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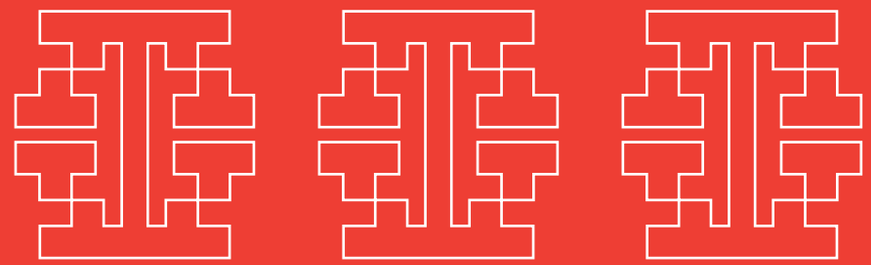

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Book Reviews

When Does Ontotheology Begin? Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus[1]

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The purpose of this essay is to compare the metaphysics of Aquinas and Scotus by considering Heidegger's interpretation of metaphysics as ontotheology. When does metaphysics as ontotheology begin? This question is certainly not new, and has already received an array of answers. First of all there is Heidegger's own answer that ontotheology is constitutive of the history of metaphysics. Therefore, ontotheology had already begun with Aristotle and even, in a sense, before him. Secondly, there are those who say that ontotheology had begun at a precise moment in the history of metaphysics. In this case, it remains to be decided at which moment it begins. One possible answer to this question is that by E.-H. Weber, who makes Henry of Ghent the beginning of ontotheology: "The fact remains that his understanding of God-Being [*Dieu-Etre*] as the first object of our knowledge and, thereby, the basis for all knowledge constitutes the first actual ontotheology of the Latin world."[2] Another possible answer to this question is that given by Alain de Libera, who attributes the beginning of

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1. [Olivier Boulnois, "Quand commence l'ontothéologie? Aristote, Thomas d'Aquin et Duns Scot," in *Revue thomiste* 95, no. 1 (1995): 85-108. Translated by Nathan R. Strunk. Editorial notes are in brackets. When possible, English translations have been cited for the sources cited by Boulnois. I also wish to acknowledge Hadi Fakhoury for bringing this translation to completion with his outstanding editorial guidance.]

2. Edouard-Henri Wéber, "Eckhart et l'ontothéologie: histoire et conditions d'une rupture," in *Maître Eckhart à Paris, Une critique médiévale de l'ontothéologie* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1984), 13-83 [p. 80]. The text cited above can be supplemented by the following: "an ontotheology postulating an immediate intuition of an absolute God-Being [*Dieu-Être*] as the first act of intellection" (p. 53); and, "Although he integrated many of the givens of Aristotelian empiricism, the master of Ghent subordinates these givens to a theological Platonism transformed by an ontotheology unfettered by Neoplatonic negativity" (p. 79); other texts attribute an "ontotheological positivism" (p. 81) to both Duns Scotus and Henry of Ghent; "John Duns Scotus shares…this ontotheology that defines the reality of God exclusively through the notion of Being or Pure Existence" (p. 82).

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ontotheology to Henry of Ghent's immediate successors. Citing Heidegger – "The science of being as such is intrinsically onto-theological"[3] – de Libera writes, "for a medievalist, this characterization of the essence of Aristotelian metaphysics is actually just one of many Latin interpretations of Avicenna that became established in the university and that, by way of twentieth century Neo-Scholasticism, had decisively pervaded the Heideggerian vision of metaphysics; namely, Scotism. In fact, it is according to Scotus – as an interpreter of Avicenna and not according to Aristotle himself – that metaphysics is presented as a science that has for its object being in common and the most eminent being, God."[4] There is still a third possibility that maintains that ontotheology is an ambiguous term that has in one sense its beginning with the metaphysical project as such, but in another sense begins at a precise moment in the history of metaphysics. It is this last route that I wish to pursue here. Two questions arise: In what sense can we speak of ontotheology in both cases? When does it begin in each case?

Methodological Problems: The Concept of Ontotheology

What is ontotheology? Is there a concept of metaphysics as a discipline that is common to every historical instance? Is there only one concept of metaphysics? At the very least, this is what ontotheology means to Heidegger. Let me summarize his thesis according to four propositions:[5]

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3. Martin Heidegger, "Hegel et son concept de l'expérience," in *Chemins qui ne mènent nulle part* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), 161. [Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 146.]

4. Alain de Libera, *La Philosophie médiévale* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1989), 72-73. One could cite the entirety of page 73, and most notably the following: "This problem of the univocity of being, which in a sense sidesteps both the 'Greek-Latin' question of transference *in divinis* and the Aristotelian problematic of the multiple meanings of being, cannot stand as the paradigm for the 'original onto-theological constitution' of metaphysics inherited from Aristotle. Rather, basically Christian, it also essentially stems from the history of Avicennism though, of course, this does not comprehensively explain the whole history of onto-theology." Also see the comments in O. Boulnois, *Jean Duns Scot: Sur la connaissance de Dieu et l'univocité de l'étant* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1988), 78-80.

5. Martin Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Kloshermann Verlag, 1992), 19 (Introduction):

(1) "Die Metaphysik sagt, was das Seiende als das Seiende ist. Sie enthält einen λόγος (Aussage) über das ὄν (das Seiende). Der spätere Titel 'Ontologie'

1. "Metaphysics states what beings are as beings. It offers a λόγος (statement) about the ὄν (beings). The later title 'ontology' characterizes its essence, provided, of course, that we understand it in accordance with its proper significance and not through its narrow Scholastic meaning." This is Heidegger's first thesis; namely, there is a general essence of metaphysics as an autonomous discipline that is more prevalent and broader than the Scholastic and historical denomination of "ontology," which describes a particular science in a specific epoch, the 17th century. Thus, there is an ontology that is not necessarily "ontology."

2. "Its representing concerns beings as beings." According to this second thesis, ontology begins precisely when there is a philosophical consideration of beings qua beings. However, this is only possible if there is a *representation* of being, a theory of being insofar as it is duplicated in an intellective second presence.

3. "In this manner, metaphysics always represents beings as such in their totality; it represents the beingness of beings (the οὐσία of the ὄν)." For the third thesis, ontology is the most universal science of all, because it concerns all things without exception.

4. Nevertheless, there is another side to metaphysics. "But metaphysics represents the beingness of beings in a twofold manner: first as the totality of beings as such with respect to their most universal traits (ὄν καθόλου, κοινον); but, secondly and at the same time, as the totality of beings as such in the sense of the highest or divine being (ὄν καθόλου ἀκρότατον, θεῖον)." Therefore, metaphysics is both ontology and theology. However, in what sense does metaphysics take on this "twofold manner"? On this point,

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kennzeichnet ihr Wesen, gesetzt freilich, dass wir ihn nach seinem eigentlichen Gehalt und nicht in der schulmässigen Verengung auffassen."

(2) "Ihr Vorstellen gilt dem Seiendem als dem Seiendem."

(3) "In solcher Weise stellt die Metaphysik überall das Seinde als solches in Ganzen, die Seiendheit des Seienden vor (die οὐσία des ὄν)."

(4) "Aber die Metaphysik stellt die Seiendheit des Seienden in zwiefacher Weise vor: einmal das Ganze des Seienden als solchen im Sinne seiner allgemeinsten Züge (ὄν καθόλου, κοινον); zugleich aber das Ganze des Seienden als solchen im Sinne des höchsten und darum göttlichen Seienden (ὄν καθόλου ἀκρότατον, θεῖον)."

[For English, see Martin Heidegger, Introduction to "What is Metaphysics?," in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 287.]

Heidegger entertains two interpretations of metaphysics.

For the first interpretation, there are two moments in metaphysics; namely, a universal moment in which one speaks of beings in general and a second moment in which one speaks of a species of being, divine being. This interpretation amounts to the same as the distinction between a *metaphysica generalis*, which treats beings as such, and a *metaphysica specialis*, treating a specific being (i.e. God), which, by reason of this distinction, is regarded both as being and divine. This interpretation is supported by the first three theses above, which admit a general theory of being qua being without appealing to a specific science of God. However, this distinction is not what is most original or interesting in Heidegger's understanding of metaphysics.

There is a second interpretation of metaphysics, which he presents here and which does not refer to the traditional, Scholastic division of metaphysics. It is the idea of a double signification of every metaphysical consideration, and not only that of a twofold domain of metaphysics. Anytime we consider the totality of being, we always regard it in a dual manner: through its general attributes and as "supreme being." Rather than being made from two parts, metaphysics is implicitly always constituted through this dual consideration of being. This explains why there is only one concept of metaphysics: it is not made of two parts whereby two conceptions of being with different objects are adjoined, but rather in every aspect metaphysics involves the dual aspect of being qua being in general and qua eminence. It is always "dimorphic."

According to Heidegger the three principal traits of metaphysics are representation, universality, and eminence. They are bound together by a mutual relation. "Because it represents beings as beings, metaphysics is, in a twofold and yet unitary manner, the truth of beings in their universality and in the highest being."[6] Because metaphysics is a representation of beings *qua beings*, it is a representation of beings through a being and therefore a *representation* of beings. This is why there is an "ontotheological essence of

6. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?*, 19. "Die Metaphysik ist in sich, und zwar weil sie das Seiende als das Seiende zur Vorstellung bringt, zwiefach-einig die Wahrheit des Seienden im Allgemeinen und im Höchsten. Sie ist, ihrem Wesen nach, zugleich Ontologie im engeren Sinne und Theologie." [Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 287. Note that Boulnois cites an additional sentence in the original not quoted in the body of the article: "According to its essence, metaphysics is at the same time both ontology in the narrower sense, and theology."]

metaphysics": metaphysics depends on a phenomenological equivocity of being that is simultaneously content and form, the contents and container, of all our thoughts and perceptions.

We ought not to forget that this interpretation is not merely a historical claim concerning metaphysics as a science. The concept of ontotheology is developed in a later introduction (1949) to the important conference, "What is Metaphysics?" (1929). Consequently, the introduction serves a dual purpose: to explain the past and show how it leads to the present, that is, from the concept (then surpassed) of metaphysics for Heidegger in 1929, and to the actual concept of the surpassing of metaphysics in 1949, when this text was published. The concept of the "essence of metaphysics" is a teleological concept intended to show how Heidegger's interpretation is historically true. In the later introduction, the concept of ontotheology explains the abandonment and failure of the concept of "fundamental ontology" – the backdrop for the Heideggerian recovery of a metaphysical ideal. It would be pointless to continue bracketing *theologia* in a new *ontology* (a "fundamental ontology") since it is impossible to separate one from the other.

Heidegger had already developed this insight[7] in his interpretation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In the winter semester course of 1930-1931, Heidegger remarks: "*Ontology* is the speculatively conceived and thus speculatively grounded interpretation of being, but in such a way that the actual being [*Seiendes*] is the absolute Θεός…The speculative [Hegelian] interpretation of being is *onto-theo-logy*."[8] God himself as absolute knowledge of the absolute is the essence of being and of λόγος. Thus, for Hegel the concept of ontotheology assumes responsibility for and determines the destiny of metaphysics so that the history of metaphysics culminates in Hegel's speculative interpretation of being. This interpretation is quite

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7. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, GA 29/30 (Francfort-sur-le-Main, 1983). [Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, and Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001).]

8. Martin Heidegger, *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, GA 32 (Francfort-sur-le-Main, 1980), 141. [Martin Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 98. It should be noted that the ellipsis omits the following sentence, "It is from the being [*Sein*] of the absolute that all beings and the λόγος are determined."]

clear, but a question remains: can one say that the end of metaphysics in Hegel's interpretation of metaphysics is the universal status of metaphysics in general?

In 1930-1931, Heidegger expresses very revealing reservations on this subject. He writes, "We know also that Aristotle already brought philosophy in the genuine sense in very close connection with θεολογικὴ ἐπιστὴμη, without being able to explain by a direct interpretation what the relationship is between the question concerning ὄν ᾗ ὄν and the question of θεῖον."[9] The point is apparent: we cannot find an explicit link between ontology and theology in the works of Aristotle. This link is created by the interpreter (Heidegger) from a circuitous perspective: it is deduced from the end of metaphysics in Hegel's philosophy and carried over to the beginning of metaphysics in Aristotle, which Hegel is meant to complete.[10]

Can we take up this conception and assume this deduction? Can we say that there is an *essence* of metaphysics, a common program underlying everything called metaphysics in the history of Western thought? (For example, in the theory of metaphysics developed by Thomas Aquinas and Scotus?) Is there a single and universal essence of metaphysics?

My second concern stems from the terminology used by Heidegger. The term "ontotheology" had a long history before him.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant uses the term "ontotheology," but it is not part of the conception of metaphysics; he wants to define a particular kind of theology, following (as was customary at the time[11]) the vocabulary of Wolff. Kant states, "If by theology I mean the cognition of the original being, then this theology is of two kinds. One kind is based on mere reason (*theologia rationalis*); the other kind is based on revelation (*theologia revelata*)."[12] If the first understands its object through pure reason

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9. Heidegger, *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 141-142. [Eng. trans., 98.]

10. Heidegger, *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 183. [Eng. trans., 126: "The inquiry into the ὄν was onto-logical ever since its beginning with the ancients, but at the same time it was already with Plato and Aristotle onto-theo-logical, even if it was correspondingly not conceptually developed."]

11. For example, D'Alembert, *Discours préliminaire de l'Encyclopédie* (1759).

12. E. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, II, 3, 7 (A631/B659) (Darmstadt, 1975), 556: "Wenn ich unter Theologie die Erkenntnis des Urwesens verstehe, so ist sie entweder die aus blosser Vernunft (*theolgia rationalis*) oder aus Offenbarung (*revelata*)." [Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1996), 609.]

with pure transcendental concepts (like *ens originarium*, *realissimum*, *ens entium*), it is called transcendental theology. The transcendental theologian, who can be called a deist, assumes that we can know in any event the existence of a first being through pure reason, but that the concept we obtain is only transcendental: he conceives it as a being that has complete reality, but is not capable of being determined any further. The name God "simply represents" a *cause of the world* and not a free creator. When the existence of this supreme being is derived from experience in general, this knowledge is called cosmotheology; when it cognizes this existence "through mere concepts without the aid of the least experience…it is called ontotheology" (the ideal of pure reason).[13] To summarize: ontotheology is for Kant a theory of God obtained by pure reason with pure transcendental concepts, which imply God's existence as *ens realissimum*. To put it even more precisely: ontotheology is a theory of being wherein being makes possible what Kant calls an "ontological proof."

Can we extend this concept, which for Kant describes a part of natural theology, to every development of metaphysical science? Can we extend this conception of metaphysics, corresponding to a particular stage in the history of metaphysics (that of Leibniz and Wolff, of which Kant is thinking here) to every period of metaphysics? This sense can readily apply to Hegel for whom total actuality is ultimately nothing but an immense ontological proof. However, can we extend this concept to two thinkers as distinct as Thomas Aquinas and Scotus, knowing moreover that the former entirely rejects the validity of the argument by Saint Anselm, and the latter requires it be "coloured" by other premises? This is why we must focus on the interpretation of metaphysics given by Thomas Aquinas and Scotus, and that from a historical point of view.

The Three Dimensions of Aristotelian Metaphysics

Heidegger's interpretation of ontotheology is a response to the problem of the unity of Aristotelian metaphysics as it had been framed by Natorp and Jaeger. Can we only say that the *same* essence of metaphysics runs

13. Kant, *Kritik der reinem Vernunft*, II, 3, 7 (A632/B660): "Oder glaubt durch blosse Begriffe, ohne Beihülfe der mindesten Erfahrung, sein Dasein zu erkennen, und wird *Ontotheologie* genannt." [Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 610.]

throughout the fourteen books much later called metaphysics by a flummoxed librarian? Heidegger states, "In the metaphysics of Aristotle, the unconcealedness of beings as such has specifically developed in this twofold manner (*Metaphysics,* Γ, E, K)."[14] According to him, such a dimorphic account of being is already present in the principal books of Aristotelian metaphysics. But is it really this simple?

In general, a close connection between ontology and theology is a very common interpretation hardly unique to Heidegger. For example, this is also Tricot's interpretation: "From the very beginning of the treatise (A, 1), metaphysics had been defined as the science of first principles and first causes. Pursuant to this question [i.e. what is metaphysics?], Aristotle answers in the opening of Book Γ that the object of metaphysics is being qua being and its essential attributes."[15] However, other questions remain: what is being qua being? Is it universal being or a particular being? In Book E, Aristotle indicates that being qua being is absolute being, and thus "the true name of metaphysics is theology."[16] Here, we have a very good example of what Heidegger meant when he asserted that Aristotle "had already brought philosophy in the genuine sense in very close connection with θεολογικὴ ἐπιστὴμη, without being able to explain by a direct interpretation what the relationship is between the question concerning ὂν ἧ ὂν and the question of θεῖον." What Heidegger adds to this generally traditional interpretation is that he novelly explains this continuity by a dimorphic account of being. However, is this account completely justified?

If we briefly consider the three books mentioned by Heidegger (Γ, E, K), we discover varying problems.

Book Γ begins with an important thesis: "There is a science that studies being qua being."[17] This is not a particular science since particular sciences only consider a specific aspect of being, but rather a universal and

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14. M. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik*?, 19: "Die Unverborgenheit des Seienden als seines solchen hat sich in der Metaphysik des Aristoteles eigens in dieses Zwiefache herausgebildet (vgl. Met. Γ, E, K)." [Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 287.]

15. Aristotle, *La Métaphysique*, I, ed. Jules Tricot (Paris: Vrin, 1974), 324.

16. Aristotle, *La Métaphysique*, 324: "Metaphysics studies being qua being in its plentitude and in its totality. […] But this universality does not exclude individuality, and the true name of metaphysics is theology."

17. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Γ, 1, 1003a20. [Aristotle, *Metaphysics: Books 1-IX*, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 271, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 147.]

common science. This is precisely what will later be called ontology. If we seek the first principles of being, we will discover them included in this science. The first principles are also the most common principles.[18] This science has nothing to do with intelligible or separated substances like God and the intelligences. Book Γ does not exactly allow for Heidegger's dimorphic interpretation. Instead, it describes a universal science, the science of being qua being, which will much later be called ontology. Though it does mention a "first philosophy" (theology) and a "second philosophy" (physics), it does so just to say: "…none of the other sciences contemplate being generally qua being; they divide off some portion of it and study the attribute of this portion."[19] Therefore, theology is distinct from metaphysics as a particular discourse and not a dimorphic reverse-side of a common discourse. First philosophy, or theology, considers an aspect of being and is a special, particular part of the science of being qua being or what will later be called general metaphysics.

Book E lends more support to Heidegger's (as well as Tricot's) interpretation. It begins by reflecting on the difference between the science of being qua being and particular sciences, especially physics, mathematics, and theology, and concludes that there is a connection between ontology and theology: "…if there is a substance which is immutable, the science which studies this will be prior to physics, and will be primary philosophy, and universal in this sense, that it is primary. And it will be the province of this science to study being qua being; what it is, and what the attributes are which belong to it qua being."[20] Clearly, we have here a key text for an interpretation of the link between ontology and theology. It is a very Platonic text: theology being the science of the first principle, it can become – like the science of the good according to Plato – a science of all things because it is the science of their principle (i.e. the Good). This is why Tricot and Heidegger's interpretation focuses on Book E, but does it justify what Heidegger intends, that metaphysics is simultaneously and under the same conditions – in a dimorphic way – an ontology and a theology?

This is very doubtful. The apparent meaning of this text is that there

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18. Cf. Pierre Aubenque, *Le Problème de l'être chez Aristote* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1962), 220.

19. Aristotle, *Metaph*. Γ, 1, 1003a22 ss. [Eng. trans., 147.]

20. Aristotle, *Metaph.* E, 1, 1026a28-32. [Eng. trans., 297-299.]

are two different sciences; a general science, ontology, and another specific science, theology. Yet, knowledge of a principle is *a fortiori* knowledge of its consequences. The tentative unity of these two sciences is governed by a Platonic idea: the science of the principle orders the science of all things. This is why "first philosophy" or theology, which considers things "immutable and separated from matter,"[21] intermixes with the "science of being qua being": the highest particular object of ontology is the very same object of theology. Theology treats being qua being because it deals with its most eminent aspect. However, this does not mean that ontology and theology are identical; it only shows that the second science is part of the first. They are rivals, yet distinct. Thus, this assertion does not confirm the *ontotheological constitution* of metaphysics. It merely correlates the two sciences, ontology (or metaphysics) and theology.

The third book mentioned by Heidegger, Book K, is truly *the* key text. It expands upon the assertion of Book E: the science of being qua being is "universal because of its priority."[22] This text goes a step further toward Heidegger's interpretation by affirming that one and the same science is both ontology and theology. "There is a science of being qua being and the separately existent."[23] However, this text's authenticity is disputed. First, for philosophical reasons: it asks whether the science of being qua being should be considered a universal science,[24] which is already evident for Aristotle. Second, for philological reasons advanced by Natorp, Moraux, and Aubenque. Thus, the interpretation of metaphysics as ontotheology seems to be the endeavor of a student striving to unify, by way of a Platonic argument, the varying aspects of Aristotle's thought. It therefore already belongs to a certain kind of commentary on the *Metaphysics* rather than to the principal intention of Aristotle.

Thus, the concept of ontotheology is very useful if one wishes to understand one predominant interpretation of Aristotle, but it lacks rigor for explaining the unity of Aristotle's metaphysics. Even if one thinks the *Cor-*

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21. Aristotle, Metaph. E, 1, 1026a16. [Eng. trans., 297.]

22. Aristotle, *Metaph*. K, 7, 1064b13. [Aristotle, *Metaphysics: Books X-XIV*, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 287, trans. Hugh Tredennick and G. Cyril Armstrong (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 89.]

23. Aristotle, *Metaph*. K, 7, 1064a28. [Eng. trans., 87.]

24. Aristotle, *Metaph*. K, 7, 1064b9. [Eng. trans., 89: "The question might be raised as to whether the science of being qua being should be regarded as universal or not."]

pus aristotelicum includes Book K, one must still show how the systematic unity in it can explain the different aspects described in Book Γ and Book E.

Can one say that this identification had been made by later commentators of Aristotle? Had it been made by Thomas Aquinas? Had it been made by Scotus? In other words, is there an ontotheological constitution of metaphysics in these two authors?

Thomas Aquinas

Aquinas mentioned a synthesis of metaphysics understood precisely as theology. It is supported by a Neoplatonic interpretation. This interpretation is cited in his commentary on *The Book of Causes*, which was initially attributed to Aristotle before Aquinas showed how it had been inspired by Proclus. In his commentary on the fourth proposition of *The Book of Causes*, Thomas writes that for the Platonists "the more common something is the more it is separate"[25]; furthermore, the more common it is, the more it is participated in by that which is posterior to it. Thus, the Platonists arrive at a first principle, which is the One and the Good itself, separated from everything that proceeds from it. Following from this common and separate principle is common being. Consequently, being is common and separate, but created by the One and participates in him. For this interpretation of metaphysics, knowledge of immaterial substances is the object of metaphysical inquiry. Ontology is simultaneously theology, because the more one considers common being the more one considers being as separated. The more one considers separate being as such, the more one considers its participation in a first principle, God. According to this interpretation, we could possibly say that this is an ontotheology in a dimorphic sense of the term, because being and God are two sides of the same phenomenon. And yet, we could not say definitively that there is an ontotheology, because there is no place for a neutral ontology. Every conception of being simultaneously is a consideration of God, since we must consider how it participates in God. I propose calling this interpretation a *theo-ontology* since it is the divine that

25. Thomas Aquinas, *In librum De causis expositio*, prop. 4, § 98, ed. C. Pera (Turin: Marietti, 1955), 28: "Secundum positiones platonicas […] quanto aliquid est communius, tanto ponebant illud esse separatum." [Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Book of Causes*, trans. Vincent A Guagliardo, Charles R. Hess, and Richard C. Taylor (Washington D.C.: CUA Press, 1996), 30.]

determines and saturates the interpretation of the ὄν and not the other way around.

However, the question remains: Is this interpretation that of Thomas Aquinas? No, since Thomas only mentions it in a commentary as a Neoplatonic position inspired by Proclus and Denys, and thus not as his own theory.

In fact, even if he does not explicitly reject this notion, Thomas developed another, more complex theory of metaphysics, which we can find in the Prologue to his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. It is organized around the idea that all particular sciences are ordered toward a single, unnamed science that is the most intelligible because it "treats the most intelligible objects."

"Most intelligible objects" has three meanings.[26] First, it signifies "the

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26. Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicae Aristotelis expositio*, Prooemium, § 4, 5, 6, ed. R. Imbach, *Prologe zu den Aristoteles-Kommentaren* (Frankfurt-Am-Main, 1993), 100 [cf. ed. Cathala (Turin: Marietti, 1950) p. 1]: "Maxime autem intelligibilia tripliciter assumere possumus.

Primo quidem ex ordine intelligendi. Nam ex quibus intellectus certitudinem, accipit, videntur esse intelligibilia magis. Unde, cum certitudo scientiae per intellectum acquiratur ex causis, causarum cognitio maxime intellectualis esse videtur […].

Secundo ex comparatione intellectus ad sensum. Nam, cum sensus sit cognitio particularium, intellectus per hoc ab ipso differre videtur, quod universalia comprehendit. Unde et illa scientia maxime est intellectualis, quae circa principia maxime universalia versatur. Quae quidem sunt ens, et ae quae consequuntur ens, ut unum et multa, potentia et actus […].

Tertio, ex ipsa cognitione intellectus. Nam cum unaquaeque res ex hoc ipso vim intellectivam habeat, quod est a materia immunis, oportet illa esse maxime intelligibilia, quae sunt maxime a materia separata […], sicut Deus et intelligentiae."

["Now the phrase 'most intelligible objects' can be understood in three ways. First, from the viewpoint of the order of knowing; for those things from which the intellect derives certitude seem to be the more intelligible. Therefore, since the certitude of science is acquired by the intellect knowing causes, a knowledge of causes seems to be intellectual in the highest degree […].

Second, the phrase can be understood by comparing the intellect with the senses; for while sensory perception is a knowledge of particulars, the intellect seems to differ from sense by reason of the fact that it comprehends universals. Hence, the science is pre-eminently intellectual which deals with the most universal principles. These principles are being and those things which naturally accompany being, such as unity and plurality, potency and act […].

Third, this phrase can be understood from the viewpoint of the intellect's own knowledge. For since each thing has intellective power by virtue of being free from matter, those things much be intelligible in the highest degree which are altogether separate from matter […] as God and the intelligible substances." Quoted from Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary*

first causes." This science is called first philosophy (*prima philosophia*). Second, it signifies "universal principles" such as being, unity, and the transcendentals. This science is called metaphysics (*metaphysica*). Evidently, Aquinas is here drawing upon Book Γ of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Third, it signifies "those things separate from matter": God and intelligent substances. This science is called theology (*theologia*).

Heidegger, who commented on this text during the winter semester of 1929-1930 just before he conceived the concept of ontotheology, is very critical towards Thomas Aquinas.[27] For Heidegger, these three disparate sciences do not constitute a *science* because they do not constitute *a* single science. There is no substantial reflection on the status of what is common to the three sciences because the unity of these three equivocal meanings is obtained only through faith. Only an account presupposing a reciprocal implication of ontology and theology can provide a favorable view of this science. (Heidegger does not use the word "ontotheology" here, but he puts in place all the milestones that will lead to the term.)

In fact, for Thomas, these sciences are not united because they lead to the same object (God), they are united because they begin from the same subject. One must be careful: these three aspects do not define the *subject* of metaphysics. According to Aristotle, every science has a *subject* and researches its principles (*Posterior Analytics*). These three sciences do not correspond to a different subject, to a genre, or particular domain. They correspond to an *object*, a point of view or way of *seeing* something that is different for each one. There is, then, a convergence of the three metaphysical accounts; namely, being is the subject-genus of these sciences. One and the same science must study the subject-genus and the causes of this genre. This is why the same science that studies being studies the immaterial substances, which are the universal causes of *ens commune*, the subject of this science.

Thomas' commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate* shows how these three trajectories of metaphysics are genuinely coordinated.

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on Aristotle's Metaphysics, trans. John P. Rowan (Notre Dame, IN.: Dumb Ox Books, 1995), xxix-xxx.]

27. Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Indianapolis, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1995), 44.

1. Causality

"Does divine science treat of what exists without matter and motion?"[28] The same science must consider both *ens commune* and the principles of all things *secundum quod in ente communicant* [insofar as they share in being]. It considers principles insofar as they are the principles of all things, common principles. There are two kinds of commonality according to Avicenna's *Sufficientia*. The first kind is by predication when something in common is predicated to all its subjects as when one says, "The form is common to all forms." Another kind is by causality when one says, "There is only one common principle that is common to everything that can be engendered from it." The second kind of commonality refers to the pre-eminence of a common cause. This cause is common because it is first as we have already seen in Book E of Aristotle.

For this understanding of commonality everything can be derived from a universal first principle of being, perfectly actual and without matter. This principle, therefore, is divine.

However, the divine itself is considered in a twofold manner, bringing about a twofold science. First, the divine is studied as principle: it is considered by philosophers on the basis of its effects. Thus, the divine is studied by the science of being qua being. What Aquinas calls divine science belongs here. Second, the divine can be considered in itself as it is knowable insofar as it reveals itself. Thus, it is considered by *Scriptura sacra*.

The principal object of first philosophy is the principle of its subject: that which is separate from matter (God). It is an ontotheology if we understand by this the passage from that-which-is-common to its common principle, from being to God (with a twofold domain). However, we ought not to maintain that first philosophy considers God insofar as God is participated by being (i.e. in a dimorphic manner).

On the contrary, the theology of sacred scripture explicitly has that-which-is-separate-from-matter, God, for its subject. Christian theology is not included in the ontotheological structuring of the first division of meta-

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28. Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio super librum Boethii De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 4, ed. B. Decker (Leiden: Brill, 1959), 190. Henceforth cited as *Super librum De Trinitate*: "Utrum divina scientia sit de his quae sunt sine materia et motu" [Thomas Aquinas, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences: Questions V and VI of his Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*, trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1986), 46.]

physics. However, as we know from Thomas Aquinas himself, the object of theology is not simply a part of the object of ontology: *esse subsistens* is not a part of the general concept of *esse*. As we have seen above, *esse subsistens* has a causal priority so that its *esse* is not part of *ens commune*, but is rather the principle of any created participation. *Ens commune* has a created *esse*, distinct from the *esse* of the Creator. Therefore, God is not included in the subject of metaphysics; rather, God is the principle of this subject.

Since God is the principle of the subject of metaphysics, God is the end of metaphysics as a science. It can be reached by a *reductio*, a return to a principle that is universal because it is simple. "The human intellect knows universal being. For this reason, it naturally desires to know its cause, which is God alone."[29] This inclination steers the intellect toward a God who is beyond common being (though not beyond being), because it is *ipsum esse*, the cause of every being, *ens commune*.

2. Separation

The issue of separation is developed in Thomas Aquinas' commentary on Boethius.[30] In this text, Boethius exposits the objects of physics, mathematics, and theology. Physics is based on that which moves and is not separated from matter (*inabstracta*): its subject cannot be separated from matter. Mathematics is based on that which is without movement yet not separate from matter. Theology is based on that which is without movement and inseparable (*abstracta*).[31] There are, however, different types of abstraction listed in q. 5, a. 1:

First, certain things depend *secundum esse* on matter and therefore they *must* exist in it. Among these things are those that cannot be considered (*secundum intellectum*) apart from it like physical objects, and those that

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29. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, III, c. 25 (Turin: Marietti, 1961), no. 2066, 33: "Intellectus autem humanus cognoscit ens universale. Desiderat igitur naturaliter cognoscere causam ejus, quae solum Deus est." [Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles, III*: *Providence, Part I*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 102.]

30. Aquinas, *Super librum De Trinitate*, expositio cap. II, 160. [Aquinas, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, 14.]

31. In fact, Aquinas interprets as *inseparabilis* where Aristotle has *choriston* (separated), but he understands it in the same manner: the divine is inseparable because it is absolutely separated from matter. It cannot be separated from it because it cannot be with it (cf. *Super librum De Trinitate*, 160). [Aquinas, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, 14.]

can be abstracted from it that do not require matter to be comprehended (*secundum intellectum*) like mathematical objects.

Second, there are certain things that do not depend on matter *secundum esse* for they can exist without it. Among these are those that have never been in matter like God and the angels, which belong to what Aquinas calls "theology." There are yet others that are not necessarily in matter like being, substance, quality, and potency and act, which are transcendental objects that belong to what is now called "ontology."

Philosophical theology is based on a subject which is "that-which-is-not-necessarily-part-of-matter," which can be called "transcendental," and leads to that which is purely transcendent. Thus, metaphysics is the science of the transcendental, but the study of the divine is its purpose and fulfillment.[32] There is also a double sense of separation, leading from abstract being to separated divinity. This avenue leads to the God beyond common being, because God is absolutely separate, more separate than the transcendentals.

3. Universality

Is a union with theology the ultimate purpose of metaphysics as in *The Book of Causes* or in Avicenna? Not exactly. The unity of metaphysics is given through an aspect of its subject: common, universal being, separate from matter and movement. However, there are two kinds of separation: an object that cannot be necessarily separate or necessarily, absolutely separated being. In the first case, we consider the subject of this science, which is being, and we follow what Thomas calls metaphysics. In the second case, we consider the principle of this subject, which leads us towards what he calls divine science. The second dimension is included in the first. However, it is not the ultimate meaning of metaphysics. It is presented in a restrictive manner by Thomas: "Now although the subject of this science is being in general, the whole of it is predicated of those things which are separate from

32. Cf. Jan A. Aertsen, "Die Lehre der Transzendentalien und die Metaphysik, Der Kommentar von Thomas von Aquin zum IV, Buch der *Metaphysica*," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 35 (1988): 293-316, to which I owe my analysis of [Aquinas'] commentary on Boethius. Also see *Super librum De Trinitate*, expositio cap II, 160, and q. 5, a. 1, 161 ss. [Aquinas, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, 14.]

matter both in their intelligible constitution and in being (*esse*)."[33] Even if the subject of metaphysics is being, even if it is principally an ontology, it can also be extended through its totality (in a dimorphic manner) to a theological dimension since God is an abstract [*abstracta*] object, but in another sense.

This ontotheological position is inspired by Aristotle, Book E.

The divine is a universal principle in a twofold sense: it is a universal cause (the principle of everything else) and, when it causes, it causes the universal being of everything. Thus, each being has its own *esse*, which is that which is most intimate to it and is the formal principle of its subsistence. The closer a form is to its principle, the more it is both universal and intimate to the thing in question.[34] God is simultaneously the principle cause and the formal principle. God is not only a cause, but also the giver of forms. God not only creates the forms that are the principles of action in creatures, but maintains their power and their activity.[35]

In this interpretation, being is universal because it is first. The more being is universal, the more it is elevated in the hierarchy of being. The more it is common, the more it is proper to a particular thing. The more it is transcendent, the more it is immanent. The more it is anterior, the more it is simple and perfect.[36] Being is simultaneously the most eminent and

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33. Thomas Aquinas, *In Met*., Prooemium, § 8, 102 (Turin, p. 2): "Quamvis autem subjectum hujus scientiae sit ens commune, dicitur tamen tota de his quae sunt separata a materia secundum esse et rationem." [Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans. John P. Rowan (Notre Dame, IN.: Dumb Ox Books, 1995), xxx.]

34. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae I Pars*, q. 105, a. 5: "Et quia forma Dei est intra rem, et tanto magis quanto consideratur ut prior et universalior, et ipse Deus est proprie causa ipsius esse universalis in rebus omnibus quod inter omnia est magis intimum rebus, sequitur quod Deus in omnibus intime operetur." [Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, trans. English Dominican Fathers (Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1948), 519: "And since a form of a thing is within the thing, and all the more, as it approaches near to the first and universal cause; and because in all things God himself is properly the cause of universal being which is innermost in all things; it follows that in all things God works intimately."]

35. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae I Pars*, q. 105, a. 5: "Deus non solum est causa actionum in quantum dat formam quod est principium actionis […] sed etiam sicut conservans formas et virtutes rerum." [Eng. trans., 519: "And thus all agents act in virtue of God himself; He is the cause of action in every action…preserving the forms and powers of things."]

36. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae I Pars*, q. 82, a. 3: "Quanto autem aliquid est simplicius et abstractius, tanto secundum se est nobilius et altius"; cf. also *ibid*., ad 2: "illud quod est prius

the most universal, because it is both the act of everything and that which is most perfect in each of them. "[The Platonists maintained that] the more common something is, the more separate it is."[37] This Platonic synthesis is a form of ontotheology par excellence, which I have called a theo-ontology.

This perspective is still accepted in the *Summae theologiae 1 Pars* (before 1268), but, as we have seen, it is rejected in the commentary on *The Book of Causes* (1272). The gap, of course, is not only chronological, it derives from different problematics and different contexts. One must recognize that the oeuvre of Thomas is not a system deduced from a singular principle. The purpose differs when it is a theological ascent toward the first principle (*Summa theologiae*) or a philosophical and philological exegesis of Aristotle.

By and large, in his commentaries on philosophy Thomas casts serious reservations on this subject perhaps in deference to the authority of the author on which he is commenting.

In his commentary on Book E (between 1270 and 1272), he writes: "However, we must remember that even though things which are separate from matter and motion in being and in their intelligible structure belong to the study of first philosophy, still the philosopher not only investigates these but also sensible things inasmuch as they are beings."[38] One could, of course, consider a simpler synthesis of theology and philosophy like the interpretation of Avicenna, which combines separate divine being with separate being. "Unless, perhaps we may say, as Avicenna does, that common things of the kind which this science considers are said to be separate from matter in being [as in the divine], not because they are always without mat-

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simpliciter et secundum naturae ordinem est perfectius." [Eng. trans., 415: "Now the more simple and the more abstract a thing is, the nobler and higher it is in itself..."; ad 2: "But what precedes absolutely and in the order of nature is more perfect…"]

37. Thomas Aquinas, *In librum De causis expositio*, IV, iv, no. 98, 28: "Quanto aliquid est communius, tanto ponebant illud esse separatum." [Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Book of Causes*, trans. Vincent A Guagliardo, Charles R. Hess, and Richard C. Taylor (Washington D.C.: CUA Press, 1996), 30.]

38. Aquinas, *In Met.*, IV, 1, no. 1165 (ed. Turin, 298): "Advertendum est autem quod licet, ad considerationem primae philosophiae pertineant ea quae sunt separata secundum esse et rationem a materia et motu, non tamen solum ea sed etiam de sensibilibus, inquantum sunt entia, philosophus autem perscrutatur." [Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans. John P. Rowan (Notre Dame, IN.: Dumb Ox Books, 1995), 402.]

ter, but because they do not necessarily have being in matter, as the objects of mathematics do."[39] However, this is only a hypothesis, and for Thomas, a false hypothesis: it is based on the Platonic interpretation, which does not distinguish between two levels of abstraction. Founded on the subsistence of ideas, it accepts that essences really subsist and ignores the difference between mathematical abstraction and the separateness of absolute divinity. Ontology cannot be based on a theology.

4. Ontotheology

We are now ready to answer the initial question. If there is an ontotheological aspect of metaphysics, it is secondary, merely a concession. Why? Because Thomas Aquinas rightly rejects the dimorphic interpretation of being leading to a singular, ontotheological science. Theology has a higher rank than ontology, but it is not part of the scope of ontology even though it is its principle and its end.

In the commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate*, we have a noetic explication of this particular position. In this text Thomas explains the difference between *ratio* and *intellectus*.[40] *Ratio* involves sensible experience and is always discursive. This is why physics is a purely rational science. Since humans are rational animals, we could say that humans are physicists-animals. *Intellectus* is the kind of knowledge proper to spiritual substances. It is the beginning and end of the rational process. As a simple act of the intelligence of simple intelligibles, it is attained through a *resolution* or an analysis. Just as commonality is twofold (through causality or universality as in q. 5, a. 4), so also analysis is twofold. There is a *resolutio secundum esse* (an analysis according to the act of being), which leads to the highest causes, immaterial substances. There is also a *resolutio secundum rationem* (an analysis according to concepts), which leads to the most universal forms, common being and the transcendentals. The first is the aim of theology; the second is the aim of what Thomas calls metaphysics, and which we would call ontology.

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39. Aquinas, *In Met.*, IV, 1, no. 1165: "Nisi forte dicamus, ut Avicenna dicit, quod huiusmodi communia de quibus haec scientia perscrutatur, dicuntur esse separata secundum esse, non quia semper sint sine materia; sed quia de necessitate habent esse in materia." [Eng. trans., 402.]

40. Aquinas, *Super librum De Trinitate*, q. 6, a. 1, p. 201. [Eng. trans., 63ff.]

As we know,[41] being is the most common object of thought; this is why it is simultaneously the proper subject of metaphysics and the proper object of the human intellect. However, knowledge of God in himself exceeds the power of the human intellect. God is the cause of being qua being,[42] and not a part of it. Since God is the principle of everything yet without being part of that which he causes (Thomas rejects the notion of *causa sui*), God is the principle preceding all things, and we can only consider him relatively or negatively. A theological resolution exceeds the limits of our intellect. This is why analogy is so important for Thomas, and why our consideration of ontology stops with theology. The first aspect (that of being in general) stops where the second begins (that of God as the principle of being). In this sense, Heidegger is correct in his analysis of the Prologue to the commentary on the *Metaphysics*: metaphysics is not *a* singular science. The rational analysis of terms cannot be traced to a singular intelligible principle. However, this is also why Heidegger was wrong in his general definition of ontotheology, because this shows precisely that metaphysics is not an ontotheology.

Thus, the birth of metaphysics is not identical with discovering a first mover, which can be reached through another rational science, through physics.[43] Metaphysics begins with the consideration of abstract being, in matter yet capable of considering separated from it, and stops where separate *esse* begins, divinity, because this *esse* is the cause and principle of everything that metaphysics can consider. God remains beyond metaphysics.

This is why metaphysics does not allow for an ontological proof. An ontological proof implies that the *esse* (existence) of God can be grasped through its *ratio* (its concept). However, God is not included in our *ratio* of being; God is its principle. Contemplation of the principle in itself does not belong to metaphysics.

There cannot be a Platonic synthesis [of theology and ontology]. There are two different sciences, which ought not be confused even if the second

41. Aquinas, *De veritate* q. 1, a 1 and *Summa theologiae* 1, q. 78, a. 1.

42. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1, q. 44, a. 2: "Et ulterius aliqui erexerunt se ad considerandum ens inquantum est ens, et consideraverunt causam rerum non solum secundum quod sunt haec vel talia sed secundum quod sunt entia, […] secundum omne illud quod pertinet ad esse illorum quocumque modo." [Eng. trans., 230: "Then others there were who arose to the consideration of being as being, and who assigned a cause to things, not as these, or as such, but as beings […] according to all that belongs to their being at all in any way."]

43. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics*, VIII.

completes the first.

To all these objections we must also add the status of metaphysics for Thomas. Everything Thomas does aims toward theology, and metaphysics is for him only a program, given through several definitions of the science (especially in his commentary of Boethius' *De Trinitate*) and his commentary on Aristotle. He never developed a metaphysics on its own. We could even say more: Aquinas does not give to metaphysics the status of a rigorous science save in a broad sense. A rigorous science is based on univocal concepts, but as Thomas emphasizes being is not univocal. Metaphysics only works with analogical terms therefore it is only a science in a broad, relative sense.

Duns Scotus

By contrast, in Duns Scotus we have a univocal concept of being, which changes everything.

Duns Scotus also critiques the Neoplatonic synthesis,[44] but he is actually much more radical for two reasons.

First, the Neoplatonic synthesis is based on the idea that being is the most universal effect. And yet, this idea masks a *fallacia* [fallacy], a logical discrepancy concerning the meaning of "universal." Scotus cites Avicenna: a cause and an effect can be universals according to power (*virtus*), according to perfection or according to predication. A universal of predication can be predicated of many things (*de pluribus*), a universal of potentiality is that which is most perfect in itself, and contains in itself more perfection than other things.

Being is not more universal according to perfection, but only according to predication. Being, when it is included among several other things, is not more perfect than those things with which it is included. Therefore, being is ultimately more universal according to predication, and its cause is more universal according to perfection. By contrast, God is the most universal cause according to perfection. If being is the most universal cause according to predication, this implies that an effect can only be the effect of being. However, nothing prevents being (the most universal effect according to predication) from being produced by an imperfect cause. God is first

44. Duns Scot, *Opus Oxoniense*, IV, d 1, q 1 § [7], ed. Wadding, t. 8, p. 10 a.

according to perfection, possessing being in the highest degree. However, being is first according to predication.

Thus, Scotus raises the very same objections that Thomas did against the Neoplatonic synthesis, but he does so in a more radical way: he directs his critiques against Thomas as well.

Second, Scotus critiques another thesis of Thomas: *esse simpliciter est proprius effectus Dei* [existence itself is the proper effect of God]. For Thomas, God alone gives *esse* to particular beings, and creatures can only prepare this divine gift by causing composition. For Scotus this is false, because every efficient cause that causes a composite being simultaneously causes its existence. Therefore, a composite being can be the efficient cause of *esse* for another composite being. A composite being can be caused by an agent without God giving the *being* of that composite being. Reciprocally, nothing can compel God who is absolutely free, which means that by divine right, in God's absolute power, God does not have to give being to a composite whose being has nevertheless already been produced by its cause. One could say simultaneously that this composite is and is not. In order to avoid these absurdities, we must recognize that causing a composite and giving it being are two sides of one and the same act.

Therefore, Scotus does not accept the traces of Neoplatonism still present in Thomas' interpretation. For Thomas, existence itself (*esse simpliciter*) is the proper effect of God and, thus, being (*esse*) is the proper end of creation. This is why God alone can create, giving being to each thing. Because God is subsisting *esse*, God can give *esse* universally to be participated in by all beings (*entia*). The commonality of being is simultaneously the principle of its causal participation. It explains why God transcends creation. The principle of universality is also the principle of causality.[45]

For Scotus, it is very different and very simple. In the order of predication, the commonality of being extends to all things including God. God is included in the concept of being, which is first in the order of predication. God is not anterior to this concept, because there is nothing anterior to it in this order. God deserves the name First Being. But in the order of perfection, God is anterior to creatures. The two orders are coherent, since in

45. As mentioned by Etienne Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot, Introduction à ses positions fondamentales* (Paris: Vrin, 1952), 347: "For the argument of Aquinas to make sense universality had to be understood in a causal sense."

the order of causality and perfection God is understood as *ens primum*, the cause of everything else (creation), but in the order of predication, God is included in being, which is both the first object of the human intellect and of metaphysics. Through being, the predicative object of metaphysics, there is a relation of causality between the first term, God, and the second term, creation.

According to Thomas, the two orders are coordinated: the divine understood as *ipsum esse* is simultaneously a principle of commonality and causality. For Scotus, one order is subordinated to the other: the primacy of potentiality or causality is included in being, and subordinated to the primacy of predication. This has consequences in three domains: the status of the first concept, the universality of being, and the inclusion of God in a concept.

1. The Primacy of the Concept

In Scotus we can find that there is a univocal and common concept of being underlying the analogy of the term "being." Underlying the term (*vox*) there is a univocal concept since all terms rely on an original imposition for their meaning. Being (*ens*) has been imposed through association with a simple notion, the *ratio essendi*. "'Being' (*ens*), however, is imposed from the act of being (*essendi*). But the act of being seems to be a simpler aspect (*ratio*) than the act of standing under (*substandi*). And therefore 'being' first occurs to the intellect with respect to that aspect (*rationem*) from which there is an imposition of the name, since it is the most simple."[46] On the basis of the equivocity of the term "being," we can deduce a simple and unequivocal concept, the act of being. There are two ways of conceiving being: "Otherwise, it is said that the same essence can be conceived under diverse meanings of conceiving and in one way a concept can be certain, and in another not. For being signifies the same thing that substance does. However, it happens that one can conceive the same essence under the aspect of being (*ratio essendi*) from which the name 'being' is imposed,

46. Duns Scot, *Super Praedicamenta*, q. 4, § (13) (ed. Vivès, 449b): "*Ens* autem imponitur ab actu essendi, sed actus essendi videtur ratio simplicior quam actus substandi, et ideo ens primo occurrit intellectui quoad rationem a qua est nominis impositio, quia simplicissima." [John Duns Scotus, *Questions on Aristotle's Categories*, trans. Lloyd A. Newton (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2014), 80.]

and not by conceiving it under the aspect of substantiality, from which the name 'substance' is imposed."[47] Even if being is an equivocal term when predicated of substance and accident, there is a simpler meaning of being wherein it signifies only "to be" (existence), which precedes the division of the categories.

The univocity of being depends on three theses. First, there is a conceptual unity that represents all things together. Second, this unity is the unity of the *ratio essendi*, which is common and more certain than anything else and anterior to that which is uncertain. Third, this unity can consequently be predicated of everything real, of substance as well as accident, of God as well as creatures.

2. The Universality of Being

For Scotus, the subject of metaphysics is being and the transcendentals. Thus, he follows the very same path as Thomas. "This we call 'metaphysics', which is from 'meta', which means 'transcends', and 'ycos', which means 'science'. It is, as it were, the transcending science, because it is concerned with the transcendentals."[48]

However, there is still a twofold meaning of the term *transcendens*. "The transcendent is whatever has no genus under which it is contained."[49] Thus, it is legitimate to understand and to translate *transcendens* as "transcendental": a term designated for being, unity, truth, etc. insofar as they extend beyond the limits of every genre and every category. Yet, we can also understand the term *transcendens* as signifying a transcendent being, God. Regarding the first sense of *transcendens*, the object of metaphysics is

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47. Duns Scot, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam* IV, 1, § [14] (ed. Vivès, 154b-155a): "Et uno modo potest conceptus esse certus, alio modo non; ens enim significat idem quod substantia tamen contingit concipere eamdem essentiam sub ratione essendi a quo imponitur hoc nomen ens, et non concipiendo illam sub ratione substantialitatis." [John Duns Scotus, *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, trans. Girard J. Etzkorn and Allan B. Wolter (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publication, 1997), 275.]

48. Duns Scot, *Quaestiones subtilissimae in Metaphysicam*, Prologue, § 5 (ed. Vivès, 4). [Scotus, *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, 7-8.]

49. Duns Scot, *Ordinatio*, 1 d 8, § 114: "Transcendens quodcumque nullum habet genus sub quo contineatur." [For English, see http://www.aristotelophile.com/current.htm as of 1/7/2018. The translation is by Peter L.P. Simpson.] Cf. Olivier Boulnois, *Jean Duns Scot: Sur la connaissance de Dieu et l'univocité de l'étant* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1988), 242].

a common concept, indifferent and neutral, representing being in its totality. Regarding the second sense, the object of metaphysics is a specific being, determinate and infinite, that is known through its own concept. This twofold sense of metaphysics provides a hinge between the two parts.

3. God in a Concept

Another consequence of Scotus' concept of univocity is the inclusion of God in a concept. If the concept of being is the first to form our intellect, God must be understood as a being among other beings, and not as the transcendent principle of every being. God is a *being*, and not the pure act of *existence* ("to be"). God is a *transcendens*, he is not beyond the transcendentals. This is why all the attributes of God, precisely for this reason, are transcendentals. "But it is not necessary that a transcendent, as transcendent, be said only of whatever being is convertible with the first transcendent, namely with being."[50]

There is not a dimorphic metaphysics, being and the divine are not two sides of the same phenomena, but our knowledge of God adds a determination to the concept of being, if we can understand it precisely, as distinguished from all other things. There is a proper concept of God such that all that is positive, all perfections, can be predicated of God.

4. The Ontotheological Structure

The Scotist discovery of univocal being that is predicated of both God and creatures alike profoundly changed the status of metaphysics. Being becomes the object of a transcendental, neutral, indifferent, and universal knowledge. It is anterior to every theological consideration. If our knowledge of God implies knowledge of a univocal concept, the contrary is not true: the concept of being does not indicate any reference to the priority of God. Thus, metaphysics, the science of being qua being, can become – with its first object – an ontology, which will be anterior and indifferent to every philosophical theology.

Does this mean that our knowledge of God is now excluded from metaphysics? Certainly not: the knowledge of God comes at the end of

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50. Duns Scot, *Ordinatio*, I, d 8, § 115: "Non oportet autem transcendens, ut transcendens, dici de quocumque ente nisi sit convertibile cum primo transcendente, scilicet ente." [*ibid*.]

metaphysics. But this science is expressed in the knowledge of being in a mediated manner as the end of a complex inquiry: "Every metaphysical inquiry about God proceeds in the following way: it considers the formal notion (*ratio*) of something, then it removes from that formal notion the imperfection that it has in creatures while retaining the formal notion [as such], to which it then attributes completely the highest perfection and in this way it attributes that notion to God."[51] In this new space of transcendental univocity, differing quiddities are the objects of three ways distinguished by Denys: affirmation (the way of perfection), negation (the way of imperfection), and causality or eminence (a way of supreme perfection). Thus, metaphysics occupies a place between the two senses of priority implied in a "first philosophy." The priority of predication has for its subject being, which is the most simple and first object in the order of knowledge. The priority of causality or perfection leads to the principal object, God. There is a close link between ontology and theology, but the first science is autonomous, which can be considered independent and prior to every theological consideration. This new level of independence is obtained through a univocal conception of being. Being embraces God, and our knowledge of being does not depend on an analogous participation in God.

For this reason we can speak of an ontotheological structure of metaphysics: there are two parts of metaphysics: one is common to all its objects, the other is specific because it pertains to one part of being.

"Therefore, a entire transcendent metaphysics will be prior to the divine science, and there will be four theoretical sciences, one transcendent and three special sciences."[52] Consequently, theology as a special science is posterior to metaphysics, a transcendental science. This is far from the priority given by Thomas to the principle of common *esse*. Here, we have the first division of metaphysics into two modern sciences: ontology as *metaphysica generalis* and theology as *metaphysica specialis*. The first science is

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51. Duns Scot, *Ordinatio*, I, d 3, § 39: "Omnis inquisitio metaphysica de Deo sic procedit, considerando formalem rationem alicuius et auferendo ab illa ratione formali imperfectionem quam habet in creaturis, et reservando illam rationem formalem et sic attribuendo illud Deo." [John Duns Scotus, *On Being and Cognition: Ordinatio 1.3*, trans. John Van der Bercken (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 56. Bracket and italics in original quote.]

52. Duns Scot, *In Metaphysicam*, I, q 1, § 47 (ed. Vivès VII, 36 a): "Metaphysica transcendens est tota prior scientia divina, et ita essent quatuor scientiae speculativae, una transcendens, et aliae tres speciales." [Scotus, *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, 57.]

independent of the latter, and the second is subordinated to the first. This is precisely what Heidegger rightly called ontotheology in the second sense.

5. Duns Scotus or Henry of Ghent?

Thus far we have responded to the initial question. There is definitely a historical beginning to the ontotheological structure of metaphysics.

However, there remains still another question, an ancillary, historical yet important question: when precisely did it begin? If the turn toward ontotheology is already complete in Duns Scotus, couldn't one also say that it was already in place before him, and that he is only teasing out its most drastic implications? This is the position of E.-H. Weber, who we have already considered, but it is also that of P. Porro. For both interpreters, Henry of Ghent developed the first ontotheology.

Using a distinction already outlined by others between an ontotheological foundation (in the commentators on Aristotle) and an ontotheological structure (in Duns Scotus),[53] Porro points out that ontotheology is "evidently taking on here two different senses: the, so to speak, Heideggerian sense (and if in this sense it is true that metaphysics as ontotheology is inescapable, then it is legitimate to speak of a single internal transition from an ontotheological foundation to an ontotheological structure), and the more original and narrow 'Kantian' sense in which the term ontotheology names a metaphysics that appropriates and is based on the ontological argument. In this case, the innovation of Duns Scotus is the beginning of modern ontotheology, mediated, naturally, by way of Suarez."[54]

If the defining feature of Henry of Ghent's metaphysics is that the issue of the existence of God is made part of his essence, it is clear that this is "a decisive step on the way to ontotheology."[55] In this case, the ontotheological turn is first made in Henry of Ghent, and Duns Scotus "did nothing more

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53. O. Boulnois, *Jean Duns Scot: Sur la connaissance de Dieu et l'univocité de l'étant* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1988), 75: "If the relation between ontology and theology is present in Scotist metaphysics, the autonomy of the first science makes it legitimate to speak of an ontotheological structure rather than a foundation; that is, an architectonic arrangement by which parts are distinguished and conjoined."

54. Pasquale Porro, *Enrico di Gand, la vie delle proposizioni universali* (Levante: Bari, 1990), 127.

55. Porro, *Enrico di Gand*, 130.

than radicalize…certain motifs already available to him."[56] Porro continues, "[i]f the principle of the possibility of the existence of a being is entailed within being itself as a simple non-contradiction of the concept, the way toward the modern formulation of the ontological proof is already cleared."[57]

It is undeniable that Henry of Ghent's metaphysics (before Duns Scotus') realizes one of the principal traits of ontotheology as defined by Kant: making possible an ontological proof. Nevertheless, upholding an analogy between being (*ens*) derived through abstraction and God's subsisting existence (*esse*) prevents Ghent from satisfying the two other fundamental traits of ontotheology: knowing the totality of being in a single representation and including God in the same concept of being.

Therefore, determining the beginning of ontotheology requires nuance; everything depends on where one places the emphasis: if in the Kantian sense one calls "ontotheology" every instance of metaphysics that admits the ontological proof, then the ontotheological turn had occurred long before Scotus and we ought to consider Henry of Ghent with respect to this turn. If one takes "ontotheology" in the more precise sense defined by Heidegger, ontotheology begins with Scotus, and in this case the decisive question concerns the univocity of being.

Conclusion

Heidegger's interpretation is ambiguous. However, it is effective precisely because of its ambiguity, and because its ambiguousness is meant to describe an ambivalence within metaphysics itself.

The concept of ontotheology has a twofold meaning. First, it refers to the essence of metaphysics as a science under a dimorphic account, since it contemplates at the same time and from the same point of view the human and divine. Second, it refers to the history of metaphysics insofar as it gradually unfolds a link between two domains, being in general and one of its parts, the divine. For reasons of clarity, I have called the first sense an ontotheological foundation and the second an ontotheological structure, even though Heidegger uses both expressions indistinguishably. However, this ambiguity is essential to his argument to make history correspond to an

56. Porro, *Enrico di Gand*, 131.
57. Porro, *Enrico di Gand*, 136.

essence of metaphysics through a rigorous teleology. The first sense of ontotheology explains the second, because the dimorphic constitution of "Aristotelian" metaphysics unfolds according to an expressly bipartite structure in Scholastic metaphysics (inspired by Scotus).

Let us now return to our overview of history; we can distinguish four periods:

First, it must be acknowledged that Aristotle's *Metaphysics* only partially meets the Heideggerian definition of ontotheology. Except indirectly in one book, Book E (Book K is likely apocryphal), the Aristotelian account of metaphysics does not turn toward a unified ontotheology.

Second, in contrast, this inseparable foundation of ontology and theology is present in the Neoplatonic theory of metaphysics, and it continues in Avicenna and the *Liber de Causis*. Therefore, it is established in the wake of the *Theology of Aristotle*, a Neoplatonic synthesis of aspects taken from Proclus and Plotinus, in order to arrive at the ultimate identification of metaphysics and theology, of Aristotelianism and Platonism. This ontotheological foundation considers God to the degree it considers being according to an analogy between the recipient of being and its participation in being par excellence.

Third, on the other end of this evolution, metaphysics based on Scotus corresponds to that which I have called an ontotheological structure (linking together a universal science with a specific science), which entails an ontological, neutral, and non-theological account of being. It remains to be seen how this was linked to acceptance of the ontological proof (this is the second meaning of ontotheology). And yet, this structuring still contributed to a dimorphic interpretation of being because of an ambiguity concerning the meaning of "transcendental." It could either mean a separate, absolute being or the universality of common being.

Fourth, however, for Thomas Aquinas neither the first nor the second interpretation of metaphysics works. For him there is an account of common, transcendental being. There is also a causal account of principles as well as an account of a separate divinity. What is for Heidegger a disparate mélange is in fact a collaboration of different sciences. We have ontology and philosophical theology, not a unified science called ontotheology.

Thus, we see that Heidegger's teleological interpretation works by virtue of its ambiguity. If we study ontotheology in Aristotle, it is not for the purpose of finding an essence of metaphysics that extends to all others, but

only for its overall development and subsequent interpretation. If we study ontotheology's historical development, it is not for metaphysics in general, in its essence, but only for a certain period from Scotus to Kant.

Nevertheless, Heidegger's approach has proved very useful. If we historicize the concept of ontotheology, we are obliged to offer a critique that complicates it. We would not have been able to reconstitute our understanding of it had it merely been left alone.

Genealogy as a Measurement of Time: A Critical Analysis of Genesis 3 to 11

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In ancient Near Eastern societies, texts concerning the "beginnings" provided the reader with a means to understand and conceptualize the notion of time in an era that was often intertwined with that of the deities. U. Cassuto notes that both the ancient Near Eastern and Greek traditions sought to emphasize an "intermixing" between the human world and that of the gods or the divine when speaking of their primordial histories.[1] However, Cassuto argues that the tradition found in the book of Genesis for the most part discards this "mythical technique"[2] of recounting primordial history. In fact, he contends that the authors of Genesis do not allow the boundaries between the Godhead and mankind to be blurred at all. Rather, the authors "see[k] to emphasize that human civilisation was of human origin" and not intermixed with that of the gods or the divine.[3] This argument, however, is not maintained by all scholars. J. Blenkinsopp argues that, quite to the contrary, the "idiom of myth" is a literary device utilized by the authors of Genesis to write their primordial history in a similar fashion to that of other ancient Near Eastern societies.[4]

Furthermore, Blenkinsopp stipulates that the transition from myth to history can best be explained by taking a closer look at the lifespans of the patriarchs as the reader moves from mythical time to historical time. He moves on to suggest that this transition is made evident by the "steep fall-off in human life expectancy," which marks the end of the "story of origins."[5]

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1. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1978), 188.

2. Cassuto, "Commentary on Genesis," 188; For Cassuto, what constitutes mythical tradition is a form of history telling that incorporates the gods and heroes (normally revered as semi-gods), and their role in forming and shaping the outcome of human events ("Commentary on Genesis," 188).

3. Cassuto, "Commentary on Genesis," 188.

4. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-creation, Re-creation: A Discursive Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 1.

5. Blenkinsopp, "Creation, Un-creation, Re-creation," 1.

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The concept of longevity is an important factor in understanding how it is that the ancient Israelites understood time measurement and what role the patriarchal lifespan played in shaping how one was to measure time in the primordial versus the historical. The following paper will argue that the motif of "longevity" was one that was associated with the primordial time motif that is well attested in the creation narratives of ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Greece. The paper will also investigate whether the authors of Genesis 3 to 11 relied on the narrative tradition of Israel's neighboring nations in Mesopotamia to create an Israelite primeval history by paying close attention to the genealogical structure used to incorporate the motif of patriarchal longevity. Furthermore, the paper will examine the distinctions between Mesopotamian primeval histories and those found in ancient Greece between the 8th and 6th century B.C.E. Once the motifs and themes of "pre-history" or primeval history within the Mesopotamian narrative traditions have been identified, the paper will move on to assess whether these same "primeval elements" have been incorporated into the narratives of Genesis 3 to 11 and the role played by the genealogies within the overarching narrative.

Establishing how the ancient Israelites understood and measured time will be imperative in determining whether Blenkinsopp's claim is correct that the lifespan motif was indeed utilized by the author of the genealogies in Genesis to distinguish between primordial and historical time. A closer examination of Genesis 5 and 11 will provide a clearer understanding of how longevity was understood prior to and after the flood to establish if the genealogies were indeed intended to provide more than just information of patriarchal lineage. Additionally, an investigation of how the genealogical form was constructed and understood will establish whether the structure was intended as a marker for the transition between primordial and historical time.

1. Time Measurement in Ancient Israel

According to D. Miano, by the first millennia B.C.E. most societies of the ancient Near East "maintained both a cyclical and a linear understanding of time."[6] Cyclical time should be understood as time in which one can

6. David Miano, *Shadow on the Steps: Time Measurement in Ancient Israel* (Atlanta: Society of

observe "predictable and repeating natural phenomena," whereas linear time is when one tries to understand the past through the process of recollection in the present, and of events as succeeding one another and as related by cause and effect.[7] It is well attested by scholars, such as J. C. Vanderkam, that in ancient Near Eastern societies cyclical time was measured with different calendrical systems.[8] The linear form of measurement, moreover, could be understood through a greater number of functions; for instance, the simple act of counting is linear in nature.[9] The authors of the biblical narratives, however, presented linear time by "relating one event to another," which was then "measured by the number of units between one occurrence and another."[10] It is important to note that, unlike the cyclical structure of measurement which repeats itself, these events are "historical" and hence only occur once in the linear form of measurement.[11] Miano points out that what is placed into question is not the form or even the function of measurement itself but how it is that the ancient Israelites "counted."[12]

The counting of years is a prominent feature of both the Priestly author and of the Deuteronomistic Historian. For both authors, time measurement is understood as adding single units together. For instance, in the genealogy of Genesis 5, the Priestly author presents two periods of time which can be understood as separate units that can be added together to constitute a measurement of time. The first unit is the patriarch's birth until the birth of his first-born son; the second unit is from the birth of the son to the patriarch's death. These two units can be added together and represent the lifespan of that patriarch, thus providing the reader with a measurement of time for longevity. Additionally, the units are measured by beginning and ending with an important date (here referring to a significant event). The Priestly author is the one who scholars have identified as using a

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Biblical Literature, 2010), 49.

7. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 50.

8. James C. VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time* (London: Routledge, 2003), 3.

9. VanderKam, "Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time," 3.

10. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 50. For instance, in 1 Samuel 6:1, the reader is told that the ark stayed in the Philistine camp for seven months and then in 1 Samuel 7:2 the ark stayed in Kireath-Jearim for twenty years.

11. VanderKam, "Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 3.

12. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 50.

chronological system that employs genealogies; i.e., that uses the births of important people to measure time.[13] It is certain, moreover, that the concept of 'generations' was not measured in the same manner in ancient Israel as it is in our modern-day context. In the latter, a parent would normally be understood as the first generation and his or her children as the second generation; the authors of the biblical text, however, do not use this same system.[14] The Israelites abandoned their inclusive[15] system of counting when structuring their generations, thus allowing them to date events by the lifespan of an individual.[16]

Miano argues that it is ultimately the Priestly narratives that build chronology based primarily upon genealogies.[17] The scope of the Priestly chronology includes events prior to the Exodus that are dated by being placed in "a specific year in the lifetime of an individual."[18] The Priestly author appears to be particularly interested in the births of sons and more specifically the births of first-born sons. Additionally, history is not presented as we see it in other ancient Near Eastern kingdoms, that is, history is presented according to the passing of time in the lives of the patriarchs "rather than to regnal years of kings and judges or to dates of other notable events."[19] Even the "greater" events that would have affected the larger

13. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 55-58.

14. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 60.

15. Miano suggests the ancient Israelites typically utilized an "*inclusive* system of counting." That is, *one* corresponds to the *first* in the sequence, whereas in modern conceptions of numerals the number *one* will not correspond necessarily to the *first* position in a sequence; if it does not, it is *exclusive* counting. When it comes to measuring between two points in time, in the modern understanding, the units are only counted *exclusively* ("Shadow on the Steps," 51). For instance, if it is Monday morning and we agree to meet in two days, following an inclusive system, we will meet on Tuesday (i.e., Monday is included in the count); but if we follow an exclusive system, we will meet on Wednesday (i.e., Monday is excluded from the count).

16. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 62-63. Curiously, while Israelites did not use an inclusive system in the context of counting generations, moderns do (p. 62). For example: I am the 3rd generation if I take my grandfather as being the starting point of the lineage and so are my sister and brother; thus, from a modern perspective, one new generation encompasses the birth of all the children from any given father (first, second, third, etc.). But in ancient Israel, one generation begins and ends with the birth of the firstborn son. The birth of any successive child is irrelevant.

17. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 63.

18. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 63.

19. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 63.

community are dated in correspondence to the lifespan of a patriarch.[20] Thus, the flood that wiped-out humanity began in the six hundredth year of Noah's life; however, making this reference alone would not constitute a meaningful chronology unless the patriarchs were associated to known dates. Hence the logic of the Priestly chronology is as follows, "if I know that event X occurred in year Y of individual Z, I still do not know when event X took place unless I know when individual Z was born."[21] For the Priestly author, this information takes the form of a genealogy the structure of which allows the Priestly author to provide necessary information concerning the beginning and end of an individual's lifespan. The genealogy provides a framework for the history of the world, so that the events in that history can be dated.

2. Genealogy as a Literary Form

We have established that the Priestly author utilizes the genealogy to provide a chronology of history. This structure of measurement of time can be found throughout the book of Genesis but is concentrated in Genesis 5 and 11. However, the genealogy is embedded within a larger narrative framework and is being utilized to recount a "story" about the beginnings. Thus, it should not only be understood as a method of time measurement but also as a literary form. First, a distinction must be made between the narrative and genealogical forms of literature. R. Robinson argues that the narrative form "treats the reader to a dramatic complication, explores and develops nuances of individual character, and pursues a perceptible telos, as the story moves, often fitfully, from initial tension to fitting denouement."[22] The genealogies on the other hand offer no such structure. They do not provide the reader with "dramatic tension" or character development, rather, the purpose of the genealogical form is to offer a continuous and monotonous pattern of paternal information.[23] Robinson describes the genealogy as being a "single-minded economy" whose sole preoccupation

20. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 63.
21. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 65.
22. Robert Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," *The Catholic Bible Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (1986): 595.
23. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 595.

consists in "the continuity of generation [upon] generation."[24] Thus, the characters presented within the genealogical construct are never detailed nor fully developed. The fundamental information provided by the structure of the genealogy concerns the "birth, death, and age at the crucial act of begetting the next generation." It provides no other in-depth information about the characters nor does it offer any additional information concerning the plot-line of the greater narrative structure in which the genealogy is embedded.[25]

Robinson notes that, although "the genealogies have a beginning, in themselves they do not move toward a final conclusion, a telos whose achievement would create a sense of definitive and satisfying closure."[26] This lack of "closure" as Robinson suggests leads one to question whether the function of the genealogy is much more than simply establishing patrilineal continuity between one generation and the next. Upon closer inspection, though, it can be argued that the possible function and intent of the genealogy is not solely to provide a link between the generations but to arrive at a climactic point by culminating a sequence of births until the structure introduces the "last" patriarchal character, which technically brings the genealogical structure to a close. The emergence of this final birth allows for a new character to be introduced as a "building block" within the greater narrative structure to create new plot lines and build upon the continuity of the larger narrative structure itself. Robinson does not give the genealogies any important role within the narrative framework, though; rather, he views them as being no more than "connectors."[27] He, much like Hayden White, argues that the genealogy is to be understood as a "nonnarrative" genre.[28] There is an importance attached to the narrative genre as being the mode that allowed ancient historians to reveal "*knowing* through the medium of *telling*," thus allowing scholars to argue that nonnarrative genres do not offer any "knowing" and should be categorized as primitive, as well as inadequate and less sophisticated modes of conveying reality.[29] This statement imposes

24. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 595.
25. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 595.
26. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 595.
27. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 596.
28. Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (1980), 12.
29. White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," 12.

a value judgment upon the genealogical structure, namely, that the form lacks complexity and depth. However, the statement does raise an important question; what content and details can be derived from the genealogical structure?

3. Content of Genealogy

Scholars, such as Robinson, argue that the biblical genealogy appears to present a "fixed" structure in respect to the "exact sequence of individuals" in order to provide an "expression of profound order."[30] Indeed, the succession of one generation to the next is the norm encountered when reviewing the content of genealogies in the biblical context. The genealogical structure at the very least contains the following details concerning the patriarchal line being introduced: birth, conception of the child who continues the line, and death.[31] However, other constructs of genealogy in Genesis 3 to 11 appear with a variety of different details; "some [include] expansions which tend toward narrative and reflect broader interests. Occasionally the genealogies expand to include the name of the wife who bears the next generation or the occupation or residence of a particular ancestor."[32] Thus, the structure and form of the genealogies within the context of Genesis 3 to 11 do appear to be fixed as Robinson tries to argue, however, the content varies at times from one genealogy to the next. In fact, in his exploration and analysis of the genealogical structure, Wilson distinguishes between two forms of genealogy based on the content of each.[33] The forms can be defined as follows: "Linear genealogies include only a single individual in each generation. Segmented genealogies trace more than one line of descent from a common ancestor, so that more than one individual appears in each generation."[34]

Another important feature is the incorporation of biographical details

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30. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 597.
31. "When Seth had lived a hundred and five years, he became the father of Enosh. Seth lived after the birth of Enosh eight hundred and seven years, and had other sons and daughters. Thus, all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died" (Gen. 5:6-8 RSV).
32. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 597.
33. Robert Wilson, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977), 19-20.
34. Wilson, "Genealogy and History in the Biblical World," 19-20.

in certain genealogical structures, such as those found in Genesis 3. These can be paralleled to the genealogical structures found in other ancient Near Eastern narratives concerning the beginnings. Cassuto indicates that the content found in the genealogies of Genesis can be compared to the content in the Sumerian King List.[35] As mentioned earlier, the genealogies of Genesis contain the names of the patriarchs and the length of their lifespans. Similarly, the Sumerian King List notes the names of the kings and their respective kingdoms, as well as the length of their reigns. In this list, the genealogical structure at times also incorporates details concerning the activities and occupations of the kings prior to their ascension to the throne.[36] Further, Cassuto argues that there are similarities between Genesis 3:20-22 ("…the father of…the forger of…"), and the structure of the Canaanite genealogical account offered by Philo Byblius.[37] However, Cassuto is primarily interested in the differences between the texts rather than the similarities they share. In Philo's account, those "inventing" tools or devices (e.g., fire, hunting and fishing) are described as gods and demi-gods; even in the Sumerian King List the content is mythological in nature.[38] Cassuto argues that it is specifically in the Torah that "we find only ordinary human beings and there is no mythological element whatsoever."[39] Therein, he emphasizes that the gods or demi-gods are not playing an active role in the outcome of the events.

In addition, K. Andriolo notes that in opposition to ancient Near Eastern narrative stories that speak about the beginnings, the Israelite descent line up until Abraham places a great deal of importance on the numerical value of the first position within the genealogical structure, that is, the firstborn son.[40] However, this is the only value that the genealogical structure provides the reader. Apart from the firstborn son's name and at times social status, no other details are provided; they are never described as the heroes of the stories as one would expect to find in other ancient Near

35. Cassuto, "Commentary on Genesis," 188.
36. Cassuto, "Commentary on Genesis," 188.
37. Cassuto, "Commentary on Genesis," 188.
38. Cassuto, "Commentary of Genesis," 188.
39. Cassuto, "Commentary on Genesis," 189.
40. Karin Andriolo, "A Structural Analysis of Genealogy and Worldview in the Old Testament," *American Anthropologist* 75, no. 5 (1973): 1660.

Easter stories.[41] This argument of a "non-mythical element" in the genealogy raises questions as to how the ancient Israelites understood and perceived the "stories concerning the beginnings." Can one then demonstrate that there are no "real" parallels to be drawn between the genealogies of the ancient Near East and those of ancient Israel?

4. Origins of Beginnings in the Ancient Near East

We begin by investigating the literary traditions of origins in Mesopotamia. According to Blenkinsopp, Mesopotamian scribal tradition was the dominant cultural and literary influence on Israel and early Judaism. In this tradition, humanity's appearance on the scene was part of a history that stretched back into the epoch of the gods.[42] For Instance, Atra-Hasis[43] is an origin narrative which can be dated back to 1700 B.C.E.[44] The story describes a three-decker world where the upper level is ruled by Anu, the lower level (also referred to as the underworld or subterranean waters) by Enki (Ea), and Middle Earth (the human sphere) by Enlil. The story recounts how Enlil puts the Tgigi, lower level gods, to work digging irrigation canals that are essential for the fertility of the lands in Middle Earth. Resenting the labor imposed upon them, the Tgigi refuse to continue their tasks and threaten Enlil. Enlil then seeks out the aid of his fellow gods, Enki and Anu, but because they sympathize with the rebels they refuse Enlil's appeal. However, Enki, who is often portrayed as cunning, offers Enlil another solution. He proposes that he petition the mother goddess, Mami, to create lower beings called 'lulu' who would take over the tasks of the Tgigi and the problem would be resolved. Mami and Enki then join forces to create the lower beings and fashion seven male and seven female figures out of clay mixed with the blood of a sacrificed god. The creation of mankind is celebrated and the goddess Mami is proclaimed *Belet-ili*, Mistress of the gods. The story then moves on to tell that some 1200 years later, the same rebellious pattern is repeated and Enlil is awakened from his sleep. This time, Enlil is livid and decides to deal with the situation himself. He chooses

41. Andriolo, "A Structural Analysis of Genealogy and Worldview," 1660.
42. Blenkinsopp, "Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation," 12.
43. An Akkadian cuneiform text copied and recopied for more than a millennium and for which there is archaeological evidence that the text was recopied outside of Mesopotamia.
44. Blenkinsopp, "Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation," 12.

to afflict the Earth and its inhabitants with a plague of famine every 1000 years in order to thin out the human population, but his plan is thwarted by Enki. So, Enlil then decides to send a great flood upon the Earth that covers it for seven days and nights. Enki, however, has plans of his own and assists a hero-like figure named Atra-Hasis (which would be considered the counterpart to Noah) to escape the deluge along with his family.[45]

There are other versions of the story, too, which have been found in Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and the eastern regions of the Mediterranean.[46] The version of the story found on the tablets of the Sumerian King List recounts how the Sumerian king, Ziusudra, is forewarned of the flood and builds a huge boat, which allows him to survive the flood that lasts for seven days and nights. Afterwards, the king offers sacrifice to the gods and is elevated by them to eternal life. Additionally, the Sumerian King List introduces genealogical structures of ante and post-diluvian king lists. In the Sumerian genealogical structure, there is also a decrease in lifespan as one moves from prehistorical to historical time; the antediluvian kings reigned for thousands of years, while the kings in the post-diluvian period only reigned for about a tenth of that period.[47]

In his history of Babylonia, Berossus presents yet another version of genealogical structure. Unlike the Sumerian King List, which lists 8 antediluvian and 23 post-diluvian kings, Berossus notes that there were 10 ante and 10 post-diluvian rulers, which is reminiscent of the Genesis genealogical structure that also lists the same number of figures.[48] It is important to highlight that Berossus would not only have been familiar with the stories of Atra-Hasis and the Epic of Gilgamesh but also with the Genesis genealogy-narrative stories as well.[49] Thus, the argument can be made that the Greek mythic-historiographical tradition was very familiar with the ancient Near Eastern tradition of narratives that recounted the

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45. The above summary was taken from the text used in Lambert & Millard's translation of the tablet which contained the story of Atra-Hasis: W. G. Lambert, A. R. Millard, and Miguel Civil, *Atra-Ḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon Print, 1969).

46. Blenkinsopp, "Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation," 12.

47. Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100, no. 4 (1981): 519-21.

48. Russell Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 108-110.

49. Blenkinsopp, "Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation," 14.

deluge and the early history of humanity.[50] Blenkinsopp is very careful to make this distinction, because we do not find this "familiarity" of the ancient Near Eastern tradition in the writings of Hesiod in the 8th century B.C.E. where it is the Trojan wars that marked the end of the mythic epoch.[51] In the ancient Greek tradition of Hesiod's *Theogony*, the world of the gods is chaotic and his narratives are not about the genesis of humans but that of the gods.[52] It is only two centuries later that Hecataeus of Miletus makes mention of the flood that wiped out all life on Earth, all except for its sole survivors: Deucalion and his three sons.[53] These are then presented as the ancestors of the three branches of the Hellenic race, which can be paralleled with the story of Noah and his three sons.[54] Then, one generation after Hecataeus, Hellanicus of Lesbos constructs his origin narrative of the people of Attica by tracing it back to the flood and inserting ante and post-diluvian genealogical structures.[55] What seems to be common amongst all of these myths of origins is the belief that humanity appears on the scene as an episode in a narrative already in progress, one that they do not control and in which they are not voluntarily involved.[56]

In both ancient Mesopotamia and Greece, the past always weighed heavily upon the present. According to Blenkinsopp, the primary concern of mythic stories was not to entertain or even to present an accurate account of the past and their history. Rather, the narratives concerning beginnings/origins, fictive genealogies and dramatic events set in the context of the remote past were intended as tools and mediums to allow the authors to think and speak about their present.[57] The narratives express convictions and ideas about their present life and context. When we speak about mythic time, therefore, we should not understand myth as being in opposition to history, or that which we understand as being factual, but as a way to address and

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50. Blenkinsopp, "Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation," 14.
51. Blenkinsopp, "Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation," 14.
52. Blenkinsopp, "Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation," 15.
53. John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 23-4.
54. Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 23-4.
55. Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 23-4.
56. Blenkinsopp, "Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation," 15.
57. Blenkinsopp, "Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation," 14, 16.

explore concerns about life, society and periods of history.[58] What function, though, does the genealogical structure play within the larger narrative structure concerning the beginnings and/or origins? Miano believes that the function of the genealogy can best be deciphered by examining the role of list making in ancient Mesopotamia and Greece.[59]

5. List Making in the Ancient World

List making in the ancient Near East, especially lists that involved some form of time measurement, was viewed as important as they would enable communities to keep track of their histories. According to J.G. Taylor, memorizing and reciting lists that involved some form of counting or measuring in the ancient world was deemed "a powerful medium for creating, organising and disseminating knowledge of the past."[60] In Mesopotamia, lists were a way of organising the cosmos to better understand it. In Greece, lists were used to organize segments of time and space, as seen, for instance, in Homer's Catalogue of Ships in book 2 of the *Iliad* and in Hesiod's *Theogony*.[61] According to Miano, these lists "are likely to predate the works in which they are now found."[62] Hence, the structure of the genealogy *qua* list will stand-out as a distinct literary form from that of the narrative in which it is embedded.

Hesiod's use of genealogies is to provide an explanation of the origins of the gods while introducing separate "mythical episodes."[63] It can be argued that the Priestly author uses the genealogical structure in exactly this manner as well. The Priestly genealogies are comprised of the names of specific figures that would have been memorized and recited by the priestly community in order to demonstrate their capacity to retain important information. When the lists were finally written down by scribes, the material contained in the lists could have been reviewed and organized.[64]

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58. Blenkinsopp, "Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation," 16.
59. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 66.
60. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 67. Cf. J.G. Taylor, "Framing the Past: The Roots of Greek Chronology" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2000), 164-74.
61. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 608.
62. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 66.
63. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 608.
64. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 67.

It is important to note that the lists were not static but dynamic, which in turn allowed for them to be changed and adapted to the needs of the chronographer or the historiographer. Robinson, for instance, argues that the genealogical lists compiled by the Priestly author are placed together with the narrative, by the author of Genesis, in such a way that allows the overarching narrative to constantly shift from one focal point to another. Thus, this enables the narrative and the genealogies to be in a constant "state of tension."[65]

Much like the lists compiled in ancient Mesopotamia, in which the reader is introduced to a linear sequence of male family members, so to in Genesis, with the continued interplay between genealogy and narrative comes also the sense that one is tracing a family history. This family noticeably acquires greater importance as the genealogical structure takes the reader from antediluvian time to post-diluvian time.[66] This in turn allows for the familial events and drama to take on greater importance as the reader moves through the narrative structure of Genesis.

Robinson argues that the literary genre of narrative and genealogy were not understood in the same manner as we understand them today. Hence, the literary genre would have been attached to a specific convention understood by both the author and the audience, a convention that is no longer attached to the literary structure but lost through its transmission.[67] Tzvetan Todorov notes, for instance, that in the Odyssey, "the narration of every event in the poem is actually the retelling of an earlier prophecy."[68] Thus, the convention attached to the literary genre of narrative was that "every action is the fulfillment of a predestinating prophecy," a convention which we would not normally associate with the modern concept of plot.[69] Contrary to this convention, the modern conception of plot is generally understood as a culmination of successive events, which are not determined by any predestinating will but are understood as being at the root cause of the outcome of the narrative.[70] This implicit logic in respect to our modern

65. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 604.
66. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 604.
67. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 604.
68. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1977), 63-4.
69. Todorov, "The Poetics of Prose," 63-4.
70. Todorov, "The Poetics of Prose," 63-4.

understanding of plot now becomes a sort of prejudgement that confuses the conventions that were once attached to the narrative-genealogy relationship.[71] Hence, to reiterate the argument posited by White: the interplay between the narratives and the nonnarrative genealogies along with their combined structures allows the overarching narrative of Genesis to fluctuate between the complete predestination of events here embodied in the genealogical structure, and the nearly complete autonomy of successive events that can be found in the narrative structure.[72] The genealogies offer structure, order and a sort of prophetic fulfilment of what is to come, while the narrative offers the complete opposite. Robinson suggests that the genealogical lists in Genesis have been structured and compiled in such a way that the reader is left with the sense that God is in charge, and creation follows the will of its creator by creating order within disorder.[73] Moreover, the genealogical lists are compiled by the Priestly author to introduce the reader to a list of ante and post-diluvian ancestors. The structure established in these genealogies is that the age of each patriarch be given at the birth of the first-born son and at the time of the patriarch's death, and that the length of time between these two events be also noted. An important and striking feature of the genealogies in the book of Genesis is then the abnormally long lifespan of the patriarchs.

6. Longevity – Lifespan of the Patriarchs

In general, the lifespans of the patriarchs in the book of Genesis, as well as throughout the Torah, move in decreasing order. The reader is told in Genesis 5 that Noah was six hundred years old at the time of the flood, but Noah's spectacular age coincides with the extreme ages of all the patriarchs on the list, so this particular element of the genealogy does not pose any difficulties. What does pose a difficulty is trying to understand why anyone would compose such a genealogy in the first place. After all, the genealogical lists do not provide any chronological information, since death ages are irrelevant to chronology.[74] Furthermore, the years found in the genealogies cannot be added together to measure an era or any significant

71. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 608.
72. White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," 12-14.
73. Robinson, "Literary Functions of the Genealogies of Genesis," 608.
74. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 91.

period of time. Hence, Miano concludes that the lifespans must have served an ideological purpose rather than a time measurement purpose.[75]

For instance, Miano takes Hesiod as an example and notes that in his presentation of the cycle of ages, he points to the lengthy lifespans of those who lived in the past as a sign of their superiority. Hesiod also indicates how the lifespans decrease with each passing generation.[76] A similar list in the biblical narratives of the book of Genesis may also be intended to present the ancestors as superior and the successive generations as inferior. In addition, there is a correlation between the length of an ancestor's lifespan and the time period in which he lived; demarcating the antediluvian genealogies from the post-diluvian genealogies.[77] Prior to the flood, the patriarchs are said to have lived between seven hundred and one thousand years, while after the flood and up until Abraham, they are said to have lived between two hundred and six hundred years. This possibly distinguishes between a golden age and a later "inferior age," an interpretation reinforced by a further division: from Abraham to Moses, the patriarchs are said to have lived only between one hundred to two hundred years of age.[78] Hence, leading scholars, such as Miano, conclude that a distinction is evidently being drawn between three eras: the antediluvian patriarchs, the post-diluvian patriarchs and the succession of patriarchs from Abraham until Moses.[79] Thus, contrary to Wilson's argument that Israelite genealogies were conceived to provide historical information concerning time measurement,[80] Israelite genealogies should be understood as playing a similar function to that of earlier Greek narratives, which were used to demarcate eras or epochs of time. It is conceivable that different authors later picked up the genealogies and assigned a certain length of time to any given generation, much like Herodotus who devised "chronologies based on several different generation lengths."[81] However, Miano argues that it may be more accurate to say that chronologies were created independently and then were harmonized with the genealogies. Thus, similar to the Greek

75. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 91.
76. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 91.
77. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 91.
78. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 91.
79. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 91.
80. Wilson, "Genealogy and History in the Biblical World," 199.
81. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 94, fn. 45.

historians, the Israelite historiographers "played with generation lengths and imposed them on preexisting genealogies in order to fit famous persons of the past properly into an accepted timeline. No single generational 'norm' figure was in use across the board."[82]

Although many scholars[83] contend that the genealogical structure found in Genesis can be compared to the genealogies of Hesiod, as well as those found in other Greek writings, they fail to note that the comparable elements from the latter do not present the reader with a comprehensive system that encompasses all of humanity. The Greek genealogical framework is restrictive to a certain extent, presenting only a few ethnic divides and is not concerned with a universal presentation of human origins. In Genesis, however, it is different. According to F. Crüsemann, the world of ancient Israel was experienced and described as a family.[84] He moves on to explicate that, for people who were not organized by a state system, genealogies played a role that cannot be underestimated, for the entire social order could be described by them. Thus, the place of each individual within society, and in this case within creation, was structured by the genealogies in Genesis. Furthermore, Crüsemann indicates that no parallels can be found in this regard between the genealogies of the ancient Near East or Greece and those found in Genesis.[85] Genesis encompasses single families and entire ethnic groups, including connections with ancestors from primordial time, a unique system with the propensity to include all of humanity – both its neighbouring peoples as well as the whole internal structure of its own.[86] In fact for some scholars, such as K. Andriolo, the structural patterns that are present in the genealogies of Genesis do not function as a form of time measurement but rather should be understood as a means by which the author of the genealogies attempted to provide readers with a map of relations.[87] Thus, every Israelite descent line not only describes the fathering

82. Miano, "Shadow on the Steps," 94.

83. E.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp ("Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation," 12), John van Seters (*In Search of History*, 23-24) and David Miano ("Shadow on the Steps," 91).

84. Frank Crüsemann, "Human Solidarity and Ethnic Identity: Israel's Self-Definition in the Genealogical System of Genesis," in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark G. Brett (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002), 63.

85. Crüsemann, "Human Solidarity and Ethnic Identity," 62-63.

86. Crüsemann, "Human Solidarity and Ethnic Identity," 63.

87. Andriolo, "A Structural Analysis of Genealogy and Worldview," 1657.

of Israelite sons but also of non-Israelite sons as well. This structure in turn allowed for the people of other nations, which also populated the world known to Israel, to depart from the Israelite ancestry, making the latter's descent line the starting point of all peoples.[88]

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that stories concerning the "beginnings and/or origins" in the ancient Near East and in ancient Greece were, as Blenkinsopp argues, shaped in the language of myth, which is defined by Cassuto as a literary tradition whereby history telling incorporates the gods and heroes (normally revered as semi-gods) and their role in forming and shaping the outcome of human events.[89] However, the argument that this same mythical language was being used by the ancient Israelites in their origin narratives to reproduce a comparable worldview is one that can be disputed. To this end, Cassuto rightly argues that this mythic-tradition was not adopted by the ancient Israelite Historiographers and thus scholars should not confuse the ancient Near Eastern and Greek worldviews about beginnings with those of ancient Israel. In turn, this forces scholars to pay closer attention to the way in which the Israelite Historiographers chose to present different time periods. Miano has argued that the longevity aspect found within the genealogies is not demarcating "mythical" time from "historical" time, as Blenkinsopp has argued, but rather is establishing distinct periods of time that are closely related to the aspect of longevity. This in turn supports the argument of Cassuto who wants to dispel the claim that the origin narratives of Genesis can be distinguished by the language of myth. Furthermore, a distinction in longevity can be observed and appears to be associated to the periods before and after the flood. Hence, it can be argued that the combination of a climactic event, such as a deluge, alongside differing lifespans can be used to present different time periods within the history of a people. Thus, for the ancient Israelite Historiographers, the conception of primordial time was not solely encompassed within the language of myth, as posited by Blenkinsopp, but rather was shaped by specific events and patriarchs who in turn were demarcated by their ancestry

88. Andriolo, "A Structural Analysis of Genealogy and Worldview," 1657.
89. Cassuto, "Commentary on Genesis," 188.

and lifespans.

On the other hand, scholars such as Crüsemann and Andriolo have contended that the function and role of the genealogical structure were not intended to demarcate periods of time but rather to provide means of differentiation between those inside and those outside of Israel's group-specific identity; an argument that still, nonetheless, needs to be understood in the context of a literary tradition about origins and beginnings. The ancient Israelite Historiographers were indeed concerned with the group specific identity of Israel, but they were also concerned with the proximity of all those who surrounded Israel as well. This concern was not only present in the Historiographers' own time and context but also depicted by them as present from the very beginning of creation; a mapping that I believe presents not only the formation of the group specific identity but also how it was formed and became increasingly distinct as the reader moves from primordial time (antediluvian period) to historical time (post-diluvian period).

Heresy, Hermeneutics, and the Hellenization of Christianity:[1] A Reappraisal of Embodiment in Origen's *De Principiis*

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In a recent work,[2] I argued that the tendency to regard Origen as a Platonist while neglecting the all-important Aristotelian dimension of his thought has led to deeply entrenched misunderstandings with respect to Origen's philosophical theology. Despite compelling textual evidence in its favour, commentators continue to ignore the thoroughly hylomorphic, Aristotelian character of Origen's thought, interpreting it instead in terms of a "Platonic" soul/body dualism. As a result, Origen's views concerning the eternity of the world, and his repeated insistence upon the inseparability of soul and body, form and matter, which are crucial to a proper understanding of his philosophical and theological system, have been almost entirely overlooked.[3] A contributing factor to this seemingly willful misreading of Origen, I argued, can be traced to what John Cavadini identifies as a "hermeneutic of suspicion."[4] In this case, the latter refers to the pervasive mistrust within Origen scholarship towards Rufinus' Latin translations of the works of Origen – in particular the *De Principiis*. This hermeneutic of suspicion stems largely from the editorial work of Paul Koetschau (1913),[5]

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1. I consciously echo here the title of Peter Martens' article, "Embodiment, Heresy, and the Hellenization of Christianity: The Descent of the Soul in Plato and Origen," *Harvard Theological Review* 108, no. 4 (2015): 594-620. It served as the initial inspiration for my own somewhat different treatment of this important problem in the study of Origen.

2. Cf. my "Aristotelian Teleology and Christian Eschatology in Origen's *De Principiis*" (MA thesis, Dalhousie University, 2016).

3. A notable exception is Robert Berchman, *From Philo to Origen: Middle Platonism in Transition* (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1984).

4. John C. Cavadini, foreword to *On First Principles*, by Origen, trans. G. W. Butterworth, introduction by Henri De Lubac (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 2013), vii; cf. viii.

5. *Origenes Werke - Fünfter Band: De Principiis*, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Leipsig: J. C. Hinrich'sche Buchlandlung, 1913).

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who accused Rufinus of having systematically purged any allegedly 'heretical' elements from his translations of Origen's Greek writings.[6] In his critical edition of the *De Principiis*, Koetschau sets about "supplementing" the Latin text with Greek fragments taken from hostile sources, all the while treating them as unbiased, objective witnesses to Origen's original meaning. G. W. Butterworth (1936), whose translation of the *De Principiis* remains the sole English language edition,[7] both endorses and expands upon Koetschau's flawed methodology.

While a critical attitude towards Rufinus is wholly justified – he openly admits to having modified Origen's text – a correspondingly critical attitude towards hostile witnesses, such as Jerome and Justinian, seems peculiarly lacking. One ill-fated consequence of this imbalance has been to dismiss the centrality of embodiment for Origen as merely a Rufinian modification. Yet, as I hope to show, this corporealism is so fundamental to Origen's worldview that attributing it to a few lines pencilled in by Rufinus is entirely untenable. The fact that commentators continue to do so can only be explained by their tendency to see Origen as a Platonist in the crudest sense; namely, as a thinker whose system is constructed upon a radical soul/body dualism. By ignoring the Aristotelian, hylomorphic character of Origen's thought which, in the case of the soul/body relation is not incompatible with Christian orthodoxy,[8] Origen is seen as much more heterodox than he in fact needs to be. The longstanding hermeneutic of suspicion with respect to Rufinus' Latin translations of Origen embedded in Koetschau's critical edition and Butterworth's English translation of *De Principiis* has, thus, resulted in deeply entrenched (and deeply misleading) assumptions concerning Origen's theological and philosophical views.

In what follows, I intend not only to demonstrate how distorting this hermeneutic of suspicion has been with respect to Origen's worldview,

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6. Due to the purge following Origen's eventual condemnation, those works of his which managed to survive (with a few important exceptions) only do so in Latin translation.

7. Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (London: SPCK, 1936).

8. This assertion may strike the theologically informed reader as somewhat strange. Aristotle was often viewed with deep misgivings by ancient theists who regarded his thoroughgoing hylomorphism as potentially negating the immortality of the soul. Nonetheless, as Thomas Aquinas was later to show, Aristotle could be interpreted in a manner conformable to Christian dogma.

but further, to examine the roots of the hermeneutic of suspicion itself. I shall contend that the latter is in fact a unique expression of a much broader methodological bias that Peter Martens calls "the Hellenization of Christianity thesis".[9] This longstanding and notoriously contentious historiographical construct is most closely associated with Adolf von Harnack who regarded "the spirit of Hellenism" as a corrosive force upon an originally pristine Christianity. As such, Harnack subscribed to an all too familiar Protestant historical narrative of decline – a narrative which, as Wedemeyer demonstrates in the case of Tantric Buddhism, extends to the study of Eastern religions as well.[10] Within Christianity, this narrative serves the Protestant polemic against Catholicism, in which the latter is seen as the (pagan) corruption of an original, Apostolic Christianity. As Jonathan Z. Smith puts it, "the pursuit of the origins of the question of Christian origins takes us back, persistently, to the same point: *Protestant anti-Catholic apologetics*" (italics in original).[11] Given that Origen is inextricably bound up with these origins, it comes as no surprise that the study of his work has been profoundly, and adversely, affected. By showing how the Hellenization of Christianity thesis informs the hermeneutic of suspicion, and how this has contributed to deeply misleading assumptions regarding Origen's theology – particularly with respect to the soul/body relation – I hope to contribute to a much-needed reappraisal of one of the most important and controversial figures in the history of Christian dogma.

1. The Hellenization of Christianity Thesis

Most scholars, as Peter Martens points out, associate the contentious "Hellenization of Christianity" thesis with the work of Adolf von Harnack. According to Harnack, the so-called "Hellenic spirit" – a notion he never clearly defines – "constituted a threat to the undogmatic gospel of Jesus. Whenever this adversarial Hellenic spirit triumphed, as it inevitably did, it corroded an authentic living Christianity into an institutionalized, dogmatic

9. Martens, "Embodiment, Heresy, and the Hellenization of Christianity," 596.
10. Christian K. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism: History, Semiology, and Transgression in the Indian Traditions* (New York: Columbia UP, 2013), 43-44.
11. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: U of Chicago, 1990), 34.

religion."[12] Following Harnack's lead, Edwin Hatch envisions an originally pristine Christianity governed by ethical behaviour rather than rational beliefs. As such, he sees the transformation of Christianity from a living faith centred upon the Sermon on the Mount to a rigid belief system rooted in the Nicene Creed as resulting from the corrosive influence of Greek ideas. For him, the emergence of this new "Arian Christianity" marks the beginning of a long decline into dogmatism, an uprooting of Christianity from its native Semitic soil.[13] While both Harnack and Hatch understand Christianity as an important departure from Judaism, they regard its subsequent Hellenization as leading to an inevitable ossification of an originally vital spirituality. The "original" Christianity, then, would seem to be precariously poised somewhere between its Judaic origins and its subsequent Hellenization.[14]

The Hellenization of Christianity thesis, as Martens rightly remarks,[15] has a long history. Its roots can be traced back to the ancient polemic between paganism and Christianity, to the (creative) tension between Greek philosophy and scriptural revelation. While some early thinkers, such as Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria, openly sought to assimilate the riches of Hellenism to their revealed religion, others, such as Tertullian, aggressively repudiated the validity of pagan learning.[16] Origen, whose *De Principiis* remains one of the greatest works of Christian philosophy, also composed the *Contra Celsum*, a magnificent work of Christian apologetic *against* philosophy (or at least against a philosopher). In Book 7 of the *Confessions*, too, we find Augustine railing against "the pride of the philosophers" while openly acknowledging his debt to "the books of the Platonists." This tension, or one might even say anxiety, concerning the right relation between philosophy and Scripture at times erupted into

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12. Martens, "Embodiment, Heresy, and the Hellenization of Christianity," 595. Cf. Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. 1, trans. Neil Buchanan (Boston: Little, Brown, 1905), 45-49; 56; 318-321; 357.

13. Edwin Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas on Christianity* (New York: Harper, 1957), 2-5.

14. Needless to say, the suggestion that there are two distinct, monolithic entities one called "Christianity" and the other "Hellenism", and that they are in conflict with each other is an absurd caricature of history.

15. Martens, "Embodiment, Heresy, and the Hellenization of Christianity," 596.

16. I refer here to the famous question: "what has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" (*De praescriptione haereticorum* 7). Of course, Tertullian himself was steeped in pagan learning, and his corporealist views are undeniably Stoic.

outright hostility and accusations of heresy. Thus, the emperor Justinian links the "insanity" of Origen's doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul to the teachings of "Pythagoras, Plato, Plotinus, and their followers."[17] For Justinian, Origen's understanding of the relation between soul and body is contrary to Scripture and thus represents "a worrisome Hellenic perversion of Christianity."[18] Origen's eventual, posthumous condemnation at the fifth ecumenical council convoked by Justinian "is inextricably linked to the Hellenization of Christianity thesis."[19] Already in antiquity, then, we find a tendency to identify Hellenism with heresy. It is a common view to this day that Origen's heterodoxy was the result of excessive Platonising.[20]

These ancient origins, however, are insufficient to account for the ideologically laden views of scholars such as Harnack and Hatch. For these thinkers, the corrosive force of Hellenism is not limited to a handful of heretics, but pervades the *whole* of Christianity *including* the very markers of orthodoxy, such as the Ecumenical Councils and Creeds. In a sense, the birth of orthodoxy for these radical moderns marks the death of the original, authentic Christianity. In other words, what we find with these thinkers is a distinctly Protestant narrative of decline in which "Hellenism" is merely a code word for Catholicism, and is seen as a corruption of an originally pristine Christianity.[21] This narrative of decline, as Wedemeyer demonstrates in his study of Tantric Buddhism, has its own ancient genealogy. According to Wedemeyer, countless historical narratives – both ancient and modern – have been constructed upon a single ubiquitous metaphor: that of organic development.[22] The basic idea is that, just as plants and animals are seen to undergo a process of growth, maturity, decay and death, so nonorganic

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17. Justinian, *Letter of Justinian to the Holy Council about Origen and those Like-minded*, in Martens, "Embodiment, Heresy, and the Hellenization of Christianity," 596.

18. Martens, "Embodiment, Heresy, and the Hellenization of Christianity," 596.

19. Martens, "Embodiment, Heresy, and the Hellenization of Christianity," 596.

20. Psychologically speaking, this strikes one as a massive case of collective projection on the part of the Christian theological tradition! *All* ancient theologians are arguably Platonists (in the broadest sense of that term) – one need only glance at the philosophical terminology of *ousia* and *hypostases* without which the central dogma of the Trinity is quite literally unthinkable. In many ways, Origen becomes the scapegoat for this collective guilt, this unconscious anxiety of the Christian tradition concerning its dependence upon Hellenism.

21. Cf. Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, 43. The whole of Chapter I, "On the Origins of Origins," of this work is worth reading.

22. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 43.

phenomena, be they cities, nations, schools of thought, or religions, are subject to cycles of flourishing and inevitable decline. While providing the foundation for much of the modern practice of history, Wedemeyer points out that this organic metaphor of growth and decline is "merely a refinement of the ancient mythopoeic vision of the successive ages of civilization: The Golden, Silver, Bronze, and Iron Ages, in which the nature of humanity progressively declines." It is a trope equally operative in India in terms of the Four *Yugas*, the last being the *Kali Yuga*, or Dark Age.[23]

This narrative of decline, which perhaps finds it clearest modern expression in Hegel's construal of history in terms of the four phases of birth, maturity, old age, and death,[24] has been enormously influential in the European study of religions. The crucial question that Wedemeyer poses for the critical historiographer of religion is: "how, with a variety of narrative forms available, did this one so quickly become dominant?"[25] Why, for example, assume that Tantric Buddhism with its elaborate spiritual technologies, its colourful rites, and priestly hierarchies marks a degeneration of an originally pristine Buddhism, rather than, say, an enrichment or creative development of the tradition? The latter, after all, is precisely how the Tantric tradition conceives of itself. Unlike the foundational teachings of Buddhism, which only lead to enlightenment after many lifetimes of practice, the tantric technologies of Vajrayana Buddhism claim to produce liberation within a single lifetime. From the perspective of the Tantric tradition, the narrative of decline would be like arguing that the automobile is somehow a corruption of the horse and buggy![26] What, then, accounts for the overwhelming preference for the narrative of decline in the study of religion as opposed to, say, a narrative of progress? The latter, after all, is perfectly familiar to us from the historical rhetoric of science and technology.

The answer, Wedemeyer, argues, may "be found by attending to patterns observable in the use of historical narrative and historical

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23. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 44.

24. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 45.

25. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 47.

26. There are, admittedly, those who would argue this! The wisdom of the Amish aside (a wisdom that seems increasingly compelling in our age of environmental crisis), it is manifest nonsense to insist that the automobile marks a decline in the efficiency of transportation.

explanation in European literature."[27] The narrative of civilizational decline – often linked to moral and sexual degeneracy – is well-established in classical literature. Both Greek and Roman writers, for example, attributed the decline of the once mighty Etruscans to moral depravity. This trope, in turn, was applied by Christian historians to the fall of Rome (one needs look no further than Edward Gibbons' *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*).[28] Such historical narratives, Wedemeyer remarks, were readily available to "the historical imaginations of early scholars of Buddhism (and religions generally), whose education was founded in large part on the study of classical literature.[29] In addition to these ancient historiographical models, we encounter a further, uniquely modern narrative of decline stemming from the Reformation and Enlightenment. In this case, the narrative fixates upon the problem of "empty ritual", and an oppressive and corrupt ecclesiastical hierarchy. Needless to say, Tantric Buddhism with its sexual yogas and elaborate priesthood makes for an all too easy, if not irresistible, target. In short, as Wedemeyer argues, Tantric Buddhism becomes the Buddhist analogue to a dogmatic Catholicism centred upon ossified creeds rather than the Sermon on the Mount.[30]

It is precisely this narrative of decline, based upon an organic metaphor of growth and decay deeply rooted (to use another organic metaphor) in the European historical imagination, which provides the impetus for the Hellenization of Christianity thesis. As we saw in the case of Tantric Buddhism, its ideological underpinnings are indebted to a uniquely Protestant narrative of religious degeneration. In the case of Christianity (or rather, *Catholicism*), it is not moral degeneracy or even ritual or a corrupt priestly hierarchy per se that are the central focus, but the dogmatizing tendencies of the "Hellenic spirit". The application of Greek philosophy to the teachings of Jesus led to ossification, a dead religion centred upon intellectually constructed creeds as opposed to a living spirituality. Once Hellenism had, as it were, stifled the vital spirit of Apostolic Christianity, an ever-deeper decline into the sterile and self-serving constructions of intellectual, liturgical, and ecclesiastical edifices became inevitable. All of

27. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 47.
28. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 47.
29. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 47.
30. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 49.

this stemmed from the unholy alliance of Hellenism and Christianity.

If one were to propose a single individual as the personification of a thoroughly Hellenised Christianity, it would undoubtedly be Origen: a towering intellectual of the early church whose Platonising tendencies (or so the story goes) led him into heresy. Harnack cites Porphyry's estimation of Origen with approval: "The outer life of Origen was that of a Christian and opposed to the Law; but, in regard to his views of things and of the Deity, he thought like the Greeks, inasmuch as he introduced their ideas into the myths of other peoples."[31] For Harnack, Origen is basically a Hellenist in disguise, a wolf in sheep's clothing who surreptitiously smuggled Greek philosophy into the revealed narratives of Sacred Scripture.[32] Beyond contributing to the progressive dogmatization of Christianity, the greatest triumph of the Hellenic spirit, according to Harnack, was that "it introduced into the Church its entire mysticism, its mystic exercises, and even the magical ceremonies as expounded by Iamblicus."[33] It is not difficult to see the thinly veiled Protestant polemic here against Catholicism with its monastic rules, its religious works, and its liturgical rites. If Origen, the great arch-heretic of antiquity, stands at the beginning of this historical narrative of decline, Catholicism undoubtedly represents its collective culmination.

2. The Hermeneutic of Suspicion

Having explored the Hellenization of Christianity thesis in some detail, I would like now to shift our attention to a problem of hermeneutics; namely, what Cavadini identifies (borrowing Ricoeur's phrase) as a deep seated "hermeneutic of suspicion" with respect to the Latin translations of Origen's surviving works. I shall begin with a brief examination of this hermeneutical problem, and then conclude with reflections as to how this relates to the Hellenization of Christianity thesis. What may initially seem like somewhat of a digression will be seen, or so it is hoped, to be merely a variation upon a single theme.

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31. Eusebius, *H.E.* VI. 19, quoted in Harnack, *History of Dogma,* 357.

32. Anders Nygren, whose notorious work *Agape and Eros* juxtaposes Christian *agape* and Platonic *eros*, echoes the same idea with respect to the topic of Christian love. Nygren singles out Origen as the chief culprit responsible for assimilating Platonic *eros* to Christian *agape* to the great detriment of the latter (*Agape and Eros* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953], 30).

33. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 359.

In his recent redaction of Butterworth's English translation of Origen's *De Principiis*, Cavadini draws attention to a peculiar methodological bias that penetrates to the very core of Origen scholarship; namely, a deep-seated suspicion regarding Rufinus' Latin translations of Origen's Greek writings, coupled with an uncritical acceptance of hostile Greek sources claiming to represent Origen's true meaning.[34] This methodological bias is not merely limited to secondary scholarship, but is embedded in Koetschau's longstanding critical edition of the *De Principiis* (1913), as well as Butterworth's English translation (1936, 1966, 1973) of Koetschau's Latin text. While Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti offer an important corrective to Koetschau with their own critical edition accompanied by French translation,[35] Butterworth's text remains the sole English language version of the *De Principiis*.[36] In his translation, Butterworth fully embraces, and even extends, Koetschau's hermeneutic of thoroughgoing suspicion regarding Rufinus' Latin rendering of Origen's Greek text. In essence, both Koetschau and Butterworth accuse Rufinus of having systematically purged Origen's *De Principiis* of any potentially heterodox opinions.[37] As a corrective, Koetschau followed by Butterworth "supplemented" Rufinus' Latin text with Greek fragments and excerpts largely taken "from sources as hostile as the anathemata of Justinian as though they were unbiased, objective witnesses to the original Greek."[38]

Needless to say, a critical attitude towards Rufinus as translator and editor of Origen's Greek works is fully justified, indeed, incumbent upon any serious scholar of Origen. As Butterworth rightly remarks, Rufinus openly admits to modifying Origen's work. In his preface to Book III of *De Principiis*, Rufinus makes the following frank admission: "But this I must needs mention, that, as I did in the former books, so in these also I have taken care not to translate such passages as appeared to be contrary to the rest of Origen's teaching and to our own faith, but to omit them as forgeries

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34. Cavadini, foreword to *On First Principles*, vii-viii.

35. *Origène: Traité des principes* (Sources Chrétiennes; Paris: Cerf, 1980).

36. Cavadini's redaction of Butterworth's text marks a recent and long overdue improvement. Yet, even Cavadini at times unwittingly falls prey to the editorial interpolations of Butterworth.

37. By Rufinus' time (4th – 5th century CE), Origen was already a controversial figure whose *De Principiis* was increasingly coming under attack for its bold speculations and its imperfect Trinitarian theology.

38. Cavadini, foreword to *On First Principles*, viii.

interpolated by others."[39] In essence, Rufinus admits to having taken certain liberties with Origen's text. While Rufinus' candour is commendable, given the controversy surrounding Origen, it is admittedly difficult *not* to instinctively share Butterworth's view that Rufinus is incriminating himself, and that the omitted "forgeries" are none other than the heterodox opinions of the great Alexandrian himself.

And yet one might pause here and ask oneself *why* it seems like such a forgone conclusion? Why assume that Rufinus is being disingenuous? After all, one frequently hears of the wild excesses of the so-called "Origenists" of the Palestinian desert, of heretical monks such as the Syrian mystic Stephen Bar Sudhaili, whose pantheistic and isochristic musings went far beyond anything Origen is generally believed to have taught.[40] Given that the growing scholarly consensus is that Origen's condemnation had more to do with the exaggerations of the so-called "Origenists" of the 5th-6th centuries that Origen himself, is it not at least plausible that Rufinus really was doing what he claims to have done; namely, restoring Origen's text by ridding it of heretical interpolations? At the very least, we must acknowledge that Butterworth's conclusion is, and in the absence of the original Greek manuscripts, can only ever be, an unverifiable hypothesis. It is by no means a forgone conclusion. The fact that it almost instinctively seems so to us, I would like to suggest, is because we too have unconsciously ascribed to the Hellenization of Christianity thesis. The sheer familiarity of the narrative of decline prevents us from seeing Origen in a more positive, and arguably more accurate, light: as in fact a *champion* of orthodoxy and a pioneer of Trinitarian theology.[41]

Whatever the case may be, it must be acknowledged that Rufinus is

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39. Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth, foreword by J. C. Cavadini, introduction by Henri De Lubac (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 2013), 194.

40. F. Prat, "Origen and Origenism," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911) online: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11306b.htm.

41. Far from being a corrupting influence, Origen's use of philosophy in fact enabled him to effectively combat the greatest challenges to the early Church; namely, Gnostic determinism and Marcionite ditheism – a task for which Origen receives little thanks. Origen also made important contributions to Trinitarian theology, something which has been overshadowed by (anachronistic) accusations of subordinationism. Cf. Jean Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture,* A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea, vol. 2, trans. John Austin Baker (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973), 375-386.

not above criticism. We simply have no way of knowing for certain what he omitted from Origen's *De Principiis,* nor what his actual editorial motives were. In regarding Rufinus with a sharply critical eye, scholars, such as Koetschau and Butterworth, are in accord with the rigorous principles of academic scholarship. What makes their hermeneutic one of *suspicion* is that this critical attitude is peculiarly one-sided.

In the introduction to his English translation of the *De Principiis*, Butterworth lists four main sources which served as the basis for his and Koetschau's "reconstruction" of Origen's text:

i. The *Philokalia*, a compilation of Origen's works made by the Cappadocian Fathers Basil and Gregory Nazianzus.
ii. A letter by Emperor Justinian to Mennas Patriarch of Constantinople containing numerous extracts from the *De Principiis*, which subsequently formed the basis for Origen's eventual condemnation.
iii. The fifteen Anathemas against Origen decreed at the Council of Constantinople in AD 553.
iv. Various fragments taken from Antipater of Bostra, Leontius of Byzantium, Theophilus of Alexandria, Epiphanius, (Jerome) and others.[42]

Of these four sources, only the first is a potentially neutral or favourable witness. The remaining three are all sources openly hostile to Origen – a fact that did not stop Koetschau from using them to "reconstruct" the alleged lacunae in his critical edition.

What is most striking about Butterworth's discussion of these controversial sources is the sheer *lack of criticism* with which he addresses them. He simply assumes their veracity *tout court*. For example, he tells us without reservation that Koetschau inserted anathemas II to VI directly into his critical text. Anathema II claims that Origen taught an incorporeal, purely intelligible original creation, while Anathema VI accuses Origen of teaching that a demiurgic *nous* created the world rather than the Trinity.[43] Both of these anathemas gloss over the subtlety of Origen's actual position

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42. G. W. Butterworth, translator's introduction in *On First Principles*, by Origen, foreword by J. C. Cavadini, introduction by Henri De Lubac (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 2013), lxiv-lxv.

43. Butterworth, *On First Principles*, 2013, lxiv-lxv. Why Koetschau felt it imperative to insert these two anathemas into his text as authentically Origenian and not, say, the absurd accusation of anathema X which accuses Origen of teaching that the resurrected body of Christ was, and of the saints will be, spherical (!) is unclear.

on these matters. In truth, they are exaggerations that echo preconceived notions of Origen as a "Platonist". These anathemas conform to the ancient roots of the Hellenization of Christianity thesis, already encountered with Justinian, which regards Hellenism as a source of heresy. When it comes to Jerome, one of Origen's most vociferous opponents, Butterworth fares no better: "No arguments," he asserts, "will alter the fact that Rufinus has left many gaps which *without Jerome's help* (emphasis added) we could not fill at all, and that time after time he deliberately transforms, abbreviates or renders inaccurately his original."[44] Upon what does Butterworth base his negative appraisal of Rufinus' translation? The fact that it differs from several passages translated by Jerome! At best, it is a case of one person's word against another. And yet, of Jerome's presentation of Origen, Butterworth confidently asserts that "though blunt, [it] is full and fair." For him, Jerome's translations have a "genuine Origenistic ring about them," and "there is *no evidence whatever* of hardening or exaggeration."[45] Leaving aside the meaningless assertion of a "genuine Origenist ring about them," (their distinctly heretical tone, perhaps?) the confidence with which Butterworth claims that there is no evidence of exaggeration *whatsoever* in Jerome's presentation of Origen is, to say the least, mindboggling. Anyone who has studied the history of philosophy knows how rare it is for opponents to treat each other's positions fairly. The notoriously irascible Jerome is no exception.[46]

How does one account for such a blatantly biased methodology? How does one explain this peculiar "hermeneutic of suspicion" in which Rufinus, as a defender of Origen is regarded as inherently unreliable,

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44. Butterworth, *On First Principles*, 2013, lxvii.

45. Butterworth, *On First Principles*, 2013, lxvii.

46. A particularly illuminating example of Jerome's "full and fair" treatment of Origen can be found in his *Ep. ad Avitum 5*. Here, Jerome "faithfully" and quite literally reproduces Origen's own words (*DePrinc*. II.III.3) concerning the eventual destruction of bodily nature at the end of time – conveniently leaving out the fact that Origen presents this view with the sole purpose of refuting it! The reason Origen gives for the preservation of bodies at this particular junction of the text is that, given the possibility of repeated falls from paradise, bodies retain a perennial importance. Insofar as Origen's justification here is itself a heretical notion (i.e., finite salvation, infinite reincarnations), it is unlikely to be a Rufinian interpolation. The tricky thing about Jerome is that, while some of his accusations are undoubtedly justified, others are blatant misrepresentations. Butterworth, meanwhile, uncritically accepts the view of Jerome as authoritative. Cf. Cavadini, *De Principiis*, 446-7, notes.

while Justinian, Jerome, and other opponents of Origen are assumed to be impeccable witnesses? A plausible means of explaining this peculiar bias, I suggest, is none other than the Hellenization of Christianity thesis. It is precisely because Koetschau and Butterworth subscribe – be it consciously or otherwise – not merely to the ancient view of Hellenism as a corrosive force upon Christianity but, above all, to the modern Protestant narrative of decline, that the incriminating exaggerations of Origen's accusers have for them the irresistible ring of truth that they do. Simply put, they are already convinced *a priori* that Origen was both a Hellenist and a heretic, and that these two things are somehow inextricably bound together. The "genuinely Origenistic ring" that Jerome's account has for Butterworth is merely the familiar echo of the latter's own preconceptions bouncing back at him. Given that Origen is so closely bound up with the origins of Christianity, the narrative of decline becomes doubly compelling. From the time of his condemnation, Origen has been consistently portrayed as the arch-heretic, the scapegoat and tragic exemplar of the dangers of philosophy. His life represents a cautionary tale of how the errors of Hellenism inevitably lead to heresy. While rooted in the ancient tension between pagan philosophy and Christian Scripture, this view of Origen takes on a heightened ideological significance for prominent Protestant scholars of religion, such as Harnack, Hatch, Nygren, Koetschau, and Butterworth. For them, Origen is the Hellenization of Christianity thesis personified. As the arch-heretic of antiquity, Origen stands at the beginning of the historical decline from the Golden Age of Apostolic Christianity to the Dark Age of Catholicism with its pagan rites, its dogmatism, and above all its mysticism.

3. A New Look at Origen's Understanding of Embodiment

Having dealt with some of the methodological and hermeneutical problems surrounding the study of Origen, particularly with respect to his most philosophical and controversial work, the *De Principiis*, I will conclude with a brief exploration of what Origen's thought might look like when viewed apart from the hermeneutic of suspicion. For the sake of brevity, I will focus upon a single, contentious issue; namely, Origen's understanding of the soul/body relation. It is widely accepted that Origen taught there was an original, noetic creation which only later became embodied as a

consequence of sin.[47] This view, as we noted above, is found in the second anathema subsequently enshrined in Koetschau's critical text of the *De Principiis*. This alleged doctrine, often referred to as the teaching on the pre-existence of souls,[48] has as its counterpart the doctrine of *apokatastasis*, or universal restoration. Given that creatures were originally incorporeal spirits, so the common view of Origen goes, at the time of restoration bodies will once again be cast aside in favour of a purely noetic existence.[49] This position is problematic in that it denies a central dogma of the Christian faith; namely, the resurrection of the body. This view, which casts Origen's teaching into the mold of a quasi-Platonic mind/body dualism, conforms to the Hellenization of Christianity thesis, and is duly confirmed by Koetschau and Butterworth's hermeneutic of suspicion. Yet is this in fact the correct, or even the most plausible, interpretation of Origen?

While many ancient and modern critics of Origen accuse him of teaching a radical soul/body dualism, his position is in fact far subtler than this. For Origen, there is a direct and crucial correlation between the moral state of the soul and its physical condition, so that the *kind* of bodies that beings possess are a direct reflection of their spiritual condition. Thus, the most spiritually refined beings possess ethereal angelic bodies, while less refined beings possess coarser bodies, such as fleshly human bodies, or murky demonic bodies. For Origen, freewill and providence coincide in the constitution of a cosmic hierarchy which is not fixed, but fluid. God's "original" creation[50] consists of free and indeterminate beings who, in a sense, constitute themselves by their own moral choices: the diversity of bodies is the result of the diversity of wills. Depending upon one's moral

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47. Jean Daniélou uncritically accepts this view remarking that with respect to Origen's conception of the fall of Man, "the influence of philosophy had a seriously distorting effect on Christian tradition" (*Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, 415).

48. Henri Crouzel, the great defender of Origen, remarks that this idea "comes from Platonism" and consequently that it is among "the most vulnerable parts of Origen's thought" (*Origen* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989], 207, 217).

49. Origen is accused of this in anathema XI: "If anyone shall say that the future judgment signifies the destruction of the body and that the end of the story will be an immaterial φύσις, and that thereafter there will no longer be any matter, but only spirit (νοῦς): let him be anathema" (Philip Schaff and Henry Wallace, ed., *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, NPNF2-14 [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1900], 319. Online: https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf214.xii. ix.html).

50. The original creation is not a temporal one, but an *ontological* one. Cf. my "Aristotelian Teleology and Christian Eschatology in Origen's *De Principiis*," esp. 60-69.

state, God providentially provides the appropriate body.[51] This embodiment is not a punishment, as Origen's opponents often claim, but a means of purgation; it is not so much punitive as pedagogical.[52] Consequently, while some incarnations are undoubtedly superior to others, Origen never rejects the body *per se* as evil, as something which needs to be transcended or abandoned. To the contrary, Origen repeatedly *affirms* the goodness of the body and of matter generally as a creation of the divine.

According to Origen, the indeterminacy of matter is such that it is capable of undergoing any kind of transformation in accordance with the freely willed choices of individuals. When it is drawn down to lower, more sinful existences, matter takes on a coarser and heavier quality, whereas when it ministers to more exalted, saintlier beings, it adopts a more refined, ethereal character. Consequently, while bodily matter may be infinitely *transformed*, it is never destroyed. Origen affirms this position in a number of places in the *De Principiis*. At II.I.4, he states that the diversity of the world "cannot exist apart from bodies" and that bodily nature "admits of diverse and various changes." In short, it is capable of undergoing every kind of transformation. As such, Origen asks whether it is possible that bodies will someday be resolved back into nonexistence. His answer is no: "In whatever form it is found, be it carnal as now or as hereafter in the subtler and purer form which is called spiritual, the soul always makes use of [the body]" (*DePrinc.* II.III.2; cf. IV.III.15, IV.IV.8).

In a way, this is not unlike Aristotle; Origen regards the body as the

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51. According to Origen's "myth of pre-existence," the original created intellects (*logika*) abided in blissful union with the divine. At some point, however, they fell away from God and their originally ethereal bodies suffered alteration in keeping with their diminished ethical/ontological condition. Those who fell only a little ways acquired subtle angelic bodies; those who fell further acquired coarser human bodies; those who fell furthest of all acquired murky demonic bodies. Origen's cosmology, thus, resembles a kind of theistic doctrine of 'karma,' in which the cosmos reflects the ethical choices of the beings which inhabit it. Given that Origen posits no temporal beginning to the universe, this interplay of providence and freewill is itself beginningless (though not endless). Cf. Origen, *DePrinc*., I.IV.1-5; II.I.1-5.

52. The diverse embodiments of beings with their inherent limitations is not punitive, but pedagogical; beings are meant to *learn* from their suffering and to be purged from their errors so that they will all eventually be restored to their original perfection and union in God. Embodiment is not so much "corporal punishment" as "physical therapy." Cf. Origen, *DePrinc*., I.VI. 1-4; II.IX.1-8.

organon, or instrument of the soul.[53] Unlike Aristotle, perhaps, the body is capable of undergoing infinite transmutations in service to an infinitely changeable soul; the body is the timeless externalization of the soul, the material projection of the individual's spiritual condition. Thus, in response to the Pauline statement that "the form of this world shall pass away" (1 Cor 7:31), Origen argues that "it is not by any means an annihilation or destruction of the material substance that is indicated, but the occurrence of a certain change of quality (*inmutatio quaedam fit* qualitatis) and an alteration (*transformatio*) of the outward form" (*DePrinc.* I.VI.4). Citing Isaiah 65:17, Origen further maintains that the final *apokatastasis* will not involve the *destruction* of the material world, but its renewal (*innovatio*) and its transmutation (*transmutatio*). Contra his accusers, Origen never claims that the body will be destroyed – nor does he deny the reality of the resurrection-body. Instead, he argues that the latter will consist of an exceedingly pure, and subtle matter such as is appropriate to the deified soul. In this, Origen is being faithful to Paul who proclaims that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven", and that "it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1Cor 15:44, 50). This is in direct contradiction to anathema XI which claims that Origen denies the survival of the body.[54]

If Origen is being faithful to Paul, he is also being faithful to Aristotle. This is evident in Origen's insistence upon the inseparability of soul and body, form and matter. Thus, while Origen concedes that matter (*hyle*, *hypokeimenon)* has its own existence apart from qualities, yet, he insists, "*it is never found actually existing apart from them*" (*DePrinc.*II.I.4). At IV.IV.7, Origen reiterates that "it is by intellect alone" that matter can be conceived of as separate. In other words, for Origen, like Aristotle, matter is always *informed* matter. In fact, in terms of his understanding of the soul/body relation, Origen's Hellenism is seen to be not so much Platonic as *Aristotelian*. Far from being a soul/body dualist, Origen ascribes to a deeply *hylomorphic* conception of reality – a fact which the hermeneutic of

53. At IV.III.15, Origen declares that, though souls are not themselves corporeal, they "yet make use of bodies, though they themselves are superior to bodily substance." At IV.IV.8, Origen insists that "this [bodily] nature must needs endure so long as those endure who need it for a covering; *and there will always be rational natures who need this bodily covering.*"
54. For the text, cf. fn. 49. Also, cf. Anathema XIV in fn. 58.

suspicion has largely obscured. As such, Origen's use of philosophy here,[55] in fact, *conforms* to and *affirms* the revealed truth of the Gospel. Rather than distorting the meaning of Scripture, Origen skillfully draws upon and modifies Aristotle in a way that harmonizes him with Paul.

The handful of passages I have presented as evidence for Origen's hylomorphism, his insistence upon the inseparability of soul and body, and consequently, his affirmation of the dogma of the bodily resurrection, is far from comprehensive.[56] The eternal inseparability of soul and body is in fact a foundational, ontological principle for Origen's *De Principiis.* The soul/body union marks the fundamental divide between creature and Creator. In a passage frequently dismissed by commentators as a Rufinian interpolation,[57] Origen declares that it is impossible for any being, except for the Trinity, to live apart from a body. Such a disincarnate, purely noetic existence can only be found in the simplicity of the Godhead, in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*DePrinc*. II.II.2; IV.III.15). This distinction between composite, corporeal creatures, and the simple, incorporeal reality of the Trinity represents the fundamental ontological divide in Origen's cosmos between Creator and creature, absolute Being and contingent beings. To deny this basic distinction leads inevitably to pantheism – a fact not lost upon those eager to condemn Origen.[58]

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55. This is not to say that Origen's philosophizing does not get him into trouble on other points of doctrine – it most certainly *does*. Yet, it is important to see that the converse is also true. In fact, even when Origen's philosophical views conflict with what will *subsequently* come to be recognized as orthodoxy, these views are always in service to orthodoxy insofar as they represent an attempt on Origen's part to overcome early Gnostic and Marcionite heresies – something for which Origen ought to be congratulated rather than condemned!

56. In addition to the many other passages in the *De Principiis* that illustrate this, there exists a crucial passage in Origen's *Contra Celsum*, in the original uncorrupted Greek, which affirms precisely, in Origen's own words, this alleged Rufinian modification. Cf. *CCels* III.41-42 (*Origène: Contre Celse* [Sources Chrétiennes; Paris: Cerf, 1967]).

57. Even Cavadini, despite his keen grasp of the problems surrounding the hermeneutic of suspicion, concedes in a footnote that "Rufinus has probably modified this passage" (*On First Principles,* 446).

58. Anathema XIV: "If anyone shall say that all reasonable beings will one day be united in one, when the hypostases as well as the numbers and the bodies shall have disappeared, and that the knowledge of the world to come will carry with it the ruin of the worlds, and the rejection of bodies as also the abolition of [all] names, and that there shall be finally an identity of the γνῶσις and of the hypostasis; moreover, that in this pretended apocatastasis, spirits only

Conclusion

What I hope to have shown in my brief excursus into the intricacies of Origen's *De Principiis* is that a close and careful reading of the actual text does not support the hermeneutic of suspicion. Far from amounting to a few passages surreptitiously penciled in by Rufinus, the notion of embodiment is in fact central to the very foundation of Origen's metaphysic – and can be confirmed by a mere glance at the *Contra Celsum* where this same idea is enshrined in the original Greek (*CCels* III.41-42).[59] While Rufinus is not above criticism, to claim that the timeless union of soul and body is an interpolation amounts to the claim that the entire *De Principiis* has been hopelessly corrupted. It would mean that Rufinus had not merely modified, or omitted, passages, as he himself admits to doing; it would mean, rather, that he had thoroughly *rewritten* the *De Principiis* in accordance with his own views concerning the relation of soul and body. In other words, we would have to conclude that the Latin *De Principiis* represents, at best, a work of philosophical collaboration between Origen *and* Rufinus. However, there is nothing to suggest that Rufinus was remotely capable of accomplishing such a feat.

The fact that such a paranoid position (for this *is* the inevitable conclusion of the hermeneutic of suspicion) has, and continues to be, maintained can only be explained by the pervasive, often unconscious, influence of the Hellenization of Christianity thesis. The ancient anxiety concerning the right relation between Greek philosophy and revealed religion, exacerbated by the modern Protestant narrative of decline with its anti-Catholic polemic, creates an intellectual atmosphere in which Origen, Hellenism, and heresy become virtually synonymous. As such, it becomes all too easy to embrace the distorted claims of Origen's accusers as legitimate, conforming as they do to our own preconceived notions of Origen as the arch-heretic of Christian history, and the personification of Hellenized Christianity. While it would be going too far to claim that Origen

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will continue to exist, as it was in the feigned pre-existence: let him be anathema" (Schaff and Wallace, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 319. Online: https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf214.xii.ix.html).

59. While a single Greek passage may seem like scant evidence, given the sorry state of Origen's surviving writings it acquires a heightened value. It is a welcome affirmation in Origen's own words of an idea often discounted as a Rufinian modification.

was *not* profoundly influenced by Hellenism, or that some of his bold speculations *do not* challenge Christian orthodoxy, what the Hellenization of Christianity thesis blinds us to is the extent to which Origen's Hellenism in fact *supports,* and *is in service to*, Christian doctrine. Origen is indeed a Hellenized Christian (or a Christian Hellenist); yet not quite the sort that he is typically accused of being. He is not merely a "Platonist,"[60] but equally an Aristotelian. In the case of the soul/body relation, this Aristotelianism in fact *accords* with, and *affirms*, the Christian view of embodiment. Only the deeply engrained prejudices stemming from the hermeneutic of suspicion, embedded in the *very critical edition* and subsequent English translation of the *De Principiis,* prevents us from seeing this. What else has it prevented us from seeing?

60. The juxtaposition of Platonism and Aristotelianism here cannot be pushed too far; by Origen's time, "Platonism" already contained a great deal of "Aristotelianism" and vice versa. Indeed, "Platonism" often serves as a general term for the Greek philosophical tradition as a whole. I use these terms merely as indicators of philosophical positions that tend to be associated more strongly with one than the other, in this case the soul/body relation.

From Pilgrim to Perfect Man: Augustine's Doctrine of Deification as Ecclesial Progress in *The City of God*

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The belief in progress has been, and many argue still is, a central and driving force in Western culture. Augustine's magisterial work *The City of God*[1] is a response to various ancient ideas of progress, and in responding to these he also sets forth his own theological understanding of the origin, progress, and consummation of human history. In traditional theological terms, this is the domain of the doctrine of providence, but it is instructive to set Augustine's thought in conversation – as he so clearly desires to – with competing systems of thought, for it is especially in comparison that Augustine's theology of history is revealed for its radical reformulation of ancient thought. In this essay, then, I will set forth a constructive portrayal of Augustine's theological idea of progress as presented in *The City of God*. Augustine in no way offers a general theory of progress that might be universally recognized *in history*; however, there is progress nonetheless as the city of God, alongside and in opposition to the earthly city, develops as a pilgrim in the world from the time of Adam and progresses until the final judgment when the two cities will at last be separated. In particular, I will argue that, even in the present age (for him the sixth and final historical age), Augustine understands there to be progress in the Church as it is being built up through love into a perfect man (XXII.18). This progress in love is *both* vertical *and* horizontal in that Augustine understands the Christian hope to be both an enduring participation in God through Christ, and a responsible participation in the world through the body of Christ.

1. Two Ideas of Progress in the Ancient Roman World

If the idea of progress is going to be a useful tool for understanding both

1. Unless otherwise noted, references are from Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. R. W. Dyson (New York: Cambridge UP, 2013). Henceforth, only book and chapter numbers will be given.

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Augustine's thought and that of his various interlocutors, we will require a broad definition of the term. A brief overview of various sources on the idea of progress leads very quickly into a land of competing claims. For example, J. B. Bury argues that the "notion of Progress… is of comparatively recent origin," and that "the intellectual climates of classical antiquity and the ensuing ages [up until "the sixteenth century"] were not propitious to the birth of the doctrine of progress."[2] This is not least because, for Bury, the idea of progress is intrinsically anthropocentric, which is to say "it must not be at the mercy of any external will; otherwise… the idea of Progress would lapse into the idea of Providence."[3] His point is well-taken and any account of the general idea of progress would have to distinguish between its pre-modern and modern manifestations. However, I do not see any necessary reason to begin with such a narrow understanding of the term. On the other end of the spectrum, Robert Nisbet traces the idea back to the ancient Greeks and sees great continuity right through the early Church and beyond: "Far from being obstacles or barriers the thoughts of progress by the ancients and Christians alike were steps toward the modern idea of progress."[4]

There is more agreement with respect to the general features of an idea of progress. At the very least, scholars agree that progress is a change through time for the better (not merely for individuals but for human society); most argue for an "end" to progress in some final state of felicity; and there is broad consensus regarding the dual-aspect of progress in terms of either its 'material' or 'spiritual' significance (or both as the case may be).[5] On the latter point, these two aspects of progress might productively

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2. J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress* (Read Books, 2011), 6-7. Sidney Pollard, *The Idea of Progress: History and Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), is at one with Bury here, arguing that "the idea of human progress… was absent in classical times, and could grow only after the mental fetters inherited from them had, at least in part, been broken" (1).

3. Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, 5.

4. Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009), xiii. Nisbet calls Bury's book "a deeply flawed classic" (xviii).

5. Other terms are often used synonymously with these: 'moral', 'religious', or 'mystical' in the place of 'spiritual'; and 'secular', 'scientific', or 'technical', in the place of 'material'. Cf. John Baillie, *The Belief in Progress* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 7-38; Ronald Wright, *A Short History of Progress* (Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press, 2004), 3-4; Pollard, *The Idea of Progress*, 1-17; Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, 4; and Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, xii.

be categorized in terms of symbolic trajectories: the horizontal (material), which is immanent and *this*-worldly, and the vertical (spiritual), which is transcendent and *other*-worldly.[6] The broadest definition of progress is thus supplied by Baillie as "a continued change for the better."[7]

1.1 Horizontal Progress: Rome without Limits

On the one hand, Augustine is arguing against those Romans who believed the empire was to progress with limitless power and dominion. In fact, his reason for writing *The City of God* was to defend Christianity against those who claimed the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410 was due to the abolishment of the ancient gods and the influence of the new religion. It is hard to imagine the loss experienced by both pagans and Christians alike who were schooled in words like those of Jupiter found in Virgil's *Aeneid*: "To the Romans I assign limits neither to the extent nor to the duration of their empire; dominion I have given them without end."[8] What the Romans believed for centuries concerning the empire – limitless in space and time – many Christians now took up and understood to be fulfilled in Christ.[9]

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6. The reason for choosing these terms will become clearer in the course of my argument. In short, I think it is possible to identify a social or even political (i.e., horizontal) progress in Augustine that, while having significant material impact, is not very concerned with technical development or utilitarian ends. His desire is to infuse the material with moral or spiritual significance, raising it to a higher plane.

7. Baillie, *The Belief in Progress*, 2. J. D. Bury defines progress as "an interpretation of history which regards men as slowly advancing – *pedetemtim progredientes* – in a definite and desirable direction, and infers that this progress will continue indefinitely" (*The Idea of Progress*, 5). For Robert Nisbet, it is "*the idea* […] *that mankind has advanced in the past – from some aboriginal condition of primitiveness, barbarism, or even nullity – is now advancing, and will continue to advance through the foreseeable future*" (*History of the Idea of Progress*, 4-5; *italics original*).

8. Quoted in Theodore E. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of the City of God," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12, no. 3 (June 1951), 347. Mommsen provides many more examples of this belief than I can include here, and he argues that it was commonly held among Christians as well. I am indebted to his diligent research throughout this section. Even at the end of the fourth century, the pagan historian Ammianus Marcellinus could proclaim that "as long as there are men, Rome will be victorious so that it will increase with lofty growth"; and the Christian poet Claudianus could write: "There will never be an end to the power of Rome…" (347).

9. This is the focus of Mommsen's article: he seeks to show that Augustine is responding not only to Roman pagans but also to Roman Christians. For example, Prudentius in AD 403 wrote:

Writing, then, on the other side of this catastrophe (he began the work in 413 and completed it in 426), Augustine sought to provide both a defense of Christianity and a critique of such exclusively horizontal understandings of progress. His method is twofold: first, he provides a barrage of historical examples that undercut any theology of material reciprocity, or what Mommsen calls "the old [Roman] principle of *do ut des:* 'I give that you may give.'"[10] The Romans presumed that by offering to the gods the gods would in turn provide them with material benefits, but for every historical example where the Romans see a positive correlation between religiosity and material gain, Augustine can find another of negative correlation (II-III). Second, he provides a theological critique of the gods in an attempt to reveal their impotence: each god is assigned "power" over particular tasks of human life; however, as the number of gods increase, the tasks become more and more minute such that no one god could ever be responsible for anything of real significance (IV). In short, the Roman gods are utterly impotent – worse, they are in truth demons inciting humans to participate in evil acts (IV.1).

How then is one to explain the spectacular growth of the Roman Empire? Here Augustine considers, and is even willing in part to commend, "the virtues of the Romans" (V.12). In particular, "the Romans were led to do many great deeds, first by their love of liberty, and then by their desire for praise and glory" (V.12).[11] At first, freedom was sought with such great

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"[Constantine] did not set any boundaries, nor did he fix limits of time; he taught an imperial power without end so that the Roman valor should no longer be senile nor the glory which Rome had won should ever know old age" ("St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress," 367).

10. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress," 359. Augustine criticizes the principle thus: "For the good make use of this world in order to enjoy God; but the evil, by contrast, wish to make use of God in order to enjoy this world…" (XV.7). In other words, the principle turns the gods into the means of a desired material and temporal end; whereas, for Augustine, God is properly an end and not a means.

11. Desire for glory, according to Augustine, is not really a virtue but rather a lesser vice that keeps greater vices – such as the lust for mastery – in check. "But the heroes of Rome were members of an earthly city, and the goal of all the services which they performed for it was its security. They sought a kingdom not in heaven, but upon earth: not in the realm of life eternal, but in that region where the dead pass away and are succeeded by the dying. What else were they to love, then, but glory, by which they sought to find even after death a kind of life in the mouths of those who praised them?" (V.14).

fervor that Romans were willing "either to die brave or live free" (V.12). Then, once freedom had been achieved, their desire for glory led to a quest for "dominion over others" (V.12). This desire for glory led many Romans to prefer the empire to their own wealth and even lives, and so that empire grew. Eventually, however, the desire for glory gave way to the corruption of luxury in which "the commonwealth was impoverished by the wealth of private citizens" (V.12). In the end, the Romans justly received what they desired: a material reward and a temporal empire (V.15). It is worth noting here that while Augustine rejects the *do ut des* formula, he does see an intrinsic – though not necessary – relationship between virtue and material welfare: greed (vice) leads to destruction, but self-sacrifice (virtue) is capable of contributing to the common good.

Detached from the transcendent God, the Roman Empire sought to "transcend" on a purely horizontal level, but its immanent ontology led to a progress of stretch and collapse. By exposing the Romans gods as demons belonging to the spatiotemporal realm, Augustine reveals the untenable nature of an exclusively horizontal progress; all such progress – driven by love of self – in the end curves in on itself, distorting external goods for the sole purpose of temporal pleasure.

1.2 Vertical Progress: Platonic Progress and Regress

Augustine has more sophisticated interlocutors in the Greek philosophical tradition. If the first five books are Augustine's rejection of the immanent ontology of Roman religion, books six through ten are an analysis of the dualist ontology[12] of the Greek philosophers who promote the possibility of vertical transcendence. Here Augustine has much to commend, especially among the Platonists; for, he argues, "No one has come closer to us than the Platonists" (VIII.5).[13]

Augustine lays out the idea of progress in Platonic philosophy beginning with the premise of Plato that "no god has dealings with men"

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12. There is obviously a distinction to be made between the dualism of the Manicheans, which posits an eternal dualism of good and evil (and is rejected by Augustine), and the dualism of the Platonists, which posits an eternal dualism of being and becoming (and is more amenable to Augustine). We will see his modifications to the Platonist position below.

13. Cf. VIII.6-11 for Augustine's generous commendation of Plato.

(VIII.18).[14] If, then, there is to be vertical progress from men to gods, there must be a means of mediation between the two. As a test case in Platonic philosophy, Augustine takes the thought of Apuleius who believed that demons function as intermediaries between gods and men (VIII.18ff). Augustine quotes Apuleius at the core of his argument:

> You have here two kinds of living creature, gods and men, with the former sharply distinguished from the latter by the sublimity of their *location*, the everlastingness of their *lives*, and the perfection of their *nature*. There is no direct means of communication between the gods and men, for not only are the highest habitations separated from the lowest by a great gulf; also, the life-force of the gods is eternal and unfailing, whereas that of men is fleeting and intermittent. Moreover, the nature of the gods is sublime in its blessedness, whereas that of men is sunk in misery (IX.12; *italics added*).

In responding to Apuleius's position, Augustine grants that the *location* of the demons is intermediate. However, wonders Augustine, how is it that Apuleius neglects to assign to the demons one attribute from each of the other two opposing pairs? Unlike *location*, neither their *lives* nor their *natures* can possibly be intermediate; therefore, if they are to remain suspended between gods and men, the demons must possess one attribute like the gods and the other like humans. And "since everlasting life cannot be received from the lowest extreme, because it does not exist there, they must receive this one attribute of theirs from the highest; and, accordingly, there is nothing but misery left for them to receive from the lowest extreme, thereby completing their intermediate position" (IX.13). In their intermediate position, the demons are in fact intermediaries, argues Augustine; however, they "cannot confer upon us a blessedness which they do not have themselves," and so their role is not one of reconciliation but of "separation" unto "eternal misery" (IX.23; IX.15; IX.13). And, as Augustine argues previously, it is utter madness to worship that which is unworthy of imitation (VIII.17).

Further, *even if*, as the Platonists hold, there is real vertical progress from the realm of becoming to the realm of the Forms, there remains among the Platonists the aporia of *enduring* transcendence. The Platonists introduced the notion of cyclical time (*circuitus temporum*) "in which the same natural things are renewed and repeated eternally" (XII.14). But

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14. "Gods do not mix with men; they mingle and converse with us through spirits instead…" (Plato, *Symposium*, ed. John M. Cooper [Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1997], 203A).

from this notion "they cannot find a way of freeing even the immortal soul, which, even when it has achieved wisdom, still ceaselessly passes back and forth between false blessedness and true misery" (XII.14; cf. 21). Unlike the horizontal progress of stretch and collapse that Augustine perceived in Roman religion, the problem with Platonism is a vertical progress and regress that continues for eternity. Augustine's solution is a return to the particular historical events of Scripture.

2. The Pilgrim's Progress: Making a Straight Path for the City of God

Theodore Mommsen provides a detailed analysis of the terms that Augustine uses pertaining to the "progress" of the city of God (*excursus*, *procursus*, and *procurrere*).[15] He concludes that the linguistic evidence suggests "the City of God on earth 'proceeded in running out its course' [XIX.5]."[16] In other words, he suggests,

> mankind has grown up from the time of its infancy through the phases of childhood, adolescence, young manhood, and mature manhood to its old age (*senectus*) which has begun with the birth of Christ. That growth of the spiritual enlightenment of the human race found its clearest expression in the scheme of "the six ages"…. The summit has been reached with the gospel of Christ, and no further fundamental change will take place in the spiritual realm to the end of time.[17]

Mommsen is certainly right that Augustine did not expect another "age" of progress to commence until the return of Christ.[18] However, it does not follow to suppose this means the end of progress in the age of the Church. For example, to Christians, Augustine is still able to write: "Now, therefore, let us walk in hope, and progress [*proficientes*] from day to day as we mortify

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15. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress," 371-72. It is curious to me that Mommsen does not look at the word *proficere* ("to make progress, advance, gain ground, get an advantage"), which a superficial perusal of the text shows to be quite pertinent (cf. X.14; XVIII.11; XIX.19; XXI.15, 27).

16. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress," 372.

17. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress," 372-73.

18. The ages of Augustine's scheme are as follows: (1) Adam to the Flood; (2) Flood to Abraham; (3) Abraham to David; (4) David to Exile in Babylon; (5) Exile to Nativity of Christ; (6) Current Age of the Church; (7) Return of Christ and Rest; (8) Eternal Rest (XXII.30).

the deeds of the flesh by the spirit" (XXI.15). Then he offers a dramatic summary of his overarching theo-logic:

> '…as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God': not by nature, however, but by grace. For there is only one Son of God by nature, Who in His compassion became the Son of man for our sakes, that we, being by nature sons of men, might become sons of God by grace through Him. For He, abiding unchangeable, took our nature upon Himself so that, through that nature, He might take us to Himself. Even while holding fast to His own divinity, *He became a partaker in our infirmity, that we, being changed for the better, might, by participating in His immortality and righteousness*, lose our condition of sin and mortality, and preserve whatever good quality He had implanted in our nature, *now made perfect by that supreme good which is the goodness of His nature* (XXI.15; *italics added*).

This is what I intend to unpack for the remainder of this paper: that the logic of incarnation leading to deification is what Augustine understands as ecclesial progress, which begins even "in this passing age, where she dwells by faith as a pilgrim among the ungodly…" (I.*Pref.*).

2.1 Time: The "New Things" of History

For Augustine, it is vital that the end of progress be a secure and lasting rest. He stresses this point in the final book of *The City of God*, describing the final state of affairs as a "full, certain, secure and everlasting felicity" (XXII.30); and he contrasts the original state of affairs in paradise with the final state of affairs in the coming kingdom of heaven in terms of "being able not to die" as opposed to "being not able to die" (XXII.30). Why is this so important? Because he understands that, without eternal security, there is no true felicity: "For how can the soul be truly blessed when it has no assurance of being so for all eternity, and if it is either unaware of coming misery because ignorant of the truth, or most unhappy with foreboding even in its blessedness?" (XII.14).

In order for the end of progress to be a secure and lasting rest, Augustine rethinks time and history in opposition to the cyclical view of the Platonists. To do this, he focuses on the genuine historical novelty introduced especially by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. By arguing that there are really "new things" in history, Augustine is able to break open the cyclical worldview and propose a linear view of history, one

with a definite beginning (creation), a surprising intervention (Incarnation), and a final consummation (deification).

With respect to his view of history, Augustine's argument is centred on chapter fourteen of book twelve when he introduces the genuinely "new things" of history in the story of Jesus. After strongly opposing the Platonic "theory of cycles," Augustine proclaims that "Christ died for our sins *once*, and 'being raised from the dead dieth *no more*; death hath no dominion over Him'" (XII.14; *italics added*). Following from the event of Christ's resurrection is that "we ourselves, after the resurrection, shall be 'ever with the Lord'" (XII.14). It is the novelty and finality of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus that breaks the cyclical worldview.

The truth of history is therefore discovered in the receptivity of time to eternity. The two realms are not hermetically sealed, but God intervenes – indeed, he participates – in history in the person of Christ introducing genuinely "new things." Apart from this revelation, philosophical reason is stuck in an endless cycle of progress and regress. History is thus revealed in its linear and participatory nature,[19] and "by following the straight path of wholesome doctrine, we may escape I know not what false and circular paths discovered by wise men who are both deceived and deceiving," for "'[t]he wicked walk in a circle' – not because their life is to recur in cycles, as they believe, but because the path of their error, that is, of their false doctrine, is circular" (XII.14). Augustine summarizes his achievement like this: "Therefore, now that we have exploded those cycles in which it was supposed that the soul is brought back at fixed intervals to the same miseries, what can be more in keeping with godliness than to believe that it is not impossible for God both to create new things never before created, and, by his ineffable foreknowledge, to preserve His will unaltered in doing so?" (XII.21).[20] This linear-participatory perspective opens up for Augustine the possibility of legitimate progress *from* creation *to* deification.

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19. For an exposition of history in its "linear and participatory… dimensions," cf. Matthew Levering, *Participatory Biblical Exegesis: A Theology of Biblical Exegesis* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).

20. Christopher Dawson suggests "This recognition of the uniqueness and irreversibility of the temporal process – this 'explosion of the perpetual cycles' – is one of the most remarkable achievements of St. Augustine's thought." Cf. "St. Augustine and His Age," in *A Monument to St. Augustine* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1930), 69.

2.2 Space: Creation and Incarnation

2.2.1 Dependent Dualism: Creation *ex nihilo*

In a certain sense, creation *ex nihilo* is, for Augustine, the first "new thing," for creation inaugurates time.[21] The doctrine also introduces an original ontology that I am calling dependent dualism. If the material realm is eternally evil (as in Manichaeism or Gnosticism), it is ultimately subject to decay and death; spiritual escape is the only mode of enduring progress. If the material realm is eternally mutable (as in Platonic philosophy), it is susceptible, after a period of progress in the realm of Forms, to fall back into the flux of becoming. Neither option is plausible for Augustine who is constrained by the limits of biblical revelation: matter is good, and only God is eternal. Therefore, creation, which for Augustine contains both spiritual and corporeal matter, must have a beginning that does not emanate from the eternal life of God. His solution, in line with the Christian tradition before him, is to propose "that there is no immutable good apart from the one, true, blessed God; and that the things which He has made are indeed good, because they come from Him, but are nonetheless mutable, because made not out of Him, but out of nothing" (XII.1).[22] The result is an ontological dualism between Creator and creation, yet not one of absolute separation or autonomy. In his own words: "For although [all the things which He has created] can be *nothing without Him*, they are *not what He is*" (VII.30; *italics added*).[23]

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21. Augustine writes: "And is it any wonder if, wandering around in these circles, they find neither a way in nor a way out? For they do not know how the human race and this mortal condition of ours began, nor how it will be brought to a close, since they cannot penetrate the depth of God's intention. *For though He is Himself eternal and without beginning, He has nonetheless caused time to have a beginning*; and man, whom He had not previously made, He has made in time not from a new and sudden resolve, but by His immutable and eternal purpose" (XII.15; *italics added*). There is nuance in Augustine's understanding of the relation between creation and time that is beyond the scope of this paper. For a more thorough explanation, cf. Simo Knuuttila, "Time and Creation in Augustine," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 2nd ed., eds. David Vincent Meconi and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014), 81-97.

22. In other words, one could say that, for Augustine, God is the efficient, formal, and final cause of creation, but not its material cause.

23. Contrary to the view of Gnosticism or Manichaeism, Augustine's cosmos is good; contrary to the view of Platonism, though of course much closer to his own view, Augustine's cosmos is

This doctrine, then, provides a foundation for an enduring spiritual-material progress. Dawson argues that Augustine:

> admits that the idea of a perpetual return is a natural consequence of the belief in the eternity of the world, but if we once accept the doctrine of Creation, as Origen himself did, there is no further need for a theory of "the circumrotation of souls," or for the belief that nothing new or final can take place in time. Humanity has had an absolute beginning and travels to an absolute goal. There can be no return. That which is begun in time is consummated in eternity.[24]

Moreover, the material realm is good and therefore analogically compatible with the good God. (The soul was never a problem for the Platonists, nor for Augustine.) However, sin causes a disruption in this dependent dualism such that, under fallen conditions, the end result of creation is necessarily corruption and decay (cf. XIII), for the created realm is now constantly susceptible in its reduced ontological status to fall, drawn by the law of ontological gravity, back into nothingness.[25] If we are to get beyond a foundation for progress and move forward as "pilgrims," the radical ontological otherness of creation in relation to the Creator must be resolved. The situation demands an ontological bridge between Creator and creation that makes a way for true progress. Herein lies the significance of the divine-human mediator, the one who bridges the provisional ontological gap left by creation *ex nihilo* and so preserves and raises that which was susceptible to decay.

2.2.2 Divine-Human Mediation: Incarnation

The doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* renders the created realm vulnerable to corruption, inevitable disintegration, and a return to nothingness. The Incarnation is, therefore, the pivot point for Augustine that ensures both access of the created to the uncreated, and the enduring significance of the

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created *ex nihilo* and therefore 1) is willed by God (cf. XI.21); 2) has a temporal beginning (cf. XI.4); and 3) is ontologically other than the being of God (cf. XII.1; quoted above).

24. Dawson, "St. Augustine and His Age," 68-69.

25. Augustine notes: "To be sure, man did not fall away from his nature so completely as to lose all being. When he turned towards himself, however, his being became less complete than when he clung to Him Who exists supremely. Thus, to forsake God and to exist in oneself – that is, to be pleased with oneself – is not immediately to lose all being; but it is to come closer to nothingness" (XIV.13).

created.

The key passage on Christ's mediation immediately follows Augustine's repudiation of demonic mediation in the thought of Apuleius. Instead of the demons who are immortal and miserable, what if we looked for a mediator who was at once blessed (like God) and mortal (like men)?

> But if, as is argued much more credibly and probably, all men must necessarily be miserable while they are mortal, then we must seek a Mediator Who is not only man, but also God: Who, by the intervention of His blessed mortality, may lead men out of their mortal misery to a blessed immortality, and Who must neither fail to become mortal nor remain mortal. He was indeed made mortal not by any infirmity of the divinity of the Word, but by His assumption of the infirmity of the flesh. But He did not remain mortal even in that flesh, for He raised it from the dead. For this is indeed the fruit of His mediation: that those for the sake of whose redemption He became the Mediator should no longer remain subject to eternal death even of the flesh. It was, therefore, fitting for the Mediator between us and God to have both transient mortality and everlasting blessedness, so that, in His transient condition, He might resemble those destined to die, and might translate them from their mortality into His everlasting condition (IX.15).

Influenced by the conventional wisdom on Augustine, one might expect his discussion on mediation to focus on the chasm introduced by sin between humans and a holy God.[26] Instead, Augustine consistently cites 1 Timothy 2:5[27] as a resolution to the ontological gap introduced by the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. The Incarnation bridges that ontological gap as the immortal God assumes, raises, and translates the mortal flesh of humans. It fuses the immutable to the mutable and in so doing rescues the latter from decay. Having, then, pointed the way in his linear doctrine of history, Augustine now paves the path toward a real and enduring progress by means of divine-human mediation.

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26. David Meconi points to Mausbach (and others) as an example of the standard interpretation of Augustine: "Mausbach singled out Augustine as the sole antagonist to the Greeks, the lone representative of a theological vision centered on human depravity. Consequently, as Mausbach suggested, Augustine is to blame for the Latin West's dismissing Christian salvation as theosis and transformation, favoring a remedial and reconciliatory construal." Cf. David Meconi, *The One Christ: St. Augustine's Theology of Deification* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013), xiii.

27. "For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human…" (NRSV). In Augustine, cf. XI.2, XVIII.47, and XXI.16.

Immediately after proposing the Incarnation as a solution to the Platonic problem of divine-human mediation, Augustine introduces the "exchange formula"[28] so widely utilized among the Greek fathers: "We have no such need [for other mediators] because a God Who is blessed and bliss-bestowing has become a sharer in our humanity, and so has furnished us with all that we need to share in His divinity" (IX.15). The descent of incarnation makes possible the ascent of deification.[29]

3. A Perfect Man: The End of Progress in the City of God

Deification is the *telos* of progress in *The City of God.*[30] For Augustine,

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28. The earliest example of the "exchange formula" is in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V.*Pref*: "the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself" (Ed. Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson [Ex Fontibus, 2010]). The most famous is in Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* 54: "For he was incarnate that we might be made god" (Trans. John Behr [New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011]).

29. This "exchange" does not suggest either automatic or universal redemption for Augustine. Meconi contends that, "while the Son's union with humanity is explained in terms of a *susceptio* [even *singularitate susceptionis*], humanity's 'contact' with divinity is explained in terms of, most often, *participatio*" (*The One Christ*, 199-200).

30. An exhaustive treatment of the doctrine of deification in *The City of God* is beyond the scope of this paper. For passages pertaining to deification in *The City of God*, cf. IX.23; X.6; XII.9; XII.21; XIII.23; XIV.13; XVII.12; XIX.17, 27; XXI.15, 16; and XXII.30. While the term *deificare* ("to make a god") occurs eighteen times in the whole of Augustine's corpus (Meconi, *The One Christ*, xv), it is absent from Augustine's vocabulary in *The City of God* (Augustine quotes Porphyry using it once in IX.23). However, it would be a mistake to conclude from this that the concept is unimportant to Augustine. In fact, in his study on *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (New York: Oxford UP, 2009), 2-3, Norman Russell provides a four-fold approach to classifying the language used to describe the concept of deification, and he suggests that the simple application of the word "gods" to human beings is an example of the weakest approach – the mere "nominal." After the nominal is the "analogical," in which humans "become sons and gods 'by grace' in relation to Christ who is Son and God 'by nature'." Then there is the "ethical approach," which "takes deification to be the attainment of likeness to God through ascetic and philosophical endeavour"; and finally there is the "realistic," which "assumes that human beings are in some sense transformed by deification." "Behind the latter" approach "lies the model of *methexis*, or *participation*, in God." It is this final, "realistic" and participatory approach that Augustine uses most consistently in *The City of God*. Russell argues that Augustine is alone among the Latin Church fathers to apply this participatory language to the divine (325-26). Likewise, Meconi argues that "It would be a methodological error… to restrict Augustine's doctrine of deification only to those places where some form of

"deification means the perfection of the human person as he or she comes to live in total and perfect union with God."[31] This does not mean an erasure of the distinction between God and humans, for God remains the one "who deifies" and humans are "those who are made gods-by-grace…."[32] In other words, by deification, humans participate in divinity but do not possess it.

Our modest proposal here is to focus on two short chapters (XXII.17-18) in *The City of God* with a view to understanding the climax of Augustine's idea of progress in his theology of deification. While there are many passages that clearly indicate Augustine's belief in deification, none are as explicit as these two chapters in describing the theological means of receiving this deification. Specifically, in his landmark study of deification in Augustine, Gerald Bonner argues that the Bishop of Hippo's doctrine is Christocentric, that it is "an ecclesial process, in that it takes place in the communion of the Church," and it is a "sacramental process."[33] All three of these dogmatic loci are highlighted in these two chapters of Augustine's thought.

This doctrine has monumental significance for Augustine's idea of progress in both its social and material dimensions *here* and *now*, and it is on this point in particular that the best of scholarship on Augustine's idea of progress requires revision.[34] No doubt it has been missed in part because the doctrine of deification is not a common feature of the early Latin Church,[35]

'deification' explicitly appears. For, in Augustine's mind, related and synonymous terms abound to describe deified creaturehood, just as readily expressible through more scriptural or creedal terms – such as becoming divinely adopted children, being made participants in God's life, and incorporation as members of Christ's own body, what he called the *totus Christus*" (David Meconi, "Augustine's Doctrine of Deification," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds. David Vincent Meconi and Eleonore Stump, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014), 208-9.

31. David Meconi, "Augustine's Doctrine of Deification," 225.

32. Meconi, "Augustine's Doctrine of Deification," 225.

33. Gerald Bonner, "Augustine's Conception of Deification," *Journal of Theological Studies* 37 (1986), 383.

34. Augustine's doctrine of deification has recently and thoroughly been expounded by David Meconi, *The One Christ*. Meconi begins his book by suggesting that his "work will argue against much of previous scholarship to show that the deification of the human person is in fact a central doctrine in the overall thought of St. Augustine of Hippo" (xi-xii).

35. Norman Russell, in his *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, comments that "Deification is also found in the Latin tradition, but, with the exception of St Augustine, very sparsely" (325). Among Latin fathers, he provides brief discussions of

and perhaps it is also that Augustine was wary of affirming the idolatry of Roman religion.[36] Either way, the result has been an impoverishment of Augustine's idea of progress, with little or no appreciation for Augustine's contributions to horizontal progress. A prime example is Mommsen who, after a fine analysis of Augustine's rejection of an exclusively *this*-worldly city of God, concludes that Augustine "saw how perilous it was for the Christian faith to proclaim, as Eusebius and others had done during the fourth century, a belief in 'progress,' if that notion was understood in *any kind of materialistic sense*" (*italics added*).[37] Instead, for Augustine, Mommsen continues, "history was the *operatio Dei* in time, it was 'a one-directional, teleological process, directed towards one goal – salvation,' *the salvation of individual men, not of any collective groups or organizations*" (*italics added*).[38] In missing the doctrine of deification in terms of Augustine's soteriology, Mommsen is unable to grasp either the social or the material significance of human progress in the thought of Augustine. On the contrary, though, the city of God, for the Bishop of Hippo, is not a collection of individual souls en route to a private and immaterial end; it is the body of Christ knit together in love, united to Christ, and maturing through time until its eschatological realization as a perfect man (XXII.17-18).

3.1 Vertical Progress: Participation in God through Christ

In chapter seventeen of book twenty-two, Augustine begins by quoting from Ephesians 4:13 and Romans 8:29: "'Till we all come to a perfect man, to the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ', and 'Conformed to the image of the Son of God'…." Ostensibly Augustine's reason for dealing with these passages is to respond to those who believe that women will be resurrected as men. But Augustine dismisses this position immediately by

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Tertullian and Hilary of Poitiers, and notes the theology of Novatian, Cassian, and Boethius (325-332).

36. Robert Puchniak makes this argument, pointing especially to *The City of God* in this respect. Cf. "Augustine's Conception of Deification, Revisited," in *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, ed. Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2006), 131. However, Augustine actually uses pagan idolatry as an occasion for discussing deification in IX.23.

37. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress," 369.

38. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress," 370.

reflecting on the innocence of nakedness in paradise and arguing that "Vice will be taken away from those bodies, therefore, and nature preserved. And the sex of a woman is not a vice, but nature." Then Augustine moves on to what he sees as a more pressing concern: the meaning of female anatomy in light of the absence of "sexual intercourse and childbearing" after the resurrection. He suggests that "the female parts" will be "accommodated… to a new beauty" that "will move us to praise the wisdom and clemency of God, Who both *made* what was not and *redeemed* from corruption what He made" (*italics added*). The emphasis on the wisdom of God in *creation* and *redemption* here is vital. Augustine sees in the first man and woman a type of Christ and the Church: in the same way that "the woman was made from a rib taken from the man's side as he slept," so "the man's sleep was the death of Christ, from Whose side, pierced with a spear as He hung lifeless upon the cross, there flowed forth water and blood, which we know to be the sacraments by which the Church is built up." What is the meaning of this interpretation? Augustine suggests that "by the fact that she was made from the man's side unity is commended to us; and, as we have said, the manner of her creation prefigured Christ and the Church."[39] The one Christ gives of his body for the building up of the Church and in so doing the unity of Christ and the Church is revealed: there is no Church apart from the gift of Christ's body. Moreover, the means of Christ's gift of himself is understood by Augustine in terms of the sacraments, which are ultimately the means that lead to the end of deification.

Chapter eighteen takes the argument one step further. Again, Augustine inquires into "what the apostle means when he says that we shall all 'come to a perfect man'." This time, he quotes Ephesians 4:10-16 in order to consider the context of the phrase. Immediately following he writes: "Behold, then, what 'a perfect man' is: Head and body together, made up of all the members, which will be perfected in its own time." This is a prime example of what Augustine so famously calls the *totus Christus* – "the divinely human head inseparable from the body which he has assumed, now constituting one person."[40] The building up of the body is understood both in terms of numerical growth and in terms of spiritual maturation, the latter of which is realized in both the individual and the whole. But it

39. It is curious here that Augustine does not also utilize Ephesians 5:30-32 in this context.
40. Meconi, *The One Christ*, 196.

is as a whole that the Church grows toward "the fullness of Christ," and, therefore, while perfection is an eschatological event for Augustine, there is real maturation in history. The age of the Church is that in which the body of Christ, together with its Head, progresses toward "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22). While the metaphors have shifted between chapters – from male and female to head and body – the result is the same: the Church, made up of individual members of the body of Christ, is indeed one with Christ who, in turn, is one with the Father. Meconi summarizes it well: "As the mediator between permanence and dissolution, Christ has assumed humanity in order to conform all humans to himself. This is the Church for Augustine: a mystical person comprised of both a divine and human head as well as angelic and human members."[41] Christians, therefore, participate in God through the flesh of Christ, and so grow up into the *totus Christus*.

3.2 Horizontal Progress: Participation in the World through the Body of Christ

Robert Nisbet is among the minority of scholars of the idea of progress who are willing to attribute some form of material progress to Augustine. He points to "Augustine's celebration of fecundity and growth in the organic kingdom for a paean to the wonders of secular culture, of the arts and sciences," which he describes as "without parallel in scope and intensity until we come to the late-Middle Ages and early-modern era."[42] Here is the passage he quotes:

> For over and above those arts which are called virtues, and which teach us how we may spend our life well, and attain to endless happiness – arts which are given to the children of the promise and the kingdom by the sole grace of God which is in Christ – has not the genius of man invented and applied countless astonishing arts, partly the result of necessity, partly the result of exuberant invention, so that this vigor of mind, which is so active in the discovery not merely of the superfluous but even of dangerous and destructive things, betokens an inexhaustible wealth in the nature which can invent, learn, or employ such arts[?] [XXII.24][43]

41. Meconi, *The One Christ*, 194.
42. Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, 54.
43. Quoted in Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, 54-55.

Yet it is hardly clear from this passage that Augustine thinks he is describing a "continuous change" or that he thinks such change is always and necessarily "for the better." Even when Augustine writes specifically of the "progress man has made in agriculture and navigation," Baillie is certainly right in his assessment that these "human achievements" "are in themselves ambivalent, as capable of wrong as of right application."[44] This "progress" of material culture, then, for Augustine, is no more than merely a fact of the local and periodic development of culture, susceptible to future regress as a result of moral collapse and cultural degradation. It does not amount to a belief in the idea of progress because its advancement toward the good is suspect, and because there is no intrinsic reason for its continuous advancement.

On the other hand, Nisbet astutely directs our attention more generally to "the early Christian ideas of *reformatio, renovatio, restauratio,* and *regeneratio* – with their implication of spiritual, but also, repeatedly, of material, political, and social improvement…."[45] It is on this point that the doctrine of deification bears fruit in terms of horizontal progress. Augustine could not conflate progress with the accumulation of *more things* (this was the undoing of the Romans), and he was rather ambivalent about the net result of making *better things* (this is a characteristically modern preoccupation); however, he was interested in how the progress of the city of God might contribute to making *things better*. This is a pithy way of saying that, for Augustine, the continuous *spiritual* progress in the body of Christ – itself inherently social and material – could and should lead to *material* progress in terms of a more just and peaceful society – in Augustine's terms, "a better temporal kingdom" (IV.28). Tarcisius van Bavel grasps the profound horizontal implications of Augustine's doctrine: "Since the moment Jesus left this world, He needs our hands to reach out to the destitute, He needs our eyes to see the needs of the world, He needs our ears to listen to the misery of others, He needs our feet to go to the persons to whom nobody goes. Salvation cannot be 'extramundane'; Christians have to build up the beginning of the Reign of God in this world."[46] Augustine says as much in

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44. Baillie, *The Belief in Progress*, 21.

45. Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, 57-58.

46. Tarcisius van Bavel, "The 'Christus Totus' Idea: A Forgotten Aspect of Augustine's Spirituality," in *Studies in Patristic Theology*, eds. Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 84-94; 86. Quoted in Meconi, *The One Christ*, 204.

The City of God where he argues that "works of mercy shown to ourselves or to our neighbours" are necessary precisely because "We, being many, are one body in Christ" (X.6).

There can be no doubt that Augustine thought God should be "sought and worshipped not for the transitory vapour of this mortal life, but for the sake of the blessed life to come, which is nothing less than eternal" (VII. *Pref.*). By horizontal progress, then, I am not here suggesting a reversal of Mommsen's thesis against the *do ut des*, for example, which he so persuasively argued. However, with the new light achieved by unveiling Augustine's doctrine of deification – in particular in its embodied, ecclesial dimension – the means of transforming *this* world are disclosed in terms of the love that is shared between and beyond members of the body of Christ. In the same way that Augustine is able to commend the half-virtues of the Romans as contributing to the spectacular growth of the Roman Empire, so he now sees an intrinsic – though again, not necessary[47] – relationship between virtue and social-material welfare in the city of God. Thus in the context of commending the Romans for their so-called virtues, Augustine contrasts the monetary sacrifice of the people for the good of the republic with Christians who "make a common property of their riches with a far more excellent purpose: namely, so that they may distribute to each according to his need…" (V.18).

To take one example, Augustine summarizes some aspects of this "better temporal kingdom" in chapter seventeen of book nineteen. In contrast to those who "do not live by faith," those "who live by faith" "make use of earthly and temporal things like pilgrims: they are not captivated by them, nor are they deflected by them from their progress towards God." This means that "both kinds of men… make common use of those things which are necessary to this mortal life; but each has its own very different end in using them." For example, both "kinds of men" agree that peace is a good to be promoted, but the heavenly city on pilgrimage recognizes this temporal peace primarily as a means to the final and eternal peace. This relativization

47. I emphasize that this relationship is not necessary, because it can never be said that virtuous behaviour always leads to felicity here and now. Throughout *The City of God*, Augustine reiterates Matthew 5:45 to emphasize that both good and evil come to the righteous and wicked alike *in this life*. In this life, therefore, virtue is its own reward; however, as I am arguing here, it also has potential to bear fruit for the common good.

of the good, secular realm is vital: while cultural and political realities are good, they can never be absolutized. Thus, for example, the heavenly city, as "a pilgrim on earth," "summons citizens of all nations and every tongue, and brings together a society of pilgrims in which no attention is paid to any differences in the customs, laws, and institutions by which earthly peace is achieved or maintained. She does not rescind or destroy these things, however." Augustine is able, therefore, to preserve and even promote significant diversity – cultural, legal, and political – within the one heavenly city.[48] He makes room for significant toleration and accommodation in pursuit of a common "earthly peace." What is more, Augustine understands the motivation for such hospitable social action in terms of the dual love of God and neighbour: "This peace the Heavenly City possesses in faith while on its pilgrimage, and by this faith it lives righteously, directing towards the attainment of that peace every good act which it performs either for God, or – since the city's life is inevitably a social one – for neighbour." How can the city of God be anything less when by love each person is united to God in Christ, and to one another as members of the body of Christ? Therefore, social-material (horizontal) progress, understood as the growth of good will and good works exercised by the Church and on behalf of one's neighbour, is intrinsic to Augustine's logic of deification.

Conclusion

While I have argued that Augustine did indeed offer a coherent theological treatment of the idea of progress in response to other versions of the theme current in his day, this does not mean that this progress is evident *apart from the eyes of faith*. The reason for this is that alongside the progress of the city of God, Augustine also describes the "progress" of the earthly city (which is really a progress unto war and death). On the surface, then, the world is in conflict until the return of Christ, a spiritual battle waged between two loves: love of self, and love of God and neighbour. The wheat and the tares grow together until harvest (Mt. 13:24-30). Therefore, the progress of the Church in history is neither the progress of millenarianism

48. The same cannot be said for Augustine's toleration of religious diversity. In the same chapter he writes: "it has not been possible for the Heavenly City to have laws of religion in common with the earthly city. It has been necessary for her to dissent from the earthly city in this regard, and to become a burden to those who think differently."

nor Marxism, for example (for Augustine's repudiation of the former, cf. XX.7); it is the growth of practical, selfless love extended into the world by the body of Christ. In this sense, there is good reason to distinguish, as John Paul II did in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*,[49] between progress and development: the former belongs to the Church alone, while the latter is the effect of the Church's leavening influence on society. Greed remains, for now, but it may be countered with generosity; lawlessness remains, for now, but it may be tempered by justice; sin remains, for now, but it may be overcome by mercy.

However, the truth is that only the progress of the city of God has any substantiality; the progress of the earthly city is utterly transient. We are right then to focus on the progress of the heavenly city, which for Augustine is a progress that culminates in eternal peace and life, and which thrives only in dependence on the grace of God mediated by the sacraments of the Church. It is this city that grows and matures through time and therefore progresses until it reaches "the fullness of Christ" who is Himself the "perfect man." In terminology borrowed from Augustine, Benedict XVI describes the impact of this ecclesial progress on the development of human society in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*:

> Man's earthly activity, when inspired and sustained by charity, contributes to the building of the universal *city of God*, which is the goal of the history of the human family. In an increasingly globalized society, the common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family, that is to say, the community of peoples and nations, in such a way as to shape the *earthly city* in unity and peace, rendering it to some degree an anticipation and a prefiguration of the undivided *city of God*.[50]

Thus, the progress of the city of God transforms the earthly city for good.[51]

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49. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Encyclical Letter, Vatican Website, December 30, 1987, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals.index.html, sec. 27.

50. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, Encyclical Letter, Vatican Website, June 29, 2009, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals.index.html#encyclicals, sec. 7.

51. I wish to express gratitude to the ARC reviewer of this essay who carefully interacted with my thought and offered helpful suggestions and criticisms, many of which I regret have not been adequately addressed.

Spinoza's God in Goethe's Leaf: The Spinozist Foundation of Goethean Morphology

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"I said to the almond tree, 'Sister, speak to me of God.' And the almond tree blossomed."
—Nikos Kazantzakis

On a first level, Goethe's unit of plant transformation, the *Urpflanze*, may be thought of as a synecdoche for Spinoza's God, to wit, a pattern of vegetative growth standing for the inner-workings of Nature as a whole.[1] Indeed, the most straightforward way of linking Spinoza's metaphysics to Goethe's sciences of form would appeal to their common understanding of Nature as a variegating entity that preserves its identity under ever different shapes and forms. Incidentally, in his multi-pronged and at times vitriolic critique of Spinozism, Pierre Bayle had argued *ad absurdum* that, were we to call the "God of the Spinozists" immutable, we would have to recognize a similar status to Proteus, Thetis and Vertumnus – i.e. the shape-shifting deities of Greco-Roman antiquity.[2] Yet, beyond simply associating Goethe with the mythical form of an infinitely plastic God, I believe there is much more to be said about the effect this Dutch philosopher had on the romantic scientist, seeing how his entire vision was articulated in undeniably Spinozist terms. What is more, the first principle in any science of Nature was to be

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1. I would like to thank Hadi Fakhoury for his enthusiasm and scholarly guidance throughout the writing of this paper. If it weren't for him the original draft of this paper would not have been presented in the 2015 conference of the Centre for Research on Religion (CREOR) at McGill University, and professor Frederick Amrine would not have taken notice of my work. I'm truly indebted to Fred for the powerful argument made in his "Goethean Intuitions" (*Goethe Yearbook* 18 [2011]: 35-50) which made me realize its potential as a Master's thesis topic (see Michail Vlasopoulos, "Goethe, and the Philosophy of Form," Unpublished master's thesis [Harvard University GSD, Cambridge MA, 2012]).

2. Note I. II in Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (Rotterdam: R. Leers, 1697), 4: 1083-1100.

claimed by a mode of knowing that both thinkers referred to as intuitive. On that account, it will be argued here that Goethe's way of mentally yielding the *Grundform* in his morphological studies is homologous to, if not directly derivative of, Spinoza's way of yielding the attributes of his God. The first part of the paper lays down some fundamental themes in Spinozistic metaphysics on the occasion of explicating one of the many geometrical analogies in the *Ethics*. The reader will be introduced to: the relation between modes and their God; the categorical status of both finite and infinite modes; the notion of physical and conceptual immanence; and how it all comes together in the subject matter of the *scientia intuitiva*. After a brief account of Goethe's foray into plant morphology, I proceed with the hypothesis that both thinkers study what comes down to the same Nature under different attributes; that Goethe's morphology takes as its object the same God as Spinoza's; but instead of studying It under one of the two traditional attributes, Extension and Thought, he sees It under the light of a new attribute; what may be termed *Morphē* in reference to the root of his newly-coined "morphology."

Spinoza's *Ethics* is a book that gained some notoriety for being, among other things, "demonstrated in the geometric order" [*ordine geometrico demonstrata*].[3] Still, however cumbersome a reading this may have made it, the allusion to the form of Euclid's *Elements* makes perfect sense if put in context. After all, the *Ethics* was written in an era that revered the said ancient treatise in geometry as a paradigm of demonstrative reasoning, and took it to hold the promise of nothing less than a final science. The early moderns were indeed captivated by a vision of a complete and definitive exposition of human knowledge that would do for the subject matter of physics or ethics what Euclidean geometry had done for magnitude with so much success. Modeled thereon and fully informed with the deliverances of empirical observation, what they referred to as *Scientia* – with a capital S – would have contained a finite sequence of definitions, postulates and self-evident axioms whence all particular truths might be derived in an orderly deductive fashion. A matter purely formalistic as it might appear, I strongly believe Spinoza did not invoke the venerated geometric order as a mere expository device, a decision that would eventually alienate many a

3. The subtitle of the *Ethics* as it appeared in Baruch Spinoza, *Opera Posthuma* (Amsterdam: Jan Rieuwertsz, 1677).

reader, from Heinrich Heine to Henri Bergson.[4] Most likely, he aspired to say something about the world itself. Indeed, for Spinoza, everything is held together by meaningful conceptual relations independently even from our human minds, in the same way the laws of geometry can be supposed to be valid even prior to our gaining knowledge of them. The order of all facts that make up the definitive story of the world is enfolded in some first principles, perhaps even finite in number, like in Euclidean geometry. So, even though human minds cannot behold the world of facts in their infinite number and complexity, there lies a promise that they may contemplate, eventually, their unique source and origin. Arguably, a similar brand of epistemological optimism was adopted by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe who, like the Dutch philosopher, never gave up affirming the absolute intelligibility of Nature.

From all the plentiful geometrical analogies offered throughout the Spinozistic corpus, one sentence stands out in capturing the essence of Spinoza's God in all Its fecundity, and that with unparalleled succinctness:

> [F]rom God's supreme power, or infinite nature, infinitely many things in infinitely many modes, that is, all things, have necessarily flowed, or always follow, by the same necessity and in the same way as from the nature of a triangle it follows, from eternity and to eternity, that its three angles are equal to two right angles.[5]

As it ought to be expected from a book ordered geometrically, this scholium is the culminating product of some many preceding propositions that have hitherto shown substances to be necessarily existing (*Ethics*, Book I, Proposition 7), infinite (EIP8), and indivisible (EIP12-13, EIP15s[II]-[VI]), right before it is demonstrated that an absolutely infinite substance, God

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4. Henri Bergson once claimed that a neophyte confronted with the quasi-mechanical complexity of Spinoza's *Ethics* is struck with admiration and terror "as though he were before a battleship of the Dreadnought class." Cf. Henri Bergson, "Philosophical Intuition" in *Key Writings*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson and John Mullarkey (New York: Continuum, 2002), 236-237. Similarly, Heinrich Heine considered this method a defect, like a bitter shell that holds a tasty kernel. Cf. Heinrich Heine, *Religion and Philosophy in Germany: A Fragment*, trans. John Snodgrass (London: Trubner & Co, 1882), 135-137.

5. *Ethics*, Book I, Proposition 17, Scholium 2. Unless otherwise noted all translations from the *Ethics* and the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* come from: *The Collected Works*, trans. Edwin Curley (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); letters from *Spinoza: Collected Works*, ed. Michael L. Morgan, trans. Samuel Shirley (Hackett Pub Co: Indianapolis-Cambridge, 2002).

or Nature, exists in exclusion of any other conceivable substance (EIP14-15). Now, the traditional way of introducing Spinoza's substance monism would be to ease the reader through the monumental ontological argument of the first book of the *Ethics*, propositions one to fourteen. However, on the occasion of that excerpt, I should like to begin *in medias res* and follow Spinoza's deductive path from the idea of the infinite being, "downwards," to the infinite order of worldly things. I hope the reasons behind this approach will become clear by the end of this paper.

What exactly are the things that follow from God? Simply, all there is and can ever be. But is this the whole story told by Spinoza? Apparently not. It is intimated in the same passage that there are two different ways of "following" – a metaphysical distinction rendered grammatical by having the "following from" [*sequi*] in present tense, in contrast to the "having flowed from" [*effluxisse*] in perfect. Running the risk of reading too much into this excerpt, we may suppose that the aspectual information of these forms was meant to highlight the difference between two sorts of "effluences" of God: (a) one, conveyed by the perfective aspect, refers to ephemeral effects that are completable in time; (b) the other, conveyed by what could be called a progressive aspect, to effects being produced constantly and indefinitely so. The first class is populated by all those finite beings that spawn here or there, now or then, and the second, by certain ubiquitous and eternal facts of law that govern their behavior.

A crucial theorem in Spinozist metaphysics, and nothing less of a founding principle of his physics, is that motion and rest belong to the second kind of products. Motion follows "from the absolute nature of God's nature" and, as such, it is an eternal and infinite modification of God (EIP21). In the literature, what mediates between the nature of the infinite being and its fully determinate manifestations are known as infinite modes, like the kinematics that befall extension.[6] In particular, motion for Spinoza assumes the important role of the principle of individuation, i.e. that which allows distinct beings be parceled out of the infinite fabric of pure Extension.[7] What makes a finite being the sort of thing it is, and the very particular instance

6. "Infinite," because they follow from a perfect being absolutely, "modes," because, albeit permanent and ubiquitous, they are but *features* of that one being.

7. I will heretofore capitalize the first letter of the words "extension," "thought" or "form," to signify their being meant as divine attributes.

of that sort, is a persisting ratio of motion and rest tracing a unique path in space.[8] Accordingly, it wouldn't be improper to think of Spinoza's motion as morphogenetic, i.e. a kinematic principle that is generative of form.

However succinct, the analogy with the geometrical proposition warrants a closer examination. Though the phrase "by the same necessity" [*eadem necessitate*] indicates a univocal understanding of necessity among the *relata*, the "in the same way" [*eodem modo*] conveys a much more heretical association of the source of the analogy (geometrical demonstration) with its target (divine expression). It implies that we are to God, not as creatures are to a creator, but as theorems are to their grounds.[9]

Even more strikingly, we read in proposition 15 of the *Ethics* that "Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God." Notably, the infamous "in" of that sentence marks a departure not only from a certain theological common sense, but of a logical one as well. Not surprisingly, it is known to have raised the ire of the religious-minded critics then, as much as it bewilders readers today. The reason for the former was the profanely intimate relation Spinoza's God bears to Its creatures. Not only are we comprehended by God in the same way conclusions are contained in premises (as in EIP17, EIP25s or EIIP8s), but it is also suggested we reside in him in the same way properties inhere in substances. After all, as is explicitly stated later in EIP25s, finite beings are simply God's affections, or the various ways by which God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way. So, even more paradoxically than the view that likens creation to a cosmic derivation, the latter view implies that creatures are parasitic on their creator in the same way that "rationality" or "paleness" is of a "Socrates."

Upon a closer look, the appeal to phenomena of predication seems to fly in the face of common-sense grammar (or at least, the familiar ways we talk thereby). Normally, our logic recognizes concrete finite beings as the ultimate subjects of predication, whereas Spinoza's theorems suggest

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8. Something structurally similar is expected from God's infinite intellect under the attribute of Thought in virtue of his doctrine of parallelism (see Ep. 64 as well as *Ethics*, Book II, Proposition 7).

9. Cf. *Ethics*, Book II, Proposition 8, where Spinoza parallelizes the way "the formal essences of the singular things, or modes, are contained in God's attributes" with the way an infinite number of equal rectangles, formed from the segments of any two intersecting lines inside a circle are comprehended by that circle.

they be themselves predicable of a God-subject. Though we can say of a "Socrates" that "he is human," the being that goes by the name "Socrates" cannot be said of any other thing other than his own self, let alone of some other substance.[10] However, in a hypothetical language modeled after Spinoza's metaphysics, what is now considered concrete within our logic – the historical Socrates in this case, as opposed to his humanity – we would have to demote to qualifications of some deeper, more fundamental subject.

Perhaps at this point, true dogmatist that he was, Spinoza would much rather give up on our common-sense grammar than compromise his metaphysics. As Anthony Kenny so succinctly puts it, for Spinoza, "the proper way of referring to creatures like us is to use not a noun but an adjective."[11] Indeed, as soon as Spinoza brings the discussion down to the level of finite modes for the purposes of outlining the principles of interaction amongst bodies and minds in Book II, proposition 9 and onwards, God gets qualified in various ways by the adverb "insofar [*quatenus*]." So, for instance, a human mind is said to perceive something adequately, as long as the idea of that thing is in God, "not *insofar* as [It] is infinite, but *insofar* as [It] is explained through the nature of the human Mind (EIIP12, corollary).[12] Unfortunately, though, the categorical status of finite beings is not the only problem looming over the analogical association of God's expressivity with geometrical proceedings.

Apart from the uneasy relationship between creature and creator, what should trouble the reader even more is the very act of the former following from the latter. What does the excerpt from that scholium (EIP17s2) imply about the act of creation or generation itself? Taking a closer look at the other *relatum* of the analogy, one can easily notice that proposition 32 of Euclid's *Elements*, Book I, is demonstrated by way of a large arsenal of propositions, themselves premised on a bedrock of self-evident axioms, postulates, as well as geometrical constructions. It seems that, if the analogy be taken seriously, every act of "following from God" would need to be explained through some

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10. This point was famously brought to the fore by professor Curley in his *Spinoza's Metaphysics: an Essay in Interpretation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) and *Behind the Geometric Method* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

11. Anthony Kenny, *The Rise of Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 191-192.

12. Emphasis added; I modified Curley's translation by replacing the pronoun "he" with "It" to give an impersonal ring to Spinoza's God.

extrinsic principle, just like a property is proved of a subject by having the truth of a general statement be mechanically transferred to a particular one through a middle term. For instance, in the classical form of the syllogistic procedure, I arrive at the conclusion that "Socrates is an animal," only as long as my initial premise "Socrates is a man" be concatenated to the major premise "all men are rational animals." In addition, involved in any kind of syllogistic is the idea of progress in time. Each step in the deductive path from premises to conclusion is conceived of as a mind's passage from old to new knowledge, or from potential to actual knowledge. In the end, our ability for meaningful reasonings goes only as far as inferring a valid conclusion from the concordance of at least two premises. This worry was in fact brought to Spinoza's attention by Tschirnhaus, one of the first men in the Spinoza circle to get his hands on the manuscript of the *Ethics*:

> In mathematics I have always observed that from any thing considered in itself – that is, from the definition of anything – we are able to deduce at least one property; but if we wish to deduce more properties, we have to relate the thing defined to other things. It is only then, from the combination of the definitions of these things, that new properties emerge.[13]

In other words, a geometric demonstration is premised on a plurality of brute statements, from the interaction thereof new connections arise between terms and new properties are proved of subjects. No single premise is rich enough to spontaneously generate a new piece of knowledge if not for the input of an external principle.[14] What is more, since the order and connection of bodies is the same as the order and connection of ideas – according to Spinoza's *Doctrine of Parallelism* from *Ethics* IIP7 – the problem of the poverty of premise in Thought is mirrored by a problem of the idleness of matter in Extension. Think of the Cartesian cosmogenesis in the unpublished *Le Monde*: by means of an initial divine push or stir, God sets a grand monolith of an extension into motion. This metaphor is

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13. Tschirnhaus to Spinoza, Ep. 82 in *Spinoza: Complete Works*, 957.

14. Harold H. Joachim argues along the same lines: "Is it not a commonplace of Logic, a familiar and indisputable doctrine, that our thought, in deducing, never proceeds *from* the Whole; that it moves always to part *within* the Whole (or within *a* Whole) and in accordance with its dominant character or the principles of its totality?" (Harold Henry Joachim, *Spinoza's Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione: a Commentary* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940], 69).

as old as the Book of Genesis, if not much older. We resist the idea of something being expressive of itself by itself; we, like the ancients, cannot think of matter as being generative of form, any more than expect a solitary premise to yield a new piece of knowledge. In fact, when called to illustrate the ontological status of Spinoza's modes, or "God's affectations," be they infinite or finite, our imagination presents us with the familiar way a piece of cloth or a body of water is affected by a local perturbation; little wonder the common metaphor for the Spinozist God is a turbulent sea or a pleated cloth.[15] However, both pictures fall short in that their subjects, sea and cloth, cannot themselves account for their waves or pleats respectively. Their forms of expression are determined by a causal influence that is conceptually and physically external to them.

Contrary to all this, Spinoza's morphogenetic motion is neither transferred nor instilled into a passive *res extensa*. The version of extension that Spinozist physics takes as its object is inherently and eternally dynamic, unlike Descartes' own. Since motion is the product of an infinite substance being ever-self-affected, it cannot be situated in time like any other worldly activity. Hence, the kinematic character of Spinoza's Substance ought to be eternally acted out. The problem arises when we try to conceive the "following from" [*sequi*] relation in a temporal sense. That, in turn, would suggest a creative act of God à la Descartes, and, temporally determined as it would have been, it would conflict with the infinitude of the divine being.[16]

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15. Anthony Quinton describes Spinoza's modes as "temporary contours taken on by the fabric of everything that there is, like waves in the sea" (Anthony Quinton, Interviewed by Bryan Magee on Spinoza and Leibniz, *The Great Philosophers*, UK: BBC, 1987). Perhaps this stems from Spinoza's own metaphor for the human condition which likens us to "waves on the sea, driven by contrary winds,…not knowing our outcome and fate" in EIII59s. Aaron Garrett also writes about the form of the *Ethics*: "To take a metaphor from Leibniz by way of Gilles Deleuze, each proposition is like a pleat or fold in a Baroque curtain that as one unfolds it one realizes envelops bolt after bolt of pleated cloth. As each proposition is unfolded, longer and longer demonstrations and justifications emerge until the whole argument up to that point is like one long seamless piece of cloth" (Aaron Garrett, "The Virtues of Geometry," in *The Oxford Handbook of Spinoza's Ethics,* ed. Michael Della Rocca, 18-44 [New York: Oxford University Press, 2018]).

16. The eternity that Spinoza has in mind, as the eighth definition of the first part of the *Ethics* suggests, is not put in terms of indefinite duration; by "eternity" he understands "existence itself insofar as it is conceived to follow necessarily from the definition alone of the eternal thing (E1D8)."

It should also be noted here that the notion of immanence, so commonly associated with Spinozist metaphysics, had been already used in a scholastic context to distinguish instances of bio-causality from mechanical causation. Immanence is the quality of any action which is initiated and consummated in the interior of the same being.[17] And, a world that can move itself, like Spinoza's, deserves to be deemed alive in some way or another, at least insofar as certain philosophical traditions are concerned which associated soul with self-motion or a principle of motion and rest. So, despite its seeming proto-mechanical rigidity, Spinoza's God is much closer to an infinitely complex organism than to an infinitely complex machine, the worldview advanced by many a philosopher of his time. It is reasonable then to suppose Goethe saw as much in Spinoza's philosophy, in his attempt to reinstate the organism as the principal object of natural philosophy.

But still, the problem asserts itself thus: if the order of physical events is the same as the order of mental ones, how is the immanentist character of self-motion in the physical realm mirrored in the realm of conceptual relations? How can a thing, in isolation from any external principle – unlike Euclid's proposition 32 – be generative of a demonstrable feature? Spinoza's answer to Tschirnhaus' worry reads as following:

> With regard to your question as to whether the variety of things can be demonstrated a priori solely from the conception of Extension, I think I have already made it quite clear that this is impossible. That is why Descartes is wrong in defining matter through Extension; it must necessarily be explicated through an attribute which expresses eternal and infinite essence. But perhaps, if I live long enough, I shall some time discuss this with you more clearly.[18]

Since Spinoza passed away a few months after making that pledge, it has since been left to the reader to reconstruct a possible response out of his written word. But, in want of such a response, some ninety-one years after his death, Spinoza's worldview fell victim of Voltaire's sharp critique: "Influenced by Descartes, he makes improper use of Descartes' equally

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17. Cf. Edouard Thamiry, "Immanence," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, ed. Charles G. Herbermann (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1907), 682-687. This view is probably rooted in a passage from Aristotle's *Physics*, Book II, 192b8-33.
18. Spinoza to Tschirnhaus, Ep. 83 in *Collected Works*, 958.

celebrated and senseless expression: Give me motion and matter and I will form a world."[19] However, seeing how the dismissive comment is directed against both philosophers indiscriminately, I notice a failure from Voltaire's part to appreciate the subtle ways Spinoza had diverged from Descartes in matters epistemological.

Descartes' meditator commences with the undeniable certainty of the *cogito* and, with this criterion at hand, he proves – circularly as some scholars complain[20] – the existence of a truthful God who guarantees the conformity of the world to our clear and distinct ideas. Instead of thusly adducing any criteria for certainty, Spinoza conceives of the normative function of a true idea in a way that is not extrinsic to the idea itself.[21] Certainty is not a property that remains to be proved of an idea, but rather a *state* the mind finds itself in, while beholding a true idea, or as Spinoza writes in the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* §35 (henceforth *TdIE*), it is the way, or "the mode by which we are aware of the formal essence." In other words, since the positing of a true idea is prior to its certainty, we cannot learn what certainty is in lack of such a mental content. Consequently, the reality of what we clearly and distinctly perceive does not require a divine guarantee to the degree that a godless scientist would be beset by a perpetual skepticism. Even the slightest glimpse of certainty offered by an object simple enough that it cannot be feigned e.g. a mental construction of a geometric figure, allows one to experience, mentally, what truth is. However, the brute truth of just *any* one of our ideas is not sufficient for conducting good metaphysics, and this is because, according to Spinoza, the method for seeking the truth is as perfect as that first true idea is.

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19. "Entêté de *Descartes*, il abuse de ce mot, également célèbre et insensé de *Descartes*: *Donnez-moi du mouvement et de la matière, et je vais former un* monde" (Lettre X, "Sur Spinosa" in *Oeuvres Completes de Voltaire*, vol. 47, *Mélanges littéraires* [Basil: Jean-Jaques Tourneisen, 1787], 410). English translation in *The Works of Voltaire*, vol. 38: *The Henriade: Letters and Miscellanies* (Akron, OH: The Werner Company, 1906), 235.

20. The main gist of the so-called fallacy of the Cartesian circle is this: in the context of the radical skepticism initiated, there can be no grounds for proving the existence of a veracious God, if the truth of the clear and distinct ideas we have of Him presupposes a divine guarantee.

21. Truth for Spinoza does not consist in the *conformity of the idea to its object* (*adaequatio rei et intellectus*), as the scholastic *credo* goes, but in ideas that are adequate in themselves, in relation to other adequate ideas of varying perfection. This is captured by a slight shift in grammar over which the abstract noun "adaequatio" is substituted with the adjective "adaequata" as a qualifier of his ideas.

Effectively, Spinoza's own purported method in his *TdIE* is about the discovery of a true idea, which, in addition to being clear and distinct, is also the source for deducing all other ideas in the "proper order (§36)." The accurate representation of Nature requires an ordering of these ideas in a gradient according to their perfection. Spinoza thinks that human science will never be perfected unless it be founded upon and be elicited from the idea of the most perfect being. One needs to order her ideas into a system that tells the story of how all particular things depend on God. "[F]or our mind to reproduce completely the likeness of Nature," as he says, "it must bring all of its ideas forth from that idea which represents the source and origin of the whole of Nature, so that that idea is also the source of the other ideas (§42)." In other words, the idea of the most perfect being offers a standard by being generative of all other ideas. In his God then, Spinoza discovers the Archimedean point on the self-evidence of which – to use Frederick Pollock's tectonic metaphor – "he would lay the whole weight of all the subsequent knowledge we may build on our leading assumptions."[22] Along a similar vein, some hundred years after Spinoza's death, Goethe remarked in a short essay on the philosopher that "we call the individual or collective impression they [the things] make on us true – so long as it springs from the totality of their existence."[23] Furthermore, near the end of his life, he admitted that his whole method relies on derivation: "I persist," he writes in 1823, "until I have discovered a pregnant point from which several things may be derived, or rather which voluntarily brings forth much out of itself and delivers it to me;"[24] while he also offered what can be described as an encomium to the geometer and her synthetic methods:

> From the mathematician we must learn the meticulous care required to connect things in unbroken succession, or rather, to derive things step by step…. Actually, its proofs merely state in a detailed way that what is presented as connected was already there in each of the parts and as a consecutive whole, that it has been reviewed in its entirety and found to be correct and irrefutable under all circumstances. Thus its demonstrations are always more exposition,

22. Frederick Pollock, *Spinoza: his Life and Philosophy* (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1880), 129.
23. Goethe, "A Study Based on Spinoza," in *Scientific Studies,* vol. 12 of *The Collected Works*, ed. and trans. Douglas Miller (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 9.
24. Goethe, "Significant Help," in *Scientific Studies*, 41.

recapitulation, than argument.[25]

This important passage speaks against the initial impression that the austere geometrical method is ill-fitted for the subtle purposes of the Romantic naturalist. What geometry had been offering all along in this context is a model of expression such that the effects produced be comprehended by the causes, or the conclusions "be virtually in" the premises, as Aquinas used to phrase it.[26]

In many ways, the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* contains the conceptual seeds for the form as well as the content of the *Ethics*. In Spinoza's time, the so-called "synthetic method," as employed in the *Ethics*, was customarily used by geometers in organizing their conceptual findings into an axiomatized system. It was meant to initiate the reader into the demonstrative path from first principles to various conclusions that can be drawn, or, as an Aristotelian would put it, to the downward movement from things "better known in themselves (*per se*)" to things "better known to us (*ad nos*)." However, the inaugural part of the *Ethics* contains an ontological argument that comprises some fourteen propositions before the striking conclusion of substance monism be drawn. This is the part we purposefully skipped in introducing the first book of the *Ethics* earlier. Insofar as the reader is encouraged to *discover* the unity and singularity of God, and since the postulation of this one divine being is celebrated by Spinoza as the highest principle of his system, we should admit that the first part of the *Ethics* is laid out analytically, not synthetically. In many ways, the analytical procedure of the first half of the *Ethics* is analogical to the way a geometer discovers that which underlies all possible figures and ultimately posits it as the subject genus of her science; only, instead of pure magnitude, it is God that is revealed to Spinoza's reader as the common ground of all there is and can ever be.

No matter how profound such an analytic ascent is, though, the finite mind cannot lead the world back into the state it was found in before the analysis; whatever particular being was traced back to its origins by analysis cannot be reclaimed in derivation by synthesis. Ultimately, the vision of the

25. Goethe, "Significant Help," in *Scientific Studies*, 16.

26. "Conclusio…est virtute in suis principiis" (*Expositio Libri Posteriorum Analyticorum*, Lib. 1, Lectio III).

mind's descent, from a singular God – be it considered an infinite body or an infinite mind – to the essences of finite things, calls for an entirely new mode of knowledge. The key I believe is hinted in this passage from the same preliminary work:

> [W]e must never infer anything from abstractions…. [T]he best conclusion will have to be drawn from some particular affirmative essence, *or*, from a true and legitimate definition. For from universal axioms alone the intellect cannot descend to singulars, since axioms extend to infinity.[27]

True science, Spinoza holds, is not about deducing the implicit features of a subject by relating it to an abstract rule or subsuming it under its appropriate class. Instead of an axiomatic system of definitions, axioms, postulates and theorems – no matter how analogous such a geometrical exposition may be to the purported workings of the Spinozist cosmos – Spinoza envisions the unfolding, property after property, of an infinite thing into the transient world we finite beings inhabit, the epidermis, as it were, of a cosmic organism. Such a system would be like starting from the concept of magnitude in geometry and deducing an infinity of possible determinations with no recourse to axioms, in the same way we would describe a familiar person standing across us, reading off trait after trait, without appeal to any abstraction or generalization.

Indeed, the book would be very different had Spinoza followed strictly the directions laid out in the *TdIE*. It is my view that, were the *Ethics* rewritten for Spinoza's ideal reader, it would only contain one definition, the definition of God from the first part, with the rest of the abstract principles (definitions of *causa sui*, of substance, attribute, mode, etc.) being redundant. The world in its entirety would be contained in a single premise. Yet – seeing how the *Ethics* does not strictly fulfill the program of the *TdIE* – the question one faces is whether Spinoza's vision is possible at all within the limits of discursive thought. The geometric exposition, though atemporal and purely formal, and however deified by Spinoza, still bears the mark of the human finite capacity for reasoning. The syntheticity of a proposition, as a Kantian would put it, is possible only in time and over an ampliative movement

27. *TdIE*, §93.

of thought,[28] whereas in God's intellect nothing is really demonstrated. Eventually, such an exalted object of acquaintance would have to be made possible through a specific theory of knowledge.

Talking about the highest degree of knowledge (the other two being knowing from random experience, be it singular things or signs, and knowing through common notions), Spinoza writes:

> [T]his kind of knowing proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the [NS: formal] essence of things.[29]

What is striking here is that Spinoza postulates a degree of knowledge (as well as the object thereof) that overrides the limits of demonstrative reasoning. Spinoza's truth is revealed by a movement of thought that goes beyond the syllogistic through common notions. This he calls an intuitive science, or *scientia intuitiva*.[30] By way of elucidation, he presents us with the simple problem of inferring the fourth proportional number in a sequence of numbers 1, 2, 3, without the mediation of any abstract principle or customary practice. Think of yourselves possessing an intuitive grasp of a line of discrete numbers and identifying relations immediately, without any recourse to rules of thumb or mathematical axioms. Everybody can obviously see that six is to three what two is to one (6 : 3 :: 2 : 1). The mind grasps this proportion spontaneously with no recourse to an abstract rule. We are not eager to discover any such rule prior to its being instantiated in this particular set of numbers; we grasp them for how they relate to each other concretely.

When this is applied to things not as simple as those four numbers on a line, things get a bit mystical: within the purview of the intuitive scientist, the principle of motion, as well as all possible finite beings that are generated thereby, are supposed to follow from the infinite being without the aid of any external principle. Only thus would Substance be intuited for the self-moving or animate being it has proven to be. In the end, faced with the limits of discursive reason, Spinoza introduced a higher level of knowing in order

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28. Cf. Introduction <A> to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. P. Guyer and A.W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 130, A6-7.
29. *Ethics*, Book II, Proposition 40, Scholium 2.
30. Cf. *TdIE* §23; EIIP40s2.

that the physical and conceptual immanence of his God be made possible. Most likely, Voltaire would still not rest his case and remain unsatisfied with such a response, but at least the issue is now framed as an epistemological limitation rather than a metaphysical impasse: if Tschirnhaus and Voltaire cannot see how the definition of one thing is generative of an infinitely populated world, then they must be still looking at things from the limited perspective of the second mode of knowledge. But if the *scientia intuitiva* is possible as the third and supreme way of knowing, then so is a way to conceive of infinitely many things following from the most perfect being. Spinoza is far from having solved the problem, but he at least attributed it to the limitations of human science on pain of locating an inconsistency in his world itself: we may not see exactly how it happens under each attribute, but the explanation of the world must lie within itself. Even if we can't see how, Spinoza's dogma holds the world to be self-explanatory as a matter of metaphysical fact. Since, to be thinking, for Spinoza, is one of the senses in which an infinite being is said to exist (EIIP1), no less so than to *be extended* (EIIP2), and since there can be no limitations to an infinite power of thinking (EID2), a divine intellect is expected to know everything adequately (EIIP3) and intuitively so. But since such a being is all there is and can ever be (EIP14, EIP15), the set of all the adequate ideas about the world, intuitively perceived, would after all be identical to God in the act of self-knowing (EVP32-EVP36).

So far, I've been working out some details of Spinoza's metaphysics from within and *sub specie aeternitatis*, that is to say, by reconstructing certain atemporal relations of the ideas that make up his system, ignoring the historical development of his work, or himself even as a human being. But, as I now turn to Goethe, I am compelled to introduce his thought through some brief historicizing. The reason behind this is that, if we are to expose Goethe's implicit Spinozism in the absence of any systematic exposition of his thoughts, we need to focus on his actual quest in search of first principles: from the inception of a vision, to the amassing of evidence and finally the development of a pertinent method. The ideas of Goethe were in constant transformation throughout his life – not unlike the characters of his *Bildungsromane* or the organic beings in his studies – and so it would be proper to approach his science accordingly, in its dynamic unfolding. To this end, I'm relying heavily on Fred Amrine's informed reading of Goethe's

Metamorphosis of Plants as a Spinozist treatise.[31] I plan to expand upon the same theme by tracing applications of the *scientia intuitiva* in Goethe's general study of organic forms.

In more than one place in his autobiography, Goethe stated unequivocally he owes his whole mode of thinking to Spinoza.[32] Admittedly, every time he had to go back to his works "the same calm air breathed" over him, a phrase followed by a dramatic statement: "I gave myself up to this reading, and thought, while I looked into myself, that I had never before so clearly seen through the world."[33] Even if an exact correspondence between Goethe's research and Spinozistic epistemology cannot be established, we can say this much: he took Spinoza's philosophy to have been relevant to, if not also formative, of his scientific inquiry. It all begun with an intense period of studying the *Ethics* in his mid-thirties after which something of a scientific vision appeared in his mind, put in explicitly Spinozistic terms. In a letter to Jacobi dated May 5, 1786, he quotes Spinoza's highest kind of knowing (the aforementioned excerpt actually) and admits:

> These few words give me the courage to devote my life to the contemplation of those things which I can reach and of whose *essentia formali* I can hope to form an adequate idea.[34]

Four months after this last letter to Jacobi, at noon, Goethe set off for Italy, embarking on a quixotic journey that would take him closer to one of his life's goals: the crystallization of an adequate idea of the plant, the *Urpflanze* or primal plant, on the basis of which he was meant to construct an entire science of form and formation. Beyond any doubt then,

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31. Frederick Amrine, "Goethean Intuitions," *Goethe Yearbook* 18 (2011): 35-50.

32. "This mind, which had worked upon me thus decisively, and which was destined to affect so deeply my whole mode of thinking, was Spinoza" (Goethe, *Truth and Fiction Relating to My Life*, 261). On 7th November 1816, Goethe writes to Zelter from Weimar: "Barring Shakespeare and Spinoza, I do not know that any dead writer has had such an effect upon me" [*Goethe's Letters to Zelter. With Extracts from those of Zelter to Goethe*, ed. A. D. Coleridge (London: George Bell & Sons and New York, 1892), 140].

33. Goethe, *Truth and Fiction Relating to My Life*, trans. John Oxenford, ed. Nathan Haskell Dole, vol. I (London: Robertson, Ashford and Bentley, 1902), 308.

34. *Goethes Werke*, ed. Sophie von Sachsen, 137 volumes (Weimar: Böhlau, 1880-1919) 4.7: 214 cited in David Bell, *Spinoza in Germany from 1670 to the Age of Goethe*, Bithell Series of Dissertations 7 (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London, 1984), 162.

biographically at least, Spinoza's intuitive knowledge should be taken as the initiatory motivation behind Goethe's science of morphology. During his *Italian Journey*, 1786-1788, Goethe was exposed to a new spectrum of plant forms and, most importantly, to unprecedented variations of species already known to him. At first, he expected to find a perfect embodiment of plant form on the ground, as real and tangible as the archetypal villa of Palladio that he visited in Vicenza. However, after having failed to locate the primal plant on the Mediterranean soil, Goethe realized that it must "grow" in an entirely different place; a similar place perhaps whence he "grew" the unfinished parts of the Strasbourg cathedral, after having perceived the "connection of these manifold ornaments amongst each other, the transition from one leading part to another,…from the saint to the monster, from the leaf to the dental."[35]

In August, he was writing to Herder he's very close to discovering "the truth about the how of the organism." "I hope you will rejoice" he says, "when you hear about these manifestations – not fulgurations – of our God." For Goethe (as for Spinoza) the essence of an organism is a direct manifestation of God Himself, and not the effect of a remote creator, what the word "fulguration" would suggest in all its Neoplatonic undertones.[36] Goethe gave an account of this concrete epiphany of his God:

> While walking in the public Gardens of Palermo, it came to me in a flash that in the organ of the plant which we are accustomed to call the *leaf* lies the true Proteus who can hide or reveal himself in all vegetal forms. From first to last, the plant is nothing but *leaf*.[37]

By using his imagination to run the unfolding of the plant backwards, Goethe derived the idea of a module in vegetative growth – a *generatrix* we may call it – whose path in space traces out every conceivable plant

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35. "I spent much time" Goethe writes, "partly in studying what actually existed, partly in restoring, in my mind and on paper, what was wanting and unfinished, especially in the towers" (*Truth and Fiction*, 9: 419).

36. The latter term, "fulguration" (éclats, literally meaning "lightning flash"), was famously used by G. W. Leibniz in the *Monadology* §47 to account for the creation of his Monads.

37. "Some Questions About Nature Which Intrigue and Perplex me," 31 July 1787, in *Italian Journey: 1786-1788*, trans. W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1982), 366.

form. Consequently, he calls *Metamorphosis of Plants* (in the 1789 essay of the same name), "[t]he process by which one and the same organ appears in a variety of forms itself to our eyes under protean forms."[38] In effect, Goethe's plant may be likened to Nature's own alembic, distilling a reserve of base materials into ever more rarified states. And just as chemicals get funneled through different vessels in the alembic, the distillation of the plant saps, from the coarser to more refined ones, is facilitated by organs of ever-increasing complexity and definition. So, the organs that accumulate into a plant form are basically instruments for drawing off cruder saps and the introduction of purer ones (§30) until the process of vegetative growth transitions into reproduction. That is to say, in order to reach perfection, i.e. to reproduce itself, the plant requires its sap to be progressively refined by way of successive plant structures. To that end, there emerge the forms of cotyledons, stem leaves, sepals, petals, pistils, stamens, one transitioning into the other, over three full cycles of *expansion* and *contraction*, starting from the outmost contracted state, the seed, to the outmost expanded state, the fruit (§41, 50, 73, 102). Taken together and in sequence, these steps in transformation constitute the "spiritual ladder" of plant generation, as Goethe called it.[39]

Just like Spinoza's ways of talking about concrete individuals switched from proper nouns to qualifications of a God-subject – say, God insofar as It expresses Socrates' nature – in Goethe's botany too, all the familiar nouns made to denote concrete components lapse into participles; any floral part is now identified with a leaf-subject insofar as it is *contracted* and *expanded* (§41, 42); *paired or divided* (§16); *lengthened* and *refined* (§31) *notched or pronounced* (§20); *anastomosed* (§25); *hidden and revealed* (§19, 76); *merged* (§35, 36, 38); *centered* (§70) etc. Most interestingly, in addition to the various transitions between the parts of the same plant, Goethe is willing to extend his principles of transformation across discrete plants: just like the ribs of the leaf anastomose to produce a connected surface in the sequence of growth, so too the pollen of one plant anastomoses with the ovaries of

38. *The Metamorphosis of Plants* (1790) trans. Agnes Arber, *Chronica Botanica* 10, No. 2, 63-126 (Waltham, Mass: Chronica Botanica Co.; London: Wm. Dawson and Sons, 1946), §4.
39. As translated by Gordon L. Miller in *The Metamorphosis of Plants* (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press, 2009), §6. Agnes Arber's rendition reads as: "an ascent – ladder-like in the mind's eye…."

another through pollination and fertilization (§63, 69, 113). From that point on, and throughout the rest of his career as a morphologist, Goethe never ceased to widen the scope of the laws of transformation.

Some less than ten years later,[40] Goethe extrapolated the conception of this fundamental organ from plants to the study of insects. Finally, in a grand culmination of his project, circa 1790, the idea of the fundamental organ and its developmental trajectory was extrapolated to vertebrates. The leaf was to different parts of the plant, what the vertebra was to different parts of the skeletal system. Just as the stem was seen as a contracted leaf, so too the skull was described as an expanded vertebra (according to his own vertebral theory of the skull).[41] Ultimately, by the end of his career, the intuitive methods of Goethe had been applied over varieties of natural objects that would have been traditionally considered unrelated, now falling under the same science of form. A ubiquitous body plan had been made the common ground for all these "scientific analogies" between insects, plants and vertebrates: the stem is a modified leaf; the insect, a modified larva; the cranium, a modified vertebra. The logic of transformation allows one part to be explained through another, one whole to be explained through its parts, and finally, one whole to be explained by another whole (see Fig. 1, below).

With these insights in mind, we may finally speculate about deeper conformities between Goethean morphology and Spinozist metaphysics. Arguably, the way Goethe arrives at the first principles of morphology and puts them into use bears some striking Spinozistic undertones. The overarching hypothesis I wish to put forward is that the metaphysical status ascribed to form in Goethe's science of morphology echoes Spinoza's theory of attributes.

Spinoza regarded Extension and Thought as two of the infinitely many possible aspects of the real, and elevated them to attributes of his Substance, viz. "what the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence" [*id quod intellectus de substantia percipit tanquam ejusdem essentiam*

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40. In a letter to Schiller dated Feb. 8th, 1797, Goethe writes from Weimar that: "I am succeeding at present in some good observations on the metamorphosis of insects" *Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe, from 1794 to 1805*, trans. G. H. Calbert (New York; London: Wiley and Putnam, 1845) 1: 231, Letter CCLXXI.

41. The inception of that idea occurred sometime in 1790, at the Lido of Venice, but remained unpublished until 1820.

constituens (EID4)]. Like Clark Kent and Superman, the material universe is identical to the mental universe, but there is no way these two aspects may interact with one another. Just like Clark's colleagues in the Daily Planet, Descartes was tricked into reifying body and mind as two things, while maintaining some privileged status for the latter. Nature, in reality, is refracted to as many attributes as there can be distinct human disciplines. In such a metaphysics, psychology and physics should be regarded as alternating yet non-overlapping ways of accounting for the same world. This means that physical and psychical discourses demarcate their parallel purviews over an infinitely multi-faceted object of study.[42]

In book I of the *Ethics*, the reader is guided through what we identified as an analytical discovery of God; the proof that an all-encompassing, absolutely infinite substance exists in exclusion to any other substantial thing. To this end, the book has been relying on a way of talking about the world beyond the confines of any given attribute, in an "attribute-neutral way." Now, in book II of the *Ethics* and onwards, Spinoza moves from that attribute-neutral analysis of God to a rigorous inquiry into two of its distinctive characters, namely, Thought and Extension. And, these characters are not the kind of things that God has, but what It is, or what It does.

According to Spinoza's theory, the presence of a divine attribute is marked by the intellect's capacity to think of the infinite in its terms and its terms only (EID3, EIP10, EIIP1). An attribute should be sought after in a global character, so fundamental and so pervasive that a complete story of the universe could be told, in principle, without ever wandering from the qualitative bounds set by that very character. After all, since an attribute is "what the intellect perceives of the substance as constituting its essence" (EID4), we should expect it also to be an irreducible feature of the world.

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42. Another useful analogy can be made with our five-fold sensoria. When I am playing the violin, the music I hear, the texture of the strings I feel, the color or form of the instrument I see are not of the same order even though we are compelled to refer them to the same thing. Hallucinogenic experiences aside, I cannot *see* the music, any more than I can *hear* color. My sense-data is delivered across different sensorial domains in correspondence with the various forms of my sensibility. The object of one sense cannot be the object of another, even though we may have reasons to admit that all deliverances of the senses have the same origin or reference. Nevertheless, there can be sensory-neutral ways of accounting for all these perceptions in terms of matter in motion, just like there is an attribute-neutral way to talk about Spinoza's God.

For, evidently, if an attribute constitutes the nature of a being that is "in itself and conceived through itself" – by the definition of substance (EID3) – it is expected to bear the same kind of conceptual independence.

In early modern times, the mark of a well-defined scientific discipline was the conceptual independence of its subject-matter (*hypokeimenon genos)*. Each science, according to the then prevailing epistemic standards (of a Peripatetic origin undoubtedly), ought to study a division of reality within a self-contained explanatory framework. The explanations offered in one such framework, according to the requirements of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, could not use minor terms from other sciences.[43] So, an early modern scientist had two options in treating the subject-matter of, say, thinking: he could either ground all psychological terms to physical ones, thus absorbing psychology into the subject-matter physics, or, treat thinking as a separate subject-matter. Spinoza's innovation consists in the latter approach. While other early mechanical philosophers were intent on reducing thinking processes to material ones, or inversely, to reduce matter to mind, Spinoza elevated the act of thinking to the status of a natural attribute. In Spinoza's one-substance philosophy, attributes such as Thinking and Extending are irreducible characters among infinitely more of them equally expressive of the universe.

One may be inclined to consider the subject-matter of Goethe's newly-founded scientific field in analogy with Spinoza's own treatment. After all, the "morphe" that forms the root of the neologism *morphê-o-logia* (from the Greek variant of form or shape), was characterized by the same kind of explanatory priority and sufficiency by Goethe, as did Thinking and Extending by Spinoza. In particular, Goethe asserts that:

> Morphology rests on the conviction that everything which exists must signify and reveal itself.... The doctrine of form is the doctrine of alteration. The doctrine of metamorphosis is the key to all the signs of nature.[44]

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43. However, it is worth noting that Descartes broke away from that very tradition insofar as he sought solutions to a variety of problems in geometry (continuous quantity) by way of his coordinate system.

44. Goethe, *Die Schriften zur Naturwissenschaft*, 1st division, 10: 128, cited in Robert Richards, *The Meaning of Evolution: The Morphological Construction and Ideological Reconstruction of Darwin's Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 36.

At this point, it is important to note that the kind of infinity that may be ascribed to Goethe's Morphe (in parallel with Spinoza's Extension and Thought) differs sharply from the indefiniteness of a class concept, i.e. it is not about an infinite number of possible members in a given class. If it were, we would be prone to recognize something like, say, "existence" as the common feature of all things, not unlike the Eleatics, and so impute to substance the attenuated reality of a universal. What makes Spinozistic metaphysics (and derivatively, Goethean morphology) interesting is the fact that the unity of the attributes under study (as well as that of its infinite modifications) is not one of a general concept over its instances, but one of a concrete yet determinable being over its various determinations. Talking about the relation between infinite and finite things, Spinoza writes:

> [T]hese singular, changeable things depend so intimately, and (so to speak) essentially, on the fixed things that they can neither be nor be conceived without them. So although these fixed and eternal things are singular, nevertheless, because of their presence everywhere, and most extensive power, they will be to us like universals, *or* genera of the definitions of singular, changeable things, and the proximate causes of all things.[45]

In other words, the universality of those fixed and eternal singular things is just our own way of making their ubiquity logically describable. Along similar lines, whatever term we find suffixed with "*ur*-" by Goethe (*Ur*-pflanze, *Ur*- phänomen, *Ur*-form) was not meant to signify an abstraction, but a concrete instance, or, as Goethe states: "an instance worth a thousand, bearing all within itself."[46] This, I think, is what initially fueled his expectations for unearthing the leaf of all leaves and plant of all plants. For, how could one "recognize that this or that form was a plant if all were not built upon the same basic model?"[47]

Goethe's Spinozistic insight is that the grouping of things in a class is only symptomatic of their partaking in an underlying concrete thing. As such, their participation in a genus is not merely predicative, as in Linnaean

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45. *TdIE*, §101.

46. From Goethe's *Theory of Color*, cited in Ernst Lehrs, *Man or Matter: Introduction to a Spiritual Understanding of Nature on the Basis of Goethe's Method of Training Observation and Thought* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1985), 109.

47. From Sicily, 17 April 1787, *Italian Journey*, 258-259.

taxonomy, but concrete. The theory behind this assertion is resoundingly Spinozistic: what makes me what I am is not the class I belong to but the thing I am modificatory of. In the context of Goethean morphology, the archetypal leaf, or the modular vertebra, or the vertebrate body plan are not categories but names for concrete processes that express themselves divergently, in certain and determinate ways. Ultimately, Goethe's notion of the archetype takes us from a taxonomy of distinct species to a pre-classificatory field of generative processes. Ernst Cassirer brilliantly summed it up by saying he was the one who "completed the transition from the previous generic view to the modern genetic view of organic nature."[48]

Perhaps the most significant corollary to Spinoza's theory of attributes is that the grasping of an attribute enables one to conceive possible yet not existing finite modes (EIP8s), or glimpse at how the formal essences of the singular things are contained in God's attributes (EIIP8). In other words, attributes are features of something so fundamental that gets to offer insight into what is really possible.

> This is how we can have true ideas of modifications which do not exist; for though they do not actually exist outside the intellect, nevertheless their essences are comprehended in another in such a way that they can be conceived through it.[49]

In short, the notion of the attribute of a Substance, along with its infinite and ubiquitous modifications, should provide the generative materials for conceiving any possible finite being. In fact, the ability to form true ideas about conceivable things has to do with the way everything is explained through or contained in an attribute. At the same time, in a pre-theoretical stage, this condition should also be sufficient for identifying a divine attribute (EIIP1). If you can think of a feature that can be descriptive of the world in its entirety, or at least capable of being articulated into fictional events that are no less true than the factual ones, then you have got yourself a divine attribute. Finally, with this insight in mind, we are definitely in a better position to appreciate the allure of the geometrical analogy; for, indeed it seems that the subject genus of geometry, i.e. magnitude or continuous quantity, stands to the figures and relations engendered in it, as a Spinozist

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48. Ernst Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, Goethe: Two Essays*, trans. James Gutmann, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1970), 69.
49. *Ethics*, Book I, Proposition 8, Scholium 2.

attribute stands to its finite modifications or affections.

But how could such ideas be true if not conforming with a fact of existence in some way or another? By refusing to admit any extrinsic denominations for distinguishing a true idea from a false one, Spinoza subverts the scholastic theory of truth as *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, i.e. the conformity between the thing and the intellect. There being or not a thing in correspondence with the idea does not affect its truth value; it only adds content to a core concept.[50] As he illustrates it by way of an analogy in the *TdIE*, an architect who has conceived of an edifice in the proper order and according to the laws of his discipline, gets to have a true idea even if this edifice never existed, and even never will[51] – like Goethe did of the unfinished towers of the Strasbourg cathedral. The truth of these ideas does not consist in God's matching the world of objects to them; ideas about non-existing things are true as possible states of an infinitely plastic God. We can scientifically explore a realm of possible finite modes, insofar as they are conceivable through an attribute and its infinite modes, just like an architect may think of a variety of tectonic solutions, as long as her thoughts are compatible with the nature of the materials and the rules of engineering. Armed with an idea of such a God and Its infinite eternal modifications, man can abstract himself from the order of actually existing things and elevate "to the realm where divine forces are at work," as Douglas Miller puts it.[52] Ultimately, to acquire knowledge of the third kind about Nature – as opposed to knowing by random experience or through common notions – is to intuit a divine attribute in its infinite fecundity, to wit, a spectrum of what is finitely possible such that it enables the mind to imagine freely, yet truthfully. The same promise is conveyed by Goethe in a letter addressed to the patron who gifted him a signed copy of Spinoza's *Ethics* in the first

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50. The things we interact with in our finite lives are formal essences, that in addition to being comprehended by a divine attribute they are also actualized in the common order of Nature (cf. EIIP8). For Spinoza, an *essentia formalis* is every bit as existing as an *essentia actualis*.

51. "[B]ut now I recognised the connection of these manifold ornaments amongst each other, the transition from one leading part to another, the enclosing of details, homogeneous indeed, but yet greatly varying in form, from the saint to the monster, from the leaf to the dental…. I spent much time, partly in studying what actually existed, partly in restoring, in my mind and on paper, what was wanting and unfinished, especially in the towers" (*Truth and Fiction*, 9: 419).

52. Douglas Miller in the introduction to *Scientific Studies*, xx.

place:[53]

> The Primal Plant is going to be the strangest creature in the world, which Nature herself shall envy me. With this model and the key to it, it will be possible to go on forever inventing plants and know that their existence is logical; that is to say, if they do not actually exist, they could, for they are not the shadowy phantoms of a vain imagination, but possess an inner necessity and truth. The same law will be applicable to all other living organism.[54]

I take it that such scientifically meaningful fictions of the kind that Goethe finds himself engaged in echo one of Spinoza's original contributions to the theory of knowledge. His theory requires the form of truth to "be sought in the same thought itself," as he says, and "be deduced from the nature of the intellect."[55] By admitting this much, Spinoza had paved the ground for a species of true statements that depend solely on the powers of active thought. The intellect need not be passively subjected to perceptions to redeem its beliefs about an external world; to accurately report facts from the other side, as it were, of a mind-body breach. Using the innate tools – the most foundational of which is the idea of God – and ordering them into a system, the intellect may participate in the production of the real by forming ideas of the virtual. These epistemic commitments, Goethe seems to have turned into a concrete practice, an art even:

> When I closed my eyes and lowered my head, I could imagine a flower in the center of my visual sense. Its original form never stayed for a moment; it unfolded, and from within it new flowers continuously developed with colored petals or green leaves. These were no natural flowers; they were fantasy flowers, but as regular as rosettes carved by a sculptor.[56]

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53. In 1784, Goethe received a copy of Spinoza's *Ethics* in Latin as a Christmas gift by Herder, his mentor, carrying the inscription: "Let Spinoza be always for you the holy Christ" cited in Robert Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life; Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 379. See the commentary by John Neubauer in Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, *in 40 Bänden*, Vol. 29 (Stuttgart and Berlin: J. G. Cotta, 1895), 2.2: 875.

54. From a letter to Herder from Naples, 17 May 1787, in *Italian Journey*, 310–311.

55. *TdIE*, §71.

56. Goethe's review of Purkinje's *Sight from a Subjective Standpoint* (1824), *Scientific Studies*, xxi.

On that account, and since the ability to think of non-existing yet true modifications is premised on the acquaintance with a divine attribute, Spinoza could have credited Goethe with the discovery of a parallel attribute. In that case, God would be regarded, in addition to an infinite mind or an infinite body, an infinite Morphe. The physico-mechanical realm of ever-swapping quantities of motion, direction and position, would be just one way of looking out into the world. For, the structural and generational affinities that abound in the natural world, Goethe seems to suggest, deserve a demarcation of their own subject matter, something that would in turn mark, for the Spinozist-minded, the presence of another self-contained attribute.

In the end, I would speculate that the puzzle of immanent causation we stumbled across earlier (and its parallel, immanent explanation) may be circumvented by realizing that, after all, it is not strings of consequences we are supposed to intuit in an "eternal and infinite nature," waiting to be teased out of it with the aid of extrinsic principles; instead, it is the realm of virtual determinations that lie dormant within such a nature, waiting to be re-enacted intellectually, intrinsically so. Indeed, and in response to Tschirnhaus, to recognize in extension a divine attribute would mean to appreciate motion as already ingrained in an infinitely determinable matter, along with all finite beings comprehended by it. It would mean that we should be able, by the power of intuition, to see how a specific kinematic state of affairs follows from ubiquitous Extension, in the same way the intuitive morphologist in us can see the hoof of the horse following from the five-digit limb of the ubiquitous body plan.[57]

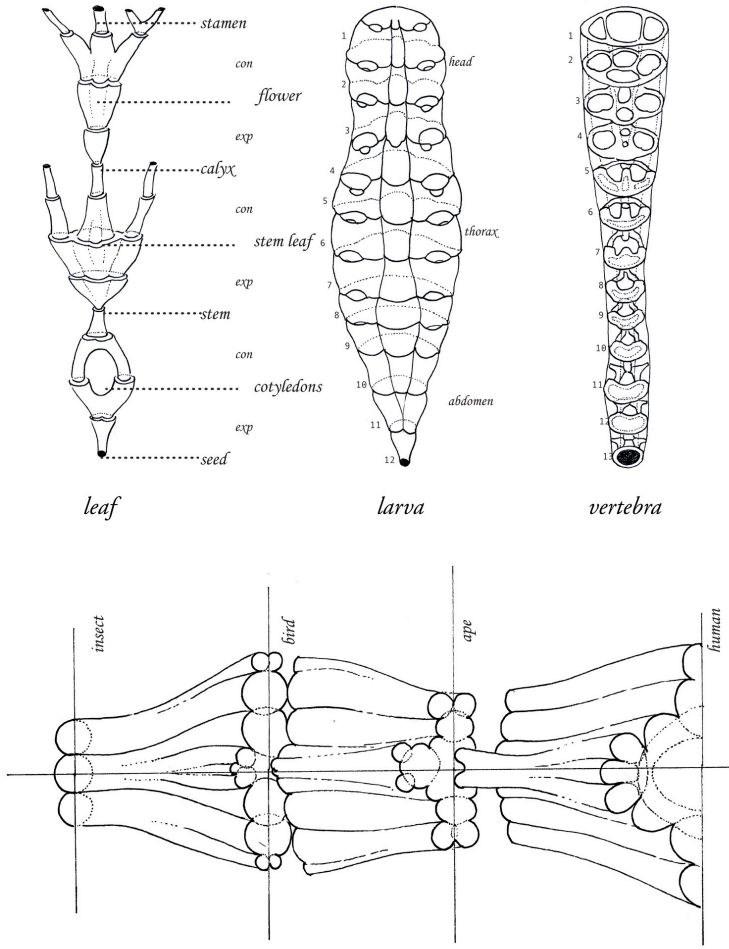
Naturally, reading Spinoza through Goethe's eyes (or anticipating Goethe through Spinoza's) comes with its own set of problems, the most pronounced of which has to do with the dubious conceptual sufficiency of Morphe. Spinoza might have protested that Goethe's form can in fact be conceived through matter and motion, and so that it fails to be as explanatorily basic as is required from a divine attribute. And indeed, unless

57. "In horses," Goethe suggests, "the five fingers have been enclosed in a hoof; we see this in an intellectual view, even if through some monstrosity the divisibility of the hoof into fingers did not convince us" (*Principles of Zoological Philosophy* [1830], trans. B. Taylor (1980), in *Mathematical Essays on Growth and the Emergence of Form*, ed. Peter L. Antonelli [Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1985], 326).

the anachronism be committed that Morphe was meant as a topological invariant, not to be defined by the metric properties it happens to take on, the subject of morphology would have to be demoted to an infinite mode, at best, falling under a general science of motion, insofar as it extends to the organic realm.

In any case, however, it might still be conducive to a better understanding of both thinkers to treat the subject-matters of their intuitive sciences as parallel to one another. For instance, it may be useful to suppose that just like, for Spinoza, every finite being is a portion of matter striving to persevere in its being within the laws of motion, for Goethe, every organic configuration is a parcel of Morphe striving for refinement or full expression within the laws of metamorphosis; that Goethe's leaf is, after all, an infinitesimal transformation, or the morphological counterpart of Spinoza's infinitesimal body, what he called *corpus simplicissimum*; that the laws of motion and rest follow from Spinoza's Extension in much the same way as the laws of expansion and contraction follow from Goethe's Morphe; that, by regarding the world as a mesh of qualitative differentiations, Goethe was drawing on a metaphysical framework that had anticipated the discovery of new attributes, out of infinitely many unknowable ones. In such a view, grafted, as it were, on Spinoza's God, that third attribute would consist in a labyrinth of possible paths of transformation yielding as many growth patterns as there are natural kinds, be it leaf, insect, or vertebrate. What is more, these transformations would to be driven by opposing forces whose polarities, ubiquitous, should pulsate the same beneath phenomena once thought unrelated: from the diastole and systole of the heart to the inhalation and exhalation of the lungs; from the expansion and contraction of the leaf to the modular configuration of the insect and the vertebral column; everything here would have flowed and would always follow from a field of vital forces in which Spinoza – had he conducted the same fieldwork as Goethe – might have recognized his own God or Nature.

Figure 1 (drawn by author)



"*A ubiquitous body plan had been made the common ground for all these 'scientific analogies' between insects, plants and vertebrates: the stem is a modified leaf; the insect, a modified larva; the cranium, a modified vertebra. The logic of transformation allows one part to be explained through another, one whole to be explained through its parts, and finally, one whole to be explained by another whole*" (p. 109, above).

Analogy and Metaphysics: Joseph Maréchal's Agent Intellect[1]

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Joseph Maréchal's (1878-1944) transcendental Thomism is a peculiar sort of philosophy: an attempt to adapt traditional Scholastic thinking to Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) critical method, its fullest expression in Maréchal's five-volume work *Le Point de départ de la métaphysique*[2] asks the question, "*what can serve as a ground for objective knowledge*?" While Kant addressed this question by situating the unity of a knowing subject and its object in consciousness, Maréchal's approach finds this unity in *Being*, making it into a philosophy that grounds religious experience. To experience, for Maréchal, is to think, and to think is to *be*.

It is this need for a ground for religious experience that led Maréchal to make a fundamental methodological claim based on the unifying character of Being: both metaphysical and transcendental philosophy, he says, cover the same subject matter, while moving in different directions.[3] The result is a highly individual vocabulary indebted to both traditions, and which can only be read as something altogether new.

This paper is a systematic exposition of Maréchal's theory of the Agent Intellect, as found in *Cahier V* of the *Point de départ*. It will show that for

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1. This article is based on parts of my MA thesis "Analogy as the Foundation of a Transcendental Thomism in the Works of Joseph Maréchal" (McGill, 2015). I would like to note, however, that my interpretation of Maréchal has evolved since then, and this article is a reflection of that evolution.

2. Joseph Maréchal, *Le Point de départ de la métaphysique, leçons sur le développement historique et théorique du problème de la connaissance* [5 vols.] (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1922-1964) [1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th editions]. From here on, the *Point de départ* will be cited using a Roman numeral for the volume, followed by the page number in Arabic numerals. All translations are my own.

3. "These two critical methods, which engage from different but complementary angles the same object, must, when pushed to their logical conclusions, arrive at the same end; for the Critique of antiquity [i.e., the ontological critique] begins with an ontological object and ends with a transcendental subject; and the modern [Kantian] Critique begins with a transcendental subject and postulates an ontological object" (Maréchal, *Point de départ,* V, 68).

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Maréchal, the Agent Intellect reveals that any particular act of knowing must be subsumed under *Being* as a general concept. The entirety of that which is potentially intelligible is the scope of Being.

A number of steps are taken in order to arrive at this conclusion. (1) Maréchal establishes that knowing has active and passive sides (Agent and Possible Intellect), and that these form an absolute unity; whatever is known must be introduced into the mind as *mind itself*, albeit as its malleable, passive side. I consider this relation to be one of analogy, and what follows, an elaboration of an "analogical" epistemology. (2) The thing that must be received into the mind is the *phantasm*, a representation of sense data which the Agent Intellect must seek out or "illuminate." (3) The mind's relationship to the phantasm consists in a double movement: it must first become its object (conversion to the phantasm) and integrate that object into itself (return to self). (4) The mutual intelligibility of subject and object is made possible by a subjective faculty, the imagination. (5) The Agent Intellect constitutes an object of knowledge out of the *phantasm* by means of a "specifying form" or *species*. (6) The *species* is fundamentally an ontological rather than epistemological construct, belonging to being rather than the mind. What it shows is the *a priori* form of the concept, or "intelligible unity of Being." In other words, if the *species* is a kind of genus that allows for knowledge to be recognized as intelligible or "objectifiable," its reference point cannot be a mere function of the mind itself, but rather one of the whole field of intelligibility.

From this, I conclude that in establishing knowing as something ontological – that is, becoming what one knows and assimilating it into oneself against the backdrop of the whole field of possible knowledge – Maréchal is fundamentally presenting knowledge as an *analogy*: knower and known relate according to a logic of similar and dissimilar, the language of analogy. Because this analogy is ontological, referring to Being, Maréchal alludes to the possibility of a second analogy, one between discursive (assimilative or human) knowing, and intuitive (creative or divine) knowing.

1. Reconciling the Active and the Passive

Maréchal's transcendental theory of the Agent Intellect begins by following the fundamentals of Kantian epistemology. Sensation is introduced into the mind according to the forms of space and time, and made into a

representation. At this point, it is not yet "constituted as a *concept*,"[4] an object of thought. Such a concept implies universal and necessary conditions that the senses alone cannot furnish; it is only when sense encounters these *a priori* conditions that an image of what is thought can be constituted within the mind. And while sense experience is purely receptive, the conceptual faculties of the mind that organize sensibility are active.

The traditional Thomist conception of knowing, remarks Maréchal, is not so different from this.[5] For Thomas, sensible intuition is made possible by the "mingled parts"[6] that are the soul (the active principle) and the body (the material passive principle).[7] Sensation is a hylomorphic activity, but within this activity, the soul affects matter of its own free will, as the *spontaneous activity* of the unified knower.[8] Insofar as it constitutes the object within the mind, this spontaneous aspect of knowing is called the Agent Intellect.

The theory of the Agent Intellect "rests entirely on the need to find a rational means of reconciliation between the diverse elements that participate in the production of the concept,"[9] or as Kant would say, the objectification of representations. First, the intellect must have something to work with, a material sense object out of which it can forge a concept. This is a *representation*, the fruit of sense data being filtered through the faculty that Kant calls intuition.[10] Maréchal calls the representation a *phantasm*,[11] or image. The phantasm, which is already a formal unit, must be received into the mind in order for conceptual knowledge to occur – the mind is a blank slate that passively receives its content.[12] And yet, the understanding, the soul, is an active faculty – it can only know through activity, through its

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4. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 185.

5. "St. Thomas, in his day, exposed an analogous conception of intellectual spontaneity" (Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 185). Maréchal is of course thinking of St. Thomas's epistemology as a whole (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Ia, Q. 75-109).

6. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 185.

7. Aquinas, *Sum* Ia Q. 81.

8. "Ipsum intellectuale principium, quod dicitur mens vel intellectus, habet operationem per sei, cui non communicat corpus" (Aquinas, *Sum* Ia Q. 75, Art. 3, Co.).

9. *Point de départ*, V, 187. "Concept" here means "object" for Kant.

10. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 51 / B 75.

11. This is the traditional Scholastic term for "the appearance of the thing." Cf. Otto Muck, *The Transcendental Method*, trans. William D. Seidensticker (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), 90.

12. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 187-8; Aquinas, *Sum* Ia Q. 79, Art. 2, Co.

spontaneity. The phantasm cannot jump into the mind, but must be actively constituted within it. The only solution to this conundrum is to concede that the mind is at once passive and active: "it is easy to see at least one result: the intellectual faculty is at once active and passive, but passive under one aspect, and active under another."[13] The mind's passive aspect is called the Possible Intellect (*intellectus possibilis*) and the active aspect the Agent Intellect (*intellectus agens*).[14]

Already, then, we see that the relation of the active to the passive (and the subject to its object thereby) is not one of separation, but of a scale, one that is intrinsic to the subject itself. This scale is actually a complex form of analogy, one that the Thomist commentator Cajetan called analogy of proportionality: in order to know, the mind must become its own object, and yet at the same time be able to "return to itself."[15] The philosophical style employed from here on is markedly analogical. More than a way of describing the relationship of opposites and the movement that takes place between them, Maréchal considers analogy to be a veritable remedy to Kantian "static thought."[16] The Agent Intellect is thus elaborated as a kind of epistemological analogy.

1.1 Agent Intellect as Activity: The Phantasm

As the active part of the mind, the Agent Intellect is inseparable from what it

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13. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 189. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, 10, 6.

14. Aquinas, *Sum* Ia Q. 79, Art. 4, Ad. 4.

15. Thomas de Vio cardinalis Caietanus, *De Nominum Analogia: De Conceptu Entis* [1498], ed. P. N. Zammit (Rome: Institutum Angelicum, 1934), §21-30. Maréchal cites Cajetan 52 times in *Cahier V*, more than any other secondary source (barring Kant and Aquinas, of course). Cajetan's most poignant example is that of the Good: moral qualities (rather like knowledge) are intrinsic, or possessed by the individual. But one cannot be wholly good – only God can be said to be so. Hence one participates, to a greater or lesser extent, in God's goodness, which is "imbibed" as it were by the subject. Goodness exists on a scale, requiring the subject to be open to an external determination (passive side) and yet self-determined (active, not-God, the other) (Caietanus, *De Nominum*, §30).

16. "[Kant] seems to be unaware of the true meaning of the scholastic theories of analogy, which deserve further exploration because, like Kant, they find the heart of the problem of knowledge in the relationship between sensible intuition and meta-sensible *a priori* conditions that themselves are not strictly intuitive" (Maréchal, *Point de départ*, IV, 82).

accomplishes – it is what it does. This action is called the *intelligibile in actu*, the "intelligible [thing] in act." It is "the objective form of the actuation of the 'intellectual potentiality'."[17] The Agent Intellect is itself the *intelligible in actu*. The thing itself, to which this form corresponds, is appropriately called the *intelligibile in potentia*. Through a process of actuation, or "becoming active," this movement yields objective knowledge.[18] The Agent Intellect actively "seeks out" phantasms in the world, and abstracts them from their physical/material element, creating a representation within the Possible Intellect and investing it with a deeper level of objectivity, creating "specifying determinations" or *species*: "The necessary role of the Agent Intellect therefore consists in creating through the abstraction of phantasms *intelligibles in actu* in the Possible Intellect, that is to say, to supply the [Possible Intellect] with 'specifying determinations' (*species*) that are intrinsically free from any material restriction."[19] This description of the function of the Agent Intellect encompasses the cognitive act in its entirety: Maréchal insists on the absolute unity of knowledge. Hence describing the Agent Intellect requires a description of each element of the cognitive act, including the *species*, the phantasm, the Possible Intellect, and the agent itself.

In a general way, the Agent Intellect is always in act, and without a preceding cause: it is both *a priori* and spontaneous. And although it is inseparable from what it causes, the *intelligibile in actu*, the actuality of the former is not the actuality of the latter; the *intelligibile* is an object of the Possible Intellect, while the Agent Intellect is purely efficient, pure act. It therefore does not contain anything, but rather makes active the

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17. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 190.

18. While the coincidence of form and function in the Agent Intellect is indeed a Thomist principle, Jan Verhoeven is right to point out the similarities between what Maréchal expresses and certain ideas found in Fichte. Cf. Jan Verhoeven, "L'inspiration fichtéenne de Maréchal," in *Au Point de départ: Joseph Maréchal entre la critique kantienne et l'ontologie thomiste,* ed. P. Gilbert (Brussels: Lessius, 2001): 75-92. For Verhoeven, the relation of Agent and Possible Intellect in Maréchal is similar Fichte's I and not-I (80). From 1806 onward, Fichte uses the term "Love" in an analogical way that is similar to Maréchal's "dynamisme" (83). Both Fichte and Maréchal believe in what Maréchal calls "l'intuition intellectulle de l'acte, ou l'acte dynamique" (Maréchal, *Point de départ*, IV, 348; Verhoeven, "L'inspiration fichtéenne de Maréchal," 76-78).

19. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 191.

Possible Intellect, wherein representations reside.[20] The Agent Intellect is the becoming of the Possible Intellect.[21] Its action is therefore limited by what it must represent in the Possible Intellect: this action is "curbed" by the phantasm. There is nothing about this theory, remarks Maréchal, that cannot be reconciled with Kant: "Kant expressed the same thing in critical terms: the concept is neither totally *a priori*, nor totally spontaneous: it is *a posteriori* (or empirical) in terms of its matter (its heterogeneous content [*contenu divers*]), and *a priori* and spontaneous in terms of its synthetic form (its universal form)."[22]

Indeed, the purpose of the Agent Intellect is the active transformation of the phantasm. The phantasm can therefore only be described in conjunction with the act that is the Agent Intellect. Maréchal points out that all the words Aquinas uses to describe the relationship between the Agent Intellect and the phantasm – transformation, elevation, spiritualisation, universalisation, illumination – are participative.[23] Perhaps the most evocative of these is illumination. Abstraction, which is the act of setting in motion possible objects (*intelligibile in potentia*) towards becoming formal objects (*intelligibile in actu*) is called the "illumination" of the phantasm. The Agent Intellect is like a light that illuminates what it knows.[24] Taking the light metaphor one step further, if the Agent Intellect *is* the *intelligible in actu*, then the light and that which is illuminated are the same. The malleable Agent Intellect must become the phantasm in order to know it, and represent it in the Possible Intellect. Yet, this conformity can only be one of *act* and not of form, since the Agent Intellect is pure act. The phantasm therefore "inheres" in the Agent Intellect, which takes on the contours of the phantasm:[25] "Its conformity with the phantasm can only be

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20. "Intellectus agens non est substantia separata, sed virtus quaedam animae, ad eadem active se extends, ad quae se extendit intellectus possibilis receptive" (Aquinas, *Sum* Ia, Q. 88, Art. 1, Co.). When actuated, the Possible Intellect becomes the Agent Intellect.

21. "Sicut omina natura ita et in anima est aliquid quo est omnia fieri, et aliquid quo est omnia facere" (Aquinas, *Sum* Ia, Q. 79, Art. 3, Co.).

22. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 194.

23. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 195.

24. Aquinas, *Sum* Ia, Q. 85, Art. 1, Ad. 4.

25. For the concept of "inhering" see Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei*, Q. 3, Art. 7 Ad. 7; *Sum* Ia, Art. 1, Ad. 1. The phantasm is not a predicate of the Agent Intellect, but "inheres" within it. Moreover, one can interchangeably say that phantasm inheres in the Agent

an "act" [of conformity] – an "attitude" – regulated by the formal character of the phantasm in virtue of its natural coordination [towards the Agent Intellect]."[26]

2. The Emanation of Powers: Conversion to the Phantasm and Return to Self

With the light metaphor, Maréchal has effectively broken down the barriers between what Kant would call separate faculties. The Agent Intellect's conformity to the phantasm in the act of knowing is a radical assertion of the oneness of spirit.[27] Maréchal brings this even further: not only must Agent and Possible Intellect share a scale of actuation and passivity (the Agent Intellect seen from the passive side is the Possible Intellect; the Possible Intellect seen from the point of view of activity is the Agent Intellect), but the phantasm and the Agent Intellect must also share this proportional scale of activity. In other words, sensibility's act is the understanding, and understanding's passivity is sensibility. This is extrapolated by means of a "general theory of powers." For Thomas, powers *emanate* from an essence. In a composed essence wherein "the perfection of the form goes beyond the purely material level,"[28] as is the case with human knowers, the difference in levels (*dénivellation*) of essence produces a hierarchy of powers. Taken literally, this means that the passive sensible powers of the mind are subordinated to its active intellectual powers. Maréchal, however, describes this relationship dynamically, affording more place to function than form. On this reading, the intellectual powers are themselves the active principle of sensibility. Insofar as sensible representation is always "becoming" intelligible, sense and understanding

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Intellect, or that the Agent Intellect inheres in the phantasm: they achieve identity in act (cf. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 199).

26. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 197.

27. Maréchal thus accuses Neo-Kantianism of "lacking imagination." This "*problème d'imagination*" always limits terms to their literal meaning: "In spite of ourselves, beholden as we are to the too-strict separation that language operates between elements that in fact are not entirely distinct, we treat the faculties of a unified subject – sense, imagination, intelligence, will – as isolated unities, reacting to each other externally. The Scholastics, whose terminology nevertheless encourages this illusion, were all the same intensely aware of the unity of the subject" (Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 197-198). Cf. Aquinas, *Sum* Ia, Q. 75, Art. 2.

28. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 202.

emerge from the same cause – the spontaneity of the subject:

> This is what the old formula "*phantasma est intelligibile in potentia*" means to say; for a real subject's potentiality never only designates the negative side or the pure possibility of an act, but also the positive suitability [*convenance positive*], or as it were, the mute desire of this act: "*potentia appetit actum; materia est appetitus formae*."[29]

Two points can be deduced from this analysis: first, intellectual dynamism has finally revealed its formal definition: it is the process of actuation according to a principle of causality common to its poles. Second, what Maréchal means by intellectual finality has been elucidated to a certain point: it is the internal cause that guides the active movement of knowing, leading sensibility towards a "concept", towards the soul. Simply put, the proper end of representation is the completion of the subject. Hence the term *emanation*, despite evoking a "moving out" from essence, implies the constitution of the source, the subject. Ultimately, emanation is analogy of proportionality put to work – it is a kind of sliding along the scale of proportionality between subject and object.

3. A Scholastic Theory of the Imagination

This means that there is a true form of proportionality established between sense and understanding, and that *intelligence*, or intellectual synthesis, is present at all levels of knowing: "human nature is filled with pervasive intelligibility all the way down to its inferior levels, even in the body and its [lowest] vegetative functions."[30] Intelligibility reaches the lowest levels of sense through the mediation of *imaginative synthesis*. This synthesis, like everything else encountered so far, is divided into passive and active sides: the *passive* imagination is "associative," or in Kantian terms, reproductive. The *active* imagination is constructive, or "productive." It is the imaginative synthesis that produces the phantasm. Although constructive, the imagination is never creative; it is a function of the understanding, the intellectual faculty, and is directed towards the intellectual synthesis. Imagination, for Maréchal, is nothing more than the name for a glimpse

29. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 205.
30. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 206.

of the Agent Intellect's movement at a privileged moment, the synthetic constitution of the phantasm. The imagination would perhaps be better defined, then, as the principle of the intelligibility of matter. As Maréchal writes, "the finality of imaginative activity and the internal unity of the phantasm is *lifted up* beyond the level of the senses – not because the image itself ceases to be concrete and material, but because its constitutive unity (at the heart of matter itself) is derived from its intelligible unity."[31]

Maréchal's view of imagination fundamentally splits what Kant calls "apperceptive unity" or the unity of consciousness, into two moments or aspects: the Agent and Possible Intellect. The apprehensive or sensible synthesis has become the act of the Agent Intellect moulding itself to sense. Now, the constitution of the Agent Intellect's "final cause" into an image is carried out by the imagination. This representative act of imagining has a passive side imitating the Possible Intellect's ability to contain information, and an active side that organizes this information, as does the Agent Intellect. In its movement from possibility to actuation, which is inscribed within the larger movement of the Agent Intellect, the imagination begins with sense, which it can reproduce. As it moves towards actuation under the guidance of the Agent Intellect, it is able to actively construct the phantasm. This determination of the phantasm by the imagination is that which grants it causal conformity with the phantasm. It is a not itself a faculty, but rather, to use scholastic language, virtual intrinsic cause of itself (insofar as it is enveloped by the Agent Intellect, which is its own cause) and the phantasm. For Maréchal, then, the imagination is the principle of proportionality of the Agent Intellect (subject) and the phantasm (object).

Imagination leaves us at the summit of materiality. Once the image has been constructed, a positive determination exists in the mind, and immanent operations continue. Imagination therefore stands at the limit of the first phase of the Agent Intellect's activity, the constitution of the phantasm – the first synthesis, to use Kant's language.[32] The intelligibility of the phantasm as a material synthesis is not derived from the image itself, nor from the

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31. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 207. Maréchal makes this point in scholastic terms, reconciling the illuminative power of the Agent Intellect with the synthetic power of the imagination at *Point de départ*, V, 211-212.

32. This "first phase" roughly corresponds to the "apprehensive synthesis" in Kant (cf. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 103 ff.).

sensible faculty that is in conformity with the external matter that is known. Intelligibility, says Maréchal, arrives at that point where imagination and understanding meet.[33] Imagination therefore belongs to both faculties. As principle of the proportionality of subject and object, it belongs to the essential emanation of a hylomorphoric being: put simply, only a being that is a matter-spirit composite is capable of a constructively imaginative act.[34] Human beings are material, and so are bound to supplement their intellectual spontaneity with sense experience. Metaphysically, this materiality represents the passive side of knowing; the Agent Intellect, the act of the understanding, is then able to "activate" or render intelligible its own passive side, which, having been pressed into the mould of sensible intuition, has taken on the form of what has been encountered in sense – it has become the phantasm. If the proper end of representation is the completion of the subject, then it is matter that provides what is lacking.[35] The active intellectual faculty is found entirely within the subject. The subject has a material element, sensibility, but this faculty ultimately belongs to the active part, the Agent Intellect, in its movement towards actualization. If knowing is *becoming* or actualization, then an exterior passive element must exist. Endowed with both passive (material) and active (intellectual) sides, the knowing subject can identify with an external material source as Possible Intellect, and then actualize that source of knowledge as Agent Intellect.

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33. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 208.

34. For Xavier Tilliette, this "Spirit" is inherently linked to the supernatural: "Le Père Maréchal cherche néanmoins dans le mysticisme chrétien sinon une confirmation du moins un gage de l'aptitude surnaturelle inscrite au moins en creux dans l'intellect. C'est pourquoi l'intuition intellectuelle est au centre de ses savants travaux" (X. Tilliette, "Maréchal et la connaissance mystique," in *Au Point de départ: Joseph Maréchal entre la critique kantienne et l'ontologie thomiste,* ed. P. Gilbert [Brussels: Lessius, 2001], 116).

35. "In the case of intelligence setting in motion sense, the pre-existing physical link is nothing other than the substantial union of soul and body; the natural and immediate domain of influence of the spiritual soul over matter is the body [insofar as it is] united to the soul in the same matter. Because the soul is the formal cause of the body, the higher powers that emanate from the soul as spirit have an essential relationship to and solidarity of action with the lower intentional powers, which emanate from composite [being] as such. Also, as soon as the sense elements come within the orbit of the imagination, they reach, by the very fact, the immediate zone of influence of the intellect: vis-à-vis the [intellect], these [sense elements] are in a very real way '*materia circa quam operatur*'" (Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 210). This paragraph is essentially a summary of the function Maréchal attributes to the "emanation of powers."

For while objective knowledge is something that must be "actualized," a purely active mind, robbed of the movement from active to passive, would not know everything, as one might initially think, but rather nothing at all. If Aristotle's moral philosophy says that virtue lies in the mean, Maréchal's epistemology exists according to the same principle of proportionality: knowledge lies in the "mean" between activity and passivity.[36]

This movement away from self to correspond with matter, and then back to the Self as Intellect is described by the use of the word *emanate*, which is sprinkled throughout Maréchal's text,[37] and the term "emanation of powers from an essence," encountered near the beginning of the theory of the Agent Intellect. The intellectual powers of the knower "emanate" from the essence of the knower towards matter. Emanation describes a dual movement away from spirit towards matter, and then of the inverse movement of matter towards spirit. These two moments constitute one movement.[38] Since this movement implies mutual intelligibility between

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36. This is part of Maréchal's broader strategy of avoiding a steep divide between the discursive and the intuitive. Tilliette affirms this – albeit in an exaggerated fashion – when he writes that for Maréchal "l'intuition est remplacée par l'affirmation du jugement ou la synthèse judicative" (Tilliette, "Maréchal et la connaissance mystique," 120).

37. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 201, 209, 256 (as "*excessum*"), 400, 493; cf. *Point de départ*, V, 155-6, 230, 335-38.

38. For Cajetan, emanation is a unified movement away from the intellect towards sense consisting of active and passive parts (Aquinas, *Sum* Ia, Q. 79, Art. 2 [in the Leonine Edition]). The Thomist tradition after Cajetan maintained the unity of this emanation (cf. Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* [The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan] [Toronto: The Robert Mollot Collection, 2007], 187). Within this movement of emanation, *illumination* is the Agent Intellect's objectifying act. As Daniel Heider writes, "the intelligible species originates by means of the effective causal concurrence of the principle cause (the Agent Intellect) and the instrumental cause (phantasms). The Agent Intellect is unified with the phantasms by the so-called virtual contact. By this contact the Agent Intellect elevates the phantasms much like an artist uses and elevates a paintbrush when painting a picture" (Daniel Heider, *Universals in Second Scholasticism* [John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam: 2014], 65). Illumination is therefore the "upward" or active part emanation. But what of its "downward" or passive moment? This question is complicated by Cajetan's obscure remarks about a "pre-illuminative" function that precedes the illumination of the Agent Intellect in his examination of *Sum* Ia, Q. 79, Art. 3. Writes Cajetan, "Singularis autem dicendi modus occurrit mihi non despiciendus. Et consistit in hoc quod lumen intellectus agentis facit intelligibile in actu in phantasmate per modum abstractionis prius natura quam fiat species intelligiblis intellectu." Heider refers to this pre-illuminative function as an "intelligible kernel…already present in

matter and mind, imagination is the hinge on which it turns.

4. The *Species*

Thus far, the first part of emanation's movement – from spirit to matter – has been described. But what happens after the Agent Intellect has encountered the phantasm? The beginning of an answer has already been offered: the Agent Intellect is "converted" to the phantasm, taking on its form, and transforming the image of something exterior into a positive determination of the subject. This positive determination of the subject is no longer a mere representation, but an *object*. Its name has already been mentioned in passing: the "specifying form," "intelligible *species*," or more frequently, *species*, is "the last secret of sense-intellect knowledge [*connaissance sensitivo-intellectuelle*.]"[39] A *species* is neither a phantasm nor an object. Rather, it is an actively constructed "subjective determination of the faculty of knowledge"[40]; a "potential intelligibility derived directly from the object"[41]; a "representation or specifying form of human knowledge."[42] It is the *species* that brings the passive intellect from potential to actual knowledge – or if one prefers, that completes the activity of the Agent Intellect; hence the intellect must actively produce the *species*.

Thinking in Kantian terms, if a phantasm is akin to a representation, and the object of knowledge is the intellect itself insofar as it has been

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the phantasms" (Heider, *Universals*, 64). See also, Yves René Marie Simon, *An Introduction to Metaphysics of Knowledge*, trans. Vukan Kuic and Richard J. Thompson (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990), 110 n. 27. This passive moment corresponds to the movement towards the phantasm in Maréchal's system. If a twofold movement of emanation can be found in Cajetan, it can be difficult to reconcile this with Aquinas's texts. Writing on Cajetan's interpretation of activity and passivity in an epistemological context (*Sum* Ia, Q. 54 and 79), Etienne Gilson accuses him of glossing Thomas' texts, implying that he is more interested in reading Aristotle through Aquinas than Aquinas himself (E. Gilson, "Cajetan et l'existence," in *Tidjschrift voor Philosophie*, 15 [1953], 283-286). If Aquinas and Cajetan are in conflict, Maréchal undoubtedly stands with Cajetan.

39. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 215.

40. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 88.

41. Stephen Fields, *Being as Symbol: On the Origins and Development of Karl Rahner's Metaphysics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2000), 31.

42. Thomas Sheehan, *Karl Rahner: The Philosophical Foundations* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1987), 79.

transformed by experience, the question of the *species* becomes: how does the (Agent) Intellect carry out its self-actuation? For Maréchal, a mental image is always necessary for this self-activation: "The concept [i.e., the object], insofar as I am conscious of it, is not a self-sufficient representation, and remains therefore *in a necessary relationship* with the concrete image."[43] This is what Thomas means when he insists on the necessity of the knower to *convertendo se ad phantasmata*[44] – in order to move upwards to objectivity and activity, the Agent Intellect must first move downwards towards an image given in experience. A *species* is thus a rule of application,[45] to borrow a term from Kant, for applying sense images, or phantasms, to the Possible Intellect by means of the Agent Intellect. The *species* is analogous to a *habitus*, though it differs from the latter insofar as it is a dynamic disposition of the mind.

4.1 *Species* as Abstracted Image

The *species* can only function within the twofold movement of emanation. When an object is known, the Agent Intellect must identify with the thing given in sense, with the passive, downward movement that is the conversion to the phantasm. The opposite upward movement, the actualisation of the phantasm (at this point, *sensibile in potentia*) is called *abstraction*. The *species* is inextricably joined to the movement of abstraction, carrying that which is essential in the phantasm up to a higher level of intellection. But what is this essential material that must be abstracted from the phantasm? If the phantasm and Agent Intellect must conform to one another in their upward movement, and the phantasm becomes increasingly active, increasingly determined, then its matter must be left behind. What is achieved, then, is a deeper level of *universality*, or as Kant would say, a greater level of synthetic unity.[46] The intelligible qualities of the thing are abstracted from its matter in order to come into consciousness. Abstraction's movement goes from individuals to the successively broader categories of species and

43. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 216.
44. Aquinas, *Sum* Ia, Q. 84, Art. 7, Co.
45. The *species* is the dynamic equivalent of the Kantian schema, cf. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, III, 176-179; V, 113, 215-17, 235 n. 1, 352.
46. Cf. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 215, 227.

genus[47]: to identify a thing as belonging to a *species*, the "specific nature" must be identified and abstracted by the Agent Intellect. Because each level of identification is broader than the first, and relates the individual to these successive levels, abstraction is synthetic, relating the One to the Many: "A relation like the one between the phantasm and the concept, characterized by the progressive abstraction of universal characteristics contained within a concrete manifold, is therefore necessarily a relation of multiplicity with unity: '*unum in multis*'."[48]

4.2 Knowing and Being: The *Species* and the Objective Unity of Knowledge

The fruit of the *conversio*, the capacity to abstract a universal from a particular, refers to the *a priori* form of the object-concept. This is a retrieval of the Kantian notion of *a priority* begun in *Cahier III*. There, the notion of the *a priori* both in Kant and Aquinas refers to the correspondence of an actualized particular with the host of possibilities from which it sprang. The *a priori* is antecedent to concrete experience, to the actualization of any of these. Here, Maréchal reminds us that operative potentialities are oriented towards abstract characteristics, a kind of backward movement from the realized particular to the host of possibilities that grounds it. A *potentiae* is applied to a formal object, and never to a thing itself.[49] Emanation, when taken as the process that moves from the subject's capacities out to the phenomena, and then the subject's activity as conformed to the object back to the subject, is grounded in an *a priori* foundation. The concept is therefore *a posteriori* in content, and *a priori* in form. The more universal an object becomes, the more unified it is with an *a priori* form.

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47. Maréchal will eventually identify three degrees of abstraction: direct abstraction of the universal, mathematical abstraction, and abstraction of transcendental concepts (Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 260-279). The goal of this description is to show that there are "degrees" of abstraction according to the formal object, meaning that it is the "act" that corresponds to foundational *a priori* syntheses, cf. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, III, 93-107.

48. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 220. On these grounds, Vergilio Melchiorre portrays Maréchal as an Idealist, but in a qualified way: the ideal limit of the phenomenal world is something real, and the intelligible and the real therefore coincide (Virgilio Melchiorre, "Maréchal, critique de Kant" in *Au Point de départ: Joseph Maréchal entre la critique kantienne et l'ontologie thomiste,* ed. P. Gilbert [Brussels: Lessius, 2001], 59).

49. Aquinas, *Sum* Ia, Q. 77, Art. 6; Maréchal, *Point de départ*, III, 114-122.

This *a priori* form of the concept, "the last universal unity," can only be thought in-itself if one supposes an imaginative object in general and then analyzes the concept in this general state. What results is what Kant calls "the categorical unity of the real,"[50] the transcendental relationship between sense and intelligence in an empty state, containing only the pure intuitions of space and time. If Kant arrives at transcendental apperception through this method, the same can be done for Thomas. At the highest level of abstraction resides "the quantitative unity of being,"[51] what has already been shown to be the *sensibile commune* that consistently applies categories to objects. The most basic form of sense, for Thomas, is quantity, the indeterminate unity of number, for all quiddities are quantitative.

Bracketing diversity within consciousness leaves an immediate rapport between Being, "the most general quality of intelligence," and concrete quantity, "the most fundamental property of any phantasm."[52] Consciousness itself is, for Maréchal, the relationship that is maintained between the two. The phantasm, being transformed or "objectified" into a concept by means of a *species*, provides the representative pole of this dynamic relationship, while the connection to Being provides a participative pole. When isolated from Being, the abstractive, representative pole is not only robbed of its dynamism, which leads it to the broadest level of universality, its deepest *a priori* formal foundations, but moreover, "one must conclude that the spontaneity of the Agent Intellect in the creation of the intelligible *species* is only a formal power of numeric synthesis. Intelligible unity is nothing other than the abstract unity of number."[53] Translated into the language of Aquinas, Kant's metaphysics of representation limits the act of emanation to the abstraction of numerical unity. This is inherently problematic, since it cannot make use of the broadest level of *a priori* synthesis: the framing of objects of knowledge within the context of all that can potentially be known. This contextualization belongs to the meta-empirical realm, and can only be gleaned through the process of the emanation of *potentiae* in a particular instance. In other words, knowing something in particular is grounded in all that can possibly be known. Writes Maréchal:

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50. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 220.
51. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 221; cf. Aquinas, *Sum* Ia, Q. 84, Art. 7, Co.
52. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 221.
53. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 221.

> If the Agent Intellect really "abstracts," and if it produces in this way the universal and discernible elements of the concept, [this occurs] by virtue of a *principle of unification*, commensurate not with quantitative being, but, in one way or another, with the entire breadth of the "knowable."[54]

Conclusion

Maréchal's analysis of the Agent Intellect therefore ends not with the unity of consciousness, as does Kant's analysis of the intellect, but rather with the intelligible unity of being, of everything that can be known. Just as the subject's knowledge is completed outside itself in the object, its very character as an intellectual being is grounded in an infinity of intelligible objects that can be potentially known. For Maréchal, epistemology necessarily becomes metaphysics insofar as Being, the universal principle of intelligibility, grounds all particular acts of knowledge.

Being, in the scholastic tradition, is not homogenous, but rather "oscillates between a maximum of actuality and a maximum of possibility."[55] Between the pure indeterminacy of prime matter (pure possibility) and pure actuality (a fully-actualized Being, which could only be divine, the *esse divinum* or *purum esse*), lie all other beings, which are a passive-active combination: "Between pure actuality and indeterminate possibility are intervowen the things we call 'beings' – graded participants between these two extremes."[56] The path towards knowledge of beings – that is to say, the process of their self-assimilation – is one that moves from possibility to actuality. Matter, or possibility, is disparate, separated, "the many," as the Greeks would say. Actuality is supreme unity, the One. Knowledge, as it moves towards actuality, requires a supreme logical unity in the pure activity that is its own understanding (Agent Intellect). Within the mind, then, lies a logical postulate of supreme unity, of Being. One might be tempted to say that from this, Maréchal is implicitly establishing the claim that the supreme objective unity of intelligence is identical with the divine essence. Indeed, if the phantasm's actuality participates in the actuality of the Agent Intellect, then might the Agent Intellect itself participate in the Pure Activity that is

54. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 223.
55. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 249.
56. Maréchal, *Point de départ*, V, 250.

the Divine Essence?

This is perhaps too great a leap to make, but it does confirm something about Maréchal's epistemology: knowledge is an analogy between subject and object, knower and known, and this analogy, insofar as it is ontological, hearkens to a further one, functioning in much the same manner: that between discursive (assimilative) knowing, and intuitive (creative) knowing. While human minds do not create objects of knowledge *ex nihilo*, the Maréchalian system affirms that they assimilate what is already there *as if* it were an intuitive object. This is ultimately the point of the concept of imagination. Maréchal may not prove the existence of a divine mind, but his analogical style of philosophy certainly shows what is divine about the human mind.

Beyond the Binary of Divine Presence and Absence in the Colonial Encounter Between the Tupinambá and Jesuit Missionaries in Brazil: A Tupian Critique of Robert A. Orsi's Theory of Religion

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In *History and Presence,* Robert A. Orsi calls for a broad rethinking of religion and history. In part, his argument relies on an interpretation of how Catholic missionaries viewed Amerindian religious practices in terms of "metaphysics of real presences."[1] For Orsi, some North American Catholic groups and Catholic missionaries of the sixteenth-century shared with Amerindians, broadly construed, common or similar views about the nature of the "real" presence of the divine among them. In *History and Presence,* this assumption is justified by a given colonial narrative in which Catholic missionaries would have "better glimpsed" the "reality of the local gods and their cults."[2]

According to Orsi, Catholicism remained "the template for non-European people's idioms of presence."[3] The proposed resemblance between the two "metaphysics of real presence" figuring in American colonial encounters purports to represent the logical religious consequence of two empirical preconditions, namely, (a) the substitution, by missionaries, of Amerindian "gods" for the Christian god, and, (b) the identitarian "anxiety" that missionaries experienced when they would have recognized the "ontological similarities" between Amerindian religions and sixteenth-century Missionary Catholicism. Differently put, the thesis of the substitution

1. Robert A. Orsi, *History and Presence* (Cambridge: Belknap-Harvard, 2016), 33.

2. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 33.

3. "Catholicism became the paradigmatic religion of real presence; as such, it was the template through which Europeans approached and understood other religions" (Orsi, *History and Presence*, 33, 250).

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of gods, together with the reports about missionaries who "converted" to a "Pagan" way of being in the world, would provide sufficient empirical grounds for Orsi's conclusion that some Amerindian religions operate principally upon basic concepts about the nature of reality that constitute "Catholicism." At the intersection of the two cosmovisions or "ontologies" – "Indigenous" and "Catholic" – would stand the common notion that "religion" in general is essentially characterized by the concept of presence – divine presence – which bespeaks to Orsi the intuition that "presence" might be also the "norm of human existence."[4] Since Orsi assumes the notion of divine "presence" primordially configures what religion is, he thinks "the 'crusading Portuguese,' operating within the common logic of Catholic colonial strategy, sought to *substitute* local demonic counterparts for authentic (meaning Catholic) presences by means of 'replacing idols with crucifixes and *feitiços* with statues and images of Catholic saints."[5]

But, why does Orsi portray and interpret such a culturally and politically complex encounter simply in terms of "substitutions" of deities and religious identitarian anxieties? What exactly sustains Orsi's theological and political assumptions in the "substitution" of deities and its theoretical premise, namely, the ontological "parallel" between Amerindians and Catholics? What exact elements constitutive of the Amerindian cosmologies and cultures would have imprinted on the Catholic missionary experience in sixteenth-century South America the feeling that Orsi calls "ontological anxiety"?

This essay challenges Orsi's theological assumptions about religion in public life during early colonial encounters in South America by means of comparing the theological theses of ontological similarity and divine substitution between Catholic missionaries and Amerindians with two other theses. In order to interrogate the validity of Orsi's theological argument about divine "presence" being a paradigm both in Amerindian religions and Catholicism, the essay elaborates on the concept of "ontological incompleteness," which derives from the anthropology of Tupian religion elaborated by Eduardo Batalha Viveiros de Castro in Brazil. In sum, the essay puts forth an anthropological and theological reflection on Tupian

4. "I am inclined to believe that presence is the norm of human existence, including religion, and absence is an authoritative imposition" (Orsi, *History and Presence*, 6).
5. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 35.

religious life as being essentially oriented towards a radical openness to alterity or difference, in order to probe two critical assumptions in Orsi's theology of presence.

My argument is twofold. First, I will sustain that a given theological analysis of early modern Christian doctrines formulated during, and in view of, the colonization of Latin America provides relative support for the thesis of the "substitution" of deities. More specifically, I invite the thought of Willie James Jennings in order to suggest that the Church's self-invention as a figure of universal sovereignty and its attempt to inscribe contingency or openness upon all peoples and their lands intended to fold a Christian identity between Amerindians and all beings inhabiting native realities. Jennings argues that the colonization of Latin America suscitated new theological questions and respective efforts to inscribe a Christian reality on native lands. His view may partially endorse the thesis of a violent divine "replacement" that is particularly emphasized when situated within a broader colonial narrative of acculturation phenomena. However, the ecclesial project to inscribe contingency and a new identity universally can neither explain nor evince adequately the empirical loss of a native sense of self and community.

Second and foremost, I examine more closely the justifying principle underside the historical hypothesis of the religious "substitution" in Amerindian lands during the sixteenth-century. Here, I introduce to the discussion on "ontological anxiety" between Amerindians and missionaries an anthropological and philosophical notion derived from Viveiros de Castro's studies of the Tupinambá religion. Viveiros' notion of Tupian "ontological incompleteness" emerges both from his perusals of early Jesuit descriptions about Tupinambá societies in Brazil and his ethnographical work with the Araweté – a contemporary group which descends from the Tupinambá. The Amerindian notion of ontological *incompleteness* challenges Orsi's assumptions on "Indigenous" realities, "ontological similitude," and the "substitutions" of deities. Consequently, it also questions his theological aspiration to normalize "divine presence" universally. Specifically, the Jesuits misperceived the Tupinambá as a people who lacked a 'king,' 'law,' and 'faith,' which tacitly signified their fundamental incapacity to conceive and participate in "organized" forms of religion.

In four interpretative steps, this essay weaves a comparative analysis of missionary and Amerindian theologies: First, I introduce the basic

historical and political sources of Orsi's argument about "presence" as a privileged "metric" for interpreting the doctrinal and practical "realities" of all religions.[6] Second, I confirm with Willie Jennings' historical-theological study the hypothesis of the substitution of religious identities in early colonial South America. Under this view, Orsi's notion of "presence" may suggest a positivist appreciation of Amerindian religions. Third, I probe both hypotheses – i.e., the "substitution" of gods and corresponding religious identities, and the positivist view that Amerindian religions are ontologically similar to Catholicism – with the support of Viveiros de Castro's study on the Tupian religious "identity." According to Viveiros, the chief mark of the Brazilian Tupinambá identity was a radical orientation to alterity or difference. He conveys the primary value of Tupian life as the existential necessity to incorporate the Other, in her or his full alterity, into its *socius*. Such a predisposition or valence also reveals what Viveiros considers the central Tupian spiritual condition: a radical openness to expand both individual and collective human realities through the incorporation of difference. To this condition, Viveiros de Castro assigned the term "ontological incompleteness."[7] Fourth, after comparing Orsi's argument about missionary "ontological anxiety" with Viveiro's notion of Tupian "ontological incompleteness," I conclude by identifying a few acute epistemic problems in the essentialist character of Orsi's theology of presence. Lastly, I suggest that the Tupian disposition towards incorporating other ways of being in the world enables a critique of rigid or insular concepts of identity.

Being comparative in essence, this essay inevitably evolves out of a mode of analysis that consists in contrasting hermeneutical and ontological notions of fundamental realities as understood by missionaries and the Tupinambá. However, the arguments here articulated neither infer nor rely on supposedly immutable, comprehensive, or universal truth-claims about the nature of reality or realities. Instead, Amerindian and Christian

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6. Orsi argues that "presence' in the Catholic sense slipped the bounds of confessional specificity and became a category of religious analysis and otherness not exclusive to Catholics (cf. *History and Presence*, 9, 249).

7. I primarily articulate the notion of ontological incompleteness in the format and content delivered in Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul: the Encounter of Catholics and Cannibals in 16th-century Brazil*, trans. Gregory Duff Morton (Chicago: Prickly-University of Chicago Press, 2011).

"ontologies" are here portrayed as cultural and religious matrixes of meaningful and mutable relationships that inform particular socio-political conditions, ways of living in community, and negotiating encounters. Thus, the essay focuses on the public role that two specific views of "reality" and "truth" assume, particularly when such views provide individuals with key elements with which entire communities of culture make existential or spiritual sense of their intersubjective ties and social situations.

However, the anthropological concept of Tupian ontological incompleteness emerged during the birth of the anthropological debate on the possibility of multiple co-existing worlds, realities, or ontologies. Hence, the fourth section of the essay accommodates a concise background note about the substantial epistemic move at stake in the "ontological turn" of anthropology. With such a note, I hope to succinctly indicate the basic theoretical structure that the argument of the multiplicity of ontologies provides to the notion of ontological incompleteness.

1. The Sources of Orsi's Theological Argument that "Presence in the Catholic Sense" Provides a Privileged Metric for the Interpretation of All Religions

Robert Orsi's *History and Presence* presents an emboldened interpretation of some cultural and political effects stemming from an old and somewhat caricaturized theological dichotomy. Orsi suggests that Reformation dissent from the doctrine of transubstantiation[8] inaugurated a theological split that would ultimately produce intellectual, cultural, and political changes during the following centuries.[9] A host of new interpretations of religious phenomena that rejected metaphysical claims – about divine physical interventions, spirit apparitions, transubstantiation, altered psychological conditions, and so forth – contributed to the generalized dismissal of the "real presence"[10] of "the gods"[11] in people's daily lives. In view of such a

8. Or, the doctrine of the real or material presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

9. "The internecine controversy among Christians about the nature of the Eucharist turned into the theoretical lens for the modern study of religion" (Orsi, *History and Presence*, 9).

10. In *History and Presence,* the expression "real presence" is supposed to communicate an assortment of interpretations on religious events correlated to metaphysical phenomena, which makes "presence" a highly ambiguous notion. Cf. *History and Presence*, 8-9.

11. Orsi employs the word "gods" to convey all deities external to Christianity. Cf. *History and*

dichotomy, Orsi proposes that the divide between "presence" and "absence" became the "metric for mapping the religious world of the planet."[12] Such a "metric," he argues, would have been used "wherever Europeans and Americans in their global adventures found the gods really present."[13]

After the sixteenth-century disputations on the ontological nature of the Eucharist,[14] Catholics would have become the "people of real presence par excellence."[15] In that stage of Christianity, different ontologies duelled over the feasibility of the conditions needed for the phenomena of transubstantiation and divine interventions in the created realm. Orsi argues these disputations ultimately overemphasized doctrinal divides between Catholics and Protestants. Later on, during the Enlightenment, that set of theological divergences amplified the impact of the formation of values directing the intellectual and political pursuits associated with the modern ideals of progress and evolution. The influential incredulous view of religion was then propelled by the secular pursuit of freedom, scientific methodological rigor, and philosophical scepticism.[16]

Altogether, Orsi thinks Enlightenment principles facilitated a widespread denial of metaphysical explanations for divine or spiritual interventions in the tangible. Especially after Kant's "What Is Enlightenment?" and Hume's *The Natural History of Religion,* many disqualified metaphysical religious beliefs as irrational. Consequently, the refutation of metaphysical theories also generated a normalized view of some religious peoples as "irrational" and morally impoverished. "Irrationality" was then a trait also attributed to cultures perceived as incapable of thinking critically, in the Kantian sense. The "irrational," indicates Orsi, were "people of color, women, the poor and marginalized..."[17] Irrespective of the marginalization of peoples and cultures on the basis of such "critical" assessments of their humanity and religious ideas, Orsi argues that "presence, in the Catholic

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Presence, 4.

12. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 249.

13. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 249.

14. Is the presence of Christ in the host to be symbolically, materially or otherwise interpreted? What is the grammatical function and the semantic value of the words "is" and "this" in the New Testament phrases "this is my body," "this is my blood," and "do this in memory of me"?

15. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 9.

16. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 3-4, 38, 41.

17. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 41-42.

sense," still constitutes a better metric of "religious analysis and religious otherness not exclusive to Catholics."[18] Thus, a certain version of the modern Catholic interpretation of divine "presence" is supposed to easily explain all religious cultures, including those that, Orsi thinks, were "substituted" for Catholicism.[19]

Within *History and Presence*'s geographically and culturally narrow historical scope,[20] Orsi argues that modern "authorities and powers" imposed on people the category of "absence." Such authorities would have been influenced by a feeling of anxiety caused by others' beliefs in the "real presence" of "gods."[21] Among the greatest theological expressions of the anxiety caused by "presence" is Luther's critique of the idea of the embodiment of Christ in the host. Although he was contemptuous to the thesis of the symbolic presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Luther abhorred the idea that human teeth could pierce Jesus' actual body, which would represent a form of cannibalism. The reduction of divinity to corruptible matter seemed both macabre and aberrant: a "gruesome and visceral immediacy"[22] between humans and their Creator.

Scholars such as David Hume, Jonathan Smith, and Clifford Geertz, agreed that Modernity existed "under the sign of absence."[23] Sociologists researching "Indigenous" societies only confirmed in Latin America what other scholars had previously established about the social phenomenon of religion: religion is (always) best described as an assemblage of symbols with socio-cultural relevance.[24] The intellectual and institutional "removal

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18. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 9.

19. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 249.

20. A few fragmented narratives about particular events in the history of modern Christianity, coupled with a set of contemporary USA-based stories chiefly involving Irish- and Italian-American Catholics, compose Orsi's cultural horizon.

21. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 8.

22. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 19.

23. Orsi cites Hume, Smith, and Geertz. Cf. David Hume, *The Natural History of Religion* (1757, repr., Stanford: Stanford, 1956) 56, in Orsi, *History and Presence*, 38 (n. 42), 268; Jonathan Z. Smith, "A Twice-Told Tale: The History of the History of Religion's History," in *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 363, in Orsi, *History and Presence*, 38 (n. 43), 268-269; Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 91, in Orsi, *History and Presence*, 38 (n. 43), 269.

24. Orsi cites Clifford Geertz's definition of symbols (*History and Presence*, 38 (n. 43), 269.

of gods" from their respective communities contributed to the growth of a certain normalized "moral narrative of modernity."[25]

One example of the political effects of the modern "moral narrative" of absence can be found in the event of the liberal revolutions. Above all, the concept of the nation-state reconfirmed the need for a certain public sensibility that seems conditioned by an inward sceptical orientation towards religions. For Orsi, such an orientation was germane to the worldviews that fomented the formation of the figure of the "good citizen."[26] Only a rational and sceptical citizen could satisfy the political condition necessary for the inauguration of the modern state. Outwardly oriented and uncivilized subjects were believed to lack basic critical skills and the capacity of self-organization. "Naturally," the political category of the "good citizen" also necessitates a culture that is conducive to the realization of utmost democratic values and ideals. Accordingly, some political theorists have argued that the transformation of mores and manners, as well as of governmental institutions, frame the "natural," "rational," and "just" motive for the constitutional option that has privileged the values of freedom and equality.[27] Thus, liberal democracy inheres also in a specific culture that feeds on the logic and meanings produced in the negative interpretations of "liberty" embedded in prevailing historical narratives, language, social behaviour, national aspirations, and religious scriptures.[28]

In sum, Orsi raises attention to two interrelated assumptions stemming from the problems caused by the "imposition of absence" upon religious cultures. First, the choice to conceive religion as a cognitive function or a symbolic system contributes little to the hermeneutical task of understand-

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25. Orsi refers to Webb Keane's concept (*History and Presence*, 40-41).

26. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 41.

27. Jack M. Balkin, *Constitutional Redemption: Political Faith in an Unjust World* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2011), 24.

28. For example, John Rawls' definition of liberty, as deduced from his theory of justice as fairness, indicates that individuals were bestowed with the *negative* power to reasonably curb state interference in their life projects according to certain limits, parameters or standards. In abstract, Rawls defines liberty with a pragmatic threefold negative structure. Freedom implies (a) free agents, who are (b) free from given limitations or restrictions, so that they are (c) free to do or not to do something in particular. Constitutionally, liberty implies a certain reasonable structuring of institutions, a certain system of public rules defining rights and duties according to public reason (John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* [Cambridge: Harvard, 1999], 179).

ing the intersubjective interactions between gods and humans,[29] and among humans.[30] Yet, Orsi still believes religions bear the power to underwrite hierarchies of power, reinforce group solidarity, and serve as a medium for political liberation. The idea proposed here is that whenever religion is either categorized as a social construction or a symbolic system, its capacity to explain particularly essential public tenets becomes debilitated, if not emptied.

Second, Orsi claims there would be political "benefits" entailed in the particular feature or quality of "cultural illegibility" (i.e., incomprehensibility) that he ascribes to those religions in which divine beings hold the power to tangibly intervene in the world. For Orsi, "the gods," never departed from humans' lived experience. Instead, and despite modernity, "the gods" "insistently reached through the bars of language, law, and theory" erected around them.[31] So, he proposes that being religiously "legible" or identifiable in the public sphere signifies being vulnerable to the schemes and demands of "officialdoms," "laws," and "technologies" of control.[32] Accordingly, the politically subversive potential of "Indigenous gods" would rest exactly upon their "invisibility and illegibility" vis-à-vis modern thought and public life. Conclusively, Orsi attributes to early modern intellectual and political movements the confinement of culturally identifiable "gods" to inner subjectivities, the mind, and the past.[33] According to him, a different destiny was reserved for culturally undetectable deities, who could pass unnoticed through the "laws and technologies that have been developed to control the gods…"[34]

However, if Orsi's version of history is to be coherent, it must consistently address the fact that Catholic theology was the first "science" that attempted to reduce Amerindian religions to a form of cultural primitivism, in addition to submitting correlated claims that Amerindian civilizations were irrational and morally inferior.[35] For some reason, Orsi's historiography

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29. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 42.
30. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 58.
31. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 251.
32. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 5, 250.
33. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 41.
34. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 250.
35. Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale, 2010), 96-97, 102-103; Enrique Dussel, *Beyond Philosophy: Ethics, History,*

moves too fast from the Reformation to the Enlightenment and the liberal revolutions, unabashedly leaving untouched an immense spectrum of scholarship about religious encounters in colonial Latin America. Yet, Orsi's theology of presence substantially relies on two major, causally-linked notions, the first of which is empirical and the second, theoretical: (a) Amerindians and Catholics shared "ontological similarities" about divine "real presence", therefore (b) "divine presence" constitutes a potentially universal metric (norm) for understanding religion and human relations.

Despite these assumptions, *History and Presence* misses the role of Catholic missionaries. Even more absent are the narratives of colonial encounters as retold from the perspective of Amerindians. If Amerindia and colonization are deployed as two essential elements in a given argument about religion in modernity, then Amerindian cultures and their versions of colonialism *must* be investigated. If Amerindia is somehow a part of modernity,[36] it is epistemically inadequate to warrant, even if only partially, an emboldened theology of presence on colonial assumptions that eschew Amerindian perspectives about colonialism.[37]

In order to trial Orsi's argument, each of the following two sections of the essay brings a different view of religious conflicts in early colonial encounters. In part, the first one aligns with the idea of the "substitution"

Marxism, and Liberation Theology, ed. Eduardo Mendieta (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 207-213; Enrique Dussel, *Ethics of Liberation In the Age of Globalization and Exclusion* (Durham, NC: Duke, 2013), 25; Walter Mignolo, Introduction to *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, by José de Acosta, ed. Jane E. Mangan (Durham: Duke, 2002), xxi, xxiii, xxvi; Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 147-148, 152-156.

36. In this essay, I assume Amerindia and the Atlantic slave trade are constitutive parts of modernity. Enrique Dussel argues convincingly that modernity roughly began in 1492 when Amerindians were "discovered" (Dussel, *Ethics of Liberation*, 33, 35, 37). Supporting Dussel's argument, Walter Mignolo explains that Acosta's work would have largely contributed to "building the imaginary of the Atlantic commercial circuit as [a] planetary consciousness," the *Orbis Universalis Christianus* (Introduction to *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, by José de Acosta, xviii, xxi, xxvi). Also, cf. Walter Mignolo, "José de Acosta's Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias: Occidentalism, the Modern/Colonial World, and the Colonial Difference," a commentary on José de Acosta, in *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, 452, 254.

37. Orsi briefly engages Acosta and Las Casas. In footnotes, he obliquely mentions Anthony Pagden, Stephen Greenblatt, Tzvetan Todorov, and Daniel Castro (Orsi, *History and Presence*, 33, 34 [n. 33], 34, 35; 267).

of Amerindian religious identities that *History and Presence* espouses. The second view then challenges the hypothesis of the ontological similitude between any Amerindian religions and sixteenth-century missionary Catholicism.

2. A Theological-Historical Narrative that Confirms the Hypothesis of the "Substitution" of Religious Identities in Colonial Brazil and Assumes a Positivist View of Amerindian Religions

Among all philosophical reductions characteristic of modernity, Enrique Dussel thinks the "negation of the corporeality of…subjectivity"[38] was the worst one for Africans and Amerindians. Dussel proposes that the colonization of the Americas represented the encounter of Europeans with the first kind of "radical barbarians." This historical event functioned as a prerequisite in the process of a surging European self-definition as the model to be followed by the whole planet. With the colonial praxis of domination, new theological and philosophical considerations gushed.[39] One of them was the denial of the humanity in the "exteriority" of other peoples. To a considerable extent, colonial difference plundered Africans and Amerindians of their subjectivities and humanity on the basis of a misconstrued theological judgment on exteriority. From this point onwards, theology sought theoretical and empirical grounds with which to develop and galvanize theories that could support grand civilizational and commercial projects. In the Western European societies of that time, theology and philosophy provided the overarching conceptual frames for all knowledge making. Similarly, the actions of social agents and institutional accreditations depended on criteria deeply embedded in traditions of theological and philosophical reflection. Catholic missions were not an exception to this condition. Hence, as a myriad of new "beings" and peoples unfolded in the vast ontological horizon inaugurated by colonial expansion, theology also concerned the ontological nature of Amerindians themselves, in addition to the consequent need to convert them.

However, both theology and philosophy – and later on, science too –

38. Dussel, *Ethics of Liberation In the Age of Globalization and Exclusion,* 37.
39. Dussel, *Ethics of Liberation In the Age of Globalization and Exclusion,* 35.

bracketed their geo-historical and linguistic foundations. As Wittgenstein would put it, the everyday life of the theorist and historian becomes the ground for judging the experience of others.[40] As Dussel explains it, theological knowledge was mistakenly accredited as being able to sufficiently conceptualize the newly found bodies, geographies, and cultures.[41] At this moment in the history of modern thought, the realities of the "Other" were effaced by the urge to invent a European intellectual and religious identity. In contemporary terms, Cora Diamond depicts a similar problem and explains it in the field of moral philosophy: when people with different sensibilities and ideals come into conflict – or inaugurate a system of oppression where conflict is invisible – the modern philosophical language of scepticism may deflect one's own self-representation and the representation of the Other as well.[42]

Black theologian Willie James Jennings explains how processes of dehumanization and erasure of Amerindian and African identities epitomize the attempt to wipe-out their religions. Ecclesial and commercial interests were tied together in the exploration of the Portuguese colonies.[43] Pope Nicholas V applied the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*[44] in order to formulate two basic hermeneutic principles that supported the colonial enterprises. Since the world was created by God, and "out of nothing," the ordered or created realm contains infinite possibilities of continuity and discontinuity. Under this construction, human nature is inherently vulnerable, instable, and malleable because it integrates the realm of creation. Consequently, humans exist without fixed or permanent identities and places. This invented principle, argues Jennings, was intended to inscribe contingency in Amerindian and African souls, so that they could be moulded.

The second hermeneutic principle inaugurated the possibility of

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40. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, trans. A. C. Miles, ed. Rush Rhees (1979, repr.; Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1991), 36.

41. Dussel, *Ethics of Liberation In the Age of Globalization and Exclusion,* 33-37.

42. Cora Diamond, "The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy" in *Philosophy and Animal Life,* ed. Stanley Cavell, Cora Diamond, John McDowell, Ian Hacking, and Cary Wolfe (New York: Columbia, 2008), 54, 55.

43. Jennings convincingly argues that the jointure of economic and theological ambitions enabled the translation of a soteriological radicalism—for the "salvation" of Amerindians—into a racial radicalism (Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination:* 27).

44. Jennings, *The Christian Imagination*, 28.

conflating the figures of the Creator and the Saviour. Once incarnated, the apex of revelation finally ingresses into the unstable temporal dimension. It follows that the event of the incarnation generated a point of stability potentially extendable to all humans.[45] Since the Creator was made manifest as an embodied human-God, all things and peoples in the world now belong to this incarnated God, i.e., to Jesus Christ. As a result, all peoples ought to be spiritually and materially retrieved to their Creator-Saviour. In brief, God's incarnation transferred to the human dimension the stewardship and authority over all created beings.[46] In turn, Christ's rights over the world bestowed the Church a colossal authority upon all peoples, their lands, and religious imaginaries.[47] According to the whimsical rule promulgated in the bull *Romanus Pontifex*,[48] the powers of the pope, the king, and the incarnation merged, in order to manifest to the world an exceptionally potent Sovereign. Invested in canonical, political, and religious entitlements, Pope Nicholas V decided to delegate to the Portuguese King the right to act on his behalf, for the purposes of converting Africans and Amerindians.

For the colonized subject, however, disruption and mutilation of the paths of wisdom necessary to live in the world[49] may eliminate a fine web of memory, language, place, and a sense of wholeness with the cosmos[50] that constitutes meaning and sustains identities. For humans whose collective self-understanding relies essentially on their conditions and roles within ecosystems and the whole environment, the events of territorial conquest, geographical dislodging, and enslavement signify an attempt to interrupt the ancestral continuity of life that makes them part of humanity. By

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45. Jennings, *The Christian Imagination*, 28.

46. Humans can only participate in God's life through Christ.

47. Jennings, *The Christian Imagination*, 28.

48. The bull *Romanus Pontifex*, from January 8, 1455, "granted" the Portuguese Crown the right and the duty to religiously and physically reshape the recently "discovered" landscapes, their peoples, and gods: "To invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all… and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever… and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery… The said King Alfonso… justly and lawfully has acquired and possessed… these islands, lands, harbors, areas..." (Cited by Jennings: "Bull Romanus Pontifex, January 8, 1455," in *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies to 1648,* vol. 1, ed. Frances Gardiner Davenport [Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1971], 23, 17).

49. Jennings, *The Christian Imagination,* 58.

50. Jennings, *The Christian Imagination*, 58.

means of creating a universal figure of sovereignty and trying to inscribe contingency upon all peoples and lands, the Church and the monarchy stood between Amerindians and the beings inhabiting their realities. For Jennings, this operation attempted to define a new relationship between the land, its inhabitants, and Amerindian identities. Amerindian religions, like all others, became potentially included in the universal "horizon of theological identities."[51]

Two major factors suggest that this doctrinal genealogy offered by Jennings tends to support Orsi's thesis of the "substitution" of deities by Catholic missionaries. First, Jennings' account communicates a positive or presential character in ancestral and modern territorial occupation, non-anthropocentric relationships, and the cultivation of ancestral languages, memories, and ways of being in the world enacted by Amerindians now and then. Second, the three aforementioned elements of Amerindian life – namely, land occupation, non-anthropocentric relationships, and ancestral appreciation and self-identification – seem to qualify or typify most Amerindian religious identities.

However, while the narratives of displacement, enslavement, and cultural effacement may be empirically conditioned by the geographical, religious, and cultural "substitutions," they might fail to demonstrate that the historical actuality of "substitutions" was inevitable. One may be geographically dislodged, enslaved, and apparently deprived of one's key cultural identifiers, and yet, one may still maintain a full sense of self, community, and universe that remains indisputably informed by ancestral forms of religious wisdom and modes of existing in the world. Therefore, Jennings' doctrinal analysis only partially and theoretically supports Orsi's thesis of the substitution of deities in Latin America.

3. The Ontological Incompleteness of the Tupinambá: A Challenge to the Hypotheses of "Ontological Similitude" and the "Substitution" of Religious Identities

This section rehearses the case of the Jesuit-Tupinambá encounter in order to expose the essentialist character of Orsi's theology. More specifically, it challenges Orsi's assumption of Catholic-Amerindian ontological

51. Jennings, *The Christian Imagination,* 29.

similitude by articulating a given anthropological view of the Tupinambá as a culture whose main sign of distinction is a radical exteriority and openness to alterity. Thus, this section seeks to demonstrate the ontological *dis*similitude between the Tupinambá and the Jesuits.

Viveiros de Castro argues that Jesuit missionaries were incapable of understanding a different form of sociability and a religion that dispensed from the figure of the sovereign. Because they seem to ignore the notion of culture as a system of beliefs, Viveiros thinks the Tupinambá have "inconstant souls" who inhabit a cosmos where the nature of reality is permanently open. To such a condition of openness, he assigns the expression "ontological incompleteness." According to him, openness to alterity was the chief reason why the Jesuits thought the Tupinambá lacked the notion of culture, construed as a system of beliefs that can be enforced. So, Viveiros' view of Tupinambá's religious and social life poses a radical contrast between the basic Tupian ontology and the ontological purview of the Thomist-Aristotelian Catholicism that the Jesuits brought to Brazil. Such a difference leads to the basic hypothesis that the Tupian ontology is open or "incomplete," while the Catholic is immutable or "complete." Incompleteness, though, is not a synonym for absence.

Orsi argues that Catholic missionaries viewed Amerindian religious practices in terms of "metaphysics of real presences."[52] The commonalities identified in key practices such as cannibalism and the sacrament of the Eucharist would indicate an ontological similitude between the two groups.[53] I suspect Orsi's position falls short of a closer analysis of Brazilian-Amerindian religion, since he advances his "substitution" of Amerindian deities thesis by means of assuming a generalized notion of "ontological proximity."

Before comparing the notion of ontological incompleteness with Orsi's thesis on ontological similitude, it is helpful to introduce the principal theoretical development in recent anthropology of religion that accommodates Viveiros' argument. The "ontological turn of anthropology" is a set of common and intersected debates that surround an original argument about the empirical and theoretical conditions necessary for the simultaneous existence of unique realities. Although it does not form nor align with any

52. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 33.

53. As a result, the Portuguese sought to substitute "Indigenous" idols for Christian symbols and icons (Orsi, *History and Presence*, 35).

strictly unified theory, the influential ventures by Philippe Descola, Marilyn Strathern, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, and Bruno Latour support the argument of ontological plurality – the simultaneity of uniquely singular realities. They share understandings and concepts that can be associated with the intellectual legacy left by the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss.[54] Some anthropologists working mainly in the USA, such as Veena Daas, Eduardo Kohn, Stefania Pandolfo, and Elizabeth Povinelli, also address similar questions.[55] It is noteworthy that all of them demonstrate a special interest in describing and advancing new forms of pluralism. Yet, what exactly is at stake in the ontological turn?

What Viveiros de Castro's series of lectures given in 1998[56] and Philippe Descola's *Beyond Nature and Culture* have most fundamentally in common is the claim that there are multiple, irreducible forms of thought that count as ontologies. These world-conceptions are not reducible to cultural practices or rituals. With their respective claims, the two anthropologists argue that these "alternative" ontologies exist and that they are coeval and contrastable with, though not fully "translatable" to, modern science and philosophy.[57] If their partaken argument on multiple ontologi*es* – in the plural – sustains, then it becomes unthinkable for anyone to claim the prerogative of a putatively superior logical or existential, phenomenological or hermeneutical epistemic position. That is, it becomes impossible to defend the exclusivity of epistemic loci of reflection that operate within the paradigms of modern knowledge, in tandem with the claim that all other forms of knowledge are inauthentic or non-rigorous. The ontological turn sustains the capacity of "observed" subjects to define their own thought about the nature of reality. Under Viveiros' contribution, anthropologists and other scholars are unable to master and assess how "native" concepts alter the anthropologists' own concepts about their point of view as observers. [58]

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54. They also find inspiration in Roy Wagner's scholarship. For a perspective on the ontological turn, cf. Pierre Charbonnier, Gildas Salmon, and Peter Skafish (eds.), *Comparative Metaphysics: Ontology after Anthropology* (Reinventing Critical Theory Series; New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

55. Charbonnier, Salmon, and Skafish, *Comparative Metaphysics*, 18.

56. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds* (Chicago, IL: Hau, 2015).

57. Charbonnier, Salmon, and Skafish, *Comparative Metaphysics*, 4.

58. On perspectivism, cf. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Os Pronomes Cosmológicos e o Pers-

He rejects the reduction of human thought to a *dispositif* of recognition and defines anthropology as the "ontological self-determination of collectives."[59] Since "observed" subjects can better define their own realities, some would argue anthropology is now "generating metaphysical perspectives not obtainable through other intellectual means."[60]

Some critics of ontological pluralism suggest the ontological turn's major argument consists in but a permissible code for cultural diversity. They displace the original claim about multiple ontologies to the broader register of cultural life in a manner that dispossesses anthropology from the power to raise ontological truth-claims. Other critics would argue that the idea of ontological pluralism threatens anthropological reflection with the much undesirable regression to primitivism, essentialism, or a vague relativism.[61] Alternatively, the shift of the recent ontological investiture by anthropology may be perceived as a renewed attempt to reconnect with the discipline's subversive disposition towards the pluralisation of culture.[62]

Aside from the disciplinary discussion of anthropology's power to generate truths, Viveiros de Castro's foremost goal may be to demonstrate the capacity of the "observed subjects" to define their own realities: anthropology serves a "permanent exercise in the decolonization of thought."[63] The relative epistemic autonomy conferred to the "subject-object" of ethnography, then, becomes essential for the proposal of ontological plurality. Consequently, the stirring disputes about which are the "truer" loci of observation and reflection seem less significant than the acknowledgement that ontological and conceptual thinking is not a privilege of a few.

Thus, the argument about the multiplicity of ontologies matters for the present discussion inasmuch as Viveiros aims at preserving ontological difference between Amerindian thought and modern metaphysics. One way to understand the treatment of Amerindian thought as expressions of

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pectivismo Ameríndio," *Maná* 2, no. 2 (1996): 115-144; Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4, no. 3 (1998): 469-488.

59. Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics: For a Post-Structural Anthropology*, ed. and trans. Peter Skafish (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2014), 43.

60. Charbonnier, Salmon, and Skafish, *Comparative Metaphysics*, 12.

61. Charbonnier, Salmon, and Skafish, *Comparative Metaphysics*, 4.

62. Charbonnier, Salmon, and Skafish, *Comparative Metaphysics*, 4.

63. Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics*, 47-8.

worlds that remain not entirely liable to modern approaches is to prioritize its denunciation of a certain arrogance in the scholarship that purports to comprehensively translate and exhaust – likely reduce – Amerindian metaphysics.[64] This way, the notion of ontological incompleteness relies on the argument for the multiplicity of worlds: if there are multiple realities, they can neither be conflated nor equated, although they can be partially communicated.

Granted that anthropology (also) bears the power to communicate truths pertaining to the realities of the "observed," what would be the "truth" of ontological incompleteness for the Tupinambá? What distinguishes Tupian from Catholic realities? In the Catholic world of the sixteenth century, religion, sociality, and politics were intrinsically dependent upon the language and categories of belief. In contrast, the Tupinambá religion and society of that period, argues Viveiros de Castro, were not rooted in the "normative experience of belief."[65]

For Viveiros, the modern notion of culture emerged from a theological reduction of the category of religion. Like religion, the concept of "culture" and that of "cultures" – the set of practices, values, histories, languages – were both theologically understood. When observed through the lens of chief theological constructions, such as the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, any given culture would disclose itself to the modern examiner as a self-preserving system of beliefs and ideals.[66] Barbarians of the "third class,"[67]

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64. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics,* 197-8.

65. Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View*, 45.

66. This proposition comes from Pierre Bourdieu (Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 12).

67. Viveiros refers to the "barbarian typology" and hierarchy crafted by José de Acosta in *De Procuranda.* On the top were the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Eastern Indians. This group could be converted through reason and advanced technologies. Inferior to them were the Mexicans, the Peruvians, and the Incans, who possessed elementary writing, accounting systems, and communication systems. This group ought to be converted through mechanisms of language appropriation and the translation of rituals and symbols. On the bottom line of barbarism were the Caribs, the Chuncos, the Chiriguanes, the Moxos, the Yscayingos, all Brazilians, and the Floridians. These peoples lived like wild beasts, and lacked both human feelings and an elementary writing system. Therefore, it was argued, they ought to be converted by force and an imposed pedagogy facilitated by the Christian government (José de Acosta, *De Procuranda Indorum Salute: Pacificacion y Colonizacion*, ed. L. Pereña et al., 2 vol. [Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-CSIC, 1984], 108).

the Tupinambá lacked a written history, "king," "law," and "faith." Their different modes of social and political organization indicated to the missionaries the incapacity to follow beliefs on a regular basis.[68] Hence, the apparent absence of "law" and "king" among the Tupinambá bespoke to the Jesuits their inability to believe.[69] In *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*,[70] Viveiros argues that the Jesuits failed to identify "religion" among the Tupinambá because they were thought to be incapable of understanding the category of belief.[71] The lack of belief would have implied the lack of religion too. Many pieces from the vast Jesuit archives of the sixteenth century describe Amerindian groups as people who do not understand religion. A quote from José de Anchieta, the most intellectually prolific Jesuit in Brazil, is illustrative:

> If they had a king, they could be converted, or if they worshiped something; but since they do not even know what believing or worshiping is, they cannot understand the preaching of the Gospel because it is based in making people believe and worship only one God, and serve Him alone; and since these heathens do not even worship anything, everything one tells them turns into nothing.[72]

The missionary logic could be condensed in the following sequence: a society that lacks a sovereign and a legal system will also lack a culture because values and ideals need reinforcement; therefore, without law and culture, such a society will necessarily lack religion too, since a religion, as much as a culture, is a system of beliefs that requires some sort of moral, legal, or political reinforcement. Since religion implied the reinforcement of mores by a sovereign, it is possible to link the missionary concept of

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68. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 13.

69. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 12.

70. In this essay, I focus on Viveiros' work about the Tupinambá people. For his anthropology of the religion of the Araweté, cf. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Araweté: Os deuses canibais* (Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Jorge Zahar Editor and ANPOCS, 1986). Also, cf. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Araweté: o povo do Ipixuna* (Lisbon, Assírio & Alvim, 2000). In English, cf. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View: Humanity and Divinity in an Amazonian Society*, trans. Catherine V. Howard (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

71. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 14.

72. José de Anchieta's *Dialogue of the Conversion of the Heathen* is quoted by Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 44.

religion to a kind of theocracy: without some sovereign political power, a society could not bear solid commitments to whatever beliefs. Under this logic, beliefs depend on strong commitments, which, in turn, must be enforced. Accordingly, Jesuits in Brazil concluded that the Tupinambá had superstitions and bad habits, but not religion.[73]

So, the three "constitutive absences" of Brazilian Amerindians, namely, lack of law, king, and faith, had a causal interconnection. This position, defenced by missionaries, contradicts Orsi's arguments about "presence" being the paradigm of both Catholicism and Amerindian religions. Orsi assumes all missionaries thought Amerindian religions are (also) based on what he calls "metaphysics of real presence." So, inasmuch as the Jesuits reported an "absence" of religion among the Tupinambá, and the category of "belief" is not a cornerstone in Tupian life, Orsi's thesis of ontological similitude between missionaries and Amerindians falls short of empirical and theoretical grounds in Brazil.

Irrespective of missionary accounts, the Tupinambá do hold a religion. In Tupian religion, ontological incompleteness is the disposition to incorporate difference or alterity in the *socius*. It communicates the incompleteness of a form of sociability and an identity that promotes the constant expansion of humanity.[74] The fact that the Tupinambá believed the separation between humans, non-humans, and divine entities was a question of condition, and not one of nature, undergirds their "incompleteness." On Tupinambá lands, humans are consubstantial and commensurable with deities and indwell their reality.[75] Moreover, generally, Amerindians hold that humans are not exceptional enough to secure a foundational specific human relation to the entire gamut of beings.[76] So, the nature of reality pertaining to both human and divine forms of existence in the Tupian universe differs from its correlate in the Christian cosmology, where humans are neither consubstantial nor commensurable with God. Such a gap or difference would have led the Jesuits to misapprehend and misrepresent Amerindian religion.

This way, it is possible to identify something in common between Orsi's view of religion and early modern Jesuit theology. Orsi frames religion as

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73. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 12.
74. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 47.
75. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 30.
76. Charbonnier, Salmon, and Skafish, *Comparative Metaphysics*, 13.

a cultural system that originates and guides interpretations of relationships and phenomena that positively display a metaphysical source of authority, the "metaphysics of real presence." Similarly, Jesuits in Brazil thought religion was a system of socially positive beliefs and norms about the nature and functioning of the world, souls, and God.[77] However, according to Viveiros' anthropology, neither Orsi's nor the Jesuits' theologies can capture the essence of the religion of the Tupinambá, because the latter is premised on an open relationship with the Other.

On a foundational level, Viveiros takes issue with a conception of society that depends on self-preservation mechanisms and an external, political, and transcendental figure of authority. In his understanding, modern European societies are organisms that fight to preserve the ideals constitutive of their own reflected being. In this vein, a culture would be a system of beliefs that reflects its social group's own form of being. Thus, the notion of a modern, organized society implies that thought, memory, and the preservation of beliefs are cardinal instruments with which groups protect their own reflexive forms of being throughout generations.

Differently, for societies where the relation to the Other is an elementary directive, the substantial transformation of cultural values is not necessarily perceived as dangerous.[78] So, the right question is no longer "were Amerindian gods and religious identities substituted?" Rather, the question is "what if 'identity' itself is conceived as a nexus of relations and transactions actively engaging the subject?"[79] Under this concept of identity, the category of "substitution" seems illogical because there is nothing to be replaced. For example, the Tupinambá were spontaneously disposed toward some Christian practices and ideas, even though they would refuse moral reinforcement by the Jesuits. This was the reason why, according to Viveiros, the Jesuits did not feel the need to substitute the Tupian gods: Amerindians would not hold strong beliefs about anything, regardless of the religious sources. Simply, they were inconstant, did not understand the concept of "culture," did not know how to believe according to the Christian connota-

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77. "Religion as a cultural system presupposes an idea of culture as a religious system" (Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 12).

78. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 18.

79. Viveiros borrows the provocation from James Clifford. Cf. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 18.

tion, and absolutely refused to commit to any fixed identity.

I am by no means suggesting that the Tupinambá lacked culture and religion. Instead, their culture appears to have been essentially an open set of potential explanations of traditional *and* new ways of being in the world. It follows that their open culture constantly needed to capture and incorporate alterity.[80] For this reason, more than towards Christianity, the Tupinambá were "inconstant" in relation to their own religion.[81] It seems reasonable, therefore, that such a religion – without rites, idols, and priests[82] – could never have been subsumed into either the Jesuits' or Orsi's positivistic concepts of religion. Orsi speaks the theological language of presence, identity, and erasure or substitution. In contrast, the Tupinambá speak the language of inconstancy, incompleteness, exteriority, and exchange.

Missionaries realized firsthand that a simple "substitution" of the Tupian "gods" for the Christian God would be unrealistic, because the Tupinambá were incapable of believing, in the Catholic sense. However, as Orsi argues, there were indeed similarities between Catholicism and Tupian religion. For instance, the Tupinambá were familiar with eschatological narratives about the end of the world and appreciated the idea of spirits and souls dwelling in their lands. They even sought conversion to Christianity. But, due to their lack of consistency, they would soon and easily forget the Gospel, the Eucharist, and any promises of eternal life.[83] The Jesuits finally decided that the prior introduction of some sort of civilizational foundation was a precondition for the conversion of Brazilian Amerindians, a historical fact which only reconfirms that the notion of public religion was, at the time, unconceivable without the notions of "king" and "law."

As Hélène Clastres also argues, the Tupi-Guarani cosmology is characterized by the notion that the human and the divine are not severed by an unbridgeable ontological gap.[84] Humans and gods are commensurable and consubstantial with one another. For this reason, humanity is seen as a condition, not a nature. In this case, Orsi's point that the gods "break into

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80. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 34.

81. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 15.

82. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 16.

83. In particular, they detested missionary prohibitions on drinking *cauim*, practicing polygamy, celebrating cannibalism, promoting wars, and executing vengeance.

84. Hélène Clastres is cited in Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 30.

time" would rather seem tautological to the Tupinambá. After all, their gods had always dwelled in the temporal realm. Overall, Amerindian gods are embodied beings. Yet, in Tupian religion, the condition of being human can and ought to be overcome. Because deities are consubstantial with humans and dwell in the world, divinity is a becoming, a condition to be achieved through the expansion of one's own humanity, and exercised in the social integration of difference. These notions contrast with the early modern theological refutation of the reduction of divinity to corruptible matter. In Brazil, the visceral immediacy between humans and deities did not represent an eschatological scandal, as it did for Luther.[85] Instead, such immediacy would be the real engine of salvation, since the goal of humanity was expressed in terms of social and individual expansion of consciousness, rather than some sort of metaphysical transmutation or bodily resurrection.

The encounter between the Tupinambá and the Jesuits also poses a serious challenge to the normative model of human relationality that Orsi's theology entails. Orsi posits the existence of an "ontological anxiety" among Catholics and "other peoples." In fact, Jesuit letters from Brazil describe how a few "bad Christians went native:" they established polygamous marriages, killed native enemies, and even participated in cannibalistic ceremonies.[86] Viveiros de Castro rejects the notion that these "native conversions" were the fruit of the imposition of a Tupian identity upon Europeans.[87] In fact, the Tupinambá would perceive gods, enemies, and Europeans as figures of affinity and sought to establish relationships with them precisely because of their difference. Difference invited affinity, which attracted the Tupinambá.

The human and divine partaking of the same nature in Tupian religion can provide a hermeneutical key for understanding the Tupinambá's seemingly paradoxical need or desire for alterity. Although they failed to understand Tupian religion, the Jesuits noted a remarkable consequence of this Amerindian concept: the Tupinambá did not know how to properly feel religious reverence and fear in the way missionaries demanded of them. "They

85. Martin Luther, "That These Words of Christ, 'This is My Body,' etc. Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics" (1527) in *Luther's Works: American Edition*, vol. 37, ed. Robert H. Fischer and Helmut T. Lehmann (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1961), 2-150, esp. 33; cited in Orsi, *History and Presence*, 19 (n. 14), 259.

86. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 32.

87. "The Indians had no maniac desire to impose their identity... Rather, they aimed…to transform their own identity" (Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 30).

do not feel anything strongly, neither spiritual loss, nor temporal, there is nothing for which they have a very sensitive sentiment, nor that lasts them long…"[88] The spirit of Paganism did not speak the same theocratic language as the missions in Brazil. In this exact sense, the Tupinambá seem to have lived in another religious and social world, one lacking the sort of normative experience of belief proposed by missionary Christianity. Did this different mode of sociability derive from Amerindians' self-perception as beings who are ontologically similar to their own gods?

Such a "similarity" could also explain why the Tupinambá seemed to be free from the social constraints of bearing culturally encumbered religious identities. To doubt that Amerindians worshipped idols and that such (absent) worship ought to have been the prime expression of their social organization is to cast suspicion on an anthropological frame of society as a reflexive and identitarian totality.[89] In brief, the cultural and religious sources of a Tupinambá mode of interiority entailed nothing but a movement toward exteriority.

Perhaps for the same reason, the broader Tupi-Guarani peoples avoided the arrogance of self-proclaiming themselves the "chosen" peoples. Accordingly, they also did not succumb to the compulsion of submitting the Other to their own image.[90] Inversely, the Tupinambá desired the Europeans in their full alterity, including some elements of Christianity.[91] Only the missionary reinforcement of Christian mores and values would unabashedly fail. For Viveiros, they received the Portuguese as an opportunity for self-transcendence, as a sign of a reunion or being capable of expanding their humanity by means of absorbing alterity.[92] They did not feel the need to reject the Other in favour of their own ethnic "excellence," because they would not see the Other as a reflexive mirror, but instead, as a destination. A society operating on the basis of such a radical engagement with difference could not automatically exclude.[93] As Viveiros puts it, the exterior was constantly engaged in a process of interiorization and the interior was

88. These are the words of the Jesuit priest Luís de Grã (Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 43).
89. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 46.
90. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 30.
91. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 31.
92. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 30.
93. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 47.

a movement towards the outside. The practice of cannibalism, for instance, reflects this principle of movement.[94]

4. Conclusion: Ontological Incompleteness and a De-colonial Critique of Orsi's Theology

History and Presence ultimately aims to provide a "unique critical purchase on the study of religion and history" which, according to Orsi, the Catholic imaginary played in shaping "modern consciousness."[95] As exposed in the previous sections, a few papal theological constructs based on an ambitious reading of the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* corroborate Orsi's point that missionaries successfully apprehended Amerindian religion "positively." Subsequently, according to Jennings' readings of missionary theology, the Jesuits might have also attempted to substitute Amerindian religious and cultural identities without securing further details about the principles underlying their native worldviews. However revealing and sophisticated, theological-historical genealogies of colonial conflicts – such as Jennings's – tend to deliver overly-broad pictures of the major theoretical and empirical effects emerging from the complex entanglement of intercultural encounters and the inauguration of political systems and moral institutions for colonial domination. Because of its geopolitical breadth, such a mode of theological analysis also tends to miss deeply encrusted and particularized nuances in Amerindians' perceptions of what colonization meant and still means for their peoples.

In any event, it is interesting to highlight that the papal attempt to inscribe "contingency" on all peoples of the world seems to resonate partially with Viveiros' understanding that the Tupinambá were spontaneously an "inconstant" people. In this regard, it remains important to inquire as to

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94. Tupian cannibalism secured the eternal inter-group nexus. Eating the member of the enemy group would prompt the enemy group's revenge. As a consequence, the infinite cycle of capturing and eating each other's warriors guaranteed memory and a constantly open soul that was ready to incorporate the enemy Other into the *socius*. For Levi-Strauss too, cannibalism revealed an excess of sociability based on the fundamental identification with the Other. Both the killing of an enemy and the loss of a warrior determined individuals' social statuses, conferred rights to marry and have children, prompted new attacks, and maintained a collective memory about warfare. Cf. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 47, 53-88, 101.

95. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 250.

whether the Tupinambá truly were spontaneously inconstant and ontologically incomplete or, instead, this view offers a misconceived representation of some reductive form of Amerindian identities that the Jesuits conveniently accepted as true in their colonial writings. In any event, the papal project to inscribe contingency and a new identity upon Amerindians failed to eliminate a native sense of self and community that was irrefutably enlivened by ancestral forms of Tupinambá wisdom and existence. To what degree can vaporous doctrines permanently erase actually embodied ancestral wisdom and their place in social life?

Irrespective of a few methodological issues in his philosophical anthropology, Viveiros' wider panorama of a given colonial encounter sufficiently attends to both Amerindian and Jesuit sources. The contrast of ontological incompleteness with Orsi's proposal that "presence" is the norm of religious phenomena[96] reveals the essentialist and generalized character of Orsi's theology. In Brazil, Jesuit missionaries failed to perceive the religion of the Tupinambá, so, the norm they inaugurated was one of "absence," and not "presence." No "idols" were worshiped. Consequently, no "substitution" of deities was detected during early contacts either. In Viveiros' interpretation, Jesuit missionaries failed to recognize the category of "religion," because they misjudged the core organizational principles conducting Tupian life: ontological incompleteness and the inconstancy that it reveals. Due to the epistemic limitation correlated with one's incapacity to question one's own political, religious, and cultural identities, the Jesuits ignored even the possibility of a religion without a sovereign and with a particularly "illegible" mode of welcoming the neighbour into a different reality.

Orsi argues that some non-modern and non-Christian religions "survived" the institutional "imposition of absence" conveyed by legal orders and political regimes, especially after the liberal revolutions.[97] However, prior to the Enlightenment and the bourgeoisie revolutions, it was precisely the absence of "king" and "law" that seem to have prevented the Jesuits from acknowledging Tupian religion in Brazil. In the Brazilian case, these two absences among Amerindians in fact stimulated the Portuguese Crown to promulgate the colonial regime only many years after it established territorial *dominium* over Amerindian land. Such a historical fact corroborates

96. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 6.
97. Orsi, *History and Presence*, 40-42, 250, 251.

Viveiros' argument that the absence of "law" and "king" among the Tupinambá led the Jesuits to conclude that Amerindians needed a juridical-political organization before they could even comprehend the idea of religion.[98] Thus, the absence of either an Amerindian or monarchical figure of sovereignty over the Tupinambá prevented the Catholics, not the Tupinambá, from recognizing the religion of the Other. This fact plays contrary to Orsi's claim that "presence" and religions survived the "laws." In Brazil, the accepted historical narratives retell that Brazilian-Amerindian religions were most directly attacked *after* the promulgation of the Portuguese colonial rule and not prior to it. To a great degree, the colonial rule aimed at delivering "civilization" and, with it, Christianity. So, also contrary to Orsi's argument, with the advent of "laws" and "theories," the religion of the Tupinambá became neither "illegible" to structures of power, nor by them "substituted." Instead, Tupian religions were illegible only *before* the promulgation of the colonial legal regime.

Finally, Orsi calls for a critical rethinking of the study of history and religion, beginning with the question of how history is constituted. However, his own historiography of colonialism in the Americas also projects on other peoples the theological notions he extracted from his study of a small sample of contemporary Italian- and Irish-American Catholics. In view of this problem – i.e., the scholarly temptation to essentialize religion – it is important to ask whether the Tupinambá's "ontological incompleteness" could possibly bespeak a different logic capable of supporting the pursuit of a (de-colonial) critique of theology and democracy. In a world where "identity" is the norm, it seems dangerous, and yet necessary, to inquire into the moral and religious meaning of that courage to welcome difference in the forms of opposed political sensibilities, seemingly inimical rationalities, and religious commitments. The disposition towards welcoming and incorporating new ways of existing in the world into our cultural and social life does not necessarily signify a threat to gradually empty identities and traditions. For instance, the Tupinambá's ontological incompleteness does not signify the "absence" of tradition and identity. On the contrary, it bespeaks the pursuit of a certain human advancement that runs against the dangers of cultural or religious ossification. While ontological incompleteness is surely not a promise of politically "harmonious" intercultural exchanges,

98. Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*, 44.

it also does not signify cultural devastation.[99] The disposition toward being culturally, politically, and spiritually transformed by one's neighbour can also preserve a special kind of religious knowledge of the self that is only contained in its full exteriority in the public life.

Perhaps, the cannibal interpreted separateness and scepticism as legends within Christian mythology. Perhaps, they interpreted the conditions of shared exteriority and the need to embody alterity as mutable, malleable, religious semi-truths. In any event, and against the totality of an eventual illegitimate sovereign, their religion seems to have evaluated evolution according to the achieved levels of a spontaneously undertaken transcendence to a state of becoming (within) the neighbour.

99. In a similar guise, Jonathan Lear weaves an interesting argument in his *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

Book Reviews

Early Tantric Medicine: Snakebite, Mantras, and Healing in the Garuda Tantras.
Michael Slouber. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016. Pp. 392.
Reviewed by Darry Dinnell, *McGill University*

In Early Tantric Medicine, Michael Slouber takes up bodies of tantric medical literature, which flourished in the later part of the first millennium CE. Slouber focuses on the Gāruḍa Tantras, a class of scriptures chiefly devoted to treating snakebites and poisoning, and named for the avian deity perhaps best known as Viṣṇu's vehicle. Despite the apparent Vaiṣṇava connection, the Gāruḍa Tantras are distinctly Śaiva, marking Śaivism's eastern branch of revelation, and they also exhibit a Śākta side as well, evoking oft-overlooked goddesses like Tvaritā (to which chapter six is dedicated). Of these medical tantras, Slouber pays particular attention to the 11th century Kriyākālaguṇotarra, and provides the first English rendering of its sections involving remedies for envenomation. This is but one of the many new paths Slouber breaks in the work, as he reinvigorates several areas of inquiry regarding tantra, Hinduism and Indian medicine previously underestimated or altogether unheeded due to scholarly inattention, elitism or a mixture of both.

Most obviously, Slouber revitalizes the category of ancient Indian medicine and also its contents by resisting the Procrustean trend among earlier scholars to represent traditions like Ayurveda as "purely rational" or "secular" (1-2), ostensibly countering magico-religious systems of healing. Instead, Slouber insists that the contents of Indian medicine should be studied on their own terms. From the very outset, he is unapologetically determined to treat tantric medicine within its emic framework – that is, as being just as much religious as medical. In this spirit, he does not hesitate to delve into texts that were hitherto labelled as "sorcery" and subsequently passed off by some academics as "lowly" (53) – as a clear case in point, the Gāruḍa Tantras have themselves been dismissed as such (43). Slouber criticizes this attitude of "intellectual elitism" and argues that more attention needs to be directed towards texts dealing in magic and sorcery, especially as they relate to medicine, so as to construct a more "holistic" vision of Indian civilization (53).

Correspondingly, Slouber reconsiders the persistent scholarly notion that the component parts of mantras are "nonsensical" – to wit, more connotative, symbolic or affective than content-driven. By contrast, Slouber characterizes the mantras in the Gāruḍa Tantras as "the precise opposite of nonsense" (57), since they were in

fact widely renowned for their efficacy, and were useful insofar as their audience accepted this effectiveness (58). Slouber then proceeds to meticulously lay out in chapters four and five the contents of mantras that were believed to neutralize envenomation such as the Vipati and Nīlakaṇṭha (among others). In the process of doing so, he elucidates corresponding ritual procedures comprised of consecrations, visualizations, and even spiritual transformation into Garuḍa, solidly establishing that these snakebite mantras were conceived of as embodied practices and not simply palliative gibberish. These mantras' reputation for effectiveness lived on, and the influence of the Gāruḍa Tantras is apprehensible in texts from a variety of traditions, which Slouber outlines in chapter seven. These include Ayurvedic works like the Hārītasaṃhita, mythological texts such as the Agni, Nārada and (unsurprisingly) Gāruḍa Purāṇas, as well as Jain and Buddhist approaches to curing snakebites, the latter both Indian and Chinese. Even in contemporary India, the Vipati Mantra is still recommended as a cure for infertility (62-63). Much of the contents of Early Tantric Medicine, then, bear a convincing, cumulative testament to the perceived usefulness of the mantras in the Gāruḍa Tantras across regions, religions and centuries.

Slouber's work also makes evident the much-needed scholarly reevaluation of the figure of Garuḍa. Textbook accounts typically take a Vaiṣṇava reading of the deity, portraying him as "king of the birds" who is little more than a supporting character in Viṣṇu's mythology. Contrary to the conjecture of at least one encyclopedia contributor, Slouber demonstrates by way of the Gāruḍa Tantras that Garuḍa is worshipped as an independent deity (14). In the Vipati visualization, for instance, Garuḍa is understood as a form of Śiva just as Bhairava is and, moving well beyond his station as Viṣṇu's vehicle or bird king, is actually "coterminous with the highest reaches of the universe itself" (69). In the goddess-based Tvaritāmūlasūtra, Garuḍa even battles Viṣṇu and in the end vanquishes him (95). The independence and preeminence he is afforded in these Śaiva and Śākta texts destabilize the mostly unquestioned assumption that Garuḍa is solely a "minor god" limited to the Vaiṣṇava fold.

In composing Early Tantric Medicine, Slouber has drawn upon a diverse body of resources in addition to the primary texts with which he is working, and so his citations include reading groups, internet searches, temple websites and personal communications. The resulting book is clearly the product of painstaking work within a close-knit community of Sanskritists and students of tantra, perhaps none more eminent than Alexis Sanderson of Oxford. That said, the book has at certain junctures a sort of provisional feel to it, given the volume of unpublished sources. Moreover, the work is largely textual, which Slouber readily admits, and could be considerably broadened with an ethnographic component. This would open up for study not only on-the-ground healing traditions in which these medical texts still resonate – or do not – but also analogous practices like snake-charming, a lacuna in

South Asian scholarship which Slouber correctly points out (126-128). Throughout the book, Slouber recurrently identifies a number of other areas that could not be expanded due to lack of space. With a length of just 131 pages before the appendices and endnotes, the reader is left wondering if some of these areas could not have been further developed.

These minor critiques seek not to impugn Early Tantric Medicine, but rather to underscore its exploratory nature. Quite evidently, there is much to be expounded concerning the subjects of tantric medicine, snakebites, and poison deities both past and present, textual and ethnographic, Sanskritic and vernacular. By reassessing so many fertile areas and posing so many new questions (not to mention furnishing an eminently readable translation of the Kriyākālaguṇotarra), Michael Slouber has initiated a career's (or more likely careers') worth of investigation. Indeed, Slouber already has translations of comparable medical texts from the Bāla and Bhūta Tantra traditions in the works. If one will forgive the strained metaphor, it appears that Early Tantric Medicine is but a seed syllable for the abundant body of scholarship soon to be elaborated and expanded by Slouber and others to follow.

Mobilizing Religion and Gender in India: The Role of Activism. Nandini Deo. New York: Routledge, 2016. Pp. 160.
Reviewed by Ali Smears, *McGill University*

In *Mobilizing Religion and Gender in India*, Nandini Deo traces the 20th century histories of the Hindu nationalist movement and the Indian women's movement by specifically examining their changing strategies and ideologies. This examination is undertaken in order to comprehend why the Indian women's movement was largely successful in the first half of the century but today is a relatively marginal political player in contrast with the growing Hindu nationalist movement. Through a historical analysis of the two movements' membership levels, electoral results, policies, and public opinion of the movements, as well as interviews with movement members, Deo attempts to pinpoint specific moments in which membership levels and public responses underwent dramatic shifts.

The book centres on the argument that both movements' particular activist strategies were responses to external events, rather than having been shaped by particular political ideologies. Of the numerous examples she offers, two, in particular, clearly stand in support of this argument. First, she highlights the marginalization of the Hindu nationalist movement after Partition, as a result of the general discomfort with traumas caused by communal tension. After the momentary ban of the RSS (1948), the Hindu right was forced to develop new strategies, and chose to invest in education through the opening of its own schools. Since this time, new branches of the movement have extended this outreach to include service provision, targeting slum dwellers by providing health care, literacy programs and prayer meetings; the author's own examination of these services shows that this service provision is often a fundamental channel to disseminate ideology.

In contrast, the women's movement has had a different approach to education. While the foundational years of the Indian women's movement saw activists mobilized around education reform as a key site for potential empowerment, after Independence the movement largely relied on the state to carry out the expansion of education for women (as, post-Partition, many channels of the movement were either busy working in refugee camps with traumatized women, or participating in nation-building at the state level). Deo argues that by leaving education solely in the hands of the state, the women's movement no longer had access to a significant site where feminist principles could be instilled in both children and parents, while the Hindu right's schools were able to spread ideology and directly access new membership. This strategical difference is significant, for, as Deo highlights, it was not until the 1990s that the government made a serious commitment to compulsory education. And so, while not all citizens may adhere to Hindutva ideology, they may take advantage of offered educational services, regardless of who the provider is.

Deo's second example of a significant shift in strategy occurred during the post-Emergency period, in which there was a general distrust of the state by both the Hindu nationalist movement and the women's movement. While this was not new for the former, this was the first time that the latter emerged in opposition to the state, resulting in the birth of an autonomous women's movement. Despite the positive growth that Deo highlights during this period, including the pioneering 'Towards Equality report', the birth of women's studies programs, and some success with legal reforms, the movement could no longer rely on state funding and had to look elsewhere to raise resources, which often meant turning to foreign funding. The author highlights four effects of the women's movement's reliance on foreign funding: 1) Women's groups were then in competition with each other, making cooperation a challenge; 2) The issue of foreign funding became politicized through a rhetoric that women's activists were "too Western"; 3) Foreign funding influenced the priorities of activists (seen through the international focus on violence against women); 4) India was opened up to a proliferation of international NGOS which, at times, were disconnected from local needs of women. Deo highlights that while the women's movement was focused on developing transnational links, the Hindu nationalist movement was making its own connections overseas through the Hindu diaspora, while at the same time maintaining a steady growth in the expansion of domestic projects and service provision. For Deo, this is a key difference in strategy that has been fruitful for the Hindu nationalist movement.

Past scholarship has detailed specific events that have caused Hindu nationalists and feminists to enter into conversation with each other (for example, the events surrounding Shah Bano[1] and Roop Kanwar[2]). Deo's contribution, however, is to map the developments and trajectories of these two movements throughout the 20th century, articulating how both movements continuously challenged – albeit in different ways – the public and private divisions of society enacted through Indian secularism. By highlighting this similarity, the author is able to compare and contrast more precisely these two as parallel movements. While this method of charting will be a useful resource for researchers, it is necessary to problematize the perception of these two movements as entirely defined and bounded in their identity and self-conception; we must question whether the borders around these movements are as rigid as Deo presents. For instance, could one woman make use of Hindu nationalist services, but also participate in a protest against gender-based violence? Subsequently, how does the author's demarcation enforce homogenized

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1. Cf. F. Agnes, "Redefining the Agenda of the Women's Movement within a Secular Framework," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 17 (suppl. 001) (1994): 63-78.

2. Cf. M. Kishwar and R. Vanita, "The Burning of Roop Kanwar," *Manushi* 42/43 (1987): 15-25.

understandings of both these movements? What is potentially missed in this analysis through the imposition of such strict barriers around these movements, especially if membership is a key site of analysis?

Aside from this, Deo's project successfully answers the questions set out in the introduction. While her work clearly contributes to social movement theory, it should also be seen as significant for the field of religious studies, as much of the scholarship on religion and politics, and Hindu nationalism specifically, begins with an examination of political theology and movement ideology. Alternatively, Deo's work demonstrates how quantitative studies of base activities (including non-religiously oriented activities) may be a useful starting point to understand the attraction and success of religio-political organizations (Deo "…looks at what Hindu nationalists *do*, not just what they *say*" [150]).

While Deo's conclusion addresses some of the new conversations that have arisen for these two movements in the beginning of the 21st century, it would be interesting to see this study expanded to recent years, specifically as the BJP (Hindu right-wing political party) has once again been elected to power in 2014. The threat of Hindutva looms in new ways over many channels of Indian social activism, even as a distinctive wave of feminist mobilizing is challenging extremism and patriarchy in India and around the world. This is certainly an interesting moment in Indian political organizing and studies like Deo's could be useful for both academic reflection and activist strategizing on the ground.

Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report. Saba Mahmood. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2016. Pp. 248.
Reviewed by Malith Kur, *McGill University*

Saba Mahmood, in her book *Religious Difference in a Secular Age*, explores the historical relationships that have evolved for over two hundred years between religious majorities, minorities, and modern secular state structures in the regions of Europe and the Middle East. In her observation, these relationships have been shaped and influenced by European interests and active involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. But the book is, more specifically, an excellent historical tour of modern Egyptian social, religious, and political life.

As the title shows, this book offers "a report" about the relationship between the religious majority and minorities in modern Egypt and beyond. Mahmood has raised many important points about this issue, but the most significant one, in my view, is the claim that "Western religious and secular discourses were crucial to the construction of the minority problem in Egypt" (72). This premise is important in three ways in the debate about religious liberty and minority rights in Egypt. First, it tries to subordinate the role of local actors in the construction of the problem associated with religious liberties and minority rights. Second, it is true that modern secular state structures have played a prominent role in trying to regulate the relationships between the communities in the region, but the problems related to religious minority groups predate Western secular influences in the Middle East. Third, Mahmood's argument exposes the magnitude of the challenges facing religious minorities in Egypt, which is the overall achievement of this book.

Let me begin with the impact of Western religious discourse. The assertion that it bears a primary responsibility for the problems of religious minorities in Egypt contradicts the historical realities of Egyptian society. In particular, it ignores different local factors that created the problems associated with minority rights and religious freedom in the region. Western religious or political discourses were not necessarily central to these issues, but were generally secondary. First, the existence of religious minorities and the problems they have been facing throughout the history of Egypt or the whole of the Middle East were a product of the historical religio-political frameworks in the region, which continue to value supremacy of one religion over the others.[1] They were not constructs of European religious or political discourses; after all, the so-called religious minority groups were present well before the arrival of European colonialism.

1. Maurits H. van den Boogert, "Millets: Past and Present" in *Religious Minorities in the Middle East: Domination, Self-Empowerment, Accommodation*, eds. A.N. Longva and A.S. Roald (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 31.

Furthermore, this claim contradicts even the arrangement of "*dhimma* (literally, pledge of security)" that the Ottoman colonial authorities made for religious minorities under their rule (36). The pledge of protection for religious minorities – which carried huge financial burdens – was put in place to address the problems they were facing under the Ottoman system of governance (36). The European religious and political discourses had no influence on such arrangements. Their contributions to the debate on the question of religious minorities in Egypt or the Middle Eastern region, rather, was a relatively recent phenomenon when Egypt became a British "protectorate in 1914."[2] Moreover, the issues of religious minorities under Ottoman rule were not the main reasons for the European powers to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman state. Indeed, the European powers were advancing their colonial ambitions to control the world. They would have continued "to undermine" the Ottoman Empire even without the issues of Christian minorities in the region (34-5). They were dealing with a competitor, another colonial empire, which had also subjugated other nations to serve its imperial ambitions. Mahmood highlights the global impact of Western power. Arguably, there were a variety of imperial strategies, both Western and non-Western, at play during the pre-modern and modern eras that shaped the problem of majority/minority relations.

Another point that Mahmood has discussed in relation to minorities is the co-existence of different religions under the Ottoman Empire. Mahmood notes that "the diversity" of religious beliefs under the Ottoman rule "led" Karen Barkey "to describe it as 'the empire of difference,'" which is true (36). Barkey has, however, emphasized that this acceptance of differences was also a policy of Roman and Byzantine Empires before the emergence of the Ottomans on the scene. It was not the desired 'goal' of any of these empires to accommodate differences or diversity in their social and political structures but a political tactic that enabled all of them "to maintain power" and exercise "control" over the conquered peoples.[3] It should also be noted that under Ottoman rule, Islam celebrated superiority over other religions and thus constructed the religious minority problem that has continued to this day in Egypt and the whole of the Middle East.[4] Therefore, Western religious discourse entered the social and religious equation as part of the Western colonial expansion in the region, but it did not create major social structures or minority traditions that did not pre-exist.

What Mahmood could have highlighted – instead of blaming the West – as a crucial factor in the construction of the problem of religious minorities in Egypt is the

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2. Van den Boogert, "Millets: Past and Present," 39.

3. Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottoman in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008), 18-20.

4. Van den Boogert, "Millets: Past and Present," 27-31.

failure of the Egyptian national agenda that gained momentum when both Copts and Muslims united against colonialism in the 1920s (80) to establish a united Egyptian society irrespective of religious affiliation. The Coptic Christian community at that time believed that Egyptian nationalism was far more important than religious identity. It was to them a powerful symbol of social co-existence. Nonetheless, the building of Egyptian national identity based on citizenship received little enthusiasm from the majority and so the question of religious freedom and minority rights came up (78-80). In this context, the construction of the minority problem in Egypt was ultimately a product of local political, social, and religious contexts. Mahmood's heavy emphasis on the influence of Western secularity provides a skewed account of these developments.

The failure of the Egyptian national agenda has added new dimensions to the persecution of religious minorities in Egypt today. Because of this open discrimination, the Coptic Christian community and other minority groups in modern Egypt are facing existential problems. The minimal option they have to mitigate the evolving threats they face daily is to raise their concerns at the international level. But Mahmood believes this process has complicated the situation and "makes the project of finding ways of Copts living together with Arab Muslims in Egypt more difficult" (102). Blaming the Coptic minority for seeking different peaceful means to secure their survival in Egypt seems hard to accept, particularly in light of the Coptic call for Egyptian nationalism free of religious influence in the 1920s. They have been struggling to fit into the new realities of Egyptian society for hundreds of years but with tenuous success. The so-called majority has relentlessly imposed its values and laws on the nation with little or no regard for the concerns of minorities.

The concerns of religious minorities in Egypt are central to family laws, which regulate the social life of different religious communities; a topic that Mahmood discusses in detail (Part II, Chapter 3). These laws capture the essence of the problem facing Egyptian society today. They take religion into the innermost core of society where traditions and national identity begin to develop. At the same time, the demise of the Egyptian national project after the end of British colonialism has since strengthened religious minorities' support for separate religion-specific family laws to offer them some space to preserve their identities. Although these laws do not help that much under the current discriminatory national legislation that allows "conversion" to Islam but "prohibit[s]" (through apostasy laws) the opposite (86), this form of legal pluralism remains the only positive contribution the Western secular legal discourse has made toward the survival of religious minorities in Egypt.

Furthermore, the Western secularization process in the Middle East helped not only non-Muslim religious minorities but also recognized the existence of small Islamic sects, such as Druze, Ismailis, Alawis, and others (62). These communities were not a creation of Western secularization, but were previously existing and

largely suppressed minority communities. Therefore, Mahmood's claim that Western religious and secular discourses were central to the construction of the religious minority problem is questionable. We know that the purported secular regimes that have emerged in the Middle East before and during the postcolonial period have not built themselves around national identities free of religious influences. They have always appealed to a dominant religious tradition to maintain power in the society. In this context, the issues of religious liberties and national minorities need to be understood primarily within the framework of the Middle Eastern political and religious structures that maintain religious superiority as a defining feature of national identity.

Despite these concerns, Saba Mahmood has opened a new chapter in the debate about religious freedom and minority rights in Egypt and beyond by exposing the challenges these groups face in the Middle East.

God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude.
Linn Marie Tonstad. New York: Routledge, 2016. Pp. 302.
Reviewed by Charles Scriven, *Kettering College (President Emeritus)*

In this densely argued book, Linn Marie Tonstad of the Yale Divinity School faults recent trinitarian theology for its speculative abstraction, gendering of God and persistent "heteronormativity." Considering theologians Hans Urs von Balthasar, Graham Ward and Sarah Coakley, and then Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Kathrine Tanner, Tonstad shows how each fails to fully overcome Christian privileging of the sexually dominant over the sexually marginalized. The failure stems in substantial part from error in trinitarian thought, and both reflects and expresses the church's disinclination to embrace the epistemological humility prescribed by its own story and apocalyptic vision.

God and Difference is rife with provocation. The author's reading strategy depends heavily on contemporary queer studies, her lens for peering as deeply as she can into more conventional, if also creative and well-meant, theological perspectives. She speaks of the coming "abortion" of the church, by which she means its ultimate disappearance. She contrasts "clitoral" with "phallic" pleasure, associating the former with "touch without violence" (136) and finding the contrast instructive for proper Christian sensibility. At least once she pulls the f-bomb into one of her sentences. Readers may relish or stumble over language of this sort, but the substance of Tonstad's argument deserves, in either case, careful attention. She is offering fresh perspective on the doctrine of the Trinity, as well as on the Christian understanding of "difference." She brings such "traditional" convictions to the table as commitment to the truth of the resurrection, to theology's dependence on revelation, and to "anticipation of the return of Christ" (2). From beginning to end, moreover, her analysis is thorough and trenchant. But as the book's price may suggest ($118.40), Tonstad's prose style is laden with the trappings of esotericism, and this will prevent most non-specialists from reading her work. The book is rewarding, and it is also hard.

Tonstad homes in on the recurring theme of "hierarchy" in contemporary attempts to understand the "relations" among the persons of the Trinity. This recurrence owes in substantial part to imagery taken from the domain of heterosexism of which she finds traces even in writers, like Sarah Coakley, who disavow "the ultimacy of heterosexuality" (106). Equally problematic, she claims, is the tendency to speaks of the "subordination" of the Son to Father. When Wolfhart Pannenberg speaks of the "hierarchical subordination" of the Son, Tonstad calls it a "catastrophic failure of the theological imagination" (165). Such talk seems incompatible with the idea that God's kingdom is a kingdom "without masters and servants" (138). Insofar as scripture does speak of Christ's subordination, subordination pertains to his hu-

manity, not to relations within the Trinity proper. Nothing in God's "immanent life" corresponds "to even the appearance of subordination" (235).

In her own constructive account of trinitarian doctrine, a major part of the book, Tonstad repeatedly emphasizes the danger of literalism. In their usefulness for insight into the divine, concepts and analogies have limits. They must not be allowed to imply masculine superiority or to fuel speculations about trinitarian origins or the precise theological meaning of threeness. The doctrine of the Trinity is a "grammar" for stating fundamental Christian commitments. It tells us that Christ reveals the divine self. It affirms God's ongoing power and glory and defines these as love. It shows that the divine purpose is the establishment of "communion" – communion such that we may be God's friends, children and siblings, and may, in our relationships with one another, transcend the "logic of hierarchy and scarcity" (243) and take true delight in one another. It is a harmful distraction to veer toward thinking that we have "*understood*" God or understood the "nature of relation in God" (237).

The book's final chapter (but for a "Postlude") addresses the way biblical apocalyptic must, in Tonstad's view, shape thinking inside the church. Here the theme of epistemological humility receives heightened prominence. The Bible envisions large-scale "reconfiguration of structures of power and exclusion" (256), and although the Spirit mediates the presence of Christ to the church today, it is also the case that Christ's ascension entails the "disappearance" of his resurrected body. We may not claim to comprehend fully the risen Christ, nor may we throw off self-doubt and suppose that our present projects and assumptions correlate with God's intentions for the future. Present ideals concerning, say womanhood or sexual identity, cannot commit us to the "self-same" down the road. The church's job is not merely to reproduce itself, or even its imagined ideal self. The church, after all, comes to an end. There is, as Tonstad pointedly notes, "neither church nor temple in the new Jerusalem, and the Lamb's presence," not an institution from today, is that city's "light" (269).

Instead of indulging its own, or its society's, "reproductive urges," the church must understand its proper role to be "the negation of the stability and viability of the symbolic order" (269). But it is just here, in connection with what she calls "epistemological apophasis" (272), that Tonstad may slip toward inconsistency. In standing against the subordination of the Son, she has earlier declared, repeatedly, that "God really is who God reveals Godself to be in Jesus the Christ" (8; cf. 226, 234). Even if we do not now see the body of the ascended Christ, we do have a record (admittedly fallible) of what the first believers remembered concerning what they took to be God's self-revelation. They saw "through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12), but still offered descriptions that go beyond the merely negative. If today Christian humility shades into sheer reticence about what Christ's followers are positively aiming for, their account, and the "revelation" that it documents, has surely lost part of its

credibility and relevance. Can a forceful witness be only witness *against*? Can an institution viable on Earth speak only of its own self-doubt and lack of knowledge?

God and Difference matters. Such questions, and others equally or more important, are just what such a book is meant to generate.

God Being Nothing: Toward a Theogony. Ray L. Hart. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. Pp. xli, 282.
Reviewed by Nathan R. Strunk, *McGill University*

God Being Nothing seeks to answer the following question: "Can *nihil*—nothingness—be given its due without issuing in nihilism?" (6) Nihilism here means "the utter indifference to matters of meaning and value" (9), and the *nihil* in question is the one implicated in the doctrinal formula, *creatio ex nihilo*. A majority of western monotheistic traditions interpreted the *nihil* within an ontotheological framework that diminished the significance of nothingness as merely privative to the positive, perdurance of being implicated in the conception of God as *ipsum esse* and ascribed to creation as *ens creatum*. In contrast, Hart interprets the *nihil* constructively to refer to the nothingness of God *in se*. He explains, "[s]everely qualifying the classical formula: *creatio ex nihilo et non se Deo*, I shall elaborate and defend the hypothesis: God creates *ex nihilo, idem est, ex Deitate ipsa* (God creates from the nothing internal to godself)" (2). Attentive to other faith traditions, Hart primarily enlists "heterodox" Christian thinkers like Meister Eckhart and Jakob Böhme to explicate the divine *nihil* of *ex nihilo* and expound the nothingness shared between indeterminate Godhead (*in se*) and determinate Creator God (*extra nos*), between *creatio ab origine* and *creatio continua*, and between the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* of humans. Insofar as the emphasis falls on "between," the book offers what can be called a "meontological *metaxu*" though Hart does not call it as such. While it shares features of other metaxologies, it will be seen that Hart's meontology at times aligns with themes that its opening question suggests it wishes to avoid.

The book is structured into three main sections or, to borrow from literature, "topoi," to explain how *nihil* is ingredient in the generation of divinity (theogony), the cosmos (cosmogony), and the human subject (anthropogony). Hart begins first with "…the distinction between Godhead and God, which is argued in Topos 1 for the light it sheds on the self-generation of deity; is pointed to in Topos 2 as the condition for there being what is not-God – other than God – namely, the cosmos; and is extended in Topos 3 as the condition for there being what is both like God and unlike God in the human creature" (45). The entire book presupposes a kind of analogue between divine nothingness and created nothingness whether as interwoven into the fabric of creation or human existence as *imago Dei*. The doctrine of analogy in thinkers like Aquinas relies on a metaphysics of creation based on an understanding of effects retaining a participatory likeness to their cause. Since Hart critiques the metaphysics of being as ontotheological, his meontological metaxology must bridge divine and creaturely nothingness so that the *metaxu* is in a sense the analogue. "The being that God the Creator has vis-à-vis the creature, like the being that the creature

has vis-à-vis God the creator, is *metaxic*, is between not only being and nonbeing but between two nots or nothings" (135). It is of no fault of the reader if this is initially difficult to understand. Nothingness, after all, is not explicitly part of our everyday experience like something among other things. Thus, one of the aims of Topos 2 and Topos 3 is to have nothingness emerge from the cracks of existence like the way black holes emerge with subtle blips and bends of space and time. For our part, we will only be able to focus narrowly on Topos 1 in order to appreciate why divine nothingness is the reason why there is not only nothingness.

The question "why is there something rather than nothing?" is a question of being and becoming, of the one and the many. The question is as old as philosophy itself, and so is one of its most prevalent answers. "Only Being is," says Parmenides, "non-being is not and cannot be thought." For Hart, the Parmenidean conception of Being has characterized much of western metaphysics especially when it played handmaiden to Christianity. In such a framework, nothingness is an aberration that does not fit the top-down hierarchy of being from the One to the many. The doctrine of creation served to reinforce this framework, implicitly banishing the *nihil* so that the corresponding condition of *creatio ex nihilo* is *ex nihilo nihil fit* (from nothing can nothing come to be, be thought, or be said) (68). By interpreting *ex nihilo* as internal to the divine, Hart's meontology departs radically from this metaphysics of being, giving voice, often in the language of literature and the imagery of poetry, to that which many have quickly passed over as unthinkable and unspeakable.

How, then, does Hart's divine meontology offer an alternative framework for understanding the problem of the one and the many? The beginning of an answer can be found in his crucial distinction between "the eternal self-generation of God, the determinate Creator, from the abysmal indeterminacies of Godhead." In brief, this distinction renders the problem of the One and the many unproblematic through an account of the complete, unified divine life of God *in se* and *extra nos*: "Everything is *in* Godhead-God, indeterminate and determinate" (48), precisely because "God is living" (52). Distinct from the noun "life," the present progressive "living" broadens the range of the divine life to include death – even God's death (52). Hart intimates moves made by Hegel and J.J. Altizer, but within a framework of a meontological *metaxu* in which God is between two nots of sheer indeterminacy of *creatio ab origine* and determinate coming to nothing of *creatio continua*. The dramatic (tragic?) interplay between them constitutes the whole of the divine life. For the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* to be properly understood the *ex nihilo* must express the way God's *in se* nihility accompanies the *extra nos* nothingness of creation's becoming, making what is chaotic and tragic in the determinacy of the latter possible by the pure indeterminate potentiality of the former.

Readers may be tempted to mistakenly interpret Hart's distinction between indeterminate Godhead and determinate God the Creator as two distinct modes of

the divine or, worse yet, a kind of gnostic dualism replete with a demiurge. Nothing could be further from Hart's theological vision, which actually seeks the exact opposite of the intentions that gave rise to modalism. Whereas modalism sought to spare an immutable God the exigencies of becoming, Hart seeks to inscribe the possibility of the tragic, the dialectic tension of creation's being and becoming, into indeterminate Godhead. "For Christian theology (this one, anyway) the turbulence consequent upon the temporal contrariety of all determinate opposites is anteceded by the meontological determinateness in God the Creator of the abysmally indeterminate *turba* of Godhead, a groundless *turba* that rumbles beyond and other than being and nonbeing" (76). In Greek, the notion of *turba* conveys confusion, disorder, and chaos. It is telling, then, that Hart predicates it of Godhead: "Godhead is…the groundless indeterminate *turbic energeia* of the divine living-dying, the ebullient, effervescent *fortissimo* of formless energy in the divine depths" (77). Changing registers slightly, he appeals to the way Böhme employed *turba* "to characterize the simultaneity of creativeness and destruction in the indeterminate abyss of Godhead (the *Ungrund*)" (81). Interestingly, this description of the divine nothingness of indeterminate Godhead resembles, like Théodore Rousseau's "Mont Blanc Seen from La Faucille, Storm Effect," the chiaroscuro of the nigh mythic God of Romanticism who holds together like nature itself love and wrath, good and evil, and light and darkness, in frighteningly arbitrary and unforgiving tension.

However, Hart's theological vision incorporates a Christian doctrine indicative of the eternality of God's temporally redemptive love; namely, the doctrine of the immanent Trinity. Hart also combines his description of God as *turba* with the perichoresis of the immanent Trinity (95). The divine perichoretic choreograph to which Hart refers is also the divine between of living and dying, advent and recusal, manifestation and hiddenness, that simultaneously defines Godhead and God the Creator's manifold redemptive interaction in creation. Hart combines Böhme's meontological conception of the divine with the redemptive, dramatic life of the Trinity *in se* and *extra nos*. Holding them together metaxologically, the question remains whether these two – the meontological divine *turba energeia* and Trinitarian perichoresis – sit together comfortably.

Intriguingly, Hart's description of Godhead as abysmal *turba* resembles descriptions of God given by those credited as the tacit origins of Nietzschean nihilism. Themes ingredient in heterodox thinkers like Eckhart, Böhme, Schelling, and Hegel (and literarily in Blake, Melville, Coleridge, Goethe, Hölderlin, Rilke, and Conrad) suggestively overlap with those credited as origins of nihilism. In *Nihilism Before Nietzsche*, Michael Allen Gillespie argues that Nietzsche's nihilism originates from a conception of divine will borne from Ockham's voluntaristic *potentia absoluta* and Luther's *deus absconditus* that come to form Descartes' divine deceiver (*genius malignus*) and Romanticism's daemonic creative force. For Gillespie, nihilism issued

from voluntarism insofar as value could not be sustained under the prospect of a complete collapse of all meaning with the prospect of an absolutely omnipotent, "dark" God arbitrarily rewriting creation's most fundamental laws if it so willed unless, of course, humans possessed a will powerful enough to posit value and withstand the wiles of the divine. In this context, God is a transrational, passionate force – bestial like Blake's tyger burning bright in fearful symmetry – whose ways are unfathomable for being incalculable on any spectrum, especially good and evil. Although Gillespie traces this genealogy to serve altogether different ends than those pursued by Hart, his description of the God behind Nietzsche's nihilism resonates in some ways with Hart's description of Godhead as *turba* or *turbic energeia*. While Hart definitely does not offer a genealogical argument like Gillespie, the topography—to use Hart's metaphor—that structured debates concerning voluntarism like divine, indeterminate freedom, the characterization of God as *deus absconditus*, and Romanticism's dark foreboding God of nature are not entirely absent the heterodox tradition supporting Hart's meontology. Hart's conception of Godhead and God borders on the tragic, a terror in the night commensurate with a cosmological *turba* in which nature's chaotic, creative-destructive violence strangely mirrors the inner life of the Godhead. Black holes are destructively all-consuming, and, if information cannot escape, they are perfectly and terrifyingly solipsistic, utterly monstrous. *Creatio* ex nihilo, then, with the emphasis on *creatio*, proves decisive in Hart's recapturing of *ex nihilo*. Recalling the opening question of this review: *creatio* may very well be what allows one to give *nihil* its due without issuing in nihilism.

There appears to be two strands in Hart that are difficult to reconcile: between the *in se* indeterminate divinity implicated in the determinate interplay of good and evil and the *in se* indeterminate divinity integral to the surpassing, generative donation of creation and the bringing about of a new creation. Hart's *metaxu* attempts to balance between these two, but because his point of entry is the *nihil* of *ex nihilo* there appears to be a slight favoring of the former. Others who have sought to think divinity metaxologically separate from the strictures of classical theism have preferred the latter for fear that the former ultimately leads to Nietzsche's kind of *nihil* in which the transposition of all values ultimately concludes with the demise of the good. Richard Kearney reminds us that gods and monsters like Ahab's whale ("the quasi-divine, quasi-demonic whiteness of the whale") can be in some ways akin, charting experiences of uncontainable excess.[1] They differ, however, in that divine alterity is accompanied with a gift that far from leaving the divine estranged makes it strangely familiar, *interior intimo meo*. In critiquing the metaphysics of being in Parmenides and the metaphysics of creation of the Christian tradition,

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1. Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods, and Monsters: Ideas of Otherness* (London: Routledge, 2002).

Hart does not entirely explore why the principle of the good was often regarded as preceding being and non-being. Though in the Parmenidean framework *creatio ex nihilo* offered a corrective to emanationism for fear of panentheism and pantheism, the doctrine also traditionally coincided with the teaching that creation is an absolutely gratuitous act of divine love entirely without precedent or necessity. Here it should be remembered that no-thingness, meontology, is usually accompanied with a second, corresponding and necessary moment. The rose "without why" also "cares not for itself and asks not if it is seen." The rose's invisibility marks its irreducible givenness and unconditioned generosity – what is also called its "porosity" to appeal to William Desmond's agapeic metaxology[2] (see *God and the Between*, 2008) or its "loving togetherness" (its being-with-of-all-beings-with-all-beings) to follow Ludwig Binswanger à la Joeri Schrijvers.[3]

In sum, Hart offers a meontological metaxology that encompasses the doctrine of creation through an "ineluctable progression of three betweens: between the two nots of the human person, between the human person and God, and between God and Godhead. Simultaneous betweens that stand under the Cloud of Unknowing, the abysmal void of Nothingness, yet also the groundlessly renewing fount of Genesis" (183). We have only cursorily explored the two nots between God and Godhead. The book as a whole traces along the contours of the unthought, delving deeply into the "without why" of God, creation, and humanity. So much of Hart's book is a new fugue on themes previously sounded by luminaries past and present, masterfully brought together here in a work that is eloquently written and subtly argued, a text written in prose with the lyrical spirit of music and poetry. Some will hear in it the strange beauty that comes with thinking the divine meontologically, which sounds somewhere on the scale between the foreboding tenor of a tragic *Requiem* and the loving ecstasy of a *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*. Hart's "thought experiment" into the abyss of nothingness will undoubtedly inspire readers to follow in the unfinished work of searching the depth and riches of the Unknown God.

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2. William Desmond, *God and the Between* (Malden: Blackwell, 2008).

3. Joeri Schrijvers, *Between Faith and Belief: Toward a Contemporary Phenomenology of Religious Life* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2016).

The Political Theology of Schelling. Saitya Brata Das. New Perspectives in Ontology. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2016. Pp. ix, 261.
Reviewed by Hadi Fakhoury, *McGill University*

In his *History of Political Ideas*, Eric Voegelin credits Schelling with developing "perhaps the profoundest piece of philosophical thought ever elaborated," and thereby with initiating "a new level of consciousness in Western intellectual history in general and in the history of political thought in particular."[1] Saitya Brata Das (henceforth SBD) may perhaps agree with Voegelin, though for quite different reasons, regarding Schelling's import for political thinking. Indeed, in *The Political Theology of Schelling*, SBD lays out a bold thesis showing that "Schelling… radically questions every mythic foundation of the political, that his radical notion of de-cision interrupts any immanence of self-presence and opens up the sense of religion as a radical transcendence that is disjoined from both myth and politics" (33). On this reading, Schelling's work undermines "the liberal-humanist pathos of modernity that grounds itself on a pantheistic immanent metaphysics of the Subject but also any political theology that would seek to legitimise the sovereign power of the state by an appeal to a 'divine' or 'theological' foundation" (39).

The "political theology" against which SBD invokes Schelling is that of the conservative German jurist and political thinker Carl Schmitt (1888-1985). Following Jacob Taubes and Walter Benjamin's critical engagements with Schmitt, SBD sees in Schelling's critique of Hegel something akin to a "negative political theology" (23, 39, 92-93, 110). Against "the attempt of any sovereignty in the worldly order to claim ultimate 'normative obligation' from us" (5), the Schellingian political theology he outlines seeks to "constantly [interrogate], through an *eschatological intensification of the difference* between the profane order of the political and the theological, any attempt to legitimise worldly sovereignty" (92, emphasis in original). Thus, in contrast to the Schmittian figure of the "sovereign" who decides on the "state of exception" (30, 92, 204) only in order "to make possible and legitimise a new order of *nomos*" (29), SBD, through Schelling, aims at thinking of a "de-legitimising" or "non-sovereign exception" (30), defined by him as "an exception that does not in turn become a rule" (92), which by insisting on "what exceeds the logic of the law… exposes the domain of the political to the wound of an eschatological justice that keeps the possibility of the future alive" (93).

Motivated by a tangible passion for his subject and with great sympathy for

1. Cited in Jerry Day, *Voegelin, Schelling, and the Philosophy of Historical Existence* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 8. The citation is from the last completed part of the *History of Political Ideas*, titled "Last Orientation," which was published posthumously.

Schelling, SBD argues his case forcefully through a lengthy introduction and six chapters (the chapters are titled, in order: "Actuality without Potentiality," "The Rhythm of History," "The Beatific Life," "The Irreducible Remainder," "The Non-Sovereign Exception," and "The Tragic Dissonance"). He approaches the Schellingian corpus in a relatively free and comprehensive way, moving between different works with ease. Although the core of his argument is mainly built around themes most prominent in Schelling's so-called "intermediate philosophy" – particularly the 1809 *Essay on the Essence of Human Freedom* (notably in Ch. 4), the *Ages of the World* of 1811-15 (Ch. 2), the roughly contemporary novella *Clara* (Ch. 3), and the *Stuttgart Private Lectures* in 1810 (Ch. 5) – SBD also engages with earlier and later works. Unfortunately, he only cites works by Schelling that exist in an English translation, altogether neglecting others, including key texts of the "late" period, strictly speaking – from the Munich lectures of 1827 until his death in 1854 – such as the *Philosophy of Mythology*, the *Philosophy of Revelation*, and the *Exposition of the Purely Rational Philosophy* – serious omissions for a study professing to deal with Schelling's late philosophy.

SBD is mainly interested in the content of ideas, and not so much in historical and critical considerations. He only superficially addresses questions of periodization in Schelling, and keeps his engagement with secondary literature to a bare minimum. In an untiringly emphatic, somewhat lyrical and often metaphorical prose (e.g., "Schelling is the lightning flash that makes visible, momentarily, the eschatological image of the event standing still in the burning landscape of redemption" [58-59]), he argues his case with urgency, reiterating his views at every turn, though at the cost of being repetitive. His philosophical imagination is considerably influenced by the concepts and terminology of French deconstruction. (Derrida has the third largest number of entries in the Bibliography, after Schelling and Heidegger.) All things considered, this is an original, insightful and engaging essay which will be appreciated particularly by people interested in Schelling's relevance for contemporary debates around ontology and political theology. Scholars of Schelling will find much to admire in this work; however, they may have some reservations, particularly SBD's tendency to overplay aspects of Schelling's thought that fit his narrative while downplaying others that do not. Below, I discuss three aspects of this book where that problem can be detected.

1. SBD does a good job at highlighting the contemporary relevance of Schellingian themes. However, in the process, he applies to Schelling a kind of retroactive hermeneutics that gives special attention to aspects of his work that can be construed as foreshadowing the views of later thinkers – especially Marx, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Rosenzweig, Bloch, Benjamin, Taubes, Derrida, and Schürmann – without sufficiently attending to their respective differences. This

is apparent, for example, in SBD's insistence, following Gérard Bensussan (who contributes the Preface), on reading Schelling as pointing to "the exit *of* and *from* philosophy as metaphysics" (8). SBD takes a sweeping view of Western metaphysics – "from Plotinus to Hegel" (194) – as founded on a concept of "being as potentiality," or "Being…understood in its infinite capacity *to be*" (1, 3). On that basis, he argues, following Heidegger (5, 8, 12, 25), that Schelling's attempt to think of "an actuality before any memory and before any memorial," or an "*actuality without potentiality*" (always emphasised in the text), places him at the "limit" or "epochal closure" of metaphysics (1), announcing a "new beginning *outside* of metaphysics" (25), one that "opens indefinitely to an excess that can't be included within the fold of metaphysics" (5, cf. 155 n. 1).

While some aspects of Schellingian philosophy may well be taken as having a "decisive importance for post-metaphysical thinking" (78), SBD fails to appreciate the fact that, for Schelling, particularly in his late philosophical period – a period which Heidegger does not appear to have paid close attention to – there was never any question of abandoning metaphysics, and perhaps least of all in his criticism of Hegel. On the contrary, he made it precisely one of his main tasks to develop, in his words, "a true dogmatic philosophy, that is, what metaphysics should be" (*S*ämmtliche *Werke* II/3, 82).[2] Apparently ignoring Schelling's aims, SBD reads the "late Schellingian caesura between positive and negative philosophy…[as an] eschatological deconstruction of metaphysics" (34). Even as he acknowledges that Schelling was "still speaking the language of metaphysics" (11, 25, 43, 78), there is an underlying assumption that Schelling was trying to say what later, "post-metaphysical" (78, 158) thinkers expressed better. In the same vein, SBD alludes to "philosophy opening to non-philosophy" via Schelling (e.g., 43, 47, 58), failing to perceive the worrying similarity, viz., with Carl August Eschenmayer's controversial *Philosophy in its Transition to Non-philosophy* (1803).[3] While SBD's attempt at bridging Schelling and later thinkers sometimes yields surprising insights – the connection to Schürmann, notably, is illuminating – his tendency to interpret Schelling's thought through an alien conceptual scheme is potentially misleading.

2. SBD does a very good job outlining what is effectively a kind of Schellingian religiosity (15), at the heart of which he places the notion of

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2. Cf. Bruce Matthew, introduction to *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, by F.W.J. Schelling (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2007), 81-82; Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1989), 34-35.

3. On the controversy between Schelling and Eschenmayer, see Alexandra Roux's illuminating introduction in C.A. Eschenmayer, *La philosophie dans son passage à la non-philosophie*, ed. and trans. Alexandra Roux (Paris: Vrin, 2005), 19-149.

"abandonment" (*Gelassenheit*) expressed by the medieval mystic Meister Eckhart and the later Heidegger (e.g., 26, 34). Indeed, according to SBD, Schelling offers us a "new sense of religion…[as] 'eschatological'… Religion, in this new sense, is the non-originary, non-autarchic and non-sovereign opening to the infinite; it is the incessant and exuberant opening to an *excess* beyond all enclosures of the mythic immanence, and beyond the self-sufficiency of the laws of the earth" (189). SDB further insists that, "if Schelling still retains the name 'religion' or 'religious' – and he does so till the last days of his philosophical career – it is in this messianic or eschatological sense" (138, cf. 6).

However, SBD fails to take into account the non-eschatological concept of religion developed in the *Philosophy of Mythology* and the *Philosophy of Revelation*. In these works, Schelling proposes a *sui generis* concept of religion as the innate and non-reflective God-positing character of human consciousness (*SW* II/3, 191). This theo-anthropological principle enables the emergence of different forms of "actual religion" (*wirkliche Religion*), from the unfree mythological religion which serves as the foundation for the free or revealed religion (Christianity), to the not-yet-existing "philosophical religion," the properly eschatological religion whose aim is not to cancel preceding religions but rather, through its content, to comprehend them (*SW* II/3, 190-194). Writes Schelling, "actual religion cannot be different from actual religion. If, now, both natural [i.e., mythological] and revealed religions are actual religion, then according to the last content there can be no difference between them both. Both must [therefore] contain the same elements [i.e., the potencies], [and] only their *meaning* in the one will be different from that in the other" (*SW* II/1, 248-249).[4] In short, not all religion is eschatological, and the three types of religion identified by Schelling, namely, the mythological and revealed religions, as well as the future religion of the spirit or "philosophical religion," are equally "actual religion."

Contrastingly, SBD – seemingly influenced by Bloch (the so-called "Marxist Schelling") and Benjamin (23, cf. 28, 31, 54-5, 60, 87, 124, 134, 139, 141, 146) – introduces a dichotomy alien to Schelling's thought. On the one hand, he associates "myth" and "mythology" with "the immanence of self-presence" (44) and the "law of the eternal return of the same" (55); on the other hand, he conflates "religion," "revelation" and "philosophical religion" as expressing the "*eschatological suspension of the mythic foundation of the law of origin*" (82, cf. 17, 33, 39-40, 82, 83, 100).[5] In fact, this dualistic conception, which SBD reads as reflecting what

4. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2007), 172-173.

5. A more focused and nuanced reading of what Schelling calls "philosophical religion" is giv-

he sympathetically (if a bit hastily) calls "Schelling's Gnosticism" (54, cf. 60, 102, 109, 114, 196), renders religion indistinguishable from "the ethical" (cf. 191), and, thereby, ironically recalls the Kantian moralisation of religion rejected by Schelling, and nowhere more strongly than in his late philosophy (cf. 17).

3. SBD's exploration of the "political-theological import of the Schellingian eschatology" (205), although illuminating in many ways, is also flawed. He states that the renewal of Schellingian thought carries the lesson that "the task of philosophy and religion – or more appropriately, of 'philosophical religion' – is to conceive of a deconstructive strategy for the delegitimation of the sovereignty of all worldly powers, whether those of the state or the Church, in such a manner that, through an intensification of difference, the promise of a future will be kept open, a future always *to come*" (207, cf. 191). SBD is not entirely wrong in stating that the eschatological religion for Schelling is potentially "revolutionary" (194). Indeed, as an example, in his *Philosophy of Revelation*, Schelling justifies the secret character of the Mystery cults on account of the perceived threat to established order and public religion represented by their belief in a superior spiritual religion yet to come (*SW* II/3, 501-510).

However, far from justifying any kind of revolutionary political action, the inherently *secret* character of the eschatological religion – which SBD recognises (e.g., 198) – means that it should remain esoteric precisely to avoid "[passing] over into the visibility of public mortality [sic], into the visibility of the visible church, or of the legal-profane order of conditioned politics" (198). Therefore, one may sympathise with SBD's construal of Schellingian eschatology as enabling a critique of "historical Reason…[in its] sophisticated and complex totalisation in the 'democratic' neo-liberal societies of the contemporary world-historical order" (207); however, one should be cautious about associating Schelling too closely with the Marxist thought of, e.g., Benjamin, who, SBD claims, was "following Schelling (without, perhaps, reading him)" by promoting a messianic antinomianism capable of "expressing the irremissible past suffering of the oppressed and the downtrodden and thereby redeeming them from the violence of history" (94, cf. 32, 37, 61, 93, 96, 205). Such language, in fact, is foreign to Schelling.

Further, it is not clear how the "eschatological deconstruction of the world-historical politics embodied in the state" (23, cf. 28, 30, 68, 74) manifests in the world, that is, what its actual political consequences are. On the one hand, SBD's

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en in Thomas Buchheim, "Was heißt, 'philosophische Religion'? Acht Thesen zur Zielsetzung von Schellings unvollendetem System," in *Religion und Religionen im Deutschen Idealismus: Schleiermacher – Hegel - Schelling*, eds. Friedrich Hermanni, Burkhard Nonnenmacher und Friedrike Schick (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015): 425-445.

deployment of a Schellingian messianic-eschatologism à la Bloch and Benjamin directed against the "powerful regimes of world-historical politics" (21, 27, 93) suggests a revolutionary aim "within history" (87), but on the other, it is difficult to imagine what that "*inoperation* of political sovereignty" (191) would actually look like given that eschatological religion is by definition "incommensurate to all world-historical politics" (32), and therefore seems to effectively imply a sort of political quietism (which yet SBD rejects, e.g., on p. 198). Lacking an explanation of what the actual political outcomes of his eschatological-messianic deconstruction would be, his political theology offers little more than vague and poetical pronouncements about the need to oppose "worldly hegemonic regimes" (46) with receptive openness to "the radical futurity of the undecidable" (180).[6] However, when SBD reads Schelling as calling for the "abandonment" and "mortification" of "Might and Violence, not just the violence and power which belong to the mortal but even that which belongs to God's own nature… in order to participate in [the] gentle game of love" [108, cf. 34], this suggests an ethics of non-violence which would have merited further development.

In truth, SBD's political theology misrepresents the actual political thinking of the later Schelling. Focusing almost exclusively on the criticism of the legal mechanism of the State in the *Stuttgart Private Lectures*, he fails to pay any attention to other works where Schelling, opposing utopianisms, defends the transcendent rationality of the State, as well as its naturalness and necessity as justified by the fallen condition of humanity.[7] This is clearly expressed in one of Schelling's last works, the *Exposition of the Purely Rational Philosophy*, where he simultaneously insists on the importance, indeed necessity of having a stable State, on the one hand, *and* on the responsibility of the individual to internally overcome State coercion, on the other (*SW* II/1, 548). In fact, he sees it as the duty of the State to ensure the necessary preconditions for the individual to attain "the greatest possible freedom (autarchy) – the freedom which rises above and, as it were, beyond the State, but not that which has a reverse effect on or within the State (*rückwärts auf den Staat wirkende oder im Staat*)" (*SW* II/1, 550). Addressing a German audience, Schelling asserts: "Let yourselves be called an 'apolitical' people as long as the majority among you prefers *being governed* rather than governing…and that you value the leisure (σχολή) which leaves the spirit and soul free for other things" (*SW* II/1, 549). Thus, if, on the one hand, his view of the State is fundamentally a traditional conservative one,

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6. To paraphrase Catherine Zuckert's criticism of Derrida and the later Heidegger in "The Politics of Derridean Deconstruction," *Polity* 23, No. 3 (Spring, 1991): 335-356, esp. at 355. Much of Zuckert's criticism could also be applied to SBD.

7. See the balanced presentation in Alexandra Roux, "Schelling et l'État : quel « ciel sur la terre » ?" *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 101, No. 3 (2003): 456-478.

on the other hand, his simultaneous affirmation of apoliticism and spiritual autarchy arguably prefigures the ideal of the Anarch in Ernst Jünger's novel *Eumeswil*.[8]

These reservations should not, however, detract from SBD's unique achievement. Despite his apparent predilection for Marxist thought and deconstruction – these being foreign to the later Schelling's essentially conservative sensibility – this is far from being a partisan work. Quite the contrary, it is a sincere and stimulating study which sheds fresh light on important ontological, theological and political themes in Schelling. Hopefully, it will inspire much-needed research into Schelling's late political thought and philosophy of religion.

Finally, there are some places where better proofreading was needed to avoid, for example, two inaccurate references to Schelling on p. 83, and several typographical errors (e.g., on p. 109: "yeaning" should be "yearning"; p. 103: "as it conscious as itself" should be "it is conscious as itself"; p. 232: "life of mortal" should be "mortal life").

8. Ernst Jünger, *Eumeswil* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1977).

Arc Style Guide: Guidelines for Contributors

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1. *Arc* accepts electronic manuscripts submitted in Microsoft Word format (.docx, .doc or .rtf). *If your manuscript includes non-Latin fonts, please indicate which font(s) you are using*. Please send submissions to the following electronic address: arc.relgstud@mcgill.ca.
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3. Articles should not exceed 10,000 words in length, including footnotes. Book reviews should not exceed 1,500 words.

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2. Final article submissions should conform to the following *Arc* style guidelines:
    - Submissions should use Canadian spelling.
    - Submissions should use gender-inclusive language, with the exception that translations of ancient texts should conform to the standards of the original language.
    - All notes should appear as footnotes, numbered consecutively. Please do not use other number systems.
    - Do not include a separate bibliography. Complete references should be given in the notes, as follows:

For first-time citations, a full bibliographic reference should be given in a note.

> 1. Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (London: Harvard University Press, 1989), 123.

2. M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jaqueline S. Palmer, "Millenial Ecology: The Apocalyptic Narrative from Silent Spring to Global Warming," in ed. Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown, *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 21–45.

3. Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 18.

If a complete bibliographic reference has already been given in a previous footnote, use the following short form: author's last name, main title, page number.

4. Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?*, 124.

5. Killingsworth and Palmer, "Millenial Ecology," 34.

6. Hadot, *The Veil of Isis*, 25.

Ancient texts may be cited parenthetically or in noted references. Citations should include the author's name, the title of the work, and the numerical references (book, chapter, verse, etc.) using Arabic rather than Roman numerals, separated by periods. When a translation is not that of the author of the article, the translation should be cited in full as a modern work.

3. For questions of style, punctuation, and spelling not covered here, please refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); and the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2004).

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