. Edmund Morgan succinctly expresses the change wrought by the Synod: "It meant that if a person born and baptised in the church did not receive faith he could still continue his membership and have his own family baptised, by leading a life free of scandal, by learning and professing the doctrines of Christianity and by making a voluntary submission to God and his Church."\textsuperscript{31}

However, in the further reflection upon the Half-Way Covenant by Increase and Cotton Mather and John Stoddard, spiritual leaders of Massachusetts and Connecticut respectively, one finds an important division in the New England mind. Stoddard was struck by the fact that while the Half-Way Covenant enlarged the congregation, it diminished the number of those who were full church members, namely those who

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{30} \textit{New England Mind II}, 76.
\end{itemize}
partook in the Lord's supper. Increase Mather took a different perspective on the situation. In 1679 he bemoaned the fact that the distinction between those who partook in the Half-Way Covenant, and those in the town who did not, had diminished to the point that there seemed little difference between one who was and one who was not in covenant with God.

The issue, then, for both was to invigorate and revive the religious spirit of citizens in the face of an emergent secularism. The Mathers re-emphasized the contractual nature of the covenant and its rational components. Increase Mather admitted that the founders had based their idea of the covenant not only upon the bible but also upon nature and reason. From this side, the importance of subjective consent was stressed and defined in terms of innate principles of reason and morality. In 1700 Cotton Mather published *Reasonable Religion* in which he states: "The power of reason is Natural to the Soul of Man." For Mather, while the truths of revelation are higher than reason they are not contrary to it. In his later work *Manuductio ad Ministerium* (1726) he went so far as to state that principles of morality are innate and "as Plain, as Clear, as Undeniable, as any that are purely Mathematical." As spelled out in his 1710 *Bonifacius. An Essay Upon the Good that is to be Devised*, Mather saw the development of piety to be the work of rational individuals and groups who through social pressure would exhort citizens to moral action. In this way Mather sought to reconcile the divisions born of an emerging capitalist economy, the doctrine of individual rights, and the toleration enforced by the Crown. From their own particular standpoints, the divided interests of society, through pious action, would realize a common good and thus uphold the divinely ordered gradations of the Puritan state. Solomon Stoddard, the "dictator of Connecticut", was far more sceptical of the rational and moral power of the human mind. He rejected the Half-Way Covenant and indeed the whole structure of the 'federal theology' as it had been defined in Massachusetts. By contrast with the view of the Mathers which defined the covenant as a contract whose terms were discernable by reason, Stoddard returned to the Calvinist doctrine of the covenant as command and asserted that grace could be known only in the inward intuition of grace itself. For Stoddard, God's grace was dispensed on the basis of His sovereign and inscrutable will which remained impenetrable to the human mind. He states: "The only reason why God sets his love on one man and not another is because he pleases." Further: "He exercises grace freely from His Sovereign Will and Pleasure."

Because no human can rationally discern sainthood, Stoddard argued, the gates to church membership should be opened to all. Though he was critical of the Church Covenant, arguing both that it could not be derived from reason and that it was

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32 *New England Mind II*, 115. Miller indicates that the duties required of full communicants were too onerous for most citizens. They were thus satisfied if they could obtain baptism for their children. *New England Mind II*, 114-5.
33 *New England Mind I*, 255.
34 *New England Mind II*, 419.
35 *New England Mind II*, 422.
36 *New England Mind II*, 435.
37 Cf. *New England Mind II*, Chapter XXIV.
38 *New England Mind I*, 283.
unscriptural, Stoddard nevertheless upheld the communal covenant and in Miller's words: "He treated the congregation and virtually the whole town (there were still a few resolute sinners) as the Church; at one stroke he cut his way through the maze of the covenants by identifying the church not with a society of saints but with the town meeting -- where he himself was dictator."[^40] Although Stoddard's abolition of the "oligarchic rule of the elect" contains democratic implications he was also quick to suppress these. By contrast with the congregationalist view in which control remained with the local church, Stoddard organized the churches in western Massachusetts into "consociations" based on the Presbyterian model, and ruled this as a "Protestant Pope".[^41]

Thus one finds in the central theological-social debates in New England, basic components of the revolutionary spirit which animated the American colonies in 1776, yet at this stage of their development defined in opposition to each other and secured by authoritarian social orders. On the one hand, one finds a conception of the individual as a subject whose rational spirit finds expression in the social order. The Mather's, even in expanding the rational capabilities of the individual, nevertheless conceived them as tied to a pre-modern social hierarchy. On the other hand, Stoddard while asserting the "equality" of all individuals under God, at least so far as rational social discriminations could not be made on the basis of grace, nevertheless stabilized this democratic impulse through his own dictatorial authority. In each community the seeds of democracy are present but do not yet permeate the social order in which they take root. The further development of the "New England mind" suggests how, in its own pre-modern way, Puritanism increasingly emphasized the subjective principle which animates the American Revolution and which leads to the collapse of Puritanism itself. The contrast between the views of Charles Chauncey and Jonathan Edwards is instructive.

Following his precursors Wise and Mayhew, Chauncey brings to fruition the rationalism implicit in the covenant theology. In Massachusetts, John Wise, more radically democratic than the Mathers, was also more rationalistic. Through emphasizing the direct connection between God and natural reason, Wise eliminates the priority of Scripture; it becomes a secondary confirmation of propositions known by reason alone.[^42] Jonathan Mayhew marks a further step in this development. As Miller argues, with Mayhew: "The purposes of society are no longer the deity's, but the subject's."[^43] What is important here is the well-being of citizens. Charles Chauncey reinterprets religion in this rationalistic light. For Chauncey, true religion: "approves itself to the Understanding and Conscience, ... and is in the best Manner calculated to promote the Good of mankind."[^44] From this secularized religion arose both the rejection of the Westminster Confession...

[^40]: *New England Mind II*, 227.
[^42]: *Puritans I*, 193.
[^43]: *Puritans I*, 194. The extent of Stoddard's domination of the Connecticut Valley was remarkable, and all the moreso in that it was exercised from Northampton.
[^44]: In *Errand*, 193.
and the birth of Unitarianism. Theologically liberal but socially conservative this rationalism represents one side of the collapse of the Puritan view.

In 1729 Jonathan Edwards succeeded his grandfather Solomon Stoddard as the theological leader of Connecticut and western Massachusetts. Edwards, intensifying the doctrine of grace, reasserted what he conceived as the Calvinist spirit of Puritanism. He: (1) rejected the judicial interpretation of original sin; (2) declared God unfettered by agreement or obligation; (3) made grace irreversible and; (4) annihilated man's natural ability.

For Edwards as the result of the Fall, humans are utterly devoid of the "spiritual principles" which enable one to love God. As a result, one is captive of the "natural principles" and unable to overcome one's natural desires and self-love. He sees grace, however, as a partial restoration of the spiritual principles. Utilizing Lockean psychology, Edwards describes grace as the gift of a new sense or as the reception of a new simple idea. To be given a new sense is to be able to perceive the love and beauty of God, actually to love God. For Edwards, grace is not itself a simple idea but rather allows one to perceive the new simple idea, that is, God's presence in human consciousness.

It can thus be seen that the positions advanced by Unitarians and Edwardsians are not mere opposites. Rather both presuppose that God is to be found in the immediate data of consciousness in the innate ideas of natural law and the simple idea conferred by grace respectively. Likewise, both in varying degrees redeem human reason and nature: Unitarians through the denial of original sin and Edwards through his Lockean reinterpretation of the Calvinistic doctrine of Grace. On the Unitarian view, the subject, thus restored, looks to logic to discover truth, while on Edwards' view he looks to the evidence of experience. But what is of significance in both views, is that the truth is immediately present to the subject's consciousness. The implicit political determination of this doctrine finds legitimacy in no authority which does not somehow emanate from and secure the right of subjectivity.

Thus, there is an identical spirit at work in Puritanism and in Enlightenment: one from the side of faith, one from the side of pure rational insight; two aspects of the one subjectivity whose democratic enactment is the basis of the revolutions of the time.

4. The American Revolution

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45 *History of Philosophy in America*, 140.
46 *Errand*, 98.
47 *History of Philosophy in America*, 180-82.
48 Edwards believed in a partial restoration of the spiritual principles of man which had been lost in the fall. *Cf. History of Philosophy in America*, 179-183
The division of Puritanism into two complementary but opposed doctrines, roughly deism and evangelicalism, is the religious form of the dual moments of the Enlightenment spirit, rationalism and empiricism. What is common among these forms of self-consciousness is the individual's inward confidence that knowledge is found nowhere but in the subject's own reason and experience. By contrast with the doctrine of Calvin, this reconciliation of divine and finite is seen to occur not simply in the divine substance but also in and for human subjectivity. James Doull argues that for the Calvinist the division and unification of the natural and sensuous nature of the subject was "received as the movement of the trinitarian idea." By contrast, in Enlightenment thought the division and the process of unification is referred to the subject itself.\footnote{James Doull, "Faith and Enlightenment" *Dionysius*, Vol.X (Dec. 1986) p. 132.} Thus, John Wise adheres to the concept of natural law and Jonathan Edwards treats of grace as a simple idea, the former reflecting Descartes's emphasis on innate ideas, the latter reflecting Locke's emphasis on simple ideas. In a more developed form this is a revolutionary subjectivity which would overturn all merely external restrictions of its freedom. The politicized Cartesian subject asserts itself as the principle of political legitimacy.\footnote{Cartesian here applies to both Descartes' and Locke's concept of the subject.}

The empiricist Lockean subject gives primary enactment of this confidence in the right to property. Whereas the Calvinist obtains merely an inward freedom through the unwarranted gift of divine grace, the Lockean subject obtains the practical guarantee of his political liberty through the appropriation of property. What is originally God's gift "to all in common" is appropriated by individuals and divided into several parts.\footnote{John Locke *Two Treatises on Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) II,V,25-6.} The individual's property is not merely a gift but is also the product of his own activity, of having "mixed his Labour with, and join'd to it something that is his own."\footnote{Locke, *Two Treatises*, II,v,27.} Further, property is here conceived in a broad sense to include "Lives, Liberties and Estates" and the purpose of government is conceived as the preservation of property.\footnote{Locke, *Two Treatises*, II,ix,123-24.}

The rallying cry of the Revolution, "No taxation without representation", thus expresses Americans' experience of a difference in British and American interests which poses a threat to the concrete freedom they obtain in the security of their property. In the argument of Daniel Dulany this difference in American and British interests makes virtual representation impossible. Developed to its logical conclusion, this difference makes political union itself impossible.\footnote{Cf. Edmund S. Morgan, *The Birth of the Republic*, 1763-89 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977) p. 123.} Moreover, the British insistence on an identical authority over legislation and taxation aids in the American deduction: Britain has no right to tax. Thus if legislation and taxation are equivalent, it follows that they have no right to legislate.\footnote{Cf. Morgan, *Birth*, 44.} Further, by executing an arbitrary and absolute power over the
colonies, the British parliament was thus formally identical to an absolute monarch. And this identification reflects negatively on King George.57

The subject's right to property thus places limits on governmental action and implies a continuation of the Puritan opposition to absolute monarchic power. The great Puritan John Cotton states: "It is necessary therefore that all power that is on earth be limited, Church power or other..."58 Compare a newspaper article which appeared in response to the Stamp Act: "No Parliament can alter the Nature of Things or make that good which is really evil .... There is certainly some Bounds to their Power and 'tis Pity they were not more certainly known."59

The work of the Founding Fathers was thus to limit government in terms compatible with the freedom of the property-owning, moral subject; a freedom known in both political and religious terms.60 The Declaration of Independence indicates why it is that the British system does not contain sufficient limitations. As James Young puts it:

> The form of the Declaration is clearly that of a large-scale, Lockean syllogism. The famous second paragraph states the premises of the argument. It begins with the assertion of self evident truths that all men are created equal and are possessed of certain inalienable rights, notably 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' Governments are said to be created to secure these rights and to derive their power from the consent of the governed. If government becomes destructive of these ends, a right inheres in the people to alter or abolish it and to institute a new one in its place.

> The body of the Declaration that follows is basically a long list of grievances against King George III. These grievances are said to be violations of natural rights and the doctrine of consent, thus leading inevitably to the conclusion that a severance of ties linking Crown to colonises is justified."61

The unity emergent in the common struggle against Britain and in the attempt to articulate its justification is given institutional form in the Articles of Confederation. The Articles were in place from the end of the Revolution to the ratification of the Constitution in 1787. The Articles unified the states in an external manner allowing each state to retain its sovereign individuality, any power not explicitly given to the U.S. Congress being retained by the states.

57 For example, Thomas Paine incorporates scripture and Locke in his denunciation both of the King and of the principle of monarchy. He states: "How impious is the title of sacred majesty applied to a worm, who in the midst of his splendour is crumbling into dust." Thomas Paine, "Common Sense" in Political Writings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) p.9. Cf. also pp. 8-15.
58 Miller, Errand, 43.
59 In Morgan, Birth, 23.
5. The Constitution As Concrete Universal

The development of the U.S. Constitution arises from a twofold negation: (1) of the Articles of Confederation (2) of the legislative tyranny of state governments. The impetus in each case, however, is not merely the rejection of the institutional results of the revolution but also a gradual recognition of the supremacy of the people and the positive impetus to realize this sovereignty in reformed institutions. The unity between the subject's reason and nature, that is, between the universal divine order and the finite human will, achieved initially in religious representation, is now given adequate political enactment.

Alexander Hamilton among others made explicit the limits of the Articles of Confederation. The central defect was that, according to the Articles, the federal government was not directly related to individuals but merely to state governments. As a result, Congress could raise neither men nor money by direct conscription or taxation of individuals but relied on the states' fulfilment of various congressional requisitions. With "neither troops, nor treasury, nor government" the security of the Confederation and of freedom of individuals was in question.62

Individuals thus had a more stable allegiance to their particular states, which they knew as the basis of the security of life and property and whose authority they knew in the sanction of law and taxation, than they had to the federal government. So long, therefore, as the primary division was between state-government and Congress, the people's loyalty remained with the state. Hence Hamilton's description of the Confederation: "Each state yielding to the persuasive voice of immediate interest has successively withdrawn its support till the frail and tottering edifice seems ready to fall upon our heads and crush us beneath its ruins."63

However, just as the Confederation could not bring institutional stability to the revolutionary will, so too a division emerged between state legislatures and the will of the people. State legislatures engaged in paper money schemes and enacted laws which confiscated property and suspended established ways of debt collection. Private property, the determinate expression of individual freedom, thus became insecure and the legislative expression of the people's will, so far as it was in opposition to the subjective freedom which is its basis, appeared as capricious and arbitrary as that of a monarch.64

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62 Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, James Madison, The Federalist Papers (ed) Clinton Rossiter, (Chicago: Mentor Books) Section 15. Hereafter references will refer to the author responsible for the specific section, title and section number

63 Hamilton, Federalist, 15. For example various states ignored the nation's treaties with foreign countries, waged war on the Indians, built their own navies, and refused to fulfill national requisitions. Cf. Morgan, Birth, 124.

64 Cf. Gordon Wood, The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969) pp. 403-9. Morgan states: "Rhode Island where a wildly depreciating paper currency had been made legal tender, was the notorious example. Hordes of happy debtors were paying off their obligations in worthless paper, leaving their creditors bankrupt." Morgan, Birth, 124.
Madison stated: "The legislative department is everywhere extending its activity and drawing all power into its impetuous vortex."\(^{65}\) Here the Revolution had turned back on itself, destroying the institutions which gave stability to its will and making its freedom vulnerable to outside interests, those of other states or foreign powers.\(^{66}\)

In critical reflection upon the defects of the Articles of Confederation and upon the tyranny of state legislatures there was, thus, the deeply felt need of institutional reform. As abstracted from its contemporary political structures, the revolutionary freedom of Americans returned to the unified will forged in opposition to British Dominion. This will, however, was now mediated not merely by the negation of external dominion but likewise by the negation of its own incomplete political forms, specifically The Articles and the priority of particular states which it sustained. Madison among others made clear that only republican government could give institutional enactment to this mediated freedom while remaining true to the character of the American people, the fundamental principles of the revolution, and self-government.\(^{67}\)

As conceived by the Framers, all government, federal and state, was grounded in the universal will of the people. As Hamilton states: "The fabric of American empire ought to rest on the solid basis of CONSENT OF THE PEOPLE. The streams of national power ought to flow immediately from that pure original fountain of all authority."\(^{68}\) But the will of the people was divided between the universal identity of all Americans and their particular identities as members of the various states. In conceptualizing the republican institutions which would make determinate the concrete freedom of Americans and unify its relations to federal and state government, the major difficulty with which the framers wrestled was that of faction, specifically the threat that a majority faction would dominate the state and coerce the rights of the minority.

What was required was a self-differentiated union of universal and particular interests, not the dominion variously of one over the other. In comprehending the whole of the individual's political life, the Constitution would operate directly on all citizens, thus achieving national government while leaving substantial jurisdiction to the states and maintaining a federal character.\(^{69}\) Moreover, as the legislature tends to predominance in republican government, it would be divided into Senate and House of Representatives.\(^{70}\) Further, the President would have veto power over acts of the legislature -- "an indispensable barrier against the encroachments of the latter upon the former."\(^{71}\) Finally, as Hamilton contends, the judiciary would be: "designed to be an immediate body between the people and the legislature in order, among other things, to keep the latter within the limits assigned to their authority."\(^{72}\) But neither the executive nor the judiciary

\(^{65}\) Madison, Federalist, 48.
\(^{66}\) Hamilton, Federalist, 6.
\(^{67}\) Madison, Federalist, 39.
\(^{68}\) Hamilton, Federalist, 22.
\(^{69}\) Madison, Federalist, 39.
\(^{70}\) Madison, Federalist, 51.
\(^{71}\) Hamilton, Federalist, 66.
\(^{72}\) Hamilton, Federalist, 78.
would, in principle, be superior to the legislature. As Madison states: "The several departments being perfectly coordinate by the terms of their common commission, neither of them, it is evident, can pretend to an exclusive or superior right of settling the boundaries between their respective powers." All authority comes from the people and as each department is grounded in the popular will, all are, in principle, equal.

Thus, the Constitution draws together the elements of universality and particularity which could not be given secure determination in Puritanism. The stability of law was unified with the democratic rebellion which reigned in the former colonies. In the Constitution, the individual's inward self-relation, conceived in its universality as the will of the people, is given determinate objective form. One finds in it not a mere correction of a fallen individuality but the enactment of a subjectivity confident of itself as the source of political legitimacy. There is room both for the universal will and for the particular interests of individuals in their private pursuits. The basis of this confidence is the recognition that the particular will is not a mere falling away from the universal but essential to its concretion. In a Madisonian pluralism, the common good arises out of the division and clash of particular interests; indeed on this view, given the division of interests, a majority could coalesce only around principles of justice and the general good.

However, the common good is not contingent upon the particularity whence it emerges. Rather, it becomes objective for the multiplicity of subjective wills, comprehensive of their difference. Madison states: "The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of government." Yet, in its comprehension of competing interests, the constitution does not eliminate differences but maintains them in dynamic relation, securing its own stability by turning ambition against ambition. Here the Enlightenment faith in the immediate goodness of the individual is returned to a more Calvinist reflection on the need to correct man's depravity. In the words of George Washington: "We have probably had too good an opinion of human nature in forming our confederation." Madison's 'auxiliary precautions' are born of the recognition that men are neither angels nor ruled by angels. Madison states: "In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions."

But in this renewed recognition of original sin the redemption of the individual consists neither in abstraction from the world, in an inward submission to the divine, nor

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73 Madison, Federalist, 49.
74 Madison, Federalist, 51.
75 Madison, Federalist, 10.
76 Madison, Federalist, 51.
77 Washington to Jay, Aug. 15, 1786 in Wood, Creation, 472.
78 Madison, Federalist, 51.
in suffering correction from an external authority. In the Constitution, the correction of the subject's inward freedom consists not in submission but in objective enactment -- the subject does not retreat from the world to an abstract inner unity but realizes this unity in concrete relation to others. Thus, the constitution embodies a fundamentally Christian recognition of the unity of reason and nature. Natural self-interest and rational principles of justice are conceived, not as irremediably opposed, but as mutually sustaining moments of a whole. The will of the people is given rational form in the Constitution which in turn rests on the people's sovereign will. But as Madison is clear, neither element exists in separation from the other: in abstraction from each other, both the raw will of the majority and the rule of law are equally destructive of freedom.

6. Conclusion: The Spirit Of The Religious Clauses Of The First Amendment

One thus finds in the U.S. Constitution an expression of the objective principles of freedom, a necessary content which both limits and enacts individual freedom. To be free in a universal and rational manner, the individual must will the objective constitutional structure which makes freedom possible. The principles of the Constitution embody the Christian reconciliation of reason and nature, of the individual's universal and particular interests. In the words of Mark DeWolfe Howe this amounts to a "de facto establishment of religion". 79

But religion is established not as a particular sect but in terms of the universal principle of freedom implicit in Christian representation and given concrete institutional form in the U.S. Constitution. Contemporary commentators have lost sight of the principles common to religious and political life. One finds a tendency to treat religion either as a matter of individual conscience or of choice, each of which ignores the common ethical objectivity present both in the Constitution and for the conscientious religious believer. As a result the difference of religious conscience from abstract individual conscience is lost, with a resulting criticism of special exemptions for religion. 80

A return to the intentions of the framers and the concrete principles of the U.S. Constitution suggests a correction of this contemporary view. What is remarkable in the views of the framers is that each of the competing interpretations of the relation of church and state expresses from its own standpoint not only the distinction between religious and secular realms but also the existence of a unifying principle. 81

80 Cf. the excellent historical analysis of this First Amendment question in Michael W. McConnell's "The Origins and Historical Understanding of Free Exercise of Religion", Harvard Law Review, Volume 103, Number 7 (1990)
81 This indicates the limits of John Rawls's account of the relation between religion and the state. On his account, the liberal state transforms individuals' religious, moral and philosophical views in an external
Starting from a Lockean position which radically separates church and state, Jefferson moves to a position of universal Unitarianism, where the separation of church and state dissolves, each realm conceived as grounded in the rational powers of the ethical individual. Whereas Jefferson would separate church and state to defend against irrational enthusiasm, he also expected a Unitarian conquest of irrational religion. He states: "I rejoice that in this country of free inquiry and belief, which has surrendered its creed and conscience to neither kings nor priests, the genuine doctrine of one only God is reviving, and I trust that there is not a young man now living in the United States who will not die a Unitarian." One might say that Jefferson expected an establishment of Unitarianism based upon the free will of individuals, not upon state support.

By contrast with Jefferson, who pursued the question from the standpoint of the rationally free citizen who had not given up his right of conscience, the evangelical standpoint stressed that the source of one's religious views lies not in the individual's rational morality but in the commands of a sovereign God. From the evangelical side, the separation of church and state was not intended to protect the state from enthusiasm but rather to protect religion from secular corruption. However, from the standpoint of faith they also conceived a unity between the two realms, recognizing God as sovereign in both.

James Madison in his *Memorial and Remonstrance* brought these standpoints together, recognizing both the need to prevent religious warfare and oppression and to permit individuals to follow absolute duties. On a Madisonian view, then, there is an important reciprocity between religious and political life. On the one hand, the state can provide substantial protection for the free practice of religious duty, while on the other hand, religious ethics can promote virtue among citizens. Perhaps the most famous statement of this principle is by Washington: "of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports ... And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion." Madison, in fact, contends that the duty to God is "precedent both in order of time and in degree of obligation to the claims of civil society." However, while Madison accepted the priority of divine commands in times of conflict between religion and state, his position is intelligible only if one recognize that he assumes a general agreement between the claims of religion and the claims of the state -- government would be impossible if there were a radical separation between constitutional and divine law.
What underlies the standpoint of the Constitution and its relation to religion is the recognition of an objective good which comprehends the universal and particular expressions of the individual's will. The Constitution reconciles the rational and natural interests of the individual; the goods of government and religion do not contradict but are, in principle, identical. Still, politics and religion in their finite interests, as a particular government or sect, may indeed conflict. In a situation of conflict, both religion and state are rendered abstract or one-sided and either may be on the side of justice or injustice. In such instances, a standpoint compatible with the spirit of the U.S. Constitution will not subordinate religious interests to those of government, assuming government to be comprehensive. Rather, under the free exercise clause of the First Amendment, it will permit exemptions which enable believers to enact their religious duties. These exemptions recognize the universality implicit in religious practice and give expression to the underlying identity of constitutional and religious principles. They uphold the awareness that in times of conflict -- either side may be untrue to their concrete identity.

From the side of the state (conceived in abstraction from religion), these exemptions might be conceived as giving the individual the opportunity to develop on his own terms a greater allegiance to the broader socio-political realm. From the side of religion (conceived in abstraction from the state), these exemptions permit the practice of duties owed to a superior power. What is implicit in the Constitution is the unity of universal ethical law, in both its political and religious moments, with the particularity of legislative act and religious representation.

The ethical principle of the U.S. Constitution is the reconciliation of individual's universal moral will and particular self-interest. These principles, though religious in origin, cannot be appropriated on the basis of sectarian religious viewpoints, but must be comprehended philosophically as the universal political enactment of self-conscious freedom. To invigorate their contemporary ethical life, Americans must not retreat to a standpoint prior to modernity, to fundamentalist religion, but must reflect more deeply on the fundamental principles and determinate history of their Enlightenment Constitution.

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86 These exemptions must be subject to the proviso that the duties they protect must not violate human rights and dignity. Such violations contradict the spirit which animates the Constitution.
Kant And Kierkegaard: The Subjectivization Of Faith

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Introduction

Writing in polemical opposition to Hegelian philosophy,¹ Soren Kierkegaard strenuously criticized the tendency of his age to elevate the results of objective reflection (scientific/historical research) and the categories of Absolute Idealism over the standpoint of the ethically-existing, finite individual. Evincing a deep distrust of the antinomous, self-transcending concepts of speculative reason, he insists that "a firmness with respect to logical distinctions" must constitute the foundation of genuine human reflection on such conceptual dualities as finite-infinite, temporal-eternal, human-divine. Underlying all theoretical enquiry, as its presupposition and condition of possibility, lies the concrete reality of the ethico-religiously "interested" individual, whose quest for the fulness of selfhood takes primacy over any possible objective knowledge. Only if this fundamental existential insight is acknowledged can metaphysical hubris be held in check and a place reserved for the proper apprehension of the ineluctable truth of finite human subjectivity.

Scholarly opinion is divided on the degree to which Kierkegaard's critique of speculative thinking presupposes a Kantian view of reason. For one recent commentator, Anthony Rudd, Kierkegaard's disavowal of universal philosophical reason in favour of the primacy of finite ethico-religious subjectivity places him in an antithetical relation not only to Hegel but also to Kant's transcendental idealist ethics.² Any apparent similarity in

¹ Kierkegaard's familiarity with Hegel's writings was largely indirect, mediated through the work of a Danish disciple, Hans Lassen Martensen, whose theological writings attempted to resolve the current impasse between Christian orthodoxy and Enlightenment rationalism through an apparently Hegelian speculative mediation between these mutually contradictory poles. Yet Danish Hegelianism was by no means a mere application of Hegelian principles to local concerns, and studying Martensen's theology therefore offered no adequate substitute for familiarity with Hegel's own texts. Robert L. Horn, in his dissertation, "Positivity and Dialectic: A Study of the Theological Method of Hans Lassen Martensen" (Ph.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1969) argues strongly for the distinctness of Danish Hegelianism, as developed by Martensen.

² Anthony Rudd, Kierkegaard and the Limits of the Ethical, Oxford, 1993. Rudd comments: "It is quite frequently claimed that Kierkegaard's ethics is largely Kantian, but this seems to me about as radical an error as it is possible to make in the interpretation of Kierkegaard. Nowhere does he say anything about morality being a condition of rationally consistent action; his mockery of the 'pure subject' and his insistence on the need for passionate existential choice are diametrically opposed to the Kantian idea that morality can be proved to be a condition of action for any rational agent."(71)

Rudd reminds us that, far from seeing ethical choice in the Kantian manner as a subordination of individual interests to the requirements of universal law or consistency in action, Kierkegaard understands "the
their divergent views Rudd traces to Kant's roots in Protestant pietist Christianity, which make it "no surprise that Kant often sounds as much like a Christian moralist as Kierkegaard."[Ibid. 136] This veneer of Christian ethics notwithstanding, Kant's version of ethics, Rudd argues, "leaves out belief in God", since Kantian morality is based on the radical autonomy of the rational agent, while religious faith emerges solely as a logical consequence of moral self-consciousness. From Rudd's perspective, Kierkegaard's thought, by contrast, affirms the irreducible independence of faith -- particularly Christian faith -- as a standpoint in which the finite subject "leaps" beyond the limits of ethical striving to a paradoxical relationship with the divine.

Yet questions must be raised concerning the adequacy of this assessment. For although in Kant the movement from morality to faith is mediated by the demand for rational coherence, while in Kierkegaard the transition occurs via an unmediated leap, for both thinkers genuine religious consciousness presupposes a richly articulated ethical life and can arise only in response to the needs of the ethical agent. Those needs differ markedly -- for Kant, the moral life collapses into a rationally incoherent "absurdum practicum" when stripped of the practical/rational postulates of God and immortality, while for Kierkegaard, the ethical subject's need for God flows from the experienced impossibility of existential self-synthesis in the absence of divine intervention. In each case, however, the standpoint of the autonomous ethical subject is presupposed, the categories of faith functioning as vehicles for the completion of that subject's extra-religious goals. Despite the clear and proper distinction Rudd draws between Kant's rational transcendent idealism and Kierkegaard's anti-idealist Christian existentialism, I would argue that particularly in Kant's later thought, Christian categories figure largely in his efforts fully to characterize the structure of autonomous moral subjectivity, while Kierkegaard's version of Christian faith owes much of its character to a reliance on Kant's dualist epistemology.

Another recent commentator, Ronald Green, admits a Kant/Kierkegaard link based on the shared principle of the "primacy of practical reason". 3 He argues, however, that Kant's Enlightenment confidence in free, universal thought/action is supplanted in Kierkegaard by a vigorous defence of traditional Christianity. Green looks to Kant's concept of radical evil, developed in Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone, to support the claim that "...Kant's powerful series of arguments in the Religion furnished Kierkegaard with much of the intellectual ammunition he needed for his project of defending Christian orthodoxy."4

universal disciplines" of ethics and religious faith primarily as means to achieving the goal of individual self-realization (135). In light of these existential preoccupations it would be perverse in Rudd's view to link Kierkegaard in any but the most superficial way to Kantian thought.

4 Green, 175. Kant's chief deviation from Christian orthodoxy lies, for Green, in his insistence that man must be able to effect his own moral regeneration. Kant's Enlightenment principles cannot accommodate admission of the powerlessness of the moral individual before sin -- whereas Kierkegaard's orthodoxy lies in his assertion that the problem of sin constitutes an absolute barrier between man and God, such that no "immanent" solution to our moral failure is possible. I would argue that Kierkegaard's appeal to the historical Christ as mediator between sinful man and the divine is, however, no return to an orthodox
My intention here is to consider Kant's and Kierkegaard's understanding of religious faith and its relationship to moral life. In Sections A and B, I argue that Kant's Enlightenment confidence in the autonomy of the rational moral subject does ultimately require him to subordinate religious faith to the demands of ethical autonomy, and in particular to reduce central doctrines of the Christian religion to means for resolving certain contradictions which inevitably arise within moral experience as manifest in the context of his transcendental dualism. Then in C, I argue that despite contemporary appeals to Kierkegaard as defender of authentic Christianity against the encroachments of Enlightenment humanism, shared epistemological assumptions ensure that the existential subject's paradoxical Christian faith offers no genuine alternative, but rather is an extension of Kant's demythologized version of orthodox Christian principles.

A. Kant's Practical Faith

i) The Moral Grounds of Belief in God

In Kant's concept of moral faith we see the emergence of a significant new strategy for justifying and comprehending religious experience. Traditionally, the Christian believer aspired to know the divine, both through conforming his consciousness to the revealed doctrines of the church, and through rational theological argument offering insight into God's being and nature. With the rise of Enlightenment methods of critical enquiry, however, the validity of both religious dogmas and rational theological doctrines was called into question. Empirical scientists joined forces with historical/biblical scholars to trace the natural roots of religious creeds, while appeals to absolute religious truths met with deepening scepticism, as rational understanding pursued its negative, critical deconstruction of both positive revelation and abstract, metaphysical claims to know God. Enlightenment thought challenged theological orthodoxy at every point, until in Kant's time there yawned a wide, antagonistic gulf between the claims of a free rational thought and those of a defensive, beleaguered religious faith.

Kant regarded the rescue of religious faith from the sceptical encroachments of Enlightenment as one of the chief accomplishments of his transcendental critique of pure reason. By bifurcating reality into a phenomenal and a noumenal aspect, finite understanding could be acknowledged as the sole source of truth regarding what appears to the perceiving intellect, while both empirical experience and metaphysical thought were denied access to noumenal, or supersensible reality. Reason, the faculty of the Unconditioned, remained free to think its essential Ideas -- God, freedom and immortality -- but since the proper content of religious concepts, Kant argued, transcends possible sensuous experience, their truth could be neither proven nor disproven by science or speculative metaphysics. They stand as "unavoidable problems set by Pure Reason for

Christology, since, like Kant, Kierkegaard ultimately accomplishes a subjective re-appropriation of the historical reality of the God-man, rather than a revival of the orthodox notion of the mystery of divine incarnation.
itself," problems which find their solution through the vital role they can be shown to play in moral experience. Access to the noumenal sphere is possible only for reason in its practical employment; thus, if religious faith is to be preserved, Kant argues, the ethical alone must become its foundation, or condition of possibility.

This claim entails however that religious thought no longer constitutes an independent sphere of inquiry but becomes a function of the autonomous rational subject's moral self-experience. Kant substitutes moral for rational theology, arguing that while the latter affords no insight into transcendent reality, the former affords practical proof of the necessity of a God-relationship for finite, rational agents. In exchange for knowledge of God, then, Kant offers a deeper understanding of what it means to be a moral person. Religious faith is thus liberated from the Enlightenment requirement to defend its truth-claims before the autonomous court of reason. Kant thereby establishes as a foundational principle Enlightenment's dogmatic confidence in the universality and autonomy of rational subjectivity, and acknowledges the theoretical inaccessibility of the Divine reality, while yet retaining rational belief in a stringently construed God-concept as an instrument of ethical self-realization. The faith/reason conflict is thus disarmed, but at the cost of any substantive content for traditional religious belief.

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant elaborates the principle of the primacy of the autonomous rational subject, characterising consciousness of the moral law, or categorical imperative, as the "sole fact of pure reason", which "forces itself upon us as a synthetic proposition a priori based on no pure or empirical intuition." This law is immediately present to me -- I cannot explain my experience of myself as an agent in the world without recognizing it, yet the law itself cannot be phenomenally explained, since any such attempt would reduce it to a function of its causal antecedents, and so undermine its absolute character as law. The speculative ideas of reason -- freedom, God and immortality -- are not further immediate facts of pure reason, but take on practical urgency when I begin to reflect upon what must be the case if a rational being is fully to comprehend his status as an autonomous agent, obligated by the moral law.

The fundamental condition of the possibility of this irreducible moral self-consciousness is the idea of freedom. For speculative reason, this concept was "problematic but not impossible", i.e., it could be thought without contradiction, although no objective reality could be assigned to it. In the context of moral experience, however, we are justified in postulating the actuality of freedom, since without it the undeniable experience of moral obligation would be meaningless. If we are to think of ourselves as moral beings who ought to act on certain occasions from duty alone, then it must be possible for us to do so. "Ought implies can" -- morality implies freedom.

But how is it possible for the individual human will to fall under the deterministic laws of nature, as it necessarily must, while also being possessed of real freedom, which Kant defines as "... a power of self-determination, independently of any coercion through sensuous impulses ..."? [CPR B562] Reason's antinomy, or internal contradiction, must be

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avoided, and Kant's solution emerges in his doctrine of the two standpoints: as
phenomenal appearance in space and time the self is indeed subject to mechanical
determinism, but as noumenon it may, at the same time, regard itself as acting in
accordance with the law of freedom. Noumenal freedom is neither the transcendent goal
of the moral will, nor a regulative ideal toward which we progress through moral action.
It is the unavoidable transcendental condition of the possibility of moral life itself -- the
permanent capacity of the finite yet rational will for choosing between inclinations
generated in nature, and maxims grounded in the imperative of practical reason.

By contrast with noumenal freedom, the moral postulation of the existence of God is
not a condition of moral law itself, but rather a condition which makes possible the
realization of the "necessary object of a will which is determined by this law"[CPrR 4].
That necessary object, or highest good, is the *summum bonum*, which Kant characterizes
as a synthesis of the concepts of moral virtue and happiness. The autonomy of the moral
will entails that the "supreme good" for the moral individual is nothing but virtue, or the
production of will which is good in itself. But virtue cannot be man's "entire and perfect
good"[CPrR 117]. The moral agent is a natural being, a creature who desires happiness.
He belongs to both the noumenal realm and the temporal world of sensuous nature --
therefore, says Kant, practical reason has an inescapable responsibility to respect our
empirically-grounded interests, forming practical maxims with a view to human
happiness. Moral striving is not intended to produce happiness, but rather virtuous
character, or worthiness to be happy; still, given an individual's devotion to virtuous
action, it would be offensive to reason if he were destined forever to lack in proportional
natural satisfaction. Therefore Kant maintains that in the highest good which is practical
for us, virtue and happiness must be thought of as necessarily combined.

But how is this complete good to be made actual? Although able to conceive of an
ideal world order, in which freedom brings about a happiness "bound up with and
proportioned to morality", the moral agent is a finite being who, even if immortal, could
not hope to be the cause adequate to the required effect. Accordingly, practical reason
postulates the existence of God conceived as the "wise Ruler and Moral Author of the
world", whose infinite power and will alone can effect the yearned-for ideal harmony of
freedom and sensuous nature [CPR B837-8].

Kant's postulated divinity, unknowable to theoretical reason, seems tailor-made to
meet the subjective requirements of the finite moral agent. He insists that this concept of
a moral mediator is not simply conjured up to satisfy the intense but contingent personal
desire of the moral individual that the object of his wishes should become actual. While
the moral necessity which attaches to this postulate is "not objective, i.e., duty
itself"[CPrR 132], still the "moral wish"[CPrR 137] is not *merely* subjective, a
sensuously-determined need of inclination, but arises in response to a necessary problem
which pure reason sets itself [*ibid.*]. So strong is this connection that if we cannot hope to
realize the *summum bonum*, (happiness in proportion to moral worth), then "the moral
law which commands that it be furthered must be fantastic, directed to empty, imaginary
ends and consequently inherently false."[CPrR 120] Thus, it is an "absolutely necessary
need" which inspires Kant's ethical self to affirm:
I will that there be a God ... I stand by this and will not give up this belief, for this is the only case where my interest inevitably determines my judgment because I will not yield anything of this interest ... (emphasis added)

**ii) The Practical Necessity of Faith**

This resolute posture of finite spirit Kant terms "pure practical faith" or "rational faith"[CPrR 132-3]: rational, because pure reason alone is its source, but faith because, while the moral individual can have no theoretical knowledge of God's existence, he is possessed of a moral belief which nothing can shake. In spite of being objectively uncertain of God's reality, the moral individual's belief is so inextricably connected with the a priori law of morality that its denial would bring in its wake the decline into absurdity of ethical ideals themselves:

Our moral faith is a practical postulate, in that anyone who denies it is brought *ad absurdum practicum*. An *absurdum logicum* is an absurdity in judgments; but there is an *absurdum practicum* when it is shown that anyone who denies this or that would have to be a scoundrel. And this is the case with moral faith.8

The contradiction confronting the moral agent who refuses to affirm the existence of a "moral Author of the world" is thus not primarily theoretical but rather "existential" -- it has to do with the moral agent's situation and condition in the world. For if indeed the final end of moral action is the unification of the opposing spheres of nature and freedom, of happiness and virtue, then how can one lead an authentic moral life if that ideal of harmony is dismissed as impossible? Surely, Kant asks, is there not a deep *practical* contradiction in trying to act morally, adopting the highest good as my end, if I am also certain that this good is beyond my reach? He maintains however that since we cannot know theoretically anything of God's nature or existence, reason is free to believe, and in this instance must believe what it cannot know -- i.e. that God exists and acts on our behalf to supplement the inadequacy of finite moral agency. Kant goes so far as to imply that loss of confidence in the moral ideal (*summum bonum*) undermines the very possibility of moral worthiness itself -- remarking that the agent who succumbs to the *absurdum practicum* by abandoning moral faith would have to be a scoundrel.

7 *Ibid* p. 150-51; while the ideas of reason are simply regulative for speculative thinking, when reason commands action they become objects of practical interest. The interest which motivates ethical action is in no sense merely natural, contingent or psychological, but is rather pure respect for the moral law as such. Kant speaks of interest as "the principle which contains the condition under which alone the power of the mind is put into practice" (CPrR 119). Free non-sensuous interest takes us beyond natural inclination, but also beyond the pursuit of mere theoretical knowledge as a worthy human goal. In this sense, Kant's notion of interest lays the foundation for Kierkegaard's concept of "essential knowledge" (see *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. David Swenson, Princeton, 1971, 176-7, where he characterises the standpoint of the authentic individual as a "knowing which is also a doing", and which has as its sole proper content the subject's ethico-religious interest.)

Kant carefully distinguishes "moral" from "doctrinal" belief in God, while making it clear that both forms of belief lack objective grounding. In the case of doctrinal belief -- i.e., the affirmation of God's existence which emerges in the course of understanding's pursuit of theoretical knowledge of nature -- this is so because no objective support for the existence of a transcendent reality is warranted. A belief in God resting upon natural theology is necessarily unstable, although of regulative use in the development of theoretical inquiry. Moral belief, however, despite its similar lack of objective grounding, is connected with an end (the *summum bonum*) which is "irrefragably established", so that "I inevitably believe in the existence of God ... and I am certain that nothing can shake this belief, since my moral principles would thereby be themselves overthrown, and I cannot disclaim them without becoming abhorrent in my own eyes."[CPR B856]

By describing moral belief -- or "pure practical faith" -- as "unavoidable", and "inevitable" Kant might seem nevertheless to confuse belief with the results of theoretical enquiry, with knowledge. There is however nothing theoretically compelling about the content of practical faith -- quite the contrary, since objective knowledge of transcendent being is impossible for us. The ethical agent's conviction is "not *logical* but *moral* certainty ... I must not even say, 'It *is* morally certain that there is a God, etc.,' but 'I *am* morally certain etc.' "[CPR B857] There can be no duty to assume God's existence -- "Faith that is commanded is an absurdity."[CPrR 151] Only the command to further the highest good is objectively grounded in practical reason. The manner in which this possibility is to be achieved remains theoretically open -- either by means of the laws of nature alone or through the action of a wise Author of the world. But since it is the duty of the moral individual not only to think but to *actualize* the harmony of virtue and happiness, this individual is confronted with a "voluntary decision of judgment"[CPrR 153]. Our moral interest compels a choice: either trust and hope in a mediating divine power, or an unhappy struggle freely to effect from within nature the ever-receding ethical ideal. Kant seems to hold that faced with such alternatives, the rational moral agent must "inevitably" embrace practical faith. But the standpoint from which the moral agent affirms this inevitable belief is not universal, but personal and existential in character, requiring assent solely of the individual moral subject who stands in need of divine support.

Kant's critical goal is the simultaneous preservation of finite empirical knowledge, the autonomy of the moral self and the validity of religious faith. He accomplishes it by enforcing a transcendental dualism, a radical distinction between finite, temporal phenomena on the one hand, and unknowable, non-temporal noumenal reality on the other. On the phenomenal side of the divide stand natural, empirical objects and subjects, on the other the noumenally free moral agent, for whom faith in an equally noumenal divine reality complements the otherwise hopeless ideality of his ethical striving within the phenomenal sphere. There can be for Kant no direct access to God, no religious duties or divine commands which do not arise from the rationally self-imposed moral law. True worship of God is reduced to committed moral activity, while any putative knowledge of God's inner reality Kant dismisses as an impediment to genuine human freedom and dignity:
Our faith is not scientific knowledge, and thank heaven it is not! For God's wisdom is apparent in the very fact that we do not know that God exists, but should believe that God exists. For suppose we could attain to scientific knowledge of God's existence, through our experience or in some other way... Then in this case all our morality would break down... The image would force itself involuntarily on [man's] soul, and his hope for reward and fear of punishment would take the place of moral motives. Man would be virtuous out of sensuous impulses.  

For Kant the bifurcated vision of transcendental idealism is the solution to Enlightenment scepticism, the ultimate condition of the possibility of empirical knowledge, rational human action and authentic belief. The limits of this dualist vision of human knowing and acting will be severely tested however as Kant embarks on a fuller consideration of the meaning and structure of transcendental freedom and its relation to the finite ethical agent.

B. Radical Evil And The Limits Of Ethical Autonomy

i) How is freedom for evil possible?

In Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, Kant incorporates an essay published a year earlier bearing the title "On the Radical Evil in Human Nature", wherein he asserts that

... there is in man a natural propensity to evil ... this evil is radical, because it corrupts the ground of all maxims; it is moreover, as a natural propensity, inextirpable by human powers....

The essay provoked shock among the moral and religious humanists of the day, who had happily embraced Kant's project of developing an ethic grounded exclusively in human rational autonomy. For thinkers steeped in the values of Enlightenment, Kant's apparent resurrection of the Christian doctrine of original sin, and denial of the optimistic Rousseauean notion of an innate human goodness, which could be progressively fostered by culture and education, seemed deeply at odds with the spirit of the age, and indeed with the basic principles of his own philosophy.

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9 Ibid., 123. For Kierkegaard, as for Kant, it is precisely the lack of objective certainty regarding God's existence which fuels the movement toward faith; and as for Kant, Kierkegaard insists that we undermine the authentic worth of the finite subject if we aspire to replace the "grave strenuousness of faith" with objective or speculative knowledge of divine being. For Hegel, by contrast, the notion that man stands in a relation of essential otherness to God, and can have no knowledge of the divine as such, is incompatible with a genuine theism, or indeed with a genuine estimation of the dignity of finite subjectivity.

For how can we be at once autonomous rational agents capable of acting solely out of respect for the self-given moral law, and beings who by nature are in bondage to radical evil? If Kant meant simply that *qua* noumenal agents we are free, while *qua* finite and phenomenal we are weighed down by sensuous nature (i.e., evil), then no great difficulties threaten transcendental idealism. However, Kant's startling point in the essay is that the ground of evil lies in free will itself -- i.e., not in sensuous nature, but in human nature *qua* noumenally free -- hence the outrage of Goethe, who in a letter to Herder, cynically dismisses Kant's new position as a concession to Christian orthodoxy, perhaps made to appease the Prussian censors, and concludes:

Kant required a long lifetime to purify his philosophical mantle of many impurities and prejudices. And now he has wantonly tainted it with the shameful stain of radical evil, in order that Christians might be attracted to kiss its hem.\(^{11}\)

If we refuse to concede that this apparent reversal is a failure of nerve on the part of the aging philosopher, then we must look within the structure of his earlier ethical works for insight into its ground and justification.

There is considerable equivocation throughout Kant's writings concerning the precise meaning and scope of transcendental freedom. It is at least clear, however, that free will for Kant never means an undetermined, arbitrary will. The difference between the free and unfree will lies in the ground of its determination -- the unfree will being determined by an empirical object, the free will by itself. Thus: "*heteronomy of the will*: the will does not give itself the law, but an alien impulsion does so through the medium of the subject's own nature as tuned for its reception."\(^{12}\) By contrast, the autonomous, or self-determining will rises above such sensuous determination. Kant characterises moral freedom thus:

What else then can freedom of will be but autonomy -- that is the property which will has of being a law to itself? 'Will is in all its actions a law to itself' expresses, however, only the principle of acting on no maxim other than one which can have for its object itself as at the same time a universal law. This is precisely the formula of the categorical imperative and the principle of morality. *Thus a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same thing ...*[Groundwork 114; emphasis added]

It appears here that *only* the good will is a free will, since it alone is self-determining. Yet, this clearly raises the question of how the moral agent can ever then be held responsible for acts performed in opposition to duty, since when he performs them he is governed by the "alien impulsion" of heteronomous, sensuous inclination. Is moral evil then reducible to a *lack* of moral autonomy? Is it merely the result of inadequate education, of social limitations, of ignorance? This would seem compatible with

\(^{11}\) This citation from Goethe appears in Emil Fackenheim's article "Kant and Radical Evil", *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol.23 (1954), 340

enlightenment accounts of the origins of evil, yet such a view eliminates any genuine power freely to negate the moral law.

Kant's ethics aims to establish the possibility and actuality of full moral responsibility despite universal phenomenal predeterminism. He insists that the source of morality is therefore the human will alone, or reason in its pure (noumenal) practical employment. If however his account, as indicated above, implies that there is no possibility of an evil free will — that we are free only to the degree that we are positively determined by the moral principle -- then how can one make sense of human responsibility for moral failure? Surely freedom entails the spontaneous, noumenal capacity to choose either for or against the moral law?

Kant's controversial evocation of radical evil can be seen as a response to this internal dilemma. To his Enlightenment critics it appeared as a retreat into Christian orthodoxy; but it would be more consistent with his lifelong goals and long-standing views regarding Christian dogma to argue rather that in formulating the concept of a freely enacted choice of moral evil as an aspect of the possibility of genuine moral responsibility, Kant continues his transcendental inquiry into the complete "conditions of the possibility" of actual moral experience.

This interpretation is consistent with the opening pages of the Religion where he reiterates his long-standing confidence that "... for its own sake morality does not need religion at all; ... by virtue of pure practical reason it is self-sufficient."[Rel. 3] Throughout his writings, Kant consistently envisages moral life as an unremitting struggle of the free subject to obey a self-given moral imperative. In the Critique of Practical Reason, the problem of ethical ideality -- the finite rational subject's inability to fulfill the self-imposed end which the moral law absolutely commands -- is resolved by recourse to belief in God, conceived as a mediator and wise Moral Author, through whom the striving individual may rationally hope for ethical closure. In Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, Kant's sensitivity to the ethical agent's pervasive struggle against moral weakness and failure leads him to postulate radical evil as the only solution rationally consistent with both the absoluteness of moral freedom and the ubiquity of moral corruption. Yet the admission of this concept will require him to deepen the autonomous subject's need to appeal to divine help, ultimately rendering problematic either the autonomy of the ethical agent, or the distinction between God and man which is central to Kant's transcendental dualism.

ii) Radical Evil's Challenge to Moral Regeneration

If reason does not command what the human will cannot accomplish, what is the explanation for the ubiquity of moral evil? In Religion, Kant attributes moral failure to a free, noumenal decision made by every finite rational being, which is the unknowable ground of all phenomenal choices throughout each individual's life. This originary character determination, Kant claims, is radical, in that it involves the agent's willing in principle to elevate -- at least on occasion -- the heteronomous interests of self-love over incentives consistent with the moral law; and it is innate, in the sense that it is attributable
to universal human nature. While the concept 'nature' is ordinarily understood in opposition to freedom, Kant here intends by it nature as "the subjective ground of the exercise (under objective moral laws) of man's freedom in general."[Rel. 18] The source of evil, then, lies not in any natural, sensuously-determined impulse, but rather in "a rule made by the will for the use of its freedom."[Rel. 17] Man himself, in his essential, noumenal nature as free, is thus the author of his own character, whether for good or evil. That character is termed "innate ... only in this sense, that it is posited as the ground antecedent to every use of freedom in experience ... and is thus conceived of as present in man at birth -- though birth need not be the cause of it." [Rel.17]

Not only does Kant insist that radical evil is innate in individual moral character -- his "ethical rigourism" dictates that, everyday experience of partial and shifting moral worth notwithstanding, all individuals are either radically good or evil [Rel.17-21]. Ethical goodness requires absolute commitment to moral law as the sole basis for action - it permits no deflections, no moral holidays, to tarnish its purity. Even a single phenomenal instance of immorality is sufficient therefore to indicate that an agent's underlying supreme maxim is to allow for occasional exceptions to dutiful action and so supports only a conditional commitment to the moral law. But since every human being is aware of many such failures to exercise a good will, it follows for Kant that all of humanity is radically evil.

In the interest of making freedom for either good or evil intelligible, Kant has introduced into his transcendental analysis a concept which seems to many indistinguishable from the Christian dogma of original sin. For both Christian and Kantian, man's nature is, through his own agency, radically and inextirpably perverse. If in his earlier works, Kant faced the problem of explaining how moral freedom could be consistent with the choice of evil, here the introduction of radical evil as a solution to this problem raises the opposite dilemma. For since the possibility of moral evil is grounded in a universal, freely-enacted perversion of the moral will, Kant must now show -- within the bounds of reason alone -- how anyone can ever free himself from innate evil and turn toward moral virtue.

He acknowledges the dilemma in its full force:

This evil is radical because it corrupts the ground of all maxims; it is moreover, as a natural propensity, inextirpable by human powers, since extirpation could only occur through good maxims, and cannot take place when the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims is postulated as corrupt; yet at the same time it must be possible to overcome it, since it is found in man, a being whose actions are free.[Rel.32]

Whereas Greek philosophy had understood evil as arising from the individual's ignorance of eternal moral truths, and progressive philosophical education as the ultimate solution to moral inadequacy, Kant here firmly rejects the ancient Greek and modern Enlightenment reliance upon thought as the vehicle of moral development. Moral transformation can occur only through a free resolution of the will, that very will,
however, which is corrupted at its root by perversion of its grounding maxim. In keeping with his ethical rigourism, Kant maintains that if an evil man is to become morally good - - that is, "a man endowed with virtue in its intelligible character (virtus noumenon)" -- no gradual temporal reformation, or piecemeal improvement in moral habits will be of help, unless they are the phenomenal manifestations of a radical revolution already achieved within his intelligible character. If an individual aspires to moral worth, he must confront his own radical sinfulness, and through an act of complete repentance, achieve a total transformation of his moral character, in effect becoming a "new man" [Rel.43].

Yet, Kant immediately asks: "Does not this restoration through one's own exertions directly contradict the postulate of the innate corruption of man, which unfits him for all good?"[Rel.46] On the one hand, Kant readily admits that it wholly surpasses our comprehension how such a restoration to moral rectitude can be effected through the individual's own radically corrupted powers; on the other he insists as always that what duty commands, we must be able to obey, however contradictory such a change of heart appears from a temporal perspective:

Man cannot attain naturally to assurance concerning such a revolution ... for the deeps of the heart (the subjective first ground of his maxim) are inscrutable to him. Yet he must be able to hope through his own efforts to reach the road which leads thither ...[Rel.46]

Just as the ultimate ground of the original lapse into evil is inscrutable in its freedom, so too must be the atemporal act of freedom whereby this condition is reversed. We can never know whether indeed we have chosen obedience to the moral law, and so moral life requires persistent striving, in the hope that such is the case.

In opposition to the orthodox Christian view that fallen, sinful man cannot redeem himself, but must rely on the redemptive grace of God, Kant firmly maintains his Enlightenment confidence in the absolute autonomy of the ethical subject -- in his power of self-conversion -- in spite of an equally strenuous insistence that the possibility of such an act is philosophically inconceivable.[Rel.46] Thus, the effort to deepen insight into the structure of moral freedom leads toward the limits of rational thought and moral autonomy themselves. Confronted with this fearful impasse Kant, as he did in the Critique of Practical Reason, turns to religious categories as a means to restore moral sanity.

iii) Divine Grace and Moral Faith

In the second Critique, Kant had already noted a relation between his moral philosophy and Christian ethics, which he saw as sharing his emphasis on the sumnum bonum, the unity of happiness and virtue, as the supreme end of moral life. He regards certain orthodox Christian doctrines as compatible with his own moral theology therefore, and able to offer support to the rational agent who aspires to a "holy will". To avoid moral self-contradiction, Kant's finite subject must be able to hope for "the Kingdom of God, in which nature and morality come into a harmony"[CPrR 135]:

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Christian doctrine, morally interpreted, offers a vehicle for this hope. Kant insists that Christian ethics is not illegitimately imported into his rational morality since it is not theological and thus heteronomous, being rather the autonomy of pure practical reason itself, because it does not make the knowledge of God and his will the basis of these laws but makes such knowledge the basis only of succeeding to the highest good on condition of obedience to these laws.\[CPrR 136\]

Through the concept of the highest good as the necessary end of pure practical reason, then, the autonomous moral law leads to true religion, now defined as "the recognition of all duties as divine commands, not as sanctions, i.e., arbitrary and contingent ordinances of a foreign [i.e., heteronomous] will, but as essential laws of any free will as such."[CPrR136]

Apart from moral self-consciousness, there can be no further insight into the will of God -- positive or revealed religion can offer us neither truths nor divine commands not already accessible to reason in its practical employment. Christianity is true religion for Kant, not because it gives access to doctrines otherwise hidden from human comprehension, but because alone among the "public religions" it is in essence a "moral religion"[Rel.47], which when stripped of its accidental historical and ritual features closely resembles the "one true religion" in which reside moral principles available to all rational beings. Knowledge of God and his will comes to us only through practical reason, wherein we grasp God not as he is in himself, but only through subjectively necessary concepts commensurate with reason's demand for moral self-coherence.\[CPrR 140; Rel.79f, 95f\] Kant's appeal to "Christianity" therefore does not imply a turning away from Enlightenment principles, but a translation of traditional Christian dogma so as to render it a suitable content for pure practical reason and the autonomous moral subject.

In the second Critique, belief in a mediating God had thus served as the solution to the incommensurability between virtue and happiness in moral life. In the Religion the question has become how the self can hope to realize even virtue, given its bondage to radical evil, or sin. The somewhat muted appeal of the second Critique to a God compatible with the Christian deity now becomes more robust, as Kant relies increasingly on such Christian terminology as "grace", "atonement" and "saviour" to counteract the difficulties raised by the subject's sinfulness, or free decision to reject the moral law. Again, the question arises whether this reliance constitutes an admission of the limits of ethical autonomy, and the independent validity of transcendent religious truths; and again Kant insists that morality founders if the ethical subject is driven to adopt a heteronomous, theonomous principle. If moral integrity is to be rescued by appeal to the doctrine of divine grace, therefore, the doctrine must somehow be construed as commensurable with the basic principle of autonomy.

Kant's urgent question is how moral self-conversion is possible for fallen man. His answer to that question seems equivocal, even paradoxical, since on the one hand he insists that we must "be able to hope through [our] own efforts" to attain the condition of
"rebirth"[Rel.43-6], while in the immediately following pages he suggests that the Christian doctrine of grace offers hope for regeneration through the will and action of the Divine. Such hope for divine grace is a matter of the "reflective faith" to which "reason, conscious of her inability to satisfy her moral need" has recourse "as a complement to her moral insufficiency".[Rel.48]

Yet, while reflective faith in grace enables us to hope for God's assistance, it is a belief which, unlike the moral postulate of God in the second Critique, finds no necessary role within the economy of either theoretical or practical reason:

even the hypothesis of a practical application of this idea is wholly self-contradictory. For the employment of this idea would presuppose a rule concerning the good which we ourselves must do in order to accomplish something, whereas to await upon a work of grace means exactly the opposite, namely, that the good is not our deed but the deed of another being, and that we therefore can achieve it only by doing nothing, which contradicts itself. Hence we can admit a work of grace as something incomprehensible, but we cannot adopt it into our maxims either for theoretical or for practical use.[Rel.48-9]

But if we cannot embrace belief in "a work of grace" without superceding the limits of even practical reason, while yet Kant says as moral agents we may need to do so, does he not direct us beyond the bounds of universal reason alone in his search for the conditions of the possibility of moral regeneration?

Kant seeks to circumvent this stark inference, but at the cost perhaps of further reducing the content of Christian doctrine not simply to its rationalist, moral dimension, (as in the second Critique) but to a mere psychological motivator, wholly subservient to the needs of the autonomous moral subject. He begins by classifying matters relating to works of grace as parerga to religion within the limits of pure reason: that is, "they do not belong within it but border upon it."[Rel.47] If the ethical agent were to assume that he can introduce these "morally-transcendent ideas" into religion as a means of gaining subjective assurance of divine assistance, he falls into fanaticism.[Rel.48] Thus, belief in the parergon of grace is not to be confused with rational faith in the necessary postulates of practical reason. Nevertheless, Kant sometimes speaks as if reason is entitled to the barest form of such a supra-rational belief, as when he cautiously suggests that:

To believe that there may be works of grace and that perhaps these may even be necessary to supplement the incompleteness of our struggle toward virtue -- that is all we can say on this subject; beyond this we are incapable of determining anything concerning their distinctive marks and still less are we able to do anything to produce them.[Rel.162, emphasis added.]

Kant never in the Religion offers any account of how the evil will could actually transform itself into a good will, although he asks the question repeatedly. In fact he
maintains that there can be no rational explanation of how freedom enacts its decisions; the attempt to impose explanatory doctrines like divine grace are illegitimate infringements on the inscrutable freedom of the moral will. If Kant were to accept such a transcendent concept within the limits of the critical perspective, he would be confusing the noumenal and phenomenal spheres, while undermining the absolute autonomy of the moral law.

Nevertheless, here he tries to make room "at the borders" of practical reason for this utterly transcendent doctrine, by hinting that from the point of view of moral motivation, the agent's hope in the trans-rational, abstract possibility of supplementary divine grace "may be necessary". Its function seems to be to bolster the temporal subject's confidence that, despite his fall into evil, and his own faltering insight into his true (i.e., noumenal) ethical status, the life-long moral struggle is not in vain.

In accordance with his critical principles, Kant offers no insight into the speculative question of whether a transcendent Deity actually does or could intervene on behalf of the moral individual. Nor does he claim that belief in divine grace is essential to enable the moral agent to effect moral conversion. In fact, he claims that despite radical corruption, there must be in us an innate "seed of goodness" which duty proclaims it is within our power to restore. Man is not devilish -- he remains potentially open to virtue and self-conversion, despite his choice of an overriding evil maxim. What is necessary is that we accept the moral ought, and through strenuous effort "render ourselves susceptible of higher, and for us inscrutable, assistance."[Rel. 41] The fallen individual must strive to realize the unreachable moral ideal, while at the same time cultivating in himself the humility to acknowledge the limits of his moral powers and the receptivity to allow their potential supplementation through grace, which Kant defines as "a decree conferring a good for which the subordinate possesses nothing but the (moral) receptivity."[Rel. 70n.]

For the finite subject who must act to restore goodness on the basis of duty alone -- while yet recognizing both that his initial disposition is corrupt, and that his sincere assessment regarding his possible moral conversion may be faulty -- the cultivation of receptivity to divine support would be of obvious motivational value. Stripped of the vital encouragement of belief in the possibility of grace, the autonomous/fallen individual might well languish in a state of despair, of "moral passivity in which nothing great or good is undertaken."[Rel. 172] Yet it remains unclear how the independent reality of the object of that invigorating moral belief is compatible with the rational requirement of moral self-regeneration -- for if there really is a transcendent dispenser of grace, the ethical agent's claim to absolute moral autonomy is surely unstable.

**iv) Religious Mystery and Moral Autonomy**

Kant's resistance to the temptations of religious positivity -- i.e., the assertion of the objective truth of revealed religious doctrines -- continues throughout his entire argument in the _Religion_, as he struggles to formulate a coherent account of moral self-redemption. What duty commands must be possible; yet the power of radical evil seems to preclude its actuality. Appeal to transcendent help diminishes individual responsibility, and so
cannot become a postulate of practical reason; yet belief in such supernatural assistance seems crucial as a stimulus to continued moral effort. This pattern of ambivalence persists as Kant deepens his analysis of what it means to be a free moral subject by introducing the notion of the "infinite guilt" which accompanies the fall into evil, and the problematic concept of "atonement by another" as its moral solution.

Kant opens Book II of the *Religion* by positing "mankind in its complete moral perfection" [Rel.54] as the ideal toward which the rational moral agent strives. This moral archetype he says we know to be a genuine product of pure reason itself, and not the arbitrary fantasy of any individual or culture. Yet just because of its universality, and especially in view of the radical evil in which mankind lies, it is incomprehensible to us how this holy ideal should have established itself in us. Hence, it is easier to affirm that "this archetype has come down to us from heaven, and has assumed our humanity", than to acknowledge the ideal as implicit a priori in moral self-consciousness. [Rel.54] The ideal of a humanity pleasing to God (morally perfect insofar as this is possible for a being subject to sensuous inclinations) is thus represented in Christian consciousness as an actual person, "the Son of God", who was willing

not merely to discharge all human duties himself and to spread about him goodness as widely as possible by precept and example, but even though tempted by the greatest allurements, to take upon himself every affliction, up to the most ignominious death. For Man can frame to himself no concept of the degree and strength of a force like that of a moral disposition except by picturing it as encompassed by obstacles, and yet in the face of the fiercest onslaughts, victorious. [Rel.55]

Man may hope then to become morally pleasing to God (and so be saved) "through practical faith in this Son of God" [Rel.55] i.e., by faithfully imitating this exemplar's moral perfection.

As to the objectivity of the moral archetype -- it is indeed objectively real as an idea generated by our "morally-legislative reason". [Rel.55] No empirico-historical, personal instantiation of this exemplar is however needed, since it is an idea already imbedded in our reason. For Kant it is not the exemplar, Christ, but virtue itself in which we truly have faith, since no example in outer, phenomenal experience, however worthy, could ever unequivocally manifest perfect moral goodness. So while it is beneficial to have before us a concrete figure from whose life and teachings we can infer -- although not know with certainty -- that he is indeed the best possible phenomenal embodiment of the moral archetype, this is by no means necessary to moral salvation, since "according to the law, each man ought really to furnish an example of this idea in his own person." [Rel.56]

Certainly it would be in violation of the requirements of practical reason to suppose that any moral exemplar, however apparently godly, were in fact divine rather than -- or as well as -- wholly human, since a divine, or holy moral being could not serve as a meaningful ideal for finite man. If he is a genuine historical personage Christ, for Kant, is therefore a "godly-minded teacher" whose pronouncements and activities provided the
occasion for his contemporaries, and through them all mankind, to seek moral self-
conversion.\[Rel.59\] Our relation to Christ is therefore in no sense dependent, but rather
invites simply the free "appropriation of his righteousness for the sake of our
own."\[Rel.60\]

Kant next turns to the difficulties standing in the way of realizing this project of free
moral appropriation. Three related difficulties arise as we contrast the paradigm of
"divine" (paradigmatically human) holiness, goodness, and righteousness with our own
fallen condition. In the first instance, we confront the realization that although there must
be present in us the seed of a disposition to moral goodness, or holiness, such that "a
change of heart must be possible because duty commands it", yet, \textit{from the point of view
of time}, every act is always already infected by the disposition to evil, and so cannot
count as the required radical act of self-conversion. Kant addresses this predicament by
invoking his critical distinction between phenomenal and noumenal reality, pointing out
that while phenomenally any progress toward holiness will inevitably be deficient, from
the point of view of the divine law-giver (i.e., practical reason as noumenal), if we
sincerely strive for ethical perfection then our own noumenal disposition will be
apprehended religiously as \textit{essentially well-pleasing to God}.\[Rel.61\]

The second difficulty emerges when we contemplate the distance between "divine"
goodness and our own inconstant temporal efforts to become morally good. It is
addressed through similar reference to the phenomena/noumena distinction. The problem
is that our moral disposition seems ever changeable, so that we feel no assurance that
"moral happiness" is truly accessible for us. If we are to persevere with confidence,
despite setbacks, we must believe that the noumenal moral disposition "which stands in
the place of the totality of this series of approximations carried on without end" can make
up for "the failure which is inseparable from the existence of a temporal being as such,
the failure, namely, ever wholly to be what we have in mind to become."\[Rel.61\]
Certainty regarding the underlying disposition is of course impossible, but observation of
his temporal moral history can give the sincerely dutiful individual "reasonable hope",
despite ethical ideality, of his ultimate moral worthiness.

The third and greatest difficulty besets every individual once he has embarked
solidly on the path of moral improvement. For even if the individual hopes that he has
indeed adopted a good disposition, and has steadfastly persevered in "conduct
conformable to such a disposition", he must still confront the divine righteousness. For
the fact remains that \textit{he nevertheless started from evil}, and this debt he can by no
possibility wipe out.\[Rel.66\] The moral individual's duty to effect moral conversion
arises because he begins with a radically evil disposition. Thus, even if he has achieved a
"change of heart", he brings with him to his new moral condition an \textit{infinite} burden of
debt and of guilt. This is not because, as orthodoxy has it, in sinning the individual
offends the \textit{infinitude} of the Supreme Lawgiver whose authority is violated\[Rel.66],
since reason can know nothing of such a transcendent relationship between God and man.
Rather, guilt is infinite because radical evil perverts \textit{the disposition} and the maxims in
general, the \textit{universal basic principles} rather than particular transgressions.\[Rel.66\]
Furthermore, Kant's moral principles dictate that the debt of sin is a \textit{personal} one; unlike
financial indebtedness, no one else can take over liability for an individual's sins, even if he should wish to do so. Thus, even the morally renewed subject seems to face the prospect of inexpiable personal debt requiring "endless punishment" and exclusion from the kingdom of God." [Rel.66]

If the individual cannot both overcome his sinfulness and expiate his moral debt, Kant's entire moral theology is in jeopardy. He must defend the possibility of moral regeneration, since without it radical evil cannot be overcome, and moral life would be futile. Rational morality also demands that the infinite debt be satisfied; yet for a finite agent bearing infinite guilt, adequate personal atonement is rationally inconceivable.

Seeking to ground the possibility of both conversion and full atonement for sin, Kant recurs to his moral interpretation of Christ's life and death. Orthodox Christianity understood Jesus not as Kant's "personified idea of the good principle" but in a positive sense, as the God-man whose unique historical actuality effected human salvation from original sin by atoning vicariously for man's infinite moral debt. Kant wishes here to utilize this traditional Christian doctrine, but in such a way as to render it compatible with radical moral autonomy, since appeal to religious positivity would involve a heteronomous solution to the dilemma generated by the autonomous choice of radical evil. What Kant requires is that his rational christology, stripped of all necessary reference to historical events, should nevertheless provide the basis for such moral atonement.

Kant has already argued that the ideal of a person -- the "son of God", who embodies moral virtue -- i.e., who always acts from duty, and who views such moral duties as divine commands -- is present in reason itself. He maintains that in the historical Jesus that moral archetype happens to be best empirically manifest, and that therefore the sinful individual can be "saved" through faith in him as the Christ in whose life radical evil has been overcome. This is not because Christ is uniquely able to accomplish a vicarious atonement for all sinners. Rather, the history of his life, suffering and death is meaningful to each sinful moral subject only because it awakens in himself an awareness of the latent moral archetype, the "self morally pleasing to God". Through a subjective appropriation of the relevant moral features of Christ's actions, any rational individual can repeat that act of atonement within his own moral consciousness. In other words, Christ is the occasion for the emergence of the moral individual's faith in himself as a potential embodiment of human moral perfection, in his own power to overcome the burden of sin.

Kant presents Christ as a teacher who, announcing himself as an ambassador from heaven, declared an end to all vain, servile faith in doctrinal confessions and practices, and "revealed", by word and example, a "saving faith" in the ideal of a humanity dedicated to moral self-perfection. [Rel.119-20] Thus Christ's role is not actually to break the hold of sin over finite individuals paralysed by radical evil, but rather to remind them of their own innate disposition to goodness, and capacity to restore themselves to virtue. Christ is thus the herald of the "pure faith of reason" which has always lain implicit in all human hearts and minds. For that faith to emerge, no historical events or documentation
are essential, although the historical Christ's "revelation" has helped many to awaken to their own ethical reality. [Rel. 132]

Yet this accommodation of Christ to the requirements of the morally autonomous agent fails to confront the very problem for whose solution Kant had turned to Christian doctrine. The difficulty for the finite agent is how to recover a lost goodness, given the infinite corruptive power of radical evil. Despite the introduction of Christ as exemplar of the moral archetype, that "how" remains a mystery. Kant insists we must both preserve moral spontaneity "according to which a good cannot come from another but must arise from man himself" [Rel. 134], and recognize that man is corrupt and so cannot redeem himself: yet reason cannot comprehend how vicarious atonement for radical evil could be compatible with human freedom. Kant concludes that from the moral point of view the possibility of such atonement can therefore be accepted only as a "holy mystery".

"Mystery" for Kant does not mean that which radically transcends all possible knowledge. He defines mystery in a peculiar fashion as "that which we can know, but which is incapable of being communicated publically." [Rel. 129] Neither the reality of freedom, as affirmed in the first and second Critiques, nor the moral postulation of God qua moral Ruler of the world, falls into this category of incommunicable yet knowable holy mystery. The ground of human freedom is inscrutable to theoretical reason; nevertheless practical knowledge of it, and of morality, is universally shared by all. However, when practical freedom seeks to realize virtue, its moral end, it is led inevitably to the holy mysteries. Likewise, practical faith in God as "moral Governor of the world" contains no mystery, since it presents itself spontaneously to human reason everywhere, supplementing the moral law of which it is the practically necessary completion. But when we go beyond rational moral belief -- which expresses the moral relation of God to the human race -- to consider what God freely might do to offset our ethical inadequacies, we approach the sphere of mystery.

The mystery of atonement is inaccessible to theoretical reason, and so cannot be "shared universally". The mystery stands beyond the reach also of practical reason, as a private matter for only the isolated, fallen individual to affirm as a deeply personal ground of confidence in the possibility of moral virtue. Kant maintains that it may be known by each single individual ... each individual will have to search for it (if ever there is such a thing) solely in his own reason ... in the inner, subjective part of our moral disposition." [Rel. 129] Yet he offers no account of what it could be for the individual moral subject to "know" in a fashion inaccessible to other rational thinkers and agents. 13 Notwithstanding his insistence that the relation between human freedom and divine grace is both theoretically and practically unfathomable [Rel. 48-9], for Kant the finite moral agent's hope for ethical self-realization fuels the need to embrace this transcendent mystery through an act of inner, subjective appropriation.

13 Elsewhere in Religion Kant opposes mysticism, and any other means of achieving private knowledge of God, as a form of fanaticism, utterly incompatible with true religion. See Rel. 111f, 162f.
C. Kierkegaard's Appropriation Of Kantian Dilemmas

i) Kierkegaard's Critique of "Immanentist" Philosophies

Thus far I have argued that despite his adherence to the principle of radical moral autonomy Kant, precisely through his efforts to secure the full freedom and responsibility of the ethical agent, exposes the limits of his transcendental dualist starting point. The moral subject is confronted with the difficulty that while duty commands moral regeneration -- i.e., the will's self-overcoming of its free choice of radical evil -- from the point of view of practical reason such self-transformation on the part of a finite, infinitely guilty agent is impossible. Kant's recourse to the figure of Christ, and to the *parergon* of divine grace, does not resolve the dilemma so much as underscore its intransigency, since any appeal to a transcendent source of moral salvation highlights the failure of autonomy to achieve its self-imposed demand for regeneration. The distinctions between nature and freedom, between finite man and the infinite but unknowable God -- so fundamental to Kant's critical project of saving both knowledge and faith from Enlightenment skepticism -- are revealed here as foci for new perplexities.

In presenting the Christian faith as paradoxical, and the Christian believer as a despairing existential subject who "leaps" to faith in the Absurd, Kierkegaard's thought appears in sharp contrast to Kant's account of faith as rational belief. Kierkegaard's critique of all "philosophies of immanence", from Plato to Hegel (among which he clearly includes Kant's transcendental idealism), his stress on the discontinuity between moral and religious consciousness, and upon "passion", not reason, as the mediator between ethical striving and religious faith, should not however obscure some fundamental lines of agreement between his position and Kant's.

Following Kant's dualist epistemology, Kierkegaard denies to science and speculative philosophy all knowledge of reality as it is in itself; following Kant's stress upon the primacy of free moral subjectivity, he insists that the restriction of the powers of theoretical reason to the phenomenal in no way invalidates human aspirations toward the supersensible, since such aspirations are most properly accommodated within the sphere of the practical. As for Kant, so for Kierkegaard, the ethical is not a self-contained sphere of life. In the quest to satisfy its deepest needs qua moral agent, ethical consciousness is ineluctably drawn beyond its own self-created boundaries toward faith in a transcendent reality. Religion, for both, is thus understood as the necessary solution to practical problems which emerge within the very structure of the ethical, so that one who has not first fully grasped the implications of what it means to be an ethical subject is incapable of experiencing the profound need for religious faith which the life of moral striving ultimately evokes. For Kierkegaard as much as for Kant, however, it may be argued that the moral standpoint is unsurpassable, since for both, religious faith's primary significance lies in its capacity to address problems raised within ethical inwardsness, rather than in its capacity to elevate the individual beyond abstractly subjective, dualist modes of modes of experience.
These common principles notwithstanding, Kierkegaard strenuously opposes Kant's efforts to characterize faith, and in particular Christian faith, as continuous with rational (albeit practical) thinking, arguing that in its highest expressions, the religious constitutes a sphere utterly independent of the demands of ethical universality. For Kant the autonomy of the ethical agent, manifest in the rationally self-imposed categorical imperative, means that not even the will of God can contradict the dictates of pure practical reason. Kant insists that revealed religious truths must be subordinated to principles accessible to universal human reason, i.e., I must first know that something is my duty before I accept it as a divine command:

When a politico-civil law, itself not immoral, is opposed to what is held to be a divine statutory law, there are grounds for regarding the latter as spurious, since it contradicts a plain duty, and since [the notion] that it is a divine command can never, by any empirical token, be accredited adequately enough to allow an otherwise established duty to be rejected on its account. (Rel. p.90-91, note)

Revealed religious truths, or ostensible divine commands, must be compatible with the autonomy of the rational will or be dismissed as products of ignorance, superstition or fanaticism.

Criticising the Biblical account of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac at the command of God, Kant remarks that no such direct duty to God is possible for a rational human subject. Religion he narrowly defines as "the recognition of all duties as divine commands" (Rel. p.142); but the reverse claim, that divine commands might positively enjoin the "teleological suspension" of ethical duty is utterly incompatible with our status as rational believers. Such direct divine intervention as sometimes is proclaimed by "historical and visionary religions" necessarily has a contingent historical aspect, and so can never be apodictically certain. Thus, Abraham could not know with certainty that it was indeed God's voice which ordered him to "slaughter his own son like a sheep" [Rel. p.175]; his defiance of ethical law would therefore be "unconscientious", since he would risk thereby disobedience to a human duty "which is certain in and of itself." [Rel. p.175] For Kant, any insight finite man possesses into the will of God must be mediated by and compatible with ethical reason, or be dismissed as spurious.

Kierkegaard's rejection of "immanentist" thought, including Kant's transcendental idealism, is based on the view that such philosophies illegitimately assume an underlying prior unity between the finite and infinite, between man and the divine, which can somehow be expressed and comprehended by human thought. This philosophical immanentism he traces as far back as Socrates and Plato, for whom finite man stands in

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14 Soren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, ed. & trans. Howard Hong and Edna Hong, Princeton, N.J., 1983, 54-67; hereafter, FT. Kierkegaard's pseudonym, Johannes de Silentio, asks the question "Is there such a thing as a teleological suspension of the ethical?" when he considers how faith can justifiably suspend the universal telos of ethical obligation in the interest of an absolute obligation to God. For Kant, clearly, the answer to this question is unequivocally negative.
an essential relation to the Truth, needing only to be "reminded" by a teacher of his intrinsic oneness with the Absolute:

Can the truth be learned?...Socrates thinks through the difficulty by means of the principle that all learning and seeking are but recollecting. Thus the ignorant person merely needs to be reminded in order, by himself, to call to mind what he knows. The truth is not introduced to him but was in him....If this is the case with regard to learning the truth, then the fact that I have learned from Socrates or from Prodicus or from a maidservant can concern me only historically...Neither can the fact that the teaching of Socrates or Prodicus was this or that have anything but historical interest for me, because the truth in which I rest was in me and emerged from me.\footnote{Soren Kierkegaard, \textit{Philosophical Fragments}, translated and edited by Howard Hong and Edna Hong, Princeton, N.J., 1985, 7-12; hereafter PF. For Kant the status of Christ would parallel that of Socrates, since Christ's moral teaching and death are precisely an "occasion" through which any rational subject can gain access to the rational moral faith which has always lain implicit in human hearts. Christ's actual existence is no more essential to the individual's discovery of this truth than is Socrates' teaching necessary for knowledge of the moral forms to be possible.}

Socrates represents for Kierkegaard an exemplary model of such a teacher, who serves as the occasion for reminding the learner of his own rational capacity for activating this implicit relation to eternal Truth. Kierkegaard's deep admiration for Socrates stems from his view that Socrates, unlike Plato and his idealist successors, modestly refused to step beyond the bounds of his own subjective existence to claim adequate knowledge of the infinite and eternal. From the Socratic standpoint, truth is subjectivity; Socratic faith consists in the confidence that authentic human thinking and acting, despite being embedded in finitude, nevertheless maintains an essential, if existentially unrealizable, intellectual relation to the infinite. Socratic ignorance is therefore the acknowledgment that although the eternal truth is not in itself a paradox, in relation to the finite human thinker it must inevitably appear as such.

In contrast to Socrates, Kierkegaard suggests, modern thought takes up Plato's metaphysical project of achieving full rational insight into the underlying unity of man and God. Its efforts culminate in Hegel's Absolute Idealism, wherein it is announced that man has "gone beyond" the need for mere Socratic faith now that speculative reason has at last comprehended the immanent oneness of the divine and human. Although Kant clearly belongs in this modern tradition, his modest disclaimers of knowledge of the absolute, together with his insistence that only rational belief in the divine-human relation is compatible with our temporal status, point toward a more Socratic vision of the status of finite subjectivity than is characteristic of later metaphysical systems.

As for Socrates, so for Kant authentic human thinking and acting remain always in a dualist, oppositional relation to the transcendent Absolute. Kant is Socratic too in his rational faith in the ultimate relation between the finite moral subject and the transcendent Moral Author of the world, and in his insistence that the truth of this relation...
lies beyond the capacity of mere temporal understanding to comprehend. Kierkegaard concurs in the Socratic/Kantian thesis that finite understanding cannot grasp the infinite. He reiterates Kant's sceptical claim that not even pure reason offers speculative insight into absolute reality; but he questions the legitimacy of the Socratic/Kantian rational faith which holds that the finite individual nevertheless may assume an intrinsic, albeit speculatively inaccessible bond with the eternal.

Kierkegaard's existentialist opposition to Kantian (Socratic) faith rests on the recognition of the contradiction into which Kant's dualist immanentalism falls when it seeks to preserve the radical, self-grounding freedom of the moral self, while at the same time acknowledging the rational incapacity of the finite self to overcome its own freely chosen lapse into radical evil. In *Religion*, Kant is driven to postulate the *parergon* of divine grace, while yet accepting that such external assistance is utterly incompatible with human autonomy and beyond the power of finite thought, whether theoretical or practical, to understand. Kant's astonishing recourse to supernatural intervention seems to entail either that the concept of divine grace is being employed merely as a stimulus to sustain the autonomous agent's continued efforts at self-regeneration, but that no genuinely transcendent reality is being posited to limit or supplement the self-grounding freedom of the subject; or that he is genuinely acknowledging the need for a transcendent support for human freedom, which clearly contradicts his efforts throughout the *Religion* to employ only a demythologized version of Christian doctrine, symbolizing immanent aspects of human ethical rationality, as a vehicle of moral transformation.

Kant is well aware that his arguments bring us to the borders of reason itself, since he introduces the *parergon* of grace not as a postulate of practical reason, but simply as a "holy mystery", privately "knowable" only by each individual in the depths of his moral subjectivity. It is inconceivable to reason, says Kant, how it is possible for any being, even the divine being, to atone vicariously for the infinite guilt incurred by another -- yet as finite subjects steeped in radical evil, we "have to assume it", even though "for ratiocination it is an unfathomable mystery". [Rel.134]

That Kant's moral philosophy is vulnerable to internal contradiction, and points beyond reason toward religious mystery as a possible resolution to that contradiction, signifies to Kierkegaard the impotence of both philosophical thought and moral activity to unify those poles of phenomenal and noumenal, finite and infinite, temporal and eternal which constitute the very foundations of Kant's vision of reality. Kierkegaard's complaint against Kant is not, however, that he retains these problematically opposed polarities, but rather that he, as do earlier immanentist thinkers, erroneously assumes that human reason, theoretical or practical, must somehow be able to bridge the gulf separating them. Kierkegaard's response to the Kantian impasse, his solution to the problem of how the finite subject may achieve moral regeneration, will not involve a negation of Kantian dualisms, therefore, but rather the restoration of faith in the historical core of the Christian religion as the unique means for transcending the dualist impasse. He will maintain that only through passionate faith -- that "crucifixion of the understanding"16 suffered by the despairing ethical individual who embraces

16 Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, hereafter CUP.
Christianity's paradoxical "existence communication" and the "breach with immanence" it portends -- can the aporia generated by Kant's immanentism be resolved.

**ii) Paradoxical Faith: Faith by Virtue of the Absurd**

On Kierkegaard's view genuine faith directs the individual beyond Kant's ethical universalism first to a full acknowledgment of the absolute otherness of the human to the divine, and thence to their paradoxical unification. This is vividly conveyed in the voice of Johannes de Silentio, the pseudonymous author of *Fear and Trembling* (hereafter cited as *FT*). The work makes no explicit mention of Christian faith, but concerns itself with the question of why the Jewish patriarch Abraham, who on God's command was prepared to sacrifice (kill) his only son Isaac, is considered the "father of faith" within the Judeo-Christian tradition. De Silentio stresses that from the standpoint of morality Abraham's action is entirely incomprehensible; indeed his obedience to God's will, in defiance of the universal moral law enjoining respect for life and love for family, appears both sinful and criminal. How then can this utterly egregious commitment to a seemingly idiosyncratic interpretation of religious obligation be construed as a model for faith?

Certainly from the Kantian perspective, Abrahamic faith exemplifies the danger of confusing the universal requirements of an autonomous ethic with the dictates of a heteronomous particular, a historically and existentially conditioned religious conscience. Yet for de Silentio Abraham's predicament, as he faces the contradiction between the law of man and the command of God, offers the purest possible distillation of the tension between an idealist (Kantian) "reduction" of faith to a mere epiphenomenon of the ethical, and faith conceived as a paradoxical, anguished response to the self-generated impasse of ethical understanding:

> The ethical is the universal and as such it is also the divine. Thus it is proper to say that every duty is a duty to God, but if no more can be said than this, then it is also said that I have no duty to God. The duty becomes duty by being traced back to God, but in the duty itself I do not enter into relation to God ... If in this connection I then say that it is my duty to love God, I am actually pronouncing only a tautology, inasmuch as 'God' in a totally abstract sense is here understood as the divine -- that is, the universal, that is duty. The whole existence of the human race rounds itself off as a perfect, self-contained sphere, and then the ethical is that which limits and fills at one and the same time. God comes to be an invisible vanishing point, an impotent thought; his power is only in the ethical, which fills all existence. [*FT* 68]

Here de Silentio formulates and then questions the Kantian claim that religion is nothing but the recognition of all duties as divine commands. He maintains that this rational mediation of the ethical and the religious effectively absolutizes finite ethical existence and reduces divine transcendence to a function of human rational willing, stripping God of any independent reality or concrete role in human existence, except as an instrument of ethical self-realization. By contrast, Abraham's anguished situation embodies a direct,
radically individuating relation to God, such that reliance upon his own ethical judgment now becomes for him a temptation, or "spiritual trial":

The paradox of faith then is this: that the single individual is higher than the universal, that the single individual ... determines his relation to the universal by his relation to the absolute, not his relation to the absolute by his relation to the universal. In this connection, to say that it is a duty to love God means something different from the above, for if this duty is absolute, then the ethical is reduced to the relative. From this it does not follow that the ethical should be invalidated; rather the ethical receives a completely different expression, a paradoxical expression... [FT 70]

Abraham's radical intention isolates him from his society and its norms in a way comparable to no mere "tragic hero" confronted with equally compelling ethical alternatives. His choice is between rational action in accordance with universal ethical values, a choice expressible therefore in conceptual language and justifiable before others, and an unspoken adherence to the incomprehensible will of God, conceived as the "absolutely Other". His dilemma is profound, since this "knight of faith" remains fully alive to the truth of the ethical, while yet commanded to exclude himself qua particular individual from obligation to its universal requirements. Ethical existence calls upon each individual to subordinate his particularity and immediate desires to the mediation of universal moral law; yet Abraham freely casts aside the security of the universal in favour of a renewed individualism, a move which to the hard-won ethical consciousness surely must appear as nothing but sinful. The terrifying aspect of Abrahamic faith is that it stands outside rational justification, since precisely those universal ethical standards by which all human action is evaluated have been "teleologically suspended". Abraham embodies a higher, yet for that reason incomprehensible particularity; in his anguished inwardness he stands in an "absolute relation to the Absolute".

Despite the clear opposition between their assessments of Abrahamic faith, it is evident that for both Kant and Kierkegaard the standpoint of religious belief presupposes and completes the ethical. For Kant, faith emerges as the guarantor of the rational coherence of ethical life in the face of its apparent internal contradictions; for Kierkegaard, faith arises as a paradoxical possibility for the individual who affirms the ethical but for whom the limits of ethical universalism have become manifest. But Kierkegaard is not content with Kant's appropriation of religious categories as a means of ethical self-completion; he insists that Kant's own ethical enquiry into radical evil points beyond a "perfect, self-contained sphere" [FT 68] within which God functions as "an invisible vanishing point" (ibid.), and that the Abrahamic model of faith more truly delineates how faith enters only when the impossibility of rational mediation has been fully acknowledged.

Kierkegaard presses beyond the borders of Kantian moral faith by means of a concept apparently quite foreign to Kant's analysis. Unlike the Kantian rational believer, Abraham believes and acts, de Silentiio says, "by virtue of the absurd".[FT 56] His faith involves a "double movement" -- the first being the "movement of infinity", whereby he
"gives up himself for the universal". (FT. 76] Here Abraham, resigning himself to God's inscrutable will, goes no further than Socrates, (or Kant) whose "ignorance" expresses a resigned acquiescence in the infinite wisdom and power of the divine, an abandonment of the claims of mere finitude in light of the superior claims of the infinite. The "knight of infinite resignation" is fully cognizant of the unbridgeable gulf between his finite conditionedness and the Absolute. His virtue consists in stoically accepting that radical divide and the suffering within existence it entails; his dignity as a finite individual consists in expressing in all his actions a rational (Socratic/Kantian) confidence in himself in his "eternal validity" as an ethico-religious being. [FT 46] He acts conscientiously and suffers the trials of existence patiently, humbly affirming the limits of his own finite powers of understanding, and trusting in the will and wisdom of God. In such infinite resignation there is a kind of peace and security for the moral individual, even when adherence to the divine will requires considerable personal renunciation:

...for one who has resigned infinitely is sufficient to oneself...In infinite resignation there is peace and rest; every person who wills it ...can discipline himself to make this movement, which in its pain reconciles one to existence." [FT 44-45]

But the dignity conferred through infinite resignation is not to be confused with faith. Abraham would not be remembered as the father of faith if, when commanded to sacrifice Isaac, he had simply acknowledged the limits of his finite understanding and bowed to the inscrutable divine will. "It takes strength and energy and spiritual freedom to make the infinite movement of resignation" [FT 47], but it requires no break with immanence, no denial of the autonomy of one's own rational judgment. The Socratic philosopher confronting the vicissitudes of temporal becoming and the Kantian moralist faced with the challenge of radical evil are alike in maintaining the autonomy of ethical selfhood, and in preserving rational confidence in the intrinsic relation of man and God.

For Kierkegaard, the clarity of vision and ethical autonomy evinced by the infinitely resigned individual are not faith, but necessary conditions of the possibility of genuine faith, faith "by virtue of the absurd". The movement to faith presupposes a deep rational certainty that the synthesis sought by the ethical self is a genuine logical and existential impossibility. It requires that the individual resign himself to this impossibility and refuse to be seduced by a naive, romantic/aesthetic hope that the difficulty is not as great as it seems. Only then, having fully comprehended the limits set by finitude, and accepted the painful consolations of infinite resignation, is the individual prepared to embrace the paradox of faith:

Faith is preceded by a movement of infinity; only then does faith commence ... only when the individual has emptied himself in the infinite, only then has the point been reached where faith can break through." [FT 69]

The "knight of faith" stands beyond rational comprehension, for in his act of faith, "by virtue of the absurd" he recovers that finite content previously resigned in the interest of
affirming his "eternal consciousness". De Silentio is careful to distinguish the absurd from those deviations from the norm which still lie within the domain of the understanding. The absurd is not to be identified with the unexpected, the improbable or the unforeseen; from the standpoint of human reason, the knight is certain of the absolute impossibility, the absurdity of any hope for salvation. Yet, embracing this impossibility, making the move of infinite resignation, in the very same moment Abraham believes that Isaac, who God has promised will be the father of a nation, will be restored to him "by virtue of the fact that for God all things are possible". [FT 46]

Faith by virtue of the absurd is paradoxical because it defies all mediation. It brings into direct conjunction the self-divided, finite inwards of the infinitely resigned existing individual and the absolute reality of the infinite, and proclaims that in a passionate moment of faith, the isolated individual, by virtue of belief in the absurd, stands higher than the ethical universal, stands in immediate unity with the divine. Through careful partitioning of the spheres of finite, empirical individuality and noumenal moral selfhood, Kant had sought to avoid extreme confrontation between these opposing poles of human self-experience. Kierkegaard, reacting against the logic of despair he perceives as implicit in this immanentist dualism, here refuses to admit any mediating principle (church, society, universal ethical reason) which could bridge the abyss separating these dualities. He rejects the Kantian effort to preserve rational continuity between ethical and religious categories because he sees in Kant's category of rational belief a fatal blurring of the distinction between finite, ethical inwards and the Absolute Otherness of God. He insists that only an absolute distinction with respect to these two poles preserves both human autonomy and divine transcendence, so that while human finite temporality is not reduced to a vanishing aspect of the infinite, (as in infinite resignation) neither is divine transcendence recast as a mere function of immanent humanist ideals (as in philosophical idealism).

Kierkegaard's position is thus intransigently dualist. He posits the ontological distinction of man and God in uncompromising terms, and finds no comfort in the Socratic-Kantian confidence in their inner a priori connection. For Kant faith arises in the course of the ethical subject's reflective exploration of himself in his relation to the "holy will", the divine universal immanent in all rational consciousness. As for Socrates, so for Kant divine truth is thus not really outside the moral individual, but is grasped ever more adequately as the subject gains insight into his own ethically autonomous being. Human ignorance regarding the ground of ethical existence is for Kant not an ultimate state of being, but a condition to be remedied through ever-advancing practical understanding of the logic of ethical agency.

Kierkegaard rejects this idealist project, maintaining that the irreducible truth of subjectivity is incompatible even with a rational mediation of the Kantian type. The category of paradox is designed to announce, in the firmest possible terms, that any point of coincidence between man's natural, temporal conditionedness and the Absolute cannot be understood, but only asserts itself by virtue of the absurd. Thus the knight of faith, of whom Abraham is paradigmatic, experiences this paradoxical coincidence, but is unable to articulate his faith, or to justify actions taken in its name. [FT. 114-15] His action is
grounded in a profound, supra-rational trust in divine integrity, a trust concealed in the inchoate depths of an isolated inwardness responsive and responsible only to the absolute authority and subjectivity of the hidden God. In the end, De Silentio stands in awe before "... the prodigious paradox of faith, a paradox that makes a murder into a holy, God-pleasing act, a paradox that gives Isaac back to Abraham again, which no thought can grasp, because faith begins precisely where thought stops." [FT. 53]

In several journal entries Kierkegaard draws a clear distinction between the paradoxical faith by virtue of the absurd described by de Silentio in Fear and Trembling (1843) and faith in the Absurd, or in the Absolute Paradox, as portrayed by Johannes Climacus, pseudonymous author of a later work, Concluding Unscientific Postscript (1846). Abraham's "belief by virtue of the absurd", that with God all things are possible, he characterizes as "the formal definition of faith"17 or again as a "purely personal definition of existential faith." [JP #11] The account presupposes an absolute difference between man and God which is both affirmed and paradoxically annulled in the act of faith. Such existential faith arises only on the far side of the ethical understanding's infinitely resigned posture toward finitude and its limitations.

Although the concept of the absurd, or the paradox, cannot be understood, it does not follow however that it is simply nonsense. Kierkegaard calls the absurd a "negatively determined concept" which, generated by the understanding itself, constitutes a "negative criterion of that which is higher than human understanding and knowledge". [JP #11] Its function may thus be compared to the concepts of Kant's dialectic, which clarify the limits of knowledge although they cannot carry thought beyond those boundaries. In Kant the effect of the dialectic is to reinforce transcendental dualism, and consequently the knower's reliance upon the categories of understanding and the finite, phenomenal knowledge they make possible. For Kierkegaard, the concept of the absurd rather thrusts the finite subject forward, beyond the limits of ethical self-understanding toward paradoxical faith:

When, for example, I believe this or that because everything is possible for God, where then is the absurd? The absurd is the negative determinant which assures, for example, that I have not overlooked one or another possibility which still lies within the human arena. The absurd is the expression of despair: that humanly it is not possible -- but despair is the negative sign of faith". [JP #9]

Kant's concept of 'holy mystery', invoked when confronting the inadequacy of practical reason to resolve the antinomous conflict between the concepts of ethical autonomy and divine grace, is to some degree analogous to the Kierkegaardian category of the absurd, insofar as the absurd is a "purely personal definition of existential faith". [JP #11] For Kant it is inconceivable to reason, either theoretical or practical, how God could assist the finite sinner in overcoming radical evil while at the same time respecting the agent's self-originative ethical autonomy. Yet Kant counsels the subject, enmeshed in

the conflict between temporal guilt and noumenal freedom, not to succumb to passivity or moral despair, since he may hope for divine assistance, even though he can in no way understand the possibility of this holy mystery. At this stage in the development of ethical consciousness, the Kantian subject seems impelled beyond purely immanent, rational faith in God as moral manager of the ethical order, toward trust in a radically transcendent God "for whom all things are possible". The mystery of divine grace is "knowable", Kant says, but only by the individual moral subject who "will have to search for it ...in the inner, subjective part of our moral disposition"; this knowledge however is "incapable of being communicated publically" [Rel. 129]. In this respect, the Kantian moral subject appears as the forerunner of Kierkegaard's knight of faith, Abraham who stands outside the universal and is hence unable publically to communicate his inner confidence in divine consistency, power and goodness.

The Kantian moral individual who believes in the mystery of grace nevertheless remains a knower, albeit in a highly attenuated and obscure sense. He continues to believe that between finite man and the eternal there is an intrinsic bond, which the moral agent's hopeful persistence in ethical striving presupposes and expresses. For Kierkegaard, however, the category of faith transcends any form of knowledge; its opposite is not doubt, which is still an epistemological stance, but despair. Only the subject who has experienced the "crucifixion of the understanding" [CUP, 500], and has acknowledged that as a sinner he must abandon all hope of rational reconciliation with the Absolute, is receptive to the fulness of faith.

iii) The Absolute Paradox: Faith in the Absurd

Beyond the immanent, philosophically comprehensible stance which Johannes Climacus, pseudonymous author of Concluding Unscientific Postscript entitles "Religion A", lies therefore Religion B, the "paradoxical religiousness" which "breaks with immanence and makes the fact of existing the absolute contradiction, not within immanence, but against immanence" [CUP 507] From the standpoint of Religion B -- or Christianity -- there is no longer presupposed, says Climacus, any fundamental kinship between the temporal and the eternal. Yet the path to Religion B leads inevitably through Religion A, "which is not speculative philosophy, but yet is speculative." [CUP, 505] In order to be susceptible to the Christian "existence-communication" the individual must undergo a dialectic of inward transformation whereby he encounters the limits of immanence, the limits of the claim that between temporal man and the eternal God there obtains a relation of inner connectedness. This mode of religious consciousness is compatible with paganism, and with modern philosophical understanding, since "it has only human nature in general as its assumption" [CUP 496]. The dialectic of Religion A therefore comprises an ever-deepening awareness of what it means to exist as a finite subject in relation to the eternal. The individual discovers in time that he "must assume that he is eternal", [CUP 508] yet ultimately recognizes that this necessary relation to the eternal must always remain unrealized in time.

Kant's autonomous moral agent, whose faith emerges in response to deepening tensions between his noumenal freedom and his finite, phenomenal character and
conditions, clearly belongs within the sphere of philosophical religion, or Religion A. The faith of Religion A has no essential relation to any particular historical starting-point. The fact of individual existence is rather a "a moment within my eternal consciousness ... and is thus a lowlier thing which prevents me from being the infinitely higher thing I am." [CUP 508] Kant's unhappy, self-divided moral believer thus finds support for his ethical striving through faith in the paradigmatic figure of Christ, whose pure exemplification of the universal human ideal of goodness serves as an occasion, a stimulus to the believer's efforts at retrieval of his own dormant "eternal consciousness". The infinitely guilty ethical subject views Christ as a model of healing atonement. Yet the resources of Kantian philosophy are not such, as we have seen, to explain how it is possible for the sinful moral agent freely to accomplish this atonement and self-transformation in his own life. From the Kierkegaardian perspective Kantian faith is a response within immanence of the repentant ethical subject burdened with infinite, unassuageable guilt. Such a faith brings into clear focus the limit of what is possible for a humanist self-understanding:

In the totality of guilt-consciousness, existence asserts itself as strongly as it can within immanence .... In guilt-consciousness the identity of the subject with himself is preserved, and guilt-consciousness is an alteration of the subject within the subject himself ... [therefore] even the decisive definition of guilt-consciousness is within the sphere of immanence after all." [CUP 505]

Neither the historical reality of Christ, nor the objective validity of Christianity's doctrinal claims, is a relevant feature of this Kantian faith. Kant's infinitely guilty moral believer cannot acknowledge Christ himself as the external source of atonement, without calling into question his own understanding of himself as spontaneous freedom. Recognizing that there can be no final rational mediation, he is an unhappy consciousness, forever caught up in the futile oscillation between the demand for autonomy and the longing for mysterious union with an infinite reality, a resolution which however must inevitably elude him. The turn to Religion B, or authentic Christianity, constitutes an acknowledgment for Kierkegaard that the dialectic of subjective inwardness characteristic of Religion A has reached its most extreme point of development, but cannot accomplish what is required for the individual's moral self-realization.

The premise whose acceptance grounds the possibility of the move beyond immanence to paradoxical Christian faith is, Kierkegaard claims, that "subjectivity is untruth" [CUP 185]: i.e., that the finite subject, far from being, as Kant would insist, the autonomous source of the moral law who stands in a necessary relation to the eternal truth, must recognize that he is in fact a sinner, a radically temporal being for whom Socratic escape "back into the eternal" by way of either speculative thought or moral virtue is forever barred. The epistemological distinction between noumenal and phenomenal reality, between man and God, fundamental to Kantian moral theology, here is recast as an absolute ontological difference. The finite moral subject is marooned in time; salvation must therefore be possible in time, or not at all.
Only at this juncture, Kierkegaard maintains, does the Absolute Paradox at the core of Christianity present itself as the sole available option for the sinful individual. As Kant has argued, for one who has freely chosen radical evil moral regeneration seems beyond reach. On the one hand, the noumenally free subject must retain his moral autonomy and self-responsibility; on the other, qua finite, he is utterly unable to atone for the infinite guilt incurred by his lapse into sin. Kant acknowledges the value of the Christian concept of vicarious atonement through a divine Saviour, but struggles unsuccessfully to translate the Christian doctrine into a principle compatible with a purely humanist ethic. His ultimate recourse to the notion of 'holy mystery' as a source of moral sustenance merely underlines the failure of transcendental dualism to resolve the impasse it has created. Kierkegaard appropriates Kant's account of the dilemma faced by the sinful moral subject, but proposes as its solution faith in the redemptive power of Christ, the God-man whose paradoxical historical actuality alone makes available to temporal sinners the benefit of infinite divine grace, or vicarious atonement.

Christian faith for Kierkegaard is thus not merely the formal, existential/Socratic faith that "with God all things are possible" -- i.e., faith by virtue of the absurd. It postulates a complete "breach with immanence", a denial of the power of the finite moral subject to effect self-regeneration, and an insistence on the salvific power of faith in the Absolute Paradox, in the absurd:

What now is the absurd? The absurd is -- that the eternal truth has come into being in time, that God has come into being, has been born, has grown up, and so forth, precisely like any other individual human being, quite indistinguishable from other individuals." [CUP 188]

In contradistinction to the Kantian project of interpreting the story of Christ's life and death as a moral archetype accessible to all rational beings, an event whose historical facticity is a matter of indifference, Kierkegaard insists that it is precisely this tendency to intellectualize Christian truth, to drain it of its sheer historical immediacy, or facticity, which must be set aside as inauthentic:

The object of faith is not a doctrine ... the object of faith is not a teacher with a doctrine ... the object of faith is the reality of the teacher, that the teacher really exists ... the object of faith is hence the reality of the God-man in the sense of his existence ... God's reality in existence as a particular individual ..." [CUP 290]

Nothing could be plainer than that for Kierkegaard the absurd fact of God's being in the world constitutes the core of Christian faith. Here he seems to be at the furthest remove possible from Kant, for whom the purported "fact" of the Incarnation, in common with every other historical datum, cannot assume decisive moral significance.

But Christ's reality, as God existing in time, is for Kierkegaard essential to the finite subject's hope for moral regeneration. His actuality as teacher -- and not any doctrine concerning the intellectual or moral substance of his message -- is the saving content of
Christian faith. The individual who believes in the absurd trusts, paradoxically, that despite his own hard-won understanding of himself as a morally autonomous agent responsible for his own salvation, this individual teacher is the sole possible vehicle of his salvation, uniquely capable of atonement for the infinite burden of sinfulness and guilt accruing to all finite subjects. The Christian existence-communication thus entails a significant risk for the sinful individual, since it invites him to affirm, against all ethical self-understanding of the Socratic-Kantian type, that moral salvation is possible only through the agency of Another. Furthermore, this Other is not the mysterious, transcendent God, for whom "all things are possible", but an existing, historically-conditioned individual who nevertheless claims to be divine.

Kierkegaard seems here to offer a robust defence of orthodox Christian faith, designed to counter the reduction of the Christ story to a mere epiphenomenon of rational self-understanding. Although the real synthesis of eternity and temporality in one individual contradicts Kant's distinction between phenomenal and noumenal spheres, the appropriation of this Absolute Paradox by the existing subject is, Kierkegaard maintains, the sole path beyond the Kantian moral aporia. Kant's God, conceived as moral Author of the world, and his conception of Christ as moral paradigm, are for Kierkegaard compatible with the religion of immanence, Religion A. This means that they do not move beyond an explication of the finite subject's immanent relationship with the eternal, a relationship which the deepening "dialectic of inward transformation" [CUP 494] characteristic of Religion A struggles to specify ever more precisely. But Christian faith is not satisfied simply to acquiesce in the humanist, immanentist vision of the moral individual as the final ground and terminus of religious ideals and concepts. For Christianity, the "untruth of subjectivity" (the finite individual as sinner) stands in paradoxical conjunction with the Absolute Paradox of the God-man, affirmed as an external source of justification and redemption. It is the eternal itself, and not an immanent relationship to the eternal, which preoccupies the authentic Christian believer: "Christianity is not content to be an evolution within the total definition of human nature." [CUP 496]

**iv) The Limits of Kierkegaard's Appeal to Religious Positivity**

Yet I would suggest that this Kierkegaardian focus on the historical actuality of Christ -- his stress on the importance of the divine itself, rather than on a mere relationship to the divine -- constitutes neither an unequivocal break with Kantian humanist ideals, nor a clear defence of orthodox Christianity, but a transposition of central Kantian principles into an existential idiom. Kierkegaard's Christology has little in common with early opponents of Enlightenment, who countered the rationalist critique of revealed religion with efforts to establish the historico-empirical actuality of Christian events. Indeed he is adamant that genuine Christian faith is inaccessible to those whose interest and focus is on objective truth, and insists that only from within the passionately interested standpoint of ethico-religious consciousness does the absurd fact of Christ's existence emerge as a meaningful possibility for the despairing moral individual. He criticizes historical investigators and speculative philosophers alike for seeking knowledge of the Christian Paradox, when by their very nature faith and its counterpart,
the Absolute Paradox, repel all possible rational comprehension. Kierkegaard, like Kant, views faith as a category quite distinct from empirical and theoretical knowledge; but unlike Kant, for whom the claims of Christian faith retain a tenuous link with pure practical reason, he places faith beyond the bounds of thought itself, since the reality affirmed by faith repels all possible modes of rational comprehension. "That which in accordance with its nature is eternal comes into existence in time, is born, grows up and dies -- this is a breach with all thinking." [CUP 513]

Kierkegaard dismisses philosophical efforts to "explain the Paradox away" by conceiving of the Incarnation as an "eternal historical fact". Speculative thought cannot approach the paradoxical reality of the God-man, since it lacks the prerequisite standpoint of existential inwardness. The speculative thinker illegitimately conflates the ontologically distinct spheres of the eternal and historical when he argues that the eternal-historical fact of Christ's existence can best be appreciated as a myth embodying eternal truths.

Religion A does not attempt in this fashion to transform the paradox into a thought-content; but since its point of departure is not historical, there again the Christian message cannot have a decisive relation to the despairing temporal believer. From the perspective of Religion A, no particular moment is decisive for the recollection within time of one's eternal consciousness, and all so called religious revelation must be understood simply as pedagogically helpful, illustrative packaging for non-temporal truths.

Finally, it is impossible to construe the Incarnation simply as another historical datum, whose reality can ideally be authenticated through diligent scholarly research, since even "... conceding that the historical account of Christianity is true -- though all the historians in the world were to unite in investigating for the sake of attaining certainty -- it would be impossible nevertheless to attain more than an approximation." [CUP 511] All historical investigation, Kierkegaard argues, yields at best approximation-knowledge, since by its very nature it deals with what is past, what therefore "has the ideality of recollection " about it. [CUP 509]. Thus the temporal knower is never in an immediate relation with historical data -- indeed is not even in immediate relation with his own objective being in the empirical world -- and so can never be apodictically certain of the truth or significance of any phenomenal content. [CUP 509] Not even a historical contemporary of Christ, an eye-witness to the events of his life, could therefore claim immediate, hence genuine, insight into the significance of that life, nor into the truth of Christ's claim to divinity.

In light of this clear insistence upon faith's separation from all modes of theoretical knowing -- speculative, natural religious, historical -- and upon the central role of subjective inwardness in matters of religious belief, Kierkegaard seems thoroughly Kantian in his approach. Yet he opposes Kant's effort to draw the rational, universally valid core of Christian religion from its historical shell and into immanent relation with moral self-consciousness, stressing instead the irreducible positivity at the heart of the Christian faith. Despite his Kantian determination to defend faith from attack by
objectivist critics, Kierkegaard maintains that the unique content of that faith is neither a universal thought-content, nor a simple historical datum, but an absolute fact which offers an existential solution to dilemmas raised but not resolved by Kantian immanentist ethics. It therefore seems vital to Kierkegaard's project that a singular, historical revelation be retained as the focus of Christian faith, and that he preserve that positive content from appropriation by either speculative philosophy or objective scholarship.

Redemption, the creation of a new man, cannot be comprehended through reflective mediation, whether historical or speculative, but occurs, he maintains, in a unique temporal Moment in which the isolated individual freely accomplishes "contemporaneity" with the paradoxical God-in-time. For this reason, Kierkegaard describes Christianity as a "discriminative, selective and polemical" religion [CUP 517], since the salvation of each particular individual is contingent upon his unique relation with Christ's temporal reality. Both the fact of Christ's existence, and the believer's temporal relation to it, are reciprocally paradoxical because in Christ "the fact of existing [is] the absolute contradiction, not within immanence, but against immanence. There is no longer any immanent fundamental kinship between the temporal and the eternal, because the eternal itself has entered time and would constitute there the kinship." [CUP 508]

For Kierkegaard then, in contrast to Kant, religious positivity seems crucial: although religious faith represents the apotheosis of subjective inwardness and passion, the essential stimulus to the achievement of ethico-religious selfhood lies utterly outside the finite subject, in the historical reality of another, who moreover claims to be the God-in-time:

The contradiction first emerges in the fact that the subject in the extremity of such subjective passion (in the concern for an eternal happiness) has to base this upon an historical knowledge which at its maximum remains an approximation" [CUP 510]

The truth of Christ's historical existence is not reducible to a necessary, or paradigmatic moral proposition. It is a contingent event which defies all rational comprehension, but which nevertheless invites appropriation as the paradoxical source of moral regeneration. Whereas for Kant any appeal to religious positivity is heteronomous and so a scandal to ethical selfhood, for Kierkegaard it is precisely the unique historical content of Christianity which enables the morally autonomous but temporally bound individual to achieve absolute self-validation through the paradoxical leap of faith.

But precisely at this point where Kierkegaard's existential account of Christian faith seems at its greatest remove from Kant's a-historical religious immanentism, one discerns the limits of his interpretation of the Incarnation as paradoxical externality. Kierkegaard has argued that faith is distinguished from all forms of knowledge, including objective historical knowing. He describes ordinary historical truth as necessarily approximative, because no temporal subject has anything but indirect access to the past. Thus, even eyewitnesses to a temporal event are in no position to pronounce definitively on its
meaning or truth-content, since even they must add, to the immediate sensing and cognition of the event, an interpretative appropriation of its "coming to be". The mode of consciousness which, Kierkegaard says, is "the organ for the historical" \[PF 81\] is therefore belief, which as the opposite of doubt is an "act of freedom, an expression of will" \[PF 83\] whereby the objective uncertainty attaching to all historical enquiry is halted by a resolute choice.

This category of belief necessarily mediates between the historical investigator and the event: "The conclusion of belief is no conclusion but a resolution and thus doubt is excluded." \[PF 84\] In a most general sense, then, Kierkegaard holds that we are cut off from genuine knowledge of any historical actuality, since finite, temporal coming to be is necessarily mediated by the subjective will of the aspiring knower. Kierkegaard explicitly links this notion of belief in historical actualities with the term faith, distinguishing however between two modes of belief/faith:

Faith is first taken in its direct and ordinary meaning \[belief\] as the relationship to the historical; but secondly, faith must be taken in the wholly eminent sense, such that this word can appear but once, that is, many times but in only one relationship" \[PF 87\]

Faith in the eminent sense is thus a sub-species of ordinary faith in historical events. It is therefore a category whose essential structure is resolute belief in actualities of temporal experience, rather than intellectual assent to eternal truths of reason.

The relevance of this analysis of faith to his interpretation of the Christian Incarnation as an historical actuality is plain. For if no historical event acquires genuine significance for an individual except through belief, or a resolute act of will, then how much more strongly must this be the case when the historical fact in question is the "absolute fact" of the God-in-time? If even an eyewitness cannot truly know contemporaneous historical events, but must subjectively appropriate and interpret for himself their always vanishing immediacy, then a fortiori neither is the eyewitness to the absurd Christian event in a privileged position to report on its veracity. The "immediacy of sense and cognition" characteristic of the experience of the eyewitness does not provide for him a superior epistemological vantage point, since the "uncertainty of coming into existence " \[PF 85\] infects his standpoint as surely as it does the efforts of latecomers who rely on the contemporary's reports for their second-hand access to the event.

Thus when Kierkegaard refers to all Christian believers as equally contemporaneous with Christ, he means by this that whether one is a historical eyewitness or a member of modern Danish society, the challenge is the same for an existing subject who would affirm the truth of the Incarnation. In fact, Kierkegaard speaks of the historically contemporaneous believer as being at somewhat of a disadvantage, since he can be distracted from the absolute facticity of the event by a preoccupation with its historical facticity in the ordinary sense, and so fail to realize that genuine contemporaneity has nothing to do with a relative, privileged access to the concrete details of the God's
existence in time. [PF. 66-71] For "faith in the eminent sense" to be realized, the individual, whether a historical contemporary or a disciple at a chronological remove, must subjectively appropriate the central message of the Teacher, Christ, who unlike the Socratic teacher is not a "midwife" helping the believer to awaken his own dormant self-knowledge, but the paradoxically concrete unity of individuality and eternity, who offers vicarious atonement to the sinful moral subject.

Yet what now seems crucial to this enterprise is the temporal facticity and subjective activity of each aspirant to faith, rather than the historical content of that faith. The "reality" of Christ, Kierkegaard holds, must be capable of becoming contemporaneous with all existential believers regardless of their historical situations. This appears to parallel Kant's claim that the Christian message is essentially a timeless truth, whose particular historical facticity is irrelevant.

Yet Kierkegaard maintains that while the Incarnation is not a mere relative historical fact, since it is uniquely open to contemporaneity with any individual, neither is it the idealist philosopher's "eternal fact", to which historical actuality is inessential. The dimension of historical facticity must not be lost, since this would be to slip back into immanence and its internal contradictions:

b) If that fact is an eternal fact, then every age is equally close to it -- but please note, not in faith, for faith and the historical are entirely commensurate, and thus it is only an accommodation to a less correct use of language for me to use the word 'fact' which is taken from the historical. c) If that fact is an absolute fact ... then it is a contradiction for time to be able to apportion the relations of people to it, for whatever can be apportioned essentially by time is eo ipso not the absolute ... but the absolute fact is indeed also historical [emphasis added]... The absolute fact is an historical fact and as such is the object of faith. The historical aspect must indeed be accentuated, but not in such a way that it becomes absolutely decisive for the individual... [PF 99-100]

For Kierkegaard the Incarnational event must be accessible to all, hence absolute; at the same it must be irreducibly temporal, and so only accessible through faith -- i.e., "faith in the eminent sense", a unique mode of consciousness radically to be distinguished from both pure speculative knowledge and ordinary historical belief. The object of Christian belief is contingently rooted in history, in having come to be; its historicality is essential to its meaning. Thus every time some believer at a historical distance makes this event the object of faith, he must "make it historical for himself, he repeats the dialectical qualifications of coming into existence." [PF 88] He does not then simply elicit the timeless truth of the doctrine from within its historical shell but appropriates an externally presented reality for himself, precisely qua historical.

There are therefore no contemporaries, in the sense of immediate eyewitnesses, to the Incarnational event. To see with the "eyes of faith" [PF 70] requires an act of subjective appropriation in which the believer reenacts and recreates the reality of the
original event within his own life. Thus all believers are equally at a remove from the actuality of this event; the chronological contemporaries of Christ might even be said to be at a disadvantage, since they would first have to lay aside their immediate access to the historical reality -- their enthusiasm to "see with physical eyes and hear with mortal ears" [PF 106] -- in order to accomplish the mediation, or subjective appropriation, necessary for the true "autopsy of faith" [PF 70].

But if the act of faith demands that the believer distance himself from concern for the immediate historicity of the event, in order to make the object of faith historical for himself, as Kierkegaard insists, then what necessity remains that an original, historical referent for such reenactments should really have occurred? For Kierkegaard an absolute distinction between time and eternity, and their paradoxical conjunction in the actuality of the God-man, seems conceptually the sole solution to the problem of moral atonement raised by Kant's immanentist dualism. He wants to stress the unavoidable need for an historical dimension to faith, while insisting that the merely historical cannot be decisive for the individual -- i.e., that empirical research into the facticity, the details of Christ's life must not be allowed to substitute for the passionate act of appropriation through which the subject comes to believe in the authenticity of that life. Yet Kierkegaard's extreme emphasis upon the "how" of belief, upon the free activity of the subject who must existentially appropriate the Christian paradox if it is to become true for him, makes it unclear whether this paradox, paralleling Kant's immanentist usage of the concept of "holy mystery", functions as anything more than a provocative thought-content, a radical stimulus for encouraging and enabling the individual finally to achieve authentic inwardness, the absolutization of passionate, temporal subjectivity. On the other side, in arguing for the irrelevance of empirical access to the paradoxically historical moment, Kierkegaard seems in danger of reproducing, albeit in an existential idiom now, Kant's Enlightenment idealist vision of an essential, trans-temporal core at the heart of positive Christian revelation.

Kierkegaard would no doubt dismiss these suggestions as inimical to a genuine understanding of Christian faith. In opposition to Kantian humanism, he proposes to reclaim the central Christian message that salvation cannot be had except through the actual life and death of the God-man. Christ's historical appearance is significant not because it illustrates a timeless theologicophilosophical truth, but because it is itself constitutive of salvation. Yet in seeking to accommodate that orthodox declaration to the requirements of his radicalized existential dualisms of time/eternity and particular individual/Absolute God -- themselves posited to address the problems inherent in Kant's phenomena/noumena distinction -- Kierkegaard reduces what for traditional Christian thought is the profound mystery of Incarnation to nothing but an "absolute fact". He maintains that instead of a mere God-relationship, such as is possible within the subjective immanence of Kantian faith, Christianity offers access to God himself. Yet the existential appropriation of the concept of Incarnation -- its focus on the primacy of the individual and his act of faith, of trust in Christ's sheer absurd reality -- justifies the complete negation of the rich speculative, historical and cultural elaboration of the Christian consciousness of the divine, such that Kierkegaard can confidently state:
Even if the contemporary generation had not left anything behind except these words, 'We have believed that in such and such a year the god appeared in the humble form of a servant, lived and taught among us and then died,' -- this is more than enough. The contemporary generation would have done what is needful, for this little announcement, this world-historical note bene, is enough to become an occasion for someone who comes later, and the most prolix report can never in all eternity become more for the person who comes later." [PF 104].

The chief lesson of Kantian transcendental dualism, for Kierkegaard, is that it reveals in the strongest possible terms the limits of reason's attempts, theoretical and practical, to comprehend the divine/human relationship. On the far side of Kantian reason, however, the disillusioned temporal subject is confronted with the possibility of an encounter with the transcendent divine itself, through its paradoxical conjunction with finite human reality. Kierkegaard's existential believer necessarily resists all efforts further to comprehend this paradox which makes possible his salvation, since his very authenticity - - his absolute being-for-self as free finite subjectivity -- precisely depends upon maintaining himself in paradoxical oneness with the radical otherness of the Absolute Paradox. Thus is the independent being of the God of Christianity reduced, Kierkegaard's intentions notwithstanding, to a mere epiphenomenon, a stimulus toward realizing the passionate inwardness of faith.
Stephen Menn's Cartesian Augustine: Metaphysical And Ahistorically Modern


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Stephen Menn finds in Augustine the metaphysical foundations of Descartes' philosophy but not because he discovers in Augustine what lies at the origins of modernity. Menn is "anti-historicist" and works within a metaphysical science which "progresses through emulation, criticism, and refinement." He reports that "Gilson and many others think that there is something essentially modern underlying Descartes' whole project of thought, and that this modern orientation excludes any real community of intention between Cartesian and pre-modern metaphysics." Though the others include Heidegger and Husserl, Menn "can find no truth in any of this." Having examined Descartes' sources, Menn discovers no "incommensurability between Descartes' 'modern' metaphysical project and the 'pre-modern' projects of his predecessors," but this is not because he has considered what distances must be spanned or what shapes need a common measure.

Nonetheless, in this hermeneutically self-conscious moment in scholarship, Stephen Menn's book not only has a refreshing simplicity and directness, but it also balances the historicist, anti-metaphysical and anti-theoretical readings of Augustine which come from postmodern philosophy and theology. By looking at the two readings together, something of the truth about Descartes' relation to Augustine might emerge. I propose in this review essay (1) to outline Menn's representation of that relation. I will, then, (2) revisit my article published in the second issue of this journal, "ReChristianizing Augustine Postmodern Style: Readings by Jacques Derrida, Robert Dodaro, Jean-Luc Marion, Rowan Williams, Lewis Ayes and John Milbank," in order to bring before us the postmodern representation of Augustine. I shall extend my treatment in Animus 2 by examining the reading of the de Trinitate upon which the Anglican postmodern theological enterprise depends, precisely because it seems "largely an intra-metaphysical"

1 Stephen Menn, Descartes and Augustine, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 400.
2 Ibid., 397 and see 400-4.
3 Ibid., 389-99; see 8ff., and 64ff.
work. Finally, (3) I shall attempt to judge between these opposed Augustines by means of a very limited comparison of texts of Plotinus and Augustine, concentrating on those from the *de Trinitate*. The relation to Plotinus is crucial.

Stephen Menn aims for more than a consideration of the relation between Descartes and Augustine. Essential to his thesis is a continuity in spiritual method from Plotinus through Augustine to Descartes. Indeed, in his book, we have before us a large part of the history of ancient philosophy. Menn reads with us a great deal of philosophical and theological text from Plato and Aristotle through the Stoics and Middle and Neo-Platonists to Augustine and within the seventeenth century. The reading is intelligent and sometimes informed, though not by any means weighed down, by the immense secondary literature on almost every question he touches. I cannot examine his whole argument, but I will try to indicate how Augustine appears in his relation to Plotinus from this ahistoric perspective which sees the continuity between Augustine and Descartes, rather than an unbridgeable gap.

1. Stephen Menn's Cartesian Augustine

Menn finds continuity at the very points where our postmodern Christians place the gaps. What Augustine learns from Plotinus and hands on to Descartes is a spiritual discipline, an *itinerarium* of the soul, and Descartes' philosophical project is a work of Christian piety inspired by the Cardinal de Bérulle. Descartes is responding to the felt need in the seventeenth century to develop from Christian "Augustinian principles a complete philosophy to replace that of Aristotle.

What Descartes took from Augustine was not, fundamentally, a set of metaphysical theses, but a *discipline* for approaching wisdom, ... and therefore also the series of intellectual intuitions produced by this discipline.

Augustine "makes central use of the discipline for contemplating the soul and God that Plotinus had developed in defense of Platonism" to search for wisdom. Crucially, Augustine's *conversio* is:

not a change of religious allegiance, but a turning towards God and away from other things. ... Augustine identifies his desire for wisdom with a desire "to fly away from earthly things to" ... God ... "for with you is

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5 Ibid., 393; see, on the role of Bérulle, 24, 47-9.
wisdom." ... Christianity [and Platonism are] only .. means for achieving this flight to God; ...[they are both] means to wisdom.\textsuperscript{6}

This absolutely critical point, that both Christian authority and philosophical reason are instruments of the quest for wisdom, is well founded in an interpretation of the \textit{Confessions}, generally, and of Book 3, particularly. Book 3 is Augustine's account of how his reading of Cicero's \textit{Hortensius}\textsuperscript{7} "enflamed" him and how he could be satisfied neither with crude Christianity nor philosophy without Christ. In fact, the mixture of Christianity and apparent philosophical sophistication drew him to Manicheism. With this Menn is able to bridge the gap, opened by Gilson and by postmodern Christian theologians, between Christianity and autonomous reason.

This gap Menn had already bridged at the other end by his account of the Christian inspiration of Descartes' philosophical project, a bridge he supports with a description of the relation of faith and reason, philosophy and theology, in Descartes. He concludes that the Augustinian and Cartesian "doctrines of faith are the same; and naturally so, since Descartes' doctrine of faith is a consequence of his adoption of the Augustinian doctrine of the free exercise of will in judgment."\textsuperscript{8} For both, "some truths are to be accepted on faith," but also, for both, we "are to press on toward knowledge."\textsuperscript{9} In this schema, the character of Augustinian \textit{sapientia} and its relation to the spiritual \textit{itinerarium} of Plotinus become the heart of the matter.

Menn's account of Plotinus is very much limited by his project. Neither he, nor Augustine, are interested in "Plotinus' doctrinal innovations" within Platonism.\textsuperscript{10} Among these innovations Menn includes things essential to understanding Plotinus. Neither Menn nor Augustine are interested in the relation to the One in its distinction from \textit{Nous}. Theirs is an \textit{itinerarium} of soul to \textit{Nous}. This means that Menn does not notice the Plotinian doctrine of the two (or more) selves, the problems with the continuity of identity in \textit{henosis}, and generally the problem of whether or how human individuality is established. He sees only the positive side of Plotinus' teaching that the real self is the one which is always above.\textsuperscript{11} Seeing only this side produces Menn's suggestive, but rough, vague and inadequately substantiated, assertion:

Plotinus is apparently the earliest philosopher to make rationality essential to the soul, and therefore to conceive soul through the "first-person"

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 7 4, 132 and 206
\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Confessions} 3.4.7-3.5.9 and \textit{de Trinitate} 14.19.26.
\textsuperscript{8} Menn, \textit{Descartes}, 333, see, generally, 322-36, especially, 333-36.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 334.
\textsuperscript{11} E.g., \textit{Enneads} IV.3.12; IV.8.8; V.1.11.
reflection which will be most prominently found, divorced from Platonist vitalism, in Augustine and Descartes.\textsuperscript{12}

The One and the divided self are not small matters or problems within Plotinus. His teaching on the self will make him a heretic within the Platonic School.\textsuperscript{15}

What Augustine found in Plotinus was the spiritual discipline of *conversio* and the intuitions which belong to that discipline, so that, knowing both himself and God as incorporeal substance, he was able to become a Christian. Menn maintains that Augustine took:

a discipline of intellectual contemplation, understandings of soul and Nous and of the origin of evil ... and ... the essential *difference* between the soul and God ( = Nous).\textsuperscript{14}

Since, for both Descartes and Augustine, the central problem in coming to their intellectual positions is getting free from the corporeal, Menn's Augustine is found in the Plotinian criticism of Stoicism and the Augustinian escape from Manicheism.\textsuperscript{15} Menn stresses, however, that, for both Plotinus and Augustine, the thesis that "the principles of physical things are incorporeal" is not just negative, so that it would be compatible with a scepticism about our grasp of "positive metaphysical knowledge."\textsuperscript{16} Rather,

Plotinus and those around him believed that it was possible, with the appropriate moral and intellectual discipline, to come to "see" God with the mind. ... [They] directed their philosophical activity, not simply toward stating and defending a doctrine, but toward an intellectual vision of the objects of that doctrine, the first God and the other incorporeal principles of corporeal things.\textsuperscript{17}

Evidently, Menn thinks that Augustine followed Plotinus in this discipline and intuition, that these belong to Augustinian *sapientia*, and that Descartes followed Augustine in the same discipline to the same intuitions.

\textsuperscript{12} Menn, *Descartes*, 112. A criticism might begin by noticing what A.H. Armstrong calls Plotinus' discovery of the unconscious and the fact that, for him, we are only intermittently conscious of our true selves; see A.H. Armstrong, "Elements in the Thought of Plotinus at Variance with Classical Intellectualism," *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, XVI (London: Variorum, 1979), 14-16.


\textsuperscript{14} Menn, *Descartes*, 80, n. 7.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 92.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 100.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 100.
There is nothing more offensive to postmodern theological Augustinianism than the centering of being, knowledge and presence which Menn attributes here to what he deems a Platonic tradition. However, it is my judgment, which I hope to substantiate in the last part of this paper, that Augustine's de Trinitate shows that what Menn asserts of Plotinus is even more true of Augustine. Further, what makes Augustine worse than Plotinus, (so to speak), is his modification of the Plotinian hypostatic spiritual trinity. This modification, to which he is moved by Christian doctrine and by Porphyry's modification of Plotinus, allows him to draw together self-knowledge and a positive knowledge of God in a way Plotinus cannot do.

In Plotinus, the self and God are known together as we ascend until self-reflexivity and the knowledge of God divide when we turn to the One itself. So Menn reports that "it is in our power, with an appropriate discipline, to understand [a noetic] incorporeal power, because we are such an incorporeal rational power." The turning from bodies to the soul, which is this discipline, is "a turning to oneself." For Plotinus, as for Augustine under his influence and Descartes under his, soul's reflection on itself is the necessary point of departure for coming to a ... purely intellectual understanding of the realities underlying sensible phenomena.

Nous is the self-complete life of being and thought. Only as what is "perfect, eternally actual, and prior to soul" could it give rise to soul. What is known in Nous, when soul turns to it in turning to itself, is a positive content. So long as self and God can come together in knowledge, there is no division between the knowledge that God is and what God is. Menn sees that the Plotinian Nous is Aristotelian, even if Plotinus "denies the Aristotelian thesis that Nous is simple." For, Plotinus "wants to induce actual knowledge of the separate Nous ... [and holds that Nous] is the beings, and that the nature of the forms is there." Nous "is itself the things it thinks." Augustine follows Plotinus here also.

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18 For Menn, "Augustine and Descartes are Platonists" along with Plotinus, ibid., 397.
20 Menn, Descartes, 110.
21 Ibid., 112.
22 Ibid., 117.
23 Ibid., 119.
24 Ibid., 114; This touches the argument of Edward Booth on the Augustinian and Aristotelian notitia sui. Booth rightly sees the Aristotelian thinking strengthened in Augustine. This is owing at least in past to the intermediation of Porphyry. See Edward Booth, "St. Augustine's notitia sui related to Aristotle and the early neo-Platonists," Augustiniana, 27 (1977), 70-132 & 364-401, 28 (1978), 183-221, 29 (1979), 97-124;
So what picture of Augustine emerges when he is placed, as here, between Plotinus and Descartes? He is, first of all, in search of wisdom, sapientia. This wisdom is attained, and it is attained in the knowledge of self and God together. Book 7 of the Confessions is central to this presentation of Augustine, though its teaching is well supported by Menn from other writings, particularly the de Libero Arbitrio and the de Trinitate. There Augustine reports that he looked within himself and saw with the eye of his soul the immutable light above his mind. Over and again Menn tells us that this is a positive intuition and that upon this everything depends.²⁶

At some points along the way Augustine parts company with Plotinus. Augustine does not remain with Plotinus in the ascent from individual to world-soul "because he was interested in his own soul."²⁷

Augustine's account ... concentrates on the human rational soul; knowledge of this soul is the starting-point for our knowledge of God. ... Augustine follows Plotinus' path in order to find the superiority of his rational soul to the bodily senses, and to discover that it has a direct relation to God, as a thing measured to measure and not as part to whole. ... God is the standard by which souls and other things are judged. It is crucial that "judgment" here is not simple judging how things are, but judging whether they are as they ought to be, passing judgment on them in conformity with some standard.²⁸

This truth, which is known as standard, and in which all else is properly known and judged, is God as Truth. It cannot simply be a property of propositions "since it is something we look to in judging, and serves as a standard of comparison for our judgments."

Augustine obviously intends his "Truth," as a separately existing Wisdom above the soul to be equivalent to Plotinus' "Nous."²⁹

Wisdom is a participation in this Truth, in God, in God's life of wisdom. So Menn concludes:

²⁵ Menn, Descartes, 119; quoting Ennead V.9.5.
²⁶ On this sight, see ibid., 139, 64, 81, 185.
²⁷ Ibid., 146, see also 148-49, 166-67, 395.
²⁸ Ibid., 149, 146, 151.
²⁹ Ibid., 154.
God allows the mind to perceive and possess God. ... Wisdom .. is a kind of truth ... but it is specifically "the truth in which the highest good is perceived and contained."30

Crucially, for Augustine, Plotinus and Descartes, the knowledge of the soul's lack or need, on the one hand, and the positive knowledge of God, on the other, are not divided in a postmodern way. Menn quotes the De Libero Arbitrio:

"When the mind contemplates the highest wisdom - which is not the soul for it is immutable - it also contemplates its mutable self, and somehow becomes aware of itself"; [Menn comments] contemplating itself as the recipient of truth and God as the source of truth, it can choose either to love God over itself, or [quoting Augustine] "to imitate God in a perverse way, as wishing to enjoy its own power; thus it becomes as much lesser as it wishes to be greater."31

Saving union, the wisdom which "adheres to the truth" is possible.32 To remain in our creaturely difference is damnation. Our participation in God cannot be reduced to awareness of need. Menn does not find a different doctrine from this in Book 10 of the de Trinitate.

Considering Augustine's taking up here, (as in other places), the Delphic command, gnothi seauton, Menn writes:

Augustine's point is not that the mind ... does not know itself - the mind always knows itself, because it is always immediately present to itself, and so better known to itself than anything else can be - rather ... the mind knows itself confusedly ... [W]e should not try to add anything to what we already know ourselves to be, but rather to subtract what we have illicitly added. ... [Then the mind] will be left ... with a knowledge of its nature or substance.33

This not only conforms to the doctrine of such works as de Libero Arbitrio but also to Augustine's account of his itinerarium in the Confessions.

There are problems with Menn's understanding of Plotinus and Augustine as they appear on the way to Descartes. He neglects the relation of Plotinus and Augustine to Scepticism in favour of their critical relation to Stoicism and Manicheism respectively. Because Augustine's teaching on the Trinity seems to Descartes to belong to the difference between their projects, neither the difference between Nous and the One as the goals of the self emerges, nor do the problems this difference creates for the identity of

31 Ibid., 184, quoting de Libero Arbitrio 3.25.76.
32 Ibid., 188, quoting de Utilitate Credendi 14.34..
33 Ibid., 252; see 396 n. 1.
the Plotinian self appear. There is a further consequence that the Porphyrian mediation of Plotinus to Augustine remains hidden. Menn does not consult later Neoplatonism to understand Plotinus and what is particular or problematic in his teaching. This conceals to him a good part of what in Augustine lies philosophically beyond Plotinus. But what is positive in the intellectual union of the human and divine he has grasped.

2. Postmodern Historicist Refashionings Of Augustine

A. The Derridean Foundations

For Jacques Derrida the Augustinian theological tradition is the quintessence of the Logocentrism which makes Western culture. Derrida's postmodern "nothing outside text" is a deconstruction of that Logocentrism, along with the self which was born in, and is at home with, that reason above history and text. So, in deconstructing Augustine, Derrida is deconstructing the center of the core of the Western Christian tradition, religious and secular. Augustine's fateful identification of God and being in his interpretation of Exodus 3.14 puts him at the origins of Western onto-theology. For postmodern theologians, the Augustinian self taken as secure intellectual substance is the root of all which is to be overcome in modernity. Constituted in relation to the divine as a mirror of the trinitarian divine self-relation, and possessing in that mirrored self-relation at once both a self-identity and a relation to the divine, the self is established in a pure thinking above and over the historical, the communal and the practical. Such an Augustinian self who would found a normative knowledge of the logic of reality in the Cartesian way must be read out of existence, (and out of Augustine), in order to construct a postmodern Christianity.

In Derrida's *Circumfession*, we find the fundamentals of a postmodern treatment of Augustine. For the sake of a postmodern Christian theology it is necessary to deconstruct in Augustine: (1) the union of substance and subjectivity, (2) intellectual individualism independent of communitarian praxis, (3) self-presence as rational certainty

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34 That interpretation occurs repeatedly in the *de Trinitate*, CCSL: 50, see 1.1.2; 5.2.3; 7.5.10. At 1.8.16 it is joined with contemplation as the Christian hope for joy so that being, knowing and presence are fully together as goal. The joining at 3.2.8 does not mention Exodus but uses *idipsum* as our goal. *De Trinitate* 2.16.27 & 2.18.34 make clear that vision is of the substance. For a criticism of a negative theology which only delays such a unification in hyperessentiality, see Jacques Derrida. "How to avoid speaking: Denials," *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*, eds. S. Budick and W. Iser, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); translating Jacques Derrida, "Comment ne pas parler: Dénégations," *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre*, (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1987), 535-595. In negative theology he includes: the "Platonic or Neoplatonic tradition", Augustine, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein. He centers on the pseudo-Dionysius and Jean-Luc Marion's treatment of him.

simultaneously established against and constituting objectivity, (4) the unity of the normative and the rational which holds together knowledge and love, and, (5) the union of self-relation and the relation to God as other. Derrida has, himself, no interest in saving Augustine for Christian theology, but the rest of the project is his own. The difference of interest is important, however. Crucial to the Christian postmodern purpose is preventing the use of Augustine's thinking in order to found an autonomous philosophical reason. So, (6) it will be essential that nothing theoretical can be carried out of Augustine's *conversio*, his *itinerarium in deum*.

At the beginning of an article interpreting the *de Trinitate*, Rowan Williams writes about the representation he would refute:

Augustine's concern with the self-relatedness of the divine essence (on the analogy of the self-perception and self-assent of the human subject) is seen as one of the primary sources of that pervasive Western European obsession with the individual's sense of him- or herself which has led, in the wake of Kant, to the fundamental illusion of modernity, the notion that the private self is the arbiter and source of value in the world. Augustine stands accused of collaborating in the construction of the modern consciousness that has wrought such havoc ... 36.

With Williams and his English postmodern theological companions, essential to the defense of Augustine against this accusation is a reading of the *de Trinitate* which would prevent comparison with Descartes' *Meditations*. To fill out our picture of what postmodern theology needs, let us connect Williams' point here with the one he makes in another essay specifically directed against a drawing together of Descartes and Augustine:

Descartes seeks ... to establish that the thinking subject's thought of its own activity is the single foundational principle of all intellectual operations, the most simple and directly accessible and invulnerable epistemological datum we possess. ... Augustine's discussion of the certitude of self-knowledge is better described as an analysis of the grammar of the 'subject' (not simply the intellect) than as a quest for assurance against the possibility of global error. 37

This distinction will reoccur with Jean-Luc Marion and we will need to consider its validity.

**B. Jean-Luc Marion's Cogito, Étienne Gilson Updated**

In my earlier article for this journal I considered Professor Jean-Luc Marion's treatment of Augustine. Since my essay was published, Marion's only extended consideration of the relation of Descartes to Augustine has appeared. This and other recent writings should now be taken into account, particularly because Menn and Marion know each other's work. To take this new literature into account, I shall need to repeat myself somewhat.

Marion found in Greek Patristic theology his most direct way into a postmodern theology. His first efforts "to shoot for God according to his most theological name - charity" are in his L'idole et la distance, where, in the pseudo-Dionysius, he discovered a genuinely theological relation to the divine names which involves oppositions -- not actually found in Dionysius -- between the divine attributes as names for praise and concepts for thought, between theology and philosophy. While Pseudo-Dionysius persists as the norm of what Marion seeks in pre-modern theology, he increasingly assimilates others to that norm, recently Aquinas, and to a considerable degree also Augustine.

As with the postmodern theologians generally, Professor Marion's reading of Augustine is best understood in the context of his understanding and judgment about the foundations of modernity especially as those are Cartesian. For him, in the seventeenth-century:

the radical position of subjectivity is replaced by the impersonal recognition of transcendence as a point of departure of philosophical reflection -- God is now a term in a demonstration, and no longer the assumed goal of a journey towards Him. ... [R]ationality [takes over] certain problems and concepts previously treated only by revealed theology ...

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38 Jean-Luc Marion, "Formulations augustinienes et cartésiennes" in Questions cartésiennes, II, Sur l'ego et sur Dieu, Philosophie d'aujourd'hui (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 37-43. For Menn's treatment of the relations of Augustine and Descartes in the form in which it was presented as a doctoral thesis at the University of Chicago, see 42, n. 52. For Menn on Marion, Descartes and Augustine, 341 n., 343 n.


From Descartes on, the pseudo-Dionysian divine names have become "purely philosophical terms." In contrast, pre-modern philosophical theology, now authoritatively represented by Thomas Aquinas, preserves the analogical gap between the creature and God.

The gap always remains, even when our knowledge is certain. ... He who [is] remains "profoundly unknown, *penitus ignotum". ... [O]ur knowledge of God terminates in inadequate and relative names, names which only allow God to be known as unknown.

Marion's study of Descartes aims to show the ambiguities at the origins of modernity; thus, there is a choice for us in getting beyond the modern which equally involves staying with something present in it. What is made of Augustine is at the heart of this choosing.

First, and mostly, Augustine is placed with pseudo-Dionysius, Aquinas and the premodern (i.e. pre Duns Scotus, Suarez and Descartes), as maintaining a reason which is always transcendent toward God. So reason is always simultaneously religious and properly theological, e.g. being is known in the *analogia entis*, there is no independent secular reasoning, indeed, really no reason apart from the *itinerarium mentis in deum*. Augustine is set definitively against Suarez, often Scotus, and usually, but not always, Descartes. Descartes may be represented more as the victim of what the theologians did rather than as the worst of the moderns.

Second, Augustine, is seen with Descartes on some matters. For example, they are treated together on voluntarism, but the Cartesian doctrine of the creation of eternal truths is used to distinguish his voluntarism as the more radical. This is a point on which Stephen Menn will differ from Marion -- judging that Marion makes the break with the scholastic and Augustinian traditions more sharp than it is. When, with Menn, the gap is diminished, Descartes "is best understood as .. working out the consequences of the
Augustinian conception of God."\textsuperscript{46} Marion traces the Cartesian \textit{cogito} to Augustine. However, what Descartes is said to have done with it Marion maintains to be very different from what Augustine was about.

Crucially, Marion points to Descartes' own recognition that Augustine is using the \textit{cogito} as a way to the analogous knowledge of the divine Trinity, and that this is not at all his own purpose.\textsuperscript{47} Here he connects with Étienne Gilson's rejection of an Augustinian foundation for Descartes' philosophy. Because faith and reason, grace and nature were so indissolubly linked in Augustine, according to Gilson, his philosophy cannot be detached from religious \textit{itinerarium} for the sake of an understanding and control of the world. As we have seen, Menn's book is substantially directed against Gilson's position.\textsuperscript{48}

Further, Marion makes a distinction which seems like that involved in Rowan Williams' contrast between Augustine and Descartes because "Augustine's discussion of the certitude of self-knowledge is better described as an analysis of the grammar of the 'subject'." As opposed to Descartes' \textit{ego} which is established in "l'interlocution d'un trompeur":

\begin{quote}
Augustin déduit l'existence directement du fait de se tromper soi-même ..., donc de se penser, par simple identité de soi à soi: se tromper présuppose d'être et y équivaut par tautologie; l'argument augustinienne reste donc dans le cadre de l'identité de l'esprit à lui-même.\textsuperscript{50}
\end{quote}

Standing behind the Cartesian \textit{ego}, Augustine's \textit{cogito} is placed at the origins of modernity. But because Augustine remains only with the self-identity of spirit, his \textit{ego} is exempt from what would ground the modern turn to the world. In contrast, the Cartesian \textit{ego} is founded in an \textit{alterité}, which might allow it to be used as a certain foundation for universal control of what is other. However, since, for Marion, the Cartesian \textit{ego} is distinct from the identity of thought and being, it is not directly onto-theological. The dreadful modern identity of subjectivity, thought and being is not completed, Descartes' thought remains \textit{indécidée (blanche)}.\textsuperscript{50}

Third, Augustine is at the source of the Latin interpretation of Exodus 3.14 identifying God and being. Here, the evaluation of Augustine may, in principle, if his theology is found to be Neoplatonic, subordinating being, go up and down with that of Aquinas. In

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\textsuperscript{46} Menn, \textit{Descartes and Augustine}, 341 n.; see 343 n. and 395 and Marion, \textit{Sur la théologie blanche}, \textit{passim}; will and knowing in Augustine and Descartes are discussed at 384; idem, "The Idea of God," 273-75.
\textsuperscript{47} Marion, \textit{Sur la théologie blanche}, 384, n. 22 on the \textit{cogito}; see also, idem, \textit{Sur le prisme métaphysique}, 138-41, 147.
\textsuperscript{48} Menn, \textit{Descartes and Augustine}, 6-17, 393 and 398-99.
\textsuperscript{49} Marion, \textit{Questions cartésiennes}, II, 41; "Formulations augustiniennes et cartésiennes" here at 37-43 is Marion's most extended treatment of differences between Descartes and Augustine on the \textit{cogito}.
\textsuperscript{50} Géry Prouvost, "La tension irrésolue: Les \textit{Questions cartésiennes}, II, de Jean-Luc Marion," \textit{Revue thomiste}, 98:1 (1998), 97: "Marion refuse ainsi d'inscrire Descartes dans la tradition onto-théologique ... la pensée de Descartes reste une pensée indécidée (blanche)."
\end{flushright}
L'idole et la distance and in Dieu sans l'être, Aquinas was placed with the onto-theologians because he made being the first of God's names. But in the "Preface to the English Edition" of God Without Being, and in "Saint Thomas d'Aquin et l'onto-théologie," and later works, the teaching of Thomas has been Neoplatonised by Marion as a théo-onto-logie, for which God is before being which he gives even to himself. Aquinas is shifted toward Dionysius and Proclus. So far as Augustine is not also a theo-ontologist, he would be set against pseudo-Dionysius, and would need to be overcome. Marion's doctrine here resembles that of Plotinus in Ennead VI.8, where the One freely gives himself being. Moreover, Marion's Cartesian ego, standing before the identity of thought and being, is close to the Plotinan One.

Finally, Augustine is placed with Bérulle and Pascal (and thus against Descartes) in the Christian reaction within modernity for the mystery and infinity of God against its tendency to univocity. In contrast, it is crucial to the argument of Menn that Descartes is inspired by the Cardinal de Bérulle.

With Marion, the transcendence toward God is crucial. Marion, and our Anglican postmodern theologians, are above all opposed to the "univocist drift" in the Scotistic transformation of scholasticism by Suarez which leads in Descartes to "a rationality not theologically assured by Christian Revelation, but metaphysically founded on the humanity of 'men strictly men'." Thus, philosophy is to be transcendentally oriented to theology, (which is religious life rather than science), or separated altogether from theology. Theology's independence from philosophy is what they demand above all. And though their programmes resemble that of Karl Barth, they are derived from Heidegger.

We can conclude that, in common with Williams, Marion reads Augustine so that any horizontal self-completeness of the interpenetration of being, thinking and loving in mens...

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52 In God without Being, 73-74 [=Dieu sans l'être, 110]: Augustine is placed with Thomas, but the Greek Fathers are absolved because being, for them, "returns to the Son, it could not in any way determine the triune divinity which therefore exceeds Being." At this point Marion, in a note (51, p. 215) quotes with approval the remark of Derrida: "as a linguistic statement: 'I am he who am' is the admission of a mortal." At n. 50, he subscribes to the argument of J.S. O'Leary who finds Augustinian thought at the origins of the onto-theological constitution of metaphysics.


which might be exploited for philosophy independent of revealed theology, is excised.\textsuperscript{56} This excision is for the sake of the transcendent relations of a radical charity, relations which are simultaneously toward a communal praxis and toward God.\textsuperscript{57}

\textbf{C. Rowan Williams' Reading Of The De Trinitate}

This transcendence, established against knowledge, is the perspective determining Rowan Williams' interpretation of the \textit{de Trinitate}. For Williams the limits of theory are set because the appropriate response to the unresolvable problems of theodicy is communitarian praxis.\textsuperscript{58} His position is radically worked out by John Milbank as "postmodern critical Augustinianism" for which theory occurs as a necessarily incomplete moment within praxis.\textsuperscript{59} Milbank's theological writing is "composing a new theoretical music."\textsuperscript{60} Theory belongs to composition and is not separable from it. The requirement that we join in the poesis means that there can be no theoretical distance or objectivity. The "event of reconciliation must be not merely believed in, but actively realized as the existence of a community in which mere 'self-immediacy' is infinitely surpassed."\textsuperscript{61} With the surpassing of interiority and self-immediacy, we also pass beyond theology as \textit{theoria}:

\begin{quote}
Unless it reflects upon the singularity of Christian norms of community, theology has really nothing to think about. ... [I]f Christians ask what is
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{56} Marion, \textit{Étant Donné}, 11: "lorsque enfin nous opposons l'adonné à la subjectivité transcendentale, nous ne suggérons pas que le "sujet" renaît dans la donation." A return to Augustine will not be for the sake of a metaphysical or transcendental subjectivity.

\textsuperscript{57} See Jean-Luc Marion, \textit{Prolégomènes à la charité}, 2nd edition (Paris: Editions de La Différence, 1991) and \textit{Dieu sans l'être}, 197ff. By means of a Dionysian theology of the divine names, and because the Eucharist is the site of his theology of charity, communitarian praxis is not set against but in contemplation.

\textsuperscript{58} Rowan Williams, "Trinity and ontology," \textit{Christ, Ethics and Tragedy: Essays in Honour of Donald MacKinnon}, edited Kenneth Surin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 87: The tragic (or absurd) requires as its response a \textit{praxis}, a "seeing' of the Cross, and through it of the world, .. concretely made possible through the existence of 'reconstructed relationships' - not an internal shift of attitudes but the coming into being of a community with distinctive forms of self-definition."


\textsuperscript{61} Milbank, "The Second Difference," 184-86.
God like? then they can only point to our 'response' to God in the formation of community. The community is what God is like.\textsuperscript{62}

I do not intend to treat John Milbank's position in this paper. To do so would require describing his postmodern substitution of a new linguistic ontology created in the wake of Derrida. To consider whether such a new metaphysics solves the problems of the ancient and modern ontologies founded in substance and in the subject would reach beyond our purposes here.\textsuperscript{63} His most recent treatment of Augustine sketches his reading of Augustine's \textit{de Trinitate}. As we would expect, for Milbank, though time, (as the dimension of the \textit{itinerarium}),\textsuperscript{64} is privileged over space, Augustine radicalizes "a stress that we only have participatory access to the eternal by \textit{remaining within} the structures of space, time and human language." "Because for Augustine to know oneself \textit{genuinely} means to know oneself as loving ... not interiority but radical \textit{exteriorization} is implied." "Augustine's use of the vocabulary of inwardness is not at all a deepening of Platonic interiority, but something much more like its subversion."\textsuperscript{65} Milbank acknowledges his dependence on Rowan Williams and Lewis Ayres to establish this view of Augustine and so to Williams, the teacher of Ayres, we turn.

The first of his two relevant articles, "Sapientia and the Trinity," is largely occupied with refuting the charge made by Eastern Orthodox theologians, generally, and by a wide range of western theologians, of whom we may take Karl Rahner as representative, that Augustine separates the treatment of the divine essence from the personal relations of the trinity in such a way as to make the essence the subject of a knowledge of God prior to and independent of revelation. This is associated among Augustine's critics with his continuing attachment to Neoplatonism. Williams is right in his rejection of this criticism which is based in misapprehensions of how the divine essence and relations are connected in Augustine, of Neoplatonism, for which there is no rational knowledge of the One, and of the history of Latin theology, which derived the distinction between the \textit{de deo uno} and the \textit{de deo trino} not from Augustine but from the Pseudo-Dionysius.\textsuperscript{66} I entirely agree with the direction of Williams' argument on this point, but note what is

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{62} Milbank, "'Postmodern Critical Augustinianism'," 228.  
\bibitem{64} See Pickstock, \textit{After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy}, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), \textit{passim}.  
\end{thebibliography}
characteristically postmodern in his theological perspective. Williams wishes to reduce substance to relation, (and thus the individual to the interpersonal), and opposes autonomous philosophical reason.

This fundamental opposition, which comes out of an antagonism to modernity, produces three further oppositions in Williams' representation of Augustine. These are deeply problematic. First, Williams opposes our union with God, on the one hand, to the mental self-relation of remembering, knowing and loving, the image of God in us, on the other. He writes: "The image of God in us ... is realised when the three moments of our mental agency all have God for their object. ... [T]he mind ... will not know itself truthfully if it is a self-contained object to itself. ... [T]he mind as independent individuality cannot image God." What, in Augustine, is a choice between good and evil, between conversio and adversio in respect to God and self, a choice which is only possible because of the three-fold image, has become an opposition so that our knowledge does not have "a truthful basis."

Second, there is an opposition between our sapientia and the divine sapientia. "Our knowledge is not like God's -- nor will it ever be: it will always and necessarily be a sapientia learned or acquired (xv.26), even when it is assured (as it now is not) of a truthful basis (xv.24-26)." This means that the human turning to God, which Williams has just demanded so that the image of God in us may be true, can never occur. In fact, we can never know in God. Williams embraces this consequence. The opposition of the two wisdoms remains absolute with the result that the knowledge of the opposition can only be increased. The same is true of the difference between Creator and creature.

Third, then, Williams opposes Creator and creature in such a way that they can never come together. Ours "is a trinitarian life appropriate to the created order, as against the trinitarian life appropriate to eternity." So, "Our sapientia ... terminate[s] ... in our recognition of our created distance from God. ... [W]e are ontologically incapable of being sapientia as God is."

There is a consequence of these oppositions which is central to Lewis Ayres' treatment of the de Trinitate. Because union cannot be realised in sapientia, indeed, in any kind of possession and actuality, we must move from knowledge to love and to love as endless quest. Williams writes that the Spirit is "love in search of an object." Sapientia, "once we are clear what sapientia really means," is "a life that generates relations of love and so

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68 Ibid., 326. There is no de Trinitate XV.xv.26.
69 Ibid., 325
70 Ibid., 326, 327.
72 Williams, "Sapientia and the Trinity," 329.
generates otherness, difference."\textsuperscript{73} So the divine self-reflexivity is both "complete in itself" and "also indeterminately in search of an object to love."\textsuperscript{74}

Finally, then, self-reflexivity and knowledge, on the one side, and self-othering and love, on the other side, are opposed. Williams concludes: "There is certainly no trace at all here of a Neoplatonic interest in the One."\textsuperscript{75} But this judgment of Augustine, as Williams represents him, is profoundly mistaken. In fact, it is Williams himself who has interpreted Augustine in a Neoplatonic way. It is precisely the division, in Plotinus, and in the Neoplatonists generally with the exception of Porphyry, between the absolute First Principle and what has self-reflexivity which separates the Neoplatonists from Augustine. In Plotinus this has the consequences, first, that self-knowledge and the knowledge of the One cannot, in the end, be drawn together and, second, that there are multiple human selves. This second consequence has been recognised as cohering with a postmodern deconstruction of the self-identity.\textsuperscript{76}

When we turn to Williams' article explicitly directed against finding Augustine a collaborator in building the foundations of modernity and of the Cartesian philosophy, we have the same interpretative principles at work. In his "The Paradoxes of Self-Knowledge in the \textit{De Trinitate}," he maintains his great separation in Augustine both of the divine and the human and of their wisdoms. So he rejects the possibility of a substantial human self-identity.

\[\text{T}he \text{mind cannot contemplate eternal truth as an object in itself: it can encounter it only through a particular kind of self-reflection. And this self-reflection likewise cannot be the perception of the mind itself as object: it exists only as an awareness of the mind's working, the mind's movement.}\textsuperscript{77}

"Created selfhood" is radically incomplete and other-directed. For what it really grasps in knowing is "the lack and desire out of which we live."\textsuperscript{78} Finally, for Williams,

\[\text{T}he \text{paradox [Augustine] presses upon us is that a mind intrinsically incomplete, desirous and mobile ... can rightly and intelligibly be said to know itself completely. Self-knowledge is being defined, [therefore,] not}\]

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 330.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 331.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} On which, in useful comparison with Descartes, see S. Rappe, "Self-knowledge and subjectivity in the \textit{Enneads}," \textit{The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus}, edited Lloyd Gerson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 269.
\textsuperscript{77} Williams, "The Paradoxes of Self-Knowledge," 122. So eternal truth would remain "through what was mutable and corruptible in the soul, as fact, image and language": J.A. Doull, "What is Augustinian \textit{sapientia}?" \textit{Dionysius}, 12 (1988), 63. Doull's article is directed against such a view of Augustine.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 127.
as cognition of a spiritual substance, but awareness of the conditions of finitude and the ability to live and act within them.  

This paradox is of Williams' own making and comes out of his assumptions which will not allow the most obvious features of Augustine's text to speak to him. Self-knowledge in Augustine's *de Trinitate* is not simply awareness of the conditions of finitude and of what we lack. In genuine Augustinian terms, Williams, in fact, condemns all humans to an eternal Hell by the necessity of their nature. Sometimes, however, Augustine's text is weakly heard for a moment. So Williams writes: "Augustine is not ... appealing to some luminous intuition of our spiritual essence, though he is quite capable at times of using language which comes close to this." This language having been successfully ignored, Williams is able to claim that the *de Trinitate* is not about self-knowledge which would constitute a union of self-certainty and substance: "It is an affirmation of the need at least to begin with the mind's involvement in time and in other selves." He judges that the love as self-othering to which it is thus moved is not Plotinian:

In this mature reworking of the whole theme of 'entering into oneself' to find God, the Plotian *eros* for the One is transformed into an *eros* directed to the understanding of *eros* itself.

Once again it is the contrast with Plotinus which gives away the weakness in how Williams reads Augustine. These Christian theological postmoderns have always a trouble with the Neoplatonists because what they want to discover in patristic Christianity is, in reality, more securely found in pagan Neoplatonism than in Christian theology. The absolute first for Plotinus is equally named by us as the Good as well as the One. The Plotinian Good is the activity of a free will which is self-productive. Indeed the productivity or self-othering of this Good is its very nature -- as the Latin medievals said of it, "bonum est diffusivum sui." But there is a limit to this self-othering. In Plotinus the One-Good cannot reflect upon itself, when it does so, when it is simultaneously above and below itself, it is *Nous*. In Plotinus it is, in fact, intellectual self-reflexivity which moves us down from the first to the second spiritual hypostasis. Significantly, the same is not true for Plotinus when speaking of the will or love of the Good. He writes that "the

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79 Ibid., 129.
80 Ibid., 130.
81 Ibid., 132.
82 Ibid., 133.
nature of the Good is in reality the will of himself," he is "choosing himself." He is, as "cause of himself," "lovable and love and love of himself." It is not by turning to love against intellect that we shall move from Plotinus to Augustine.

Rather it is with a reflexive union of being, intellect and love that Augustine, following Porphyry, probably mediated through Victorinus, and submitting to the counciliar definitions of the Church, parts company with Plotinus. The Augustinian trinity, as opposed to the Plotinian triad, is self-reflexive. The Plotinian One-Good is essentially a free, generous, othering, loving activity, but it is precisely not self-othering because, as the Good, it cannot know itself in or as its other. This lack is reflected in the human self which knows the spiritual hypostases by "entering into itself" but which cannot, in the end, hold together self-knowledge and the One. In Augustine we have genuine self-othering and self-reflexivity both in God and in His human image. What is fled by postmodern theology is what makes Augustine's characteristic development of Christian Platonism. It is ironic that the fundamental fault of this would be theological and anti-philosophical reading of Augustine is to reduce almost to nothing the trinitarian structure of the divine and the human for Augustine.

Williams, in flight from an association of Descartes and Augustine, misreads Augustine's relation to Plotinus whom Williams imposes on Augustine at the very moment that he polemically opposes Neoplatonism. Let us see what happens when Augustine is read in a concord between Plotinus and Descartes.

3. Self-Knowledge And God As Other In The Enneads And The De Trinitate

There are two Augustines before us. For one, at least so far as knowledge is concerned, God is always beyond. If the human and divine come together at all, it is in charity, praxis and poesis. For the other, self-knowledge and the knowledge of God are so tied up with each other that we may speak of self-presence and rational certainty, of knowledge of God through self-knowledge, of grasp and possession of God, of intuition and understanding of the nature of God and ourselves. Can we decide between these Augustines?

84 Ennead, VI.8.13.38-40.
85 Ennead, VI.8.14.41-VI.8.15.2.
A. Plotinus

I have already indicated that there are limits to what is understood of Plotinus, and thus Augustine, in the modern, anti-historicist and metaphysical perspective of Menn. However, I think that these limits can be surpassed and, when surpassed, his perspective encompasses the postmodern Augustine who turns out to be a pagan Neoplatonist just when he thinks himself to be most distinctively himself!

Crucial for the understanding of Augustine, who is explicit about it, but also for Plotinus, is that both begin in a philosophical movement from Scepticism as well as from the Stoicism emphasized by Dr. Menn. Ennead V.1, On the Three Primary Hypostases, an Ennead to which Menn refers often, begins, not with a criticism of Stoicism, but from the audacious soul, thinking itself to belong to itself, delighting in its otherness and illusory independence. Running as far away from its origins as possible, it is, in fact, dependent upon the sensible below it.

This is the Sceptical soul which has returned to itself when it found that it was not able to pass from the sensible to the ideal in the Platonic manner. Not able to arrive at the knowledge of the truth, it was thrown back upon itself and discovered there, to its surprise, that it was content. With itself it achieved quietude, its always assumed ideal, an ideal it had sought in knowledge of the truth. It now decides that moving in judgment between the true and the false, the good and the evil would not have provided quietude at all. What the self had mistakenly sought in otherness it now possesses better in itself. Plotinus administers a two-fold discipline to this soul, established in a reflexive relation to the sensible as obstacle. By these disciplines it will know its origin and worth. One part of that discipline is a contempt for the sensible. The other part is a turning inward to where the individual discovers the three primary hypostases: Soul, Nous, and the One.

The Plotinian soul is established in a completion of the Sceptical reflexion into self, a reflexion which is carried to substantial self-knowledge. In that self-reflexivity the soul rises, as Menn says it does, to Nous and to the knowledge of itself and all else in Nous. Because the Plotinian Nous is also self-reflexive, the human soul, established in self-knowledge in reaction to a confusion with the sensible, is able to hold together, at the level of Nous, self-knowledge and the knowledge of the divine other. Human knowing and its object are together there, just as thought and being are established in relation to each other within the life of Nous. However, when the individual reaches that through which both it and all else are ultimately established, the One, the limit of self-reflexivity, appears. Porphyry, in his heretical drawing together of the first and second hypotheses of the Parmenides within the First Principle, will exploit the fact that, unlike his successors, Plotinus ascribes energeia and boule to the One in such a way that it may be said to give itself its freedom and being. However, for Plotinus, being and will do not belong to the

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87 See W.J. Hankey, "The Postmodern Retrieval of Neoplatonism."
88 Sextus Empiricus, Outlines of Pyrrhonism, Bk. I, xii-xiii.
89 Ennead VI.8 generally, see particularly VI.8.7.48ff.; VI.8.8-9; VI.8.13.5-9 & 39ff.; VI.8.16.30ff.; VI.8.20.10-13.
One in an act of self-reflexion. Such an act would divide the One, placing it above and below itself, as if it received itself from itself as from another.90 What is true of the soul which exists from another, and needs above all to know this alterity, cannot be true of the One.91 There is no reflexive self-thering within the One.

Since the knowing individual self is established in the One, the fact that a self-reflexive knowing cannot be carried to the root of the self has extremely important negative consequences for self-identity in Plotinus.92 The best treatments I know leave us with paradox and aporia. Gerard O'Daly shows that soul remains, as thinking self-reflexive subject, when it achieves *henosis* with *nous*.93 But, the principle of the self is the One, love of whom moves the whole *itinerarium* of self-knowledge. Ultimately the One and the individual belong together; returning to the One, the individual returns to itself.94 But awareness, when we are with the One, is beyond reason and intellectual self-reflexion. There, the individual is returned to itself and also "he is not himself." Certainly, there, self-knowledge and apprehension of the One cannot be held together. We are beyond being and self-knowledge because the One is itself beyond being and reflexive knowing.95 Plotinus writes:


91 *Ennead* V.1.3; VI.8.12.1-12; VI.9.1.42-43; VI.9.3.20ff.; VI.9.5.4ff.


93 Gerard J.P. O'Daly, *Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1973) concludes that the self does not disappear at the intelligible level, indeed, the self is not annihilated but retained even in *henosis* with intellect. O'Daly at p.65 examines *Ennead* IV.4.2, where Plotinus says that the soul, "must of necessity enter into one-ness (*henosis*) with *nous* by reason of its conversion" (line 26). "But this *henosis* does not imply ... that the soul loses its identity": "the two are one, and two" (lines 29-30) "One cannot fail to be struck by the use, once again, of the paradox of self-intellection, now clearly applied to explain how and why the human self, reverting to the Intelligible, remains itself, while at the same time being one with the totality of Being." (O'Daly p.65) The paradox is: "all intellection implies self, precisely because it is only in the act of reflexion, which presupposes a subject, that intellection occurs. But ... since this reflexion is upon the very subject of the dualized, intelligizing self, self-intellection does not lessen the unity of being - indeed, it depends for its integrity upon that unity." (O'Daly p.64).

94 *Ennead* VI.9.1.28ff.; VI.9.2ff.; VI.9.9.56-60 and VI.9.10-11; especially, VI.9.11.39 [these last texts are on both sides of the divide].

95 *Ennead* VI.9.4; VI.9.7.20-21; VI.9.8.25-30; VI.9.9.56-60 and VI.9.10-11. This side of Plotinus, with its difference from "traditional Western theologians from St. Augustine onwards," is strongly presented in A.H. Armstrong, "The Escape of the One," *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, XXIII (London: Variorum,
Intellect ... has one power for thinking, by which it looks at the things in itself, and one by which it looks at what transcends it by a direct awareness and reception.  

Significantly for our dialogue with postmodern interpreters of Augustine, this second power is "Intellect in love," nous éron. As Gerard O'Daly wrote: Plotinus "must isolate an instance of nous which transcends its characteristic activity of reflexion and attribute to this the vision of the One. ... But the notion of a non-intellectual Intellect is quickly found unsatisfactory." Since neither is given up, Plotinus' thought at this point is aporetic.

At the human level, the Plotinian higher and lower selves remain irreducibly beside one another because both the One and also the substantial Being of Intellectual self-relation are models and causes of its identity, freedom and authentic existence. A self with two such goals must move back and forth between being and non being, between identity and otherness, between reflexivity and self-forgetful simplicity. Its identity cannot lie in a knowledge which is its own. Of the problems and real consequences for human self-identity of what is ultimate for Plotinus, Menn seems largely unaware. These consequences are welcomed by postmoderns who would deconstruct modern self-identity, but the postmodern theologians place with Augustine what belongs to Plotinus. To find postmodern selves, we should better look to Plotinus than to Augustine, to pagan rather than to Christian Neoplatonism.

B. Augustine

In turning to Augustine we shall not be able to separate what is philosophical from what comes from the Christian Scriptures and the authority of the Church. It is just Augustine's theological transformation of the Plotinian divine triad with its necessarily subordinated and unequal second and third hypostases that allows him to unify the self and to bring it together with God in self-knowledge more completely than Plotinus did. In these unifications, as compared to Plotinus, to post-Plotinian pagan Neoplatonism, and to

1979). In this Armstrong is explicitly following Trouillard. One may also compare the treatment of the Plotinian mysticism by Pierre Hadot: "Si on 'le' voit, dit Platon, on se voit soi-même identique à lui et on ne voit pas l'Un comme différent de soi, mais on est soi-même devenu un autre, on n'est plus soi, ni à soi, l'on n'est plus une essence particulière, mais comme le Bien de Platon ..., on est au-delà de l'essence." *Annuaire École pratique des hautes études Ve Section - sciences religieuses*, 79 (1971-72), (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1972), 273; see also his three treatments in the *Annuaire du Collège de France*: 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1990-91, pages 459-65, 501-5 and 481-91 respectively.

96 *Ennead* VI.7.35.20-23; with the second kind of seeing he "mingles his seeing with what he contemplates."

97 *Ennead*, VI.7.35.24; O'Daly, *Plotinus' Philosophy*, 88.

98 *Ennead* VI.8.6-7; VI.8.9; VI.8.12-13; VI.8.16-24.

99 Menn, *Descartes*, 111, n. 26 recognizes some of the problems but seems to have forgotten them by the following page. See also 122, n. 33. The problems are well brought out by Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 159-61 and O'Daly, *Plotinus' Philosophy*, 82ff.
postmodern Augustinianism, Augustine "assigns an enhanced scope to intellect." But, then, philosophy and Christian authority were both necessary to Augustine's trinitarian doctrine. As scholars like Edward Booth, Werner Beierwaltes and Salvatore Lilla have shown, Porphyry and Aristotle are crucial for what Augustine thinks. When, from the resulting self-knowledge, a principle for autonomous philosophical reason is developed, there is no betrayal.

As with his representation of Plotinus, I judge that Stephen Menn's picture of Augustine should be augmented with a greater recognition of his relation to Scepticism as well as to Stoicism and Platonism. On his way from Manicheism to Platonism Augustine passes through Scepticism. That this passage is indispensably important is testified not only by the Contra Academicos, but by his account of mens with its indubitable union of being, thinking and loving, the account so troubling for a postmodern retrieval of Augustine. Augustine also begins from the Hellenistic desire for peace, rest, or quietude, and finds his way there by a reflexive movement into the self as against the sensible. The fundamental difference between Augustine and Plotinus is that Augustine is able to carry this self-reflexivity all the way through. It is carried further within the individual self so that reflexivity becomes a positive relation of remembering, knowing and loving on which much else can be established. It is also carried through to the absolute First

100 See, on the second comparison, Hankey, "Theoria versus Poesis."
101 R.D. Crouse, "Paucis mutatis verbis: St. Augustine's Platonism," Augustine and his critics, edited R.J. Dodaro and G.P. Lawless, London and New York: Routledge, in press. Crouse goes on: "Certainly in pagan Platonism, nous has a high place in the divine hierarchy and in the human soul, yet the ascent to God demands a faculty of soul beyond intellect, where union is sought by way of the religious praxis of the mysteries, above understanding." On the "flower of nous" in Plotinus, see O'Daly, Plotinus' Philosophy, 86-7. Sorabji found what Crouse also finds, Time, Creation and the Continuum, 170: "For Plotinus the highest stage of mystical experience was never intellectual ... for Augustine the highest stage always remained intellectual, since it always involved a vision of the truth."
102 de Trinitate 2.1: "substantiam dei siue per scripturam eius siue per creaturam"; 8.5.8; 15.1: "diuinae scripturae auctoritate, uerum ... ratione demonstrare"; see Crouse, "St. Augustine's De Trinitate: Philosophical Method."
105 The subject of Augustine's Confessions is that rest. The book has a subjective beginning: "inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te" (1.1.6-7), and an objective conclusion: "Tu autem bonum nullo indigenis bono semper quietus es, quoniam tua quies tu ipse es" (13.38.53.10-11), in this regard. In the midst is "Versa et reuersa in tergum et in latera et in uentrum, et dura sunt omnia, et tu solus requies." (6.16.26.22-24) [CCSL, XXVII]. See R.D. Crouse, "Recurrens in te unum: The Pattern of St. Augustine's Confessions," Studia Patristica, XIV, ed. E.A. Livingstone, Text und Untersuchungen 117 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1976), 392 and Sorabji, Time, Creation and the Continuum, 169.
Principle so that self-knowledge and our knowledge of God as other do not need to be opposed.\textsuperscript{106}

In responding to the postmodern representation of Augustine from within Menn's perspective corrected in the way indicated, I shall look at two questions. First, the character and purpose of Augustine's cogito and second the character of Augustinian sapientia. It is crucial is that both belong to what we may call "saving knowledge." As much as possible I shall restrict myself to the de Trinitate.

However, it is not with the de Trinitate, but with the Confessions, that I begin, and there with a point at the center of Menn's argument and well established by him. With this one might respond to the notion of Williams and Marion that the Augustinian cogito is unlike the Cartesian, because, whereas Descartes wanted to establish that the cogito is incorporeal substance, Augustine is dealing with the "grammar of the subject" or "simple identité de soi à soi,\textsuperscript{107}" "tautologie," "l'identité de l'esprit à lui-même."

Whatever these categories of Williams and Marion signify, it cannot be denied that, for Augustine, the indubitable unity of thought and being in the human mind has content and that this content is absolutely central to his representation of how he came to Christian belief. Augustine cannot become a Christian believer until he can conceive incorporeal substance, until he knows not just that it is but positively grasps its nature. He comes to that conception through reflection on his own thinking which is both incorporeal and indubitably exists. Because of the self-presence with which Book 10 of de Trinitate is occupied,\textsuperscript{108} in his own thinking Augustine finds together the required knowledge both that incorporeal substance exists and what it is.\textsuperscript{109} Using the resulting unity of incorporeal thought and being as a place from which to perceive what is both above and below himself, Augustine arrives at a Platonic hierarchy within which God is the true identity of thought and being, like the Plotinian Nous. In that hierarchy, Augustine locates his own thinking. So far as it is mutable, the human mens lies between true being above him and sensible "almost non-being" below.\textsuperscript{110} The knowledge that the human mens is indubitably existent incorporeal substance is thus necessary to Augustine's conversion.\textsuperscript{111} It is saving knowledge.

\textsuperscript{106} E.g. Compare Augustine, De trinitate 15.15.24-25 as interpreted by Williams, "Sapientia," 325-26 with Plotinus Ennead VI.7.35; VI.7.41; & Ennead VI.9.7.20-21; VI.9.11.24-25.\textsuperscript{107} Williams, "The Paradoxes of Self-Knowledge," 121; Marion, Questions cartésiennes, II, 41; O'Daly seems to make a like distinction in Augustine's Philosophy of Mind, 171.\textsuperscript{108} de Trinitate 10.7.10-10.10.16; see also 8.6.9; 9.3.3; 9.11.\textsuperscript{109} de Trinitate 10.10.16: "Quapropter dum se mens nouit substantiam suam nouit".\textsuperscript{110} This the argument of Confessions 7. The hierarchy of being, with God as the "I am," the most true being, is suggested at de Trinitate 5.2.3: "cui profecto ipsum esse unde essentia nominata est maxime ac uerrissime competit." See also 3.2, etc.\textsuperscript{111} The necessity to get beyond a corporeal and sensible picture of reality is repeatedly urged in de Trinitate, indeed, we begin there: see 1.1.1; 2.18.54; 3.1; etc. At 10.10.15-16 this is linked with the fact that the mind knows its own substance.
The unbreakable self-reflexive unity of remembering, understanding, and loving has, and must have for Augustine "a truthful basis." Not only does it involve an indubitable certainty, but, establishing that we are rational is, from the beginning to the end of the de Trinitate, required to lead us to God. The de Trinitate is a step by step deepening of the understanding that we are essentially rational, what this means, what it makes possible, and what it requires. It certainly requires self-attention and the recognition of the goodness of self-knowledge. When Augustine finally reaches the consideration of the inner and superior reason and the image of the trinity which belongs to it, he makes his principle explicit. The image of the trinity has been impaired by sin but not lost:

Beckh! the mind .. remembers itself, understands itself, and loves itself; if we perceive this, we perceive a trinity, not yet God indeed, but now finally an image of God.

When this image does not turn to that of which it is an image, and thus deprives itself of the knowledge which makes it happy, it is foolish and wicked, but its being as image is what places this sin in its power. If the essential incorporeal rationality of the human soul could be denied, nothing in the whole argument would work. This is why Augustine returns to his refutation of the Sceptics in the final book of the de Trinitate.

Knowledge is finally for Augustine what makes us happy. We seek union with the Good in contemplation. Vision is the realization of what love seeks; love is a steadfast perceiving. We are made happy by this contemplation because knowledge of ourselves, other persons, and, indeed, all things in the Word is normative knowledge. Wisdom knows the thing and its good, and judges it by its good all at once. Fact and value cannot be separated here.

The contemplation, or wisdom, which makes us happy is knowledge of all things in the divine Word. A progressive identification of the object of beatifying contemplation, so that we come to know its character as the eternal Word, Truth and sapientia, and, at the same time, come to know that our capacity and need for just that consummation are essential to us, structures the de Trinitate. That need and capacity are bound up with the trinity which belongs to our higher reason and true selves, the trinity which is image of God. The discovery of this trinity, and of the sapientia which always belongs to it, is the very heart and goal of Augustine's argument. Its discovery implies that the knowing

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112 de Trinitate 10.10.14; 15.12.21.
113 de Trinitate 2.16.27; 2.17.28; 3.2.8; 3.10.21; 4.1; 11.1; 12.15.24; 14. passim; 15.15.25.
114 de Trinitate 5.1.2; 9.11.16; 10 passim.
116 E.g. de Trinitate 14.12.15: "stulta est."
118 de Trinitate 8.4.6: "Et quid est deum scire nisi eum mente conspicere firmeque percipere?" See 11.6.10.
119 de Trinitate 8.3.4; 8.3.5; 8.6.9; 8.9.13; 9.6 & 7; 10.1.1; 10.1.2; 10.3.5; 12.2.2.
120 de Trinitate 1.10.20; 4.1.2; 4.18.24; 7.3.5: "cum de sapientia scriptura loquitur de filio loquitur"; 12.14ff.; etc.
which is eternal life begins here. Rather, and better, because sapientia is always at least secretly or latently present in our memory, this wisdom has properly no beginning.\textsuperscript{121} "Human nature has been so formed that never does it not remember itself, never does it not understand itself, never does it not love itself."\textsuperscript{122} Neither knowledge nor self-knowledge can be reduced in Augustine to empirical experience. The self which is self-known does not cease to exist when we are not empirically attending to it. This much remains in Augustine of Plotinus' higher soul which is always in contemplation of Nous, whether or not the historical self is conscious of this contemplation. In Augustine this higher self belongs primarily to memory. So, Williams is mistaken; scientia is "learned or acquired," but sapientia is not.\textsuperscript{123}

Beatitude in contemplation, the vision of all things in the eternal Word which is their good, is our goal, but that goal is a return to our beginning, or better, to what is before our self-conscious knowing. The triad of memory, understanding and love is present in each of the three activities of mind.\textsuperscript{124} So there is a knowing and a loving within memory before knowledge is projected into consciousness. The "before" in this knowing before knowing, so to speak, corresponds in our minds, and in our being, to the priority of the divine Principle. Final contemplation is a return to that gaze of eternal being which belongs to memory and to the fundamental structure of our minds.\textsuperscript{125} The joining of that finality with the relation to the Principle which belongs to the before of memory allows reason, in virtue of its access to its source and end, to have its proper self-completeness. By self-reflexion in and through its relation to God as Alpha and Omega, each relation having its appropriate mental character, divine form is given to the human.\textsuperscript{126} Moving to that self-completeness is the whole point of Augustine's \textit{itinerarium} from the outer trinity of Books 11 and 12 to the inner trinity of Books 14 and 15. The result is a real

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\textsuperscript{121} \textit{de Trinitate} 10.3.5: "quandam occultam memoriam"; 11.3.6; 11.7.11: "ipsa tamen acies non inde existit, sed erat ante ista"; 14.6.8; 14.6.9ff.; 14.8.11; 14.14.18; 14.15.21; 15.15.25: "Sempiternum est scire quod uiet, nec tamen sempiternum est cogitare uitam uel cogitare scientiam uitae suae"; 15.21.40: "illa est abstrusior profunditas nostrae memoriae ubi hoc etiam primum cum cogitaremus uinuimus et gignitur intimum uerbum ..."; 15.21.41. I owe what I understand of Augustine at this point to Michael Carreker.

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{de Trinitate} 14.14.18: "Sic itaque condita est mens humana ut numquam sui non meminerit, numquam se non intellegat, numquam se non deligat.

\textsuperscript{123} Williams, "\textit{Sapientia}," 326. See \textit{de Trinitate} 14.8.11: "quae sciuntur uelut adventicia sunt in animo".

\textsuperscript{124} Book 11 both describes the trinity in the outer man, i.e. the trinity in which there is a dependence on the external object and in which memory acquires its content from without, and moves us toward the inner trinity in which these externalities are overcome. The contrast is well drawn in 12.1-3.

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{de Trinitate} 14.6.8: "ita sibi nota erat quae ueritatem in qua quae memoria continentur ei ati non cognitentur."

\textsuperscript{126} Theology and philosophy after Augustine will have to sort out what are put together here: the existence of the human in its cause, memory, the structure of mind, etc.

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{de Trinitate} 14.12.15 & 16.
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participation in eternity, an overcoming of the alterity of mind turned to the historical.\textsuperscript{127} Ultimately, the result is blessedly ahistorical.

4. Conclusion

Augustine's \textit{de Trinitate} is better understood from within a modern ahistoric stance, where standing within metaphysics, Augustine is placed together with Plotinus and Descartes. In fact, within that view, we are better able to understand his difference from Plotinus than the alternative postmodern perspective can.

To say it is doubtless too naïve, but the problem for postmodern retrievals of the pre-modern is the text. Intellectually, at least, postmodern reflection is always within the temporal and has no solution except to deepen our sense of creaturely finitude. Philosophy as metaphysics is excluded and so we cannot get beyond a historicism which falsifies older philosophy, both modern and pre-modern. Postmodern theology separates itself from the texts on which it depends precisely because it reduces them to text. Theology's desire to become independent of philosophy is determined by its present philosophical situation and it must live or die within the limits philosophy prescribes for it. Mostly it seems to die, at least as \textit{theoria}. So far as it remains alive and yet does not pass totally into \textit{praxis} and \textit{poesis}, Christian theology is assimilated to pagan Neoplatonism.

The limit of Stephen Menn's metaphysical enterprise is the converse of the theologians. He does not draw Augustine's theology closely enough together with philosophy. Modern and premodern philosophy are as dependent on theology as theology is on philosophy. When what is theological in the Augustinian tradition is correctly appreciated precisely by identifying more accurately "Plotinus' doctrinal innovations" within Platonism and how Augustine stands to them,\textsuperscript{128} we will understand better how theology reforms philosophy in Augustine. When that is done, what will found, with Descartes, autonomous philosophy, will have its foundations more fully secured and known. That is the paradox of the \textit{de Trinitate}.

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Note regarding Zbigniew Janowski, \textit{Index Augustino-Cartésien: Textes et Commentaire}

Since writing this article I have read in Ms Zbigniew Janowski, \textit{Index Augustino-Cartésien: Textes et Commentaire}, just completed, which is to be published this year in Paris by Vrin. Written in the face of skepticism from Jean-Luc Marion ("Gilson n'a pas entièrement réussi, vous ne réussirez pas davantage"), but with his energetic assistance,

\textsuperscript{127} \textit{de Trinitate} 14.14.18; 14.15.21.
\textsuperscript{128} Menn's statement at 200: "Augustine thinks the Platonists had the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity" is altogether inadequate.
Janowski's book establishes beyond doubt literary connections between the text of Descartes' *Meditations* and texts from several important works of Augustine. So far as method is concerned, Janowski supplies what Menn lacks: careful philology, attention to historical context and requisite scholarship. While problems remain because Descartes need not have read -- and probably did not read -- the works of Augustine which contained the texts he knew, the two books taken together present a formidable obstacle to anyone attempting a postmodern opposition of Augustine and Descartes.

Janowski concludes that before 1630 Descartes had read *de Doctrina Christiana*, and the *de Ordine* and *de Genesi ad Litteram* before 1637. Before 1641 he had read *de Immortalitate animae*, *de Quantitate animae*, *de Libero Arbitrio*, *de Trinitate*, *Confessiones*, *de Ciuitate Dei*, *Contra Academicos* and *de Vera religione*. The themes essential to the Cartesian metaphysics as presented in the *Meditations* which are found in Augustine include the following list which I reproduce from Janowski's Ms.

1. *Le but de la philosophie*
2. *La définition de la science*
3. *Les mathématiques sont certaines sive dormi*
4. *La malin genie*
5. *Le cogito*
6. *La définition de l'âme*
7. *La notion de l'étendue*
8. *L'exemple de la cire*
9. *L'Inspectio mentis*
10. *Je suis un melieu entre l'être et néant*
11. *L'explication de l'origine de l'erreur*
12. *Dans la vision intellectuelle il n'y a pas d'erreur*
13. *L'entendement arbitre entre des données des sens*
14. *L'âme est comme un pivot*
15. *La définition des vérites éternelles*
16. *Dieu crée par l'acte de sa connaissance*
17. *L'innéisme.*

He concludes: "Ce qui est indubitable, c'est que, même si le cartésianisme n'est pas la plus fidèle interprétation de la philosophie de saint Augustin, il en est certainement une interprétation légitime."

In my view Janowski's book is a turning point in a long debate. Every serious scholar of Descartes and of the Augustinian tradition will want to examine its evidence, just as every good philosophical and theological library will need to acquire it.

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The Closing Of The Early Modern Mind:
Leo Strauss And Early Modern Political Thought

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And new Philosophy calls all in doubt,
The Element of fire is quite put out;  
The Sun is lost, and th'earth, and no mans wit
Can well direct him where to looke for it.
And freely men confesse that this world's spent,
When in the Planets, and the Firmament
They seeke so many new; then see that this
Is crumbled out againe to his Atomies.
'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone;
All just supply, and all Relation:
Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot,
For every man alone thinkes he hath got
To be a Phoenix, and that then can bee
None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee.
-- John Donne
An Anatomie of the World The First Anniversary.

Perhaps the simplest way to describe Leo Strauss's position is as a defence of the structures necessary to the moral and political imagination against the levelling tendencies at work in modernity. Like Nietzsche and Heidegger, Strauss sees that the West is in the grip of a profound spiritual crisis. And following Nietzsche and Heidegger, Strauss sees that this crisis itself opens up the possibility of a release from modernity. This release both brings to light a principle that is beyond, but forgotten by, modernity,¹ and points to a return to origins, free from and prior to the sources of modernity.² At the same time, it is important to distinguish Strauss's analysis of modernity from that of either Nietzsche or Heidegger. Unlike these two thinkers, Strauss does not trace modernity to the metaphysical turn which began with Socrates and Plato, nor to the slave revolt of morality that received its most decisive impetus from Judaism. Rather, Strauss sees the roots of contemporary nihilism in the deliberate reformulation of political philosophy achieved by the great early modern thinkers, above all Machiavelli and

¹ This principle is the Will to Power, Being, and Nature for Nietzsche, Heidegger and Strauss respectively.
² This return to the origins takes the form of the pre-Socratics for Nietzsche and Heidegger, Socrates and Plato for Strauss. See Catherine Zuckert, Post-Modern Platos (Chicago, 1996) 310 for a useful distinction between Strauss's return to antiquity and that of Heidegger.
Hobbes. The source of modernity, according to Strauss, lies not in a metaphysical, religious, or even scientific transformation, but rather in an alteration of how political and moral things were understood. Strauss sees the history of modernity as above all a history of the further development of this initial alteration in political philosophy. The "three waves of modernity" are the stages by which the fundamental nihilism that was implicit in the origins of modernity came to appearance. Strauss describes the change in political philosophy that produced modernity in various ways: as a lowering of horizons; as a new conception of nature; and as a replacement of human will for nature as the source of standards. In all of these characterizations it is clear that, for Strauss, modernity is founded upon the internalizing of the sources of morality within human subjectivity, and, as the necessary consequence of this, the oblivion of nature and the total historicization of all moral and political standards. For Strauss, in this sense, Heidegger and Nietzsche, far from signalling the end of modernity, are the most complete realization of it.

Indeed, Strauss will equate the third wave of modernity--that initiated by Nietzsche and Heidegger--as the "crisis of our time." It is for him the crisis of our time because it brings into question the moving principle of the first two waves of modernity: this crisis is "the fact that the West has become uncertain of its purpose." This purpose Strauss terms "the Modern Project." Strauss argues that the crisis of modernity, while corrosive of the social and political life in Western nations, could be for reflective souls an opportunity to be liberated from the project of modernity and its underlying assumptions. The crisis of our time, for Strauss, exposes the inherently dubious nature of modernity, and points not only to a return to the ancients, but also to a need to re-examine what is at the origins of modernity. Since for Strauss modernity had at its beginning a fundamental reformulation of political philosophy, in order to grasp the nature of modernity, and thereby better to understand our contemporary crisis, we are required to return to the early modern political thinkers--those who initiated the project of modern political philosophy.

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3 Leo Strauss, What is Political Philosophy? (1959) pp. 40f. See also p. 172 for an example of Strauss's explicit departure from Nietzsche's account of modernity.

The following abbreviations will be used for Strauss's various texts: The City and Man (1964), CM; The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism (1989), CR; Natural Right and History (1953), NRH; On Tyranny (1991), OT; Persecution and the Art of Writing (1952), PAW; Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy (1983), SPPP; What is Political Philosophy (1959), WIPP; The Political Philosophy of Hobbes (1952), PPH; Philosophy and Law (1995), PL; Thoughts on Machiavelli (1958), TM; Spinoza's Critique of Religion (1965), SCR; Liberalism Ancient and Modern (1968), LAM.

4 PPH 129


8 PPH xv.

9 "Three Waves" 82. The centrality of the political in Strauss's description of modernity as opposed to other descriptions of the modern (such as Heidegger's) rests partially on his view that the question of the best life is the central question for humanity, but more precisely on his understanding of modernity as a specifically
Strauss describes the purpose or project of modernity as "the universal society, a society consisting of equal nations, each consisting of free and equal men and women, with all these nations to be fully developed as regards their power of production, thanks to science."[10] Strauss equates the project of modernity with the realization of a revolutionary humanism, a humanism released from the constraints of an older institutional order. It was the revolutionary politics of the nineteenth century that was animated by just such a vision, whether in a liberal or socialist form. The revolutionaries presumed that the substance of the nineteenth-century nation state would pass into the hands of an emancipated humanity. Hegel's distinction between civil society and the state would be overcome.[12]

It was of course Karl Marx who argued most forcefully that the European nation state, with its capacity to order citizens to higher moral and political ends, had the roots of its dissolution in early modern Europe. It is perhaps ironic that Strauss follows Marx in locating the source of revolutionary humanism in the early modern period. Strauss and Marx agree that the origin of this revolutionary 'result' must be found in the beginnings of modernity. For both, there is a revolutionary innovation at the origins of modernity, which cannot be contained within the traditional structures of European social and political life, but is necessarily antithetical to them. However, Strauss finds the source of this revolutionary modernity in the political philosophy of the period, where Marx sees that philosophy as only the "epiphenomenon" of more fundamental material causes—the new modes of production. The revolutionary result is for Strauss not the outcome of the unconscious working of history; it is, rather, the self-conscious project of certain fundamental political philosophers whose thinking crucially reoriented political life.

Strauss's claim about the origins of modernity has two elements: a causal element, and a hermeneutical element. The causal element—that modernity could be caused by the thoughts and writings of certain political philosophers—will not be considered in this paper. The more fundamental element of Strauss's position is his hermeneutical claim that thinkers such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, and Locke held the revolutionary or radical standpoint he attributes to them. It is not immediately obvious, as Strauss himself recognized, that these thinkers advocated a fully radical, atheistical humanism. That this is in fact their position Strauss establishes through his famous recovery of the esoteric-
The exoteric face of these early modern texts hides an esoteric radicality: early modern texts seem to exhibit both a departure from the tradition and a conformity to it. Strauss's critique of much of the scholarly literature on these texts is that complacent commentators have failed to recognize the consistent radicality behind the apparently contradictory face of these writings.

The interest of my paper is not so much to determine the merits of any of Strauss's readings of early modern texts, as it is to make sense of, from the standpoint of Strauss's position as a whole, why he came to read early modern writers as he did. To put it bluntly: the claim of this paper is that Strauss reads into the writings of early modern political philosophers the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries' revolutionary result. In this sense, Strauss's reading is, ironically, deeply historicist: he reads texts relative to their apparent historical outcome. What has been lost sight of in Strauss's account is a genuinely early modern standpoint.

For Strauss, the history of political thought in the West is broken in two: the thought of the ancients, and that of the moderns. As an anti-historicist, Strauss does not characterize this break as a result of historical causes; but rather he see it as a result of a re-conception of moral and political thought, a fundamental restructuring of how we conceive moral and political life. At the centre of our moral and political self-understanding, for Strauss, is the notion of "nature", i.e., what is given prior to human willing. From his earliest writings, the division between modern and ancient was characterized by a distinction concerning what is meant by "nature." In "Comments on Der Begriff des Politischen" Strauss points to two fundamental concepts of nature: "whether as an order seen as a model or whether as disorder which is to be removed." In The Political Philosophy of Hobbes, Strauss writes:

Traditional natural law is primarily and mainly an objective "rule and measure," a binding order prior to, and independent of, the human will, while modern natural law is, or tends to be, primarily and mainly a series of "rights," of subjective claims, originating in the human will.

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17 See PAW 22-37 and WIPP 221-232
18 See WIPP 66-7.
20 Strauss's conception of historical causality is not without subtlety. The source of modernity is the thought of Machiavelli and other political philosophers and not larger historical events. However, that thought can be crucially conditioned, not only in its influence upon history, but in its very conception. For example, Machiavelli's thought was not caused by the surrounding Christian culture, but it was conditioned by it in both motivation (anti-theological ire) and content (the central place of propaganda); see WIPP 44-5. However, Strauss sees these conditions as not touching upon the fundamental possibility of and character of political philosophy which rests rather on the permanent problems and not historical conditions; see WIPP 63-77 and OT 212.
21 SCR 336.
22 PPH vii-viii.
The ancients in one way or another conceived of nature as a restraining order within which human beings lived out lives of lesser or greater virtue; the moderns saw nature as an alien other to be overcome through human activity. The distinction between the ancients and the moderns lies in determining which is the central grounding principle for moral and political life--nature's order, or humanity's will. The simplicity of this opposition is what gives such force to Strauss's account of the history of political thought. Implicit in it is the assumption that any position that argues for a synthesis of these two sides is inherently contradictory. The originators of modernity, the early modern thinkers, appear to argue for such a synthesis, and so for Strauss, either they were contradictory or their apparent contradictions hid a deeply consistent radical humanism. The argument of this paper is that Strauss's conception of the nature of moral and political thought in general renders impossible an appreciation of early modern political thought in its own terms: Strauss allows modernity to be understood only in its revolutionary form. In this sense, he has closed the early modern mind.

Before trying to substantiate this criticism of Strauss, it is best to try to understand his interpretation of early modern political philosophy. But according to Strauss modern political philosophy (and in particular early modern political philosophy) can only be understood in contrast to, and as a modification of, classical political philosophy. So we will come to understand Strauss's readings of the early moderns only once we have come to terms with his conception of classical political philosophy.

As we have noted, for Strauss, the defining term in political philosophy is "nature." For classical political philosophy, nature has two distinctive but connected aspects: 1) nature appears as the standards and types available to natural or pre-philosophic understanding; 2) nature is the eternal, articulated order, the whole knowable properly only through philosophy. For Strauss, these two aspects of nature are connected above all in the movement of philosophy as a movement from pre-philosophic opinion to philosophic knowledge.

Strauss argues that the kinds or types, above all moral kinds or types, cannot be understood as being the result of a construct or a convention. Natural right, in particular, comes into appearance through the structures inherent in the living together that belongs to the very humanity of human beings. In *Natural Right and History*, Strauss brings out how human being, in contrast with non-human being, arises out of sociality, and in particular political sociality. Strauss's argument has interesting parallels with the analyses of communitarian writers such as Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre. Like them, Strauss grounds morality within the requirements of man as a being who finds his

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23 See "Three Waves" 85-6.
24 For Strauss on syntheses, see *OT* 191-192 and "Jerusalem and Athens" in *Commentary* (June 1967) 45-57. In *OT* Strauss speaks of Hegel as a synthesis of Socratic and Machiavellian or Hobbsian politics, but makes it clear that the Hobbian element dominates--hence there is no true synthesis.
25 *WIPP* 75 and *NRH* 78-81.
26 *NRH* 120-46.
Good, or Telos, through his being-with others. Strauss then shares with the communityarians a non-metaphysical structuring of human sociality which is fundamentally teleological. However, against the infinite openness of communitarian historicism, Strauss brings out the fixed requirements of political life on the one side, and the ineliminable differences of individuals relative to these fixed requirements. Where Taylor and MacIntyre emphasize hermeneutical openness in the application and articulation of the teleological structures of human moral life, Strauss argues that, in order to preserve and fulfill the teleology attendant upon human nature as social, society must be closed. This brings out a political dimension in Strauss that remains less developed in the communityarians. Strauss argues that the practices that establish the virtuous life arise, not out of the spontaneity of human communality, but out of the work of legislators who have the wisdom or foresight to establish those practices that most fully bring forth human sociality. In this, Strauss takes up the Nietzschean principle that there is a fundamental difference in the ranks of human beings. For Strauss, therefore, because of the crucial role that the political has in the development of human sociality, the central category for the analysis of human things is the "regime." So while both Strauss and the communityarians will speak of the best life for man, for the communityarians, that best life, and the society and polity proper to it, is knowable only in a historically relative or provisional sense; for Strauss, through the life of the philosopher, the best life by nature and the best regime by nature become available for a knowing that is free from historical contingency. Thus the figure which, according to Strauss, both secures his analysis against historicizing relativism, and at the same time brings out most emphatically the limits of the city, is the philosopher.

The philosopher is concerned with nature in its fuller sense, and not just as it appears to the pre-philosophic understanding. The philosopher seeks wisdom--that is, knowledge

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28 The parallels between Strauss and the communitarians are manifold. The whole discussion of human sociality as the distinguishing feature of humanity in contrast to the non-human parallels a similar theme in much of Charles Taylor's writing. Strauss's derivation of the virtues from out of the requirements of human nature understood as social and political is analogous to MacIntyre's discussion of practices. Again, Strauss's discussion of "specific human types" parallels MacIntyre's discussion of "characters" in After Virtue. As well, compare Strauss's definition of the life of the philosopher and MacIntyre's definition of the "good life" (After Virtue 196). See also Heidegger, Being and Time (New York, 1962) Part I, section IV, 149-68.

29 The difference between Strauss and Taylor or MacIntyre exemplifies the more pervasive distinction in contemporary thought described by Peter Levine in Nietzsche and the Modern Crisis of the Humanities (Albany, 1995) as the distinction between Nietzscheans and (Wittgensteinian) humanists. One side points to a rise above history to a principle hidden from view by human (and particularly Western) culture; the other side sees such a rise as the culmination of Western metaphysical absolutism, staying rather with finite historically contingent inter-subjective structures of understanding. Both sides, in their difference, remain within a shared phenomenological standpoint. What distinguishes them is the source and nature of meaning.

30 See MacIntyre's highly skeptical relation to institutions as opposed to practices in After Virtue, 187ff.

31 NRH 133.


33 NRH 136f. Strauss would undoubtedly find Taylor's and MacIntyre's positions as falling within the view that makes "civilization" primary as opposed to "regime" (NRH 138).

34 See MacIntyre, chapter 18, and Taylor, chapter 3.

of the whole and parts of the whole. What stands above and beyond all cities in their
historical particularity, their rise and decline, is nature. Strauss speaks of nature in terms
of "the whole" or "the eternal order." In his rise from opinion to knowledge, the
philosopher seeks to understand "the eternal cause or causes of the whole" or, in Platonic
language, the "ideas." However, Strauss will undercut the metaphysical implications of
this language in two related ways. First, he denies that the whole is, or can be, fully
knowable. Philosophy is the love or pursuit of wisdom, not its accomplishment; it is
fundamentally zetetic. As Strauss writes, "philosophy in the original meaning of the term
is nothing but knowledge of one's ignorance." Second, Strauss interprets what appears
to be a language of metaphysical causes that ground the realities revealed in pre-
philosophic awareness in terms that undercut these metaphysical implications: "we may
also view man in the light of the unchangeable ideas, i.e., the fundamental and permanent
problems." As Stanley Rosen notes, Strauss develops Platonism in a non-
foundational way. The objects of the zetetic life are the problems whose resolution is understood not
to be knowledge but to be a lapse into dogmatism.

Nature involves these two aspects: the pre-philosophic awareness of the citizen, and
the philosophic detachment of the philosopher. Central to Strauss's concern is the relation
of these two sides: how is the philosopher connected to the city? It can sometimes appear
that Strauss places on one side the city as given to the fulfillment of the needs of "one's
own," and, on the other side, the philosopher, free and independent of the city in his self-
sufficient knowledge. However, it is precisely in contrast to such a "pre-Socratic" or
Epicurean understanding that Strauss presents what he calls Classic Natural Right. The
relation of philosophy to the city is transformative of both sides. Strauss sees that
philosophy arises from the city through the questioning of the ancestral. The closed world
of opinion necessary to the life of the city is brought into question through the
recognition that there is a plurality of ways of life. The philosopher can, therefore,
apparently serve the city: a) through assuring the city of the foundation of its ways in
nature; and b) by making the city aware of the standards of nature so that it may improve

36 OT 198, 212.
37 OT 196. See WIPP 39; NRH 75; OT 279.
38 WIPP 39; see OT 196. See also NRH 30-1 where Strauss recounts Heidegger's critique of metaphysics
and points to an original philosophy that escapes this critique
40 OT 196. The status of the permanent problems in Strauss's defence of classical political philosophy is a
most vexed issue; see Rosen 107-40 and Victor Gourevitch "Philosophy and Politics II" in Review of
Metaphysics 22 (1968): 281-325. What philosophy results in is knowledge of the permanent problems, not
of the order or whole those problems presuppose. The problems are not causes or objects of knowledge.
They function not at the level of ontology, but phenomenology. They are problems grounded in meaning
and, in particular, in questions of the good life. In spite of his use of language of the whole, of permanent
causes and so on, Strauss does not seek to revive classical political philosophy by re-establishing classical
physics and metaphysics, but he recognizes the ambivalence of his use of permanent problems as a
substitute; see NRH 7-8 and 35, also "On a New Interpretation of Plato's Political Philosophy" in Social
41 NRH chapters 3 and 4. See Drury The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss, 62-71, for an argument that the two
accounts are in fact identical. According to Strauss, what separates Heidegger and Nietzsche, for whom
there is a similar indifference to the political, from the pre-Socratics, is the presence of a religiously-
inspired transformative will in their philosophical positions. See SPPP 174-91 and CR 27-46.
itself. Equally, there is a turn towards the city from the side of philosophy, as philosophy grows self-aware: the city is the condition for the philosophic life. The philosopher is a citizen as well as a philosopher. Indeed, Strauss argues, that it is in this double movement that the philosopher is led to an awareness of the full heterogeneity within nature, and above all of the difference between the human and the non-human. More than this, this double movement produces the possibility of philosophy's moving beyond the impotence of merely recognizing the fundamental problems, to a knowledge of the actual standards at work in natural right.

So there appears to be a natural symbiosis of philosophy and civic life; but while philosophy, according to Strauss, may wish to give this impression to the city, it is in fact at best only a noble lie. The way of the philosopher is utterly in contrast to, and destructive of, the way of the citizen. The philosopher leads a life open to the whole; the citizen's virtue and nobility depend upon his attachment to the closed world of his city. The citizen requires of the philosopher that he confirm as natural the virtues by which he, the citizen, lives. The philosopher knows those virtues to be groundless in the sense intended by the citizen. That is to say that what applies to the closed horizons of the city cannot be grounded in the open or natural horizon of the philosopher. The citizen must believe certain things about the world which, while false, are necessary to the very being of the citizen. Strauss sees that deception is necessary, but not as simple manipulation by the philosopher for any nefarious or extra-civic purpose; rather, the philosopher "lies" in order to preserve and enhance the life of the citizen, while at the same time safeguarding the place of philosophy. That the structures or virtues necessary to a properly human life within the city are not grounded in metaphysical "ideas" that stand outside the city is not to say that these structures are "not susceptible of rational legitimization." Rather, the very necessity of these virtues for civic life--a necessity exposed in the interaction between the philosopher and the city--provides the rational legitimization of these virtues. The political virtues are thus grounded in the nature of man as a political animal. However, for exactly the same reason, they are applicable to the philosopher only insofar as he is a political animal.

In Strauss's account of classical political philosophy the virtues of the city are necessarily conditional or dependent virtues. Precisely because the city is the necessary premise for civic morality, the city itself is established in a situation lacking civic morality. The founding and preserving of the city as the condition for morality cannot itself be subject to civic morality. For Strauss this appears particularly in the need to defend the regime against destruction from enemies both external and internal.

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42 WIPP 39.
43 NRH 146-64.
44 WIPP 54.
45 LAM 62. Strauss frequently points out that Cain and Romulus were fratricides.
46 TM 295; SPPP 238.
47 WIPP 84-5. Strauss sees a characteristic of the break with classical thought in the reduction of politics to external relations and to the ensuring of the survival of the polity, as opposed to the fulfillment of its purpose; see WIPP 44.
does not presuppose a beneficent nature that ensures that good will prevail. But this does not for Strauss undermine the inherent worth of civic morality for citizens; however, it does point to a necessary tension built into civic life between the conditions of civic life and the purpose of civic life. Alongside the inherent contradictions of political life, are the contradictions between philosophy and civic morality. The philosopher affirms civic morality as necessary to the city in so far as the city is a necessary condition for philosophy, but at the same time he would limit civic morality not only as problematic for the city in its worldly existence, but as destructive of the freedom of thought necessary to philosophy. In this sense Strauss's philosopher is beyond good and evil; his "morality" is strictly provisional to the requirements of philosophy—a non- or post-civic activity. The philosopher lives beyond the moral and political imagination through a rise to intellectual enquiry into the permanent problems that both structure and render questionable that imagination. This rise beyond civic morality on the part of the philosopher is not for Strauss the appearance of nihilism; philosophic activity is not simply self-willed, rather it is an activity given to the philosopher from out of the relation of humanity to nature as adumbrated by the permanent problems. Philosophy is the best human activity not only because it is most pleasurable, but also because it is highest. The rise beyond civic morality is not then a rise beyond teleology: the classical philosopher remains within the phenomenology of the Good even as he questions it.

What Strauss discovers in the texts of ancient political philosophy is a non-metaphysical, a-historical, moral and political phenomenology. Classical moral and political philosophy understood once and for all the primary structures necessary to the moral and political imagination. For Strauss, as for Taylor and MacIntyre, humans require for their very being-in-the-world as moral agents a structure of goods that allows a moral world to appear at all. For Taylor and Maclntyre, as for Strauss, such a moral phenomenology makes present notions of the noble or good, irreducible to utility, calculation or procedure. What distinguishes Strauss from these communitarians is that he sees that beyond all historically relative horizons is a natural horizon provided by the requirements and problems inherent in the very being of moral and political life. This

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48 Compare NRH 7-8 and 123. For Strauss there is a partially intelligible, stable, articulated whole available to a moral and political phenomenology, but whether that whole will cause justice to occur in the relation of its parts remains unknown.
49 LAM 230, 271.
50 Leo Strauss Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity (SUNY, 1997) 465.
51 WIPP 91; OT 198.
52 OT 197-8; LAM 31-2.
53 OT 204, 209-10; NRH 151-2; WIPP 38-40; LAM 8.
54 NRH 122-5. One aspect of Strauss that seems to speak against this characterization is Strauss's language. Strauss does not use and indeed ridicules the situational language of many phenomenologists; just as he ridicules the technical language of social scientists; WIPP 28-9 and LAM 203-23. Strauss is able to use "ordinary" language with its implied relation to a stable shared reality because his phenomenology is moral and political and results in a stable nature, known through the permanent problems. Strauss does not see the human situation as falsified by ordinary language. Rather, it is falsified by ordinary opinion. The fundamental problem is not Being but the Good. To make meaning problematic at the level of the good life and not at existence presupposes a stability to language in order to destabilize opinion. It is therefore a question whether Strauss discovers the stability of nature or presupposes it in his acceptance of ordinary language. See WIPP 78-94.
natural horizon arises, as we have seen, out of the interplay between the philosopher and the city. For Strauss, modernity is premised upon a radical reworking of the relation of the philosopher to the city through a new conception of nature: the result is a reconstitution of our moral and political consciousness. Once we are able to characterize Strauss's conception of classical political philosophy as a form of moral and political phenomenology, his interpretation of modern political philosophy can become comprehensible from within that framework.

Strauss divides modernity into three stages or "waves." The first wave began with Machiavelli and was crucially modified by Hobbes and Locke to produce the modern doctrine of natural right. Its contemporary correlate is capitalist liberalism, the acquisitive consumer society dedicated to fulfilling human needs. The second wave, initiated by Rousseau, absorbed nature as a standard by taking it into human history which now served as the source of moral and political guidance. Freed from notions of a natural necessity, this wave produced a more radically utopian--and hence more deeply alienated--form of humanism. Its contemporary correlate is communism. The third wave, which Strauss sees as our contemporary crisis, began with Nietzsche's questioning of the rationality or "humanity" of both history and nature: humanity finds itself in the midst of a terrifying existence, free to create the values by which to live. The contemporary correlate of this wave is fascism.

The three waves by which Strauss defines the historical stages of modernity are at the same time all contemporary political standpoints. But while Strauss sees these positions as distinct, they also belong together as a common development. The waves of modernity expose with increasing explicitness the nihilism at the heart of modernity. The assumption that the human will has a positive content is thereby shown to be simply the residue left by the tradition, due to an inadequate liberation from it in the preceding waves. The second wave dissolves the assumption of a human nature adumbrated by a fundamental guiding passion which could form the basis of natural right. The third wave dissolves the assumption of a human right or rational right that came to replace natural right. The third wave brings to light that the sole basis of the will's guidance is its own free activity--beyond both nature and reason.

For Strauss there is even in the Nietzschean will a deception that a return to the origins of modernity can free us from. If classical political philosophy is defined through nature as the context or structure belonging to humanity's moral-being-in-the-world,
modernity can be understood through its redefinition of nature and therefore of the very structure of humanity's moral phenomenology. For the early moderans, nature is no longer an order within which humanity's moral and political life is structured, but rather an otherness or lack whose conquest provides the most profound impetus to moral and political life. Nature has become that which is to be negated for the sake of a properly human culture. The very establishment of the modern requires the positing of a nature the negation of which forms the basis of human culture and freedom. Thus, even as the three waves of modernity deepen this new negativity, the whole project is premised on an initial affirmation or acknowledgement of nature—an affirmation lost sight of as modernity develops.

From within Strauss's moral and political phenomenology, the emergence of modernity must begin with a new conception of nature so that it will no longer be understood as "the hierarchic order of man's natural ends," but rather as a source of "terror and fear." What Strauss wanted to clarify in his first writings on Hobbes was that the nature relative to which modernity takes its point of departure is not simply the mechanical necessity of modern natural science, but is rather the source of this terror. Strauss later came to see that this same notion of nature had its first articulation in Machiavelli. For Strauss, nature as terror, as a moral phenomenon, is more primal to the definition of modernity than nature as mechanical. It is this shift in the structure of the moral and political consciousness that is, for Strauss, most fundamental to the great transformation into the modern.

With this shift in the conception of nature, a whole realignment in the structure of the moral and political imagination has occurred—or, rather, as the unfolding of modernity displays to Strauss, the destruction of that imagination. Nature is no longer a whole which structures the moral and political, providing a schema by which to give content to good and evil, a connection between "is" and "ought." Nature is no longer a system of ends or perfections which is realized and gives meaning to notions of virtue. As Strauss notes in a number of places, nature acts in modernity not as an end to be realized, but rather as a beginning from which one must escape. Nature is to be conquered or mastered, and this conquest or mastery is at the same time the realization of human culture. Strauss points out that in Hobbes the passion which moves humans from the state of nature into civil society is itself the apprehension of the negation of nature: the
fear of death. The step into modernity is therefore a step out of, or an alienation from, nature as a whole within which ends are discovered. Nature now stands over and against humanity:

Man can be sovereign only because there is no cosmic support for his humanity. He can be sovereign only because he is forced to be sovereign. Since the universe is unintelligible and since control of nature does not require understanding of nature, there are no knowable limits to his conquest of nature. He has nothing to lose but his chains, and, for all he knows, he may have everything to gain. Still, what is certain is that man's natural state is misery; the vision of the City of Man to be erected on the ruins of the City of God is an unsupported hope.

Here Strauss is presenting modernity in a manner not unlike Heidegger, except with an emphasis on the moral and political: the ready-at-hand world of ordinary, daily existence has been replaced in modernity by a present-to-hand standpoint which looks upon objects in their sheer externality. Like Heidegger, Strauss does not see this turn to a self external to the world as a step towards greater objectivity, free of illusions, but rather as a construct unable to find an integrated relation to the "other" it is necessarily opposed to. Indeed, the "other," the object, is objective precisely in order that it might be available for conquest or mastery and thus for culture. As Strauss said in his commentary on Carl Schmitt, "'Culture' is to such an extent cultivation of nature that it can be understood as a sovereign creation of the mind only if the nature being cultivated is taken to be the opposite of mind and has been forgotten." From the standpoint of classical political philosophy, both modern nature, with its indifference to humanity, and the culture that becomes the necessary response to it, are constructs. They are constructed upon and over the natural world as envisioned by the classics. Strauss contrasts the immediacy or concreteness of classical political thought, which takes its orientation from the orientation of the city and the structures of "natural" moral and political imagination, with the abstractness of modern political philosophy. For Strauss, modern political philosophy nevertheless always retains an implicit relation to that natural structure. As the development of modernity more and more completely undermines this connection, humanity comes to find itself lost in a directionless void--this is the crisis of our time.

Of course, this movement beyond the horizon of the city, the pre-philosophic awareness of moral and political things, belongs to the philosopher in the classical period. The skeptical dissolution of the city's horizon did not lead the classical philosopher to

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73 NRH 180-1. Strauss sees in Machiavelli the nature is simply to be conquered and stands opposed to the city, but in Hobbes, nature is restored as a standard. However, it is a standard only as providing an absolute given passion which must be radicalized so as to be infinite, without a stable end or perfection belonging to it. See also PPH 16, 150-1.
74 NRH 175.
76 SCR 336.
77 OT 192.
78 WIPP 28.
79 WIPP 181. See also LAM 203-23
nihilism insofar as he discovered nature lay beyond the city, and the philosopher did not step beyond nature. However, for the moderns, nature is beyond the city only insofar as it is below the city. As Strauss states in his discussion of Hobbes,

Hobbes's view of man, as far as it is essential to his political teaching, expresses how the new view of the whole affects "the whole man"--man as he is understood in daily life or by the historians and poets, as distinguished from man as he is to be understood within the context of Hobbes's natural science. "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens" man: the mood generated by the truth, the true mood, is fear, the fear experienced by a being exposed to a universe which does not care for it by properly equipping it or by guiding it.

According to Strauss the realization of modernity requires that not just philosophers but citizens in general must step outside pre-philosophic awareness: they must become enlightened, atheistical individuals. What distinguishes these modern citizens from philosophers is that their detachment is the result of a dogmatic skepticism, not a zetetic skepticism motivated by love of wisdom. Or, rather, philosophy itself becomes changed; its end is no longer wisdom for its own sake, but rather "to relieve man's estate, or to increase man's power." When nature "lacks intelligence," philosophy becomes effective.

If nature no longer provides guidance to moral and political life, except (in the first wave) as that from which humanity must escape in order to establish itself, what is the source of the principles that structure the modern moral and political imagination? Strauss's third wave of modernity brings to light the answer: it is the contentless human will. However, modernity does not begin with this contentlessness--or at least this lack of content remains implicit in the beginning. Machiavelli and Hobbes assume a certain notion of the good, namely, the fulfillment of human need. So while Strauss describes this first wave negatively, as a lowering of horizons, a removal of restraint, a turning to pleasure as the highest good those philosophers who were moved to initiate modernity were not simply motivated by these negations, but more principally by an affirmation: the

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80 For Strauss this stepping outside of or beyond nature is deceptive. Moderns presuppose as given a moral sphere; they do not question the possibility of political philosophy. In this sense moderns can take up a detached standpoint while assuming the very being of the moral and political. Moderns, for Strauss fail to ask the fundamental question: "What is virtue?" See PPH 152; WIPP 92-4.
81 WIPP 181.
82 WIPP 46.
83 NRH 171-2.
84 TM 296.
85 WIPP 181 and PPH 163-4.
86 It is vital for Strauss's whole argument that the shift to modern political philosophy is not the direct negation of moral phenomenology, but is rather a shift within moral phenomenology. Nihilism is a "moral" phenomenon. See PPH 28-9
87 PPH 165
88 TM 294.
ROBERTSON: THE CLOSING OF THE EARLY MODERN MIND: LEO STRAUSS AND EARLY MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

desire to effect the fulfillment of human needs, and above all those most fundamental and pervasive needs, the passions. Strauss tells us that Machiavelli

achieves the decisive turn toward the notion of philosophy according to which its purpose is to relieve man's estate or to increase man's power or to guide man toward the rational society, the bond and the end of which is enlightened self-interest or the comfortable self-preservation of each of its members. 89

In Strauss's eyes, what is crucial about needs or passions, for the early modern philosophers, is that they are immediately and fully actual and do not require the recognition of a teleological nature to give them structure and significance. These needs exist in the state of nature outside of the city and outside the moral and political imagination of the ancients. In this turn to the body, the early moderns do not simply reduce humanity to animality. The idealism or "political" nature of the hedonism of the early moderns is that it is premised upon a need less easily satisfied than food or protection. 90 That need is the requirement that the fulfillment of these ends be guaranteed:

There is a guarantee for the solution of the political problem because a) the goal is lower, i.e., in harmony with what most men actually desire and b) chance can be conquered. 91

By removing all ends inherent to political life, the early moderns make the end simply the fulfillment of human need. The whole, nature, must serve humanity in its givenness. 92

The truth of the early modern is a revolutionary humanism:

Man is effectively emancipated from the bonds of nature, and therewith the individual is emancipated from those social bonds which antedate all consent or compact, by the emancipation of his productive acquisitiveness, which is necessarily, if accidentally, beneficent and hence susceptible of

89 TM 296.
90 The turn to the fulfilling of human need is not for Strauss the application of detached scientific rationality to a set of finite given problems. The call for guaranteed effectiveness points to an irrational endless (Schopenhaurian) will at the heart of modernity. Strauss brings this out in his discussion of "vanity" in PPH 10-1. The finite ends early modernity would satisfy always remain an inadequate content for the human: NRH 251.
91 "Three Waves" 87. See also PPH 92, 160: the collapse of classical rationalism begins with the perception that reason while able to discern standards is ineffectual in realizing them. At that point reason has become an external observing reason and has lost sight of its phenomenological task. Strauss sees it easily dissolves into a purely technological rationality.
92 TM 207-8. For Strauss Christianity has a crucial intermediary role. Modernity for Strauss is not secularized Christianity, rather it is the rejection of Christianity - but is therefore conditioned by that rejection. Machiavelli replaces humanity for Christian humility, but humility had replaced magnanimity. Humanism with its emphasis on effectivity and populism appeared possible or desirable and magnanimity impossible or undesirable because of Christianity.
becoming the strongest social bond: restraint of the appetites is replaced by a mechanism whose effect is humane.\textsuperscript{93}

According to Strauss, in the early modern period, this revolutionary humanism appears especially through the relationship between natural right and natural law.\textsuperscript{94} What distinguishes modern natural right from classical natural right is that it is a subjective claim, namely, the claim to the fulfillment of one's most pressing passion: self-preservation. According to Strauss, for both Hobbes and Locke natural law does not act as a limit to this right, but rather as a set of calculated principles by which that right might most readily be realized:

Through the shift of emphasis from natural duties or obligations to natural rights, the individual, the ego, had become the center and origin of the moral world, since man--as distinguished from man's end--had become that center or origin.\textsuperscript{95}

Strauss makes use of his hermeneutical method, (the exoteric-esoteric distinction) to eliminate all apparent constraints upon natural right which appear in the texts of Hobbes and Locke. In particular, in the case of Locke, where the text seems to give priority to natural law over natural rights, Strauss engages in complex arguments to demonstrate that Locke means the opposite of this.\textsuperscript{96} And not only is it inherent to this "early modern" revolutionary humanism that there are no natural constraints upon it; equally for Strauss, there must be no supernatural constraint. Atheism is necessary to modern natural right: God's existence would limit, give significance to, and provide consolation from, the expansive, technological society. As Strauss says, "if we do not permit ourselves to be deceived by ephemeral phenomena, we realize that political atheism and political hedonism belong together. They arose together in the same moment and in the same mind."\textsuperscript{97} Again, Strauss expends considerable effort in eradicating every apparent aspect of theism from the texts of the early modern political philosophers.\textsuperscript{98}

Certainly it is an important question whether Strauss is actually right in his interpretations of the various texts he considers. But what is more fundamental to the force and clarity of Strauss's position is that for him early moderns have to be proponents of an atheistical, rights-centred, nature-conquering, society that assumes as a premise belonging to its very starting-point that there can be no pre-existing limits to human self-assertion. For Strauss, as soon as the human stands outside nature, thereby seeing it as simply a barren given, immediately the whole teleological framework necessary to the older moral and political imagination collapses. The relationship between the lowering of horizons and the conquest of nature which Strauss identifies as the two central

\textsuperscript{93} NRH 248.
\textsuperscript{94} PPH 156-7
\textsuperscript{95} NRH 248. See also PPH viii.
\textsuperscript{96} NRH 202-20; WIPP 197-220.
\textsuperscript{97} NRH 169.
\textsuperscript{98} See, for example, WIPP 183-96 and SPPP 220-23.
components in Machiavelli's position (and thus in the very origins of modernity) has its necessity in this movement beyond nature:

The discovery of the Archimedean point outside of everything given, or the discovery of a radical freedom, promises the conquest of everything given and thus destroys the natural basis of the radical distinction between philosophers and non-philosophers. Yet in looking forward to the extreme consequences of Machiavelli's action, we must not forget the fact that for Machiavelli himself the domination of necessity remains the indispensable condition of every great achievement and in particular of his own: the transition or the jump from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom will be the inglorious death of the very possibility of human excellence.  

It is the necessity of the opposition between the ancients and the moderns, between natural law and natural right, between natural order and human freedom, that closes down the possibility of understanding early modernity from a Straussian standpoint. Or, to put it less polemically: it is at least worth considering that the history of political thought need not be defined through the requirements of a certain moral and political phenomenology. To think beyond the apparent necessities of this phenomenology might allow us to see the early modern period as characterized by a uniting, in their very difference, of natural law and natural right, of natural order and human freedom. It may be the case that the "contradictions" of Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke, are only our contradictions. Modernity need not be defined solely in terms of a revolutionary humanism. The recovery of early modernity in its own terms would be not only the recovery of a past that belongs to us: it may also provide us with suggestions as to how to think beyond the apparent necessity of opposing existential phenomenology to revolutionary humanism, an opposition that seems to benight our own thinking.

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