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Preface

Contemporary scholars who still believe there is much to be learned from the great arguments of the past - indeed that they are absolutely prerequisite to any concrete comprehension of modern freedom - find themselves swimming against a tide of conventional wisdom that is systematically hostile to the whole speculative legacy. The seeds of a contrary, ultra-philosophical thinking have grown to full maturity. It has become a point of intellectual correctness to presume that the history of western thought is to be viewed as nothing more than a series of "meta-narratives" whose real purpose was quite other than they proposed - to conceal some ideological prejudice, perhaps, or dignify linguistic distortions by dressing them in pseudo-theoretical garb.

The ultra-modernist siege against the citadel of philosophy would now appear to have been somewhat lifted as the radical critique of the western tradition has taken a distinctly skeptical turn and no longer speaks of a final conquest of the legacy of speculative thought, only of its intellectual suspension. Perhaps the time has come to begin to recover its original sense.

This first issue of Animus shows how the original sense of various classical arguments has been missed or trivialized by assimilation to ultra-modernist conceptions. The first essay surveys the 19th and 20th century seen as a single project specifically aimed at the radical critique of the thinking standpoint of philosophy, a project Jackson argues has reached its denouement in post-modern thought. In the aftermath of its attempt skeptically to nullify the philosophical spirit the recovery of that spirit itself and what it has actually accomplished becomes urgent. The four following articles draw upon the Greek speculative tradition to show how, working from ultra-modern assumptions, later interpretations of key themes and arguments have obscured and even obliterated their original sense.

Thus Andrews reviews the presumption of using modern truth-functional logic to analyze and correct elements of Aristotle's logic; she shows how important logical distinctions have been altogether lost in attempts to transpose them into the classical Russellian mode. In a timely riposte to Derrida's para-Freudian reading of Antigone, Epstein next makes the case that "the Nietzschean view of tragedy as showing the identity of the particular individual with 'being' cannot withstand the examination of a play central to the tragic world"; his analysis demonstrates how the essentially speculative intent of Greek art is entirely corrupted in attempts to reduce it to non-speculative post-modern terms. House's article considers the long-standing and current misrepresentation of Aristotle as the "earth-bound empiricist" who debased the pure gold of Plato's idealism into his own bio-materialist currency; House enlists the texts to show how the Platonic idealism, far from confuted in Aristotle's criticism, is indeed completed in it. Finally, Johnston distinguishes Augustine's concept of time from the Plotinian, and in this essentially shows Augustine as beyond Neoplatonism.

PREFACE

The common method followed is to argue classical positions from their own principles rather than, as is the prevailing custom, from later ones. The aim is restore some sense of what has been accomplished already in philosophy. In the next issue the focus will be on similar issues seen from a contemporary perspective. The whole interest of Animus is to encourage the rebuilding of the ruined bridges that link contemporary thought to its own origins, a task which requires construction from both sides of the divide. For the proper outcome of the western speculative tradition is just the contemporary world itself, and the principle of freedom that informs it has no other source than in that very same tradition. Any whose habit is to damn modernity in defense of the philosophical tradition, or who takes as gospel the post-modern view of the latter's final obsolescence, will find little of interest here.

9/11 And The History Of Philosophy

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Introduction

There is nothing more significant about a philosophy than how it situates itself within or in respect to the history of philosophy. When it locates itself historically, a form of philosophy defines what philosophy itself is by placing this mode of human living, reflection, speaking, and writing *vis-à-vis* that in relation to which it emerged and has developed. This placing occurs in respect to genres (e.g. poetry, prose, face-to-face discourse, introspection, writing) and to other representations or imitations of the whole (e.g. most importantly, at least at its origins, to myth and religion and, in more modern times, to what are commonly called “sciences”). Designating its normal setting is also part of this historical placing. It will involve the question put most influentially in our time by Pierre Hadot as to whether philosophy is properly a way of life—as it was indisputably when it began and throughout the Hellenic and Hellenistic periods. As a way of life philosophy was thus carried on both in agora and in monastery, both in prison and in episcopal and imperial curia, both in the Neoplatonic schools headed by a “divine” successor to Plato and in Islamic *halqa* which took up their studies from the commentaries on the classical philosophical texts produced in the late ancient Neoplatonic and Peripatetic schools. For Hadot, philosophy’s move out of these situations and making the university its normal location was of the utmost significance. In his judgment, the present existence of philosophy as the abstractly theoretical production and manipulation of concepts divorced from life and serving other forms of knowing what is, other determinations of what is to be done, and other powers shaping the self and enabling life is a humiliating reduction and ruinous loss. Such diminished philosophy is hardly separable from paid professional work in the university. Hadot indicates the connection of place and character thus:

the university is .. made up of professors who train professors, or professionals training professionals. Education was thus no longer directed toward people who were to be educated with a view to becoming fully developed human beings, but to specialists, in order that they might train other specialists.¹

¹ Pierre Hadot, “Philosophy as a Way of Life,” in *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, 270; see also idem, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie antique?* Collection Folio/Essais (Paris: Gallimard, 1995) 355-407 at 389. For a description and assessment of Hadot’s position see W.J. Hankey, “Philosophy as Way of Life for Christians? Iamblichan and Porphyrian Reflections on Religion,

Understood in this wide way, when philosophers, whether explicitly or implicitly, construct the historical structure for philosophy and locate their work and that of others within it, they prescribe what counts as reason. In consequence, they may be contributing to decisions which have life or death consequences. It is hard to know whether what our professional philosophers in their university departments do is of much influence and whether they are in fact regarded as professional experts on what ought to be regarded as rational. Nonetheless, they must play some role in shaping what we suppose reason to be and, rigorously delimiting philosophy and excluding from its rationality what may not count seems to be crucial to the activity of the philosophy departments at the dominant universities of the Anglo-American Protestant world. There, many of those who now make our wars received what we are pleased to call a liberal education. Especially since September 11, 2001, some of these, the most powerful of our political leaders, have told us that what they describe as free democratic Christian society is in a worldwide cultural war against what some of them call Islamo-fascism. Indeed, some of them have also led us into dreadfully murderous external wars against parts of the Islamic world and to a universal and never to be ended so-called “war against terror” largely directed against Muslims, which, among other evils, has institutionalised torture in societies which had defined themselves by opposition to it and been destructive of our civil liberties. The necessity of these wars—cultural, shooting, or metaphorical—and of the means employed have frequently been justified directly or indirectly by labelling the Islamic enemy as irrational because Islam itself and its cultural product are irrational. Let me adduce a few recently published articles in the *New York Times* which manifest diverse aspects and results of this approach.

On September 21st, David Brooks, generally supposed to possess access to what is being thought inside the White House, published a column in the *Times* which began by declaring that the international system was broken. He went on to lament that since 9/11 no consensus had been reached on what is moving the enemies and judged:

The core of the dispute is: Do the extremists play by the normal rules of geostrategy, or are their minds off in some mystical sphere that is utterly alien to our categories? Do they respond to incentives and follow the dictates of what we call self-interest? Can they be deterred by normal threats to their security? Or, alternatively, are they playing an entirely different game? Are the men who occupy the black hole that is the Iranian power elite engaged in a religious enterprise based on an eschatological time frame and driven by supernatural longings we can't begin to fathom?²

Answering these questions has serious consequences because, as he wrote “The definition of the threat determines the remedies we select to combat it...” According to Brooks:

Virtue, and Philosophy in Thomas Aquinas,” *Laval Théologique et Philosophique*, 59:2 [Le Néoplatonisme] (Juin 2003): 193-224.

² David Brooks, “Lessons From U.N. Week,” *New York Times*, September 21, 2006.

Millions of Americans think the pope [in Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections," University of Regensburg, Tuesday, 12 September 2006] asked exactly the right questions: Does the Muslim God accord with the categories of reason?... These millions of Americans believe the pope has nothing to apologize for. They regard the vicious overreaction to his speech, like the vicious overreaction to the Danish cartoons, as another sign that some sort of intellectual disease is sweeping through the Arab world.

Indeed, while lamenting the diminution of Hellenic rationality within Christian religion and the secularised remains of Christendom, the nub of the Pope's recent criticism of Islam was to locate its divinity outside rationality.³ A survey article in the *New York Times* produced in the wake of his lecture, "Across Europe, Worries on Islam Spread to Center," reported on what seemed to unite the European and the American millions. Evidence was adduced that more Europeans "in the political mainstream are arguing that Islam cannot be reconciled with European values."⁴ Although those surveyed often appeared to be thoroughly secularised, they seemed to agree with the Pope that reason was exclusively on their side of the conflict. Although the Islamic reaction to the Pope's animadversions induced him to more dialogue with Muslims than he previously envisaged, nothing like seems to be happening in Washington (or at Number 10 Downing Street.) On October 17th, Jeff Stein reported in the *Times* on a remarkable ignorance of the enemy. Stein has been asking "Washington counterterrorism officials": "Do you know the difference between a Sunni and a Shi'ite?"⁵ After what appears to have been a serious investigation, he concluded that:

most American officials I've interviewed don't have a clue. That includes not just intelligence and law enforcement officials, but also members of Congress who have important roles overseeing our spy agencies.... Too many officials in charge of the war on terrorism just don't care to learn much, if anything, about the enemy we're fighting.

³ See Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections," University of Regensburg

Tuesday, 12 September 2006: "...for Muslim teaching, God is absolutely transcendent. His will is not bound up with any of our categories, even that of rationality. Here Khoury quotes a work of the noted French Islamist R. Arnaldez, who points out that Ibn Hazn went so far as to state that God is not bound even by his own word, and that nothing would oblige him to reveal the truth to us. Were it God's will, we would even have to practise idolatry."

⁴ Dan Bilefsky and Ian Fisher; Dan Bilefsky reported From Brussels, and Ian Fisher From Rome, contributing were Sarah Lyall and Alan Cowell from London, Mark Landler from Frankfurt, Peter Kiefer from Rome, Renwick Mclean from Madrid and Maia De La Baume from Paris, "Across Europe, Worries on Islam Spread to Center," *New York Times*, October 11, 2006.

⁵⁵ Jeff Stein, "Can You Tell a Sunni From a Shiite?" *New York Times*, October 17, 2006.

What is reported and opined in these articles raises many questions including, for example, why the Islamic mystical sphere is alien and our own is not? and why we cannot begin to fathom the eschatological time frame and the supernatural longings of the Iranian power elite when some of those in the most powerful places in the Anglo-American world also operate out of an eschatological time frame and supernatural longings? In this paper I shall neither ask nor attempt to answer these or many other such questions. I want rather to consider three matters.

- 1) The first is how some important constructions of the history of philosophy in the Christian West—religious or secular—exclude Islamic philosophy not only in fact but in principle—thus, we may surmise, contributing to our notion that Muslims are moved irrationally and that their world is incomprehensible to us.
- 2) The second is how, especially in France, treatments of Islamic philosophy have been constructed which make it actual for the West.
- 3) The third is how the books on Arabic and Islamic philosophy published since 9/11 would require reshaping the histories of philosophy dominating our part of Western philosophical academe if we were to grant that the traditions they describe are real continuations of Hellenic philosophical rationality. Significantly, including Islamic philosophy would equally require including much of the Greek and Latin philosophy now neglected or excluded in principle by our university Philosophy departments.

I begin with a partial survey of how the history of philosophy is treated.

Treatments Of The History Of Philosophy

A. Harvard and Oxbridge

Because Harvard, Oxford, and Cambridge have a pre-eminent academic prestige for the Anglo-American Protestant world, itself claiming a power unequalled in human history which gives America and Britain acting together the means and the responsibility to reshape the Islamic Middle East, the treatment of the history of philosophy there especially requires our attention. The degree to which Oxbridge and the Protestant Ivy League define the centre is exhibited by the fact that what they refuse to accept within the boundaries of philosophical reason is investigated outside their walls. Thus, while the exclusions of Harvard Philosophy are more or less reiterated within the rest of the Ivy League of secularised Calvinism, some of what is refused there is taught at the margins: Neoplatonism and medieval philosophy have a place in the Roman Catholic universities, in Canada, and within Canada especially in Québec. In consequence there is as much work done on Neoplatonism in Canada as there is in the USA or in Britain! In the British world, students can learn something about Neoplatonism at the Universities of Liverpool and London. Ireland plays a role like that of Québec in North America. Let us start with Harvard, which many regard as the greatest of universities, because none exceed it in the purity which exclusion gives.

North Americans found the 20th century's greatest historian of Medieval Philosophy, Étienne Gilson irresistible. The range and depth of his learning, the beauty of his imagination, and his capacity for moving rhetorical simplicity brought him repeated invitations to the summits of American academe. Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Berkeley, only to name some, welcomed him warmly. Nonetheless, after he got to know the leading philosophers on these exalted heights of WASP academe Gilson discovered that he was not really having any positive effect on how philosophy was done there. At Harvard he discerned not only that philosophy and its history were to be strictly separated in that world but that the first was thought to depend upon ignorance of the second. Professor Gilson reported after a visit:

As for the history of philosophy, they don't see any use for it. Perry is quite upset. He thinks that too much studying of the systems of others prevents young people from finding one of their own.⁶

A 1938 review of Gilson's *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* in *The Yale Review* gives us a reason for neglecting the philosophy of the premodern world in particular. The author agreed with Gilson that modern philosophy has been self-destructively skeptical, but continued: "for all its inadequacy the modern world has at least moved on, and in the process it has tremendously increased its positive knowledge and its technical skill." As a result, "the possibility is again open of reason developing the logical consequences of the positive knowledge of empirical science without destroying itself in the process."

Richard McKeon in the same journal, when reviewing *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, put the same kind of reasoning in another way, one which it is important for us to note. McKeon concluded:

...the exposition of a Christian philosophy, based on a religious foundation, which Professor Gilson himself recognizes...will not again, in the absence of that religious spirit, serve for unification for mankind...Most modern readers...will find little in the doctrines of the Middle Ages...which can be recognized as directly relevant to modern problems. For the justification of philosophy is by the reason it employs, not the faith which it may seek to understand.⁷

Philosophy in WASP America would serve positive science which it supposed united mankind, not religion which divided it. For it Gilson's position belonged to the same dead world where they would also have located Islamic philosophy had they been

⁶ See Gilson in L.K. Shook, *Étienne Gilson*, The Étienne Gilson Series 6 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), 150.

⁷ C.A. Hart, *New Scholasticism*, 25 (1951), 42. The review of *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* is in *The Yale Review*, 28 (1938): 203-205; Richard McKeon's review is in *The Yale Review*, 26 (1936-37): 396-397.

interested in it. This was the period in which the British Empire had finally reached its greatest extent by acquiring a whole new set of possessions and dependencies in the Middle East. It occurred to none on the leading heights of Anglo-American Protestant power that the modern world might not have definitively “moved on” and that the avatars might resurrect and even successfully attack the capitals of its empire.

In any case the refusal of most of its history which Gilson found at Harvard seventy years ago still belongs to the definition of what Philosophy does there. The Department is not large—it has less than thirty members even including visitors and “other Harvard Faculty offering instruction in Philosophy.”⁸ There is at present no class offered in the Department on the philosophical developments in the two millennia between Aristotle and Descartes apart from classes on medieval science given in the history of science programme. When I was a Visiting Scholar there in 2001 and sought to find someone who worked on Neoplatonism I was referred to Robert Wisnovsky, not in Philosophy but in Islamic studies, whose magisterial book entitled *Avicenna’s Metaphysics in Context* appeared in 2003. This extraordinarily learned and philosophically acute study, dependent on a mastery of the Greek, Latin, and Arabic sources as well as on the multilingual modern scholarship, shows how Avicenna’s metaphysics takes its departure from unresolved problems in later Greek Neoplatonism. Despite the gaps in what Harvard knew which Wisnovsky filled, by the time I returned as a Visiting Scholar in 2005 Wisnovsky had moved to Québec where at McGill he had become head of the distinguished Islamic Institute. His learning has not been replaced at Harvard. When recently the Department of the Classics attempted to appoint an expert in Neoplatonism, the Philosophy Department said that it would refuse to recognise her classes. As Gilson discovered, ignorance of the history of philosophy at Harvard is principled and determined.

Cambridge across the Atlantic sympathises with its younger protégée in the way that it treats philosophy much as it once did in religion. The only person listed as a member of the Faculty of Philosophy who bridges the gap between Classical ancient philosophy and the 17th and 18th century moderns is John Marenbon.⁹ However, this learned historian of medieval philosophy of an analytical cast of mind is not actually a teaching member of the Faculty at all but rather holds a research post at Trinity College where, as his official webpage tells us, “he runs an informal history of philosophy seminar,” in which I participated while a Visiting Fellow there. His predecessor, the important historian of medieval philosophy Peter Dronke, was kept out of the Faculty of Philosophy altogether, holding a post in the department of “Other Languages”! Neither the leading world expert on Avicenna’s logic, Tony Street, nor the student of Werner Beierwaltes, Douglas Hedley, an expert on Platonism in the modern world, are part of the Faculty of Philosophy. Both are located in the Faculty of Divinity. No one holds a post to teach Neoplatonism at Cambridge.

⁸ See <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~phildept/>

⁹ See <http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/>

The Faculty of Philosophy at Oxford describes itself as “one of the world’s great centres for philosophy” with “more than seventy professional philosophers.”¹⁰ What it excludes as philosophical reason will then be of the greatest importance. There Ancient philosophy goes no later than Stoicism and Skepticism. Although the distinguished historian of the ancient Peripatetic tradition, Richard Sorabji, is listed among the seventy, in fact he has retired from the University of London where he was replaced by the excellent young historian of Arabic philosophy, Peter Adamson, and his position at Oxford is as an Honorary Fellow of Wolfson. No one has taught Neoplatonism at Oxford since the great Eric Dodds retired forty years ago. His groundbreaking studies were motivated by a genuine philosophical enthusiasm for what he investigated. However, not only was Dodds in Classics not Philosophy—he was Regius Professor of Greek—but even there he was pressured out of teaching about the school which dominated philosophy for more than a thousand years.¹¹ My arrival at Oxford in 1978 to do a D.Phil. on Aquinas’s Neoplatonism had been immediately preceded by the folding up of the Readership in Medieval Philosophy when L. Minio-Paluello retired after a life devoted to publishing painstaking editions of the medieval Latin translations of the Arabic philosophers. I was required to travel to Paris and Rome to find help with my research. Within the last few years Minio-Paluello has finally been replaced by Cecilia Trifogli, another Italian philologist-historian who works mostly on the history of science in the Middle Ages. Brian Leftow, who occupies the Nolloth Chair in the Philosophy of the Christian Religion located at Oriel, has a professional interest in Medieval philosophy. Richard Cross, also at Oriel, and Marilyn McCord Adams, a Canon Professor at Christ Church, are certainly authentic experts on medieval philosophy, but they are placed outside the professional seventy; their appointments are in the Faculty of Theology. Fritz W. Zimmerman, a Fellow of one of my colleges in Oxford, St Cross, and the Lecturer in Islamic Philosophy in the Oriental Institute, is likewise an outsider. He has published both translations of Islamic philosophical texts and articles on the connection of Islamic philosophy with Neoplatonism, although nothing has appeared for almost a decade. To what does all this amount?

As one might expect given the unsystematic modes of Oxford and of the English mind, and given the number of philosophers there, an enormous range of historical learning and philosophical speculation is to be found. Philosophy at Oxford is a full and varied jackdaw’s nest—not for it the Puritanical exclusions of Harvard or even of Cambridge. There is no endeavour, however, to provide access to all the essential elements of the history of western philosophy, let alone an attempt to find their connection. In general the approach at Oxford is to separate the philosophical arguments as logical questions from the contexts in which they occur. Thus, although Medieval philosophy is not excluded in principle, because arguments deemed worth considering are to be found in its massive bulk, the Neoplatonism, which underlay its connecting and distinguishing of philosophy and religion and which most completely considered the need

¹⁰ See <http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/>

¹¹ See my “Re-evaluating E.R. Dodds’ Platonism,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 103 (2005), in press.

for this relation, is not taught. Moreover, the continuous tradition of Hellenic philosophy within Islam is not regarded as something required in order that we might have a full understanding of the range, kinds, and conditions of philosophical reasoning.

B. Islamic Philosophy in France

Before passing on to say a word or two about how Islamic philosophy is located within treatments of the history of philosophy in France—which requires a reference to Germany—it will be useful to return briefly to Étienne Gilson. Evidently he came out of the French academic world which aims to give a full account of the history of philosophy including both that of western Europe and of the Islamic world. In Paris, when the offerings and researches of the universities, the Collège de France, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), and the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE) are combined, there is an expert edition, translation, exposition, and analysis of the texts of the history of philosophy, Western, Middle Eastern and Oriental, by philosophically educated historians and philologists and a philosophical engagement with their ideas not to be matched anywhere else in the world. Gilson’s outstanding contribution was to the development of medieval philosophy both in terms of extending exact historical knowledge and in terms of the present demands of its intellectual claims as “Christian philosophy.” Within that development, and as essential to it, he worked with many to expand our knowledge of Islamic and Jewish philosophy in our Middle Ages. The use of what he and his fellow Christian medieval historians accomplished is recognised by Islam’s own historians of philosophy. Nonetheless, the facts that these Westerners were only interested in the “role played by Islamic philosophy in Latin scholasticism,”¹² and that many students of Western philosophy only know about it in that context, may lead to the kind of misunderstanding of its character displayed by the Regensburg lecture of Pope Benedict XVI. Partly this misunderstanding may stem from the fact that the 12th and 13th centuries, the point at which the influence of Islamic philosophy of the West was greatest, was also the point at which, within Sunni Islam *falsafah* had both reached its greatest intellectual power and influence and was declining. Following the attacks of al-Ghazzali and the response of Ibn Rushd (our Averroës), Seyyed Hossein Nasr tells us both that “in the western lands of Islam,” *falsafah* “ceased to exist as an independent and rigorously defined discipline” and also that “in the eastern lands of Islam and particularly in Persia the role [and future] of *falsafah* was quite different.”¹³ Thus, even if (and there are problems with this) Sunni Islam were able to be convicted of irrationalism in virtue of the loss of philosophy as “an independent and rigorously defined discipline,” this would not be a criticism which could be sustained against Islam as such. To convict Islam of irrationalism on this basis would be like condemning Christianity of the same because of Calvinism’s predestinarianism and Protestantism’s general opposition to natural

¹² See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophesy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 45.

theology.¹⁴ An error of the same kind is made when the ideas of the most extreme school within Islamic *Kalām* (i.e. dialectical or scholastic theology) are used to convict Islam itself of irrational voluntarism. Unfortunately, those basing their views on Hegel's account of Islam do just this.

(B-1) *G.W.F. Hegel*

Hegel's treatment of philosophy and theology in Islam is largely derived from Moses Maimonides. As long as Hegel is treating "Arabian philosophy," he does well enough given what he knew of the phenomena. There is the limitation like that of Gilson and his associates that Hegel is only interested in the Arabs as receiving Greek intellectual culture and passing it on to the West. Nonetheless, he recognised their intellectual genius, the love of philosophy, and something of the character of the result. Hegel says:

Philosophy, along with all the other arts and sciences, flourished to an extraordinary degree...[It] was fostered and cherished among the Arabians...In the Arabic philosophy, which shows a free, brilliant and profound degree of imagination, Philosophy and the sciences took the same bent that they had taken earlier among the Greeks...Consequently it is the Alexandrian or Neo-Platonic Idea which forms the essential principle or basis of the Arabian as well as of the Scholastic philosophy, and all that Christian philosophy offers...[I]t will be found that the main dogmas of this philosophy have much in common with those of the Scholastics.¹⁵

Hegel says nothing, however, about what the Islamic philosophers changed in the Hellenic deposit so as to deliver it to the Latins in a different form than that in which they had received it. The most important of these transformations is characterised by Alain de Libera in terms of establishing the philosophical known world as a scientifically constructed totality over against what is made known by religious revelation. As de Libera puts it, the Arabs mediated the texts of Aristotle to the Latins as "a total philosophic corpus, into which the whole of Hellenistic thought, profoundly

¹⁴ See Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University": "Dehellenization first emerges in connection with the postulates of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Looking at the tradition of scholastic theology, the Reformers thought they were confronted with a faith system totally conditioned by philosophy, that is to say an articulation of the faith based on an alien system of thought. As a result, faith no longer appeared as a living historical Word but as one element of an overarching philosophical system. The principle of sola scriptura, on the other hand, sought faith in its pure, primordial form, as originally found in the biblical Word. Metaphysics appeared as a premise derived from another source, from which faith had to be liberated in order to become once more fully itself. When Kant stated that he needed to set thinking aside in order to make room for faith, he carried this programme forward with a radicalism that the Reformers could never have foreseen. He thus anchored faith exclusively in practical reason, denying it access to reality as a whole."

¹⁵ *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane and Simson [1896] reprint (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955), iii, 26-29.

neoplatonised, had surreptitiously crept.”¹⁶ This is a very different view of philosophy from that which Aquinas found among either his Christian or his pagan Hellenic sources and sets the point of departure for the *Summa Theologiae*, providing what moves him to establish for Latin Christians the basis of a secular humanism.¹⁷ Hegel’s treatment becomes deeply problematic—not to say polemical—when he goes on to describe the *Kalām*. Hegel is very clear that his source, Maimonides, is describing a movement in philosophical theology which Rambam rightly supposed began among Byzantine Christians, which spread from them to Jewish and Islamic theologians, and which Maimonides, standing on the shoulders of his Islamic philosophical co-workers, opposed.¹⁸ Maimonides cannot be blamed for Hegel’s polemical misrepresentation; he has a proper veneration for the Islamic Peripatetics to whom he owes his philosophical education. Hegel takes Maimonides’ description of the most extremely voluntaristic sect of these dialectical theologians—a position which may be compared to the most extreme Calvinistic predestinarianism or Malebranche’s occasionalism among Christians—to describe the Islamic idea of God itself and its philosophical result.¹⁹ Benedict XVI may be a victim of the continuation of Hegel’s polemical misrepresentations among German intellectual historians. Although the Pope himself would not make this mistake, a condemnation of Islam by Christians on this basis forgets that an extreme voluntarism continually repeats itself within Christianity especially among those under the influence of Augustine.²⁰ Unless they had no access to Christian thinkers except the most extreme Augustinians between Duns Scotus and Pascal, fair-minded judges would not condemn

¹⁶ Alain de Libera, *Penser au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 20. For brief description of this Aristotelianism, see idem, *La querelle des universaux: De Platon à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Des travaux (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 117 and 68-124.

¹⁷ See my “Aquinas at the Origins of Secular Humanism? Sources and innovation in *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 1, a.1,” *Nova et Vetera* [The English Edition of the International Theological Journal], 5:1 (2007): 17-40.

¹⁸ *Hegel’s Lectures*, iii, 27-28, 30-31, 35-36.

¹⁹ For an example of a continuation of these errors and polemics in the American imperial interest see Floy Elizabeth Doull, “Wanted: A Philosophical Foundation for the Equality of Religion and Culture in Canada,” in *Multiculturalism and Religious Freedom*, ed. Susan Harris (Charlottetown: St. Peter Publications, 2005), 157-186. For an example of the best kind of alternative see Ernest Wolf-Gazo, “Contextualizing Averroes within the German Hermeneutical Tradition,” *Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 16 (1996): 133-163.

²⁰ Benedict acknowledges in “Faith, Reason and the University”: “In all honesty, one must observe that in the late Middle Ages we find trends in theology which would sunder this synthesis between the Greek spirit and the Christian spirit. In contrast with the so-called intellectualism of Augustine and Thomas, there arose with Duns Scotus a voluntarism which, in its later developments, led to the claim that we can only know God’s voluntas ordinata. Beyond this is the realm of God’s freedom, in virtue of which he could have done the opposite of everything he has actually done. This gives rise to positions which clearly approach those of Ibn Hazn and might even lead to the image of a capricious God, who is not even bound to truth and goodness. God’s transcendence and otherness are so exalted that our reason, our sense of the true and good, are no longer an authentic mirror of God, whose deepest possibilities remain eternally unattainable and hidden behind his actual decisions.”

Christianity on a whole on the ground of this tendency in its theology.²¹ We must consider below what motivates Hegel's misrepresentation of Islam which has been useful, together with the rest of his history of philosophy, to constructing the mentality of Protestant Western imperialism.

(B-2) *Émile Bréhier*

With Hegel and with the French in his wake—whether they are following him, their own Auguste Comte (1790-1856), or Heidegger's reaction against the Hegelian unification of being, thought, and history²²—philosophy and its history are inextricably intertwined. In his attempt to promote the idea of Christian philosophy Gilson's first opponent was a figure whom I shall designate as the default historian of philosophy for 20th century France, Emile Bréhier (1876-1952). As an philosophical historian of philosophy, Bréhier unites Hegel, Comte, and a deep study of Neoplatonism in a way which illumines the 20th century French historiography of philosophy for us.

Bréhier not only constructed a complete history of Western philosophy but also considered how the modern constructions of the history could be and were made. He tells us the:

feeling that philosophy essentially has a history was intensified when, in the 18th century, it was recognised that there is a solidarity as between the various periods in human development. Spiritual life can only be described as a reality which has developed gradually...²³

This conception began in connection with sacred history but was secularised by Condorcet. His work:

Led...to the assertion that there is a unity in the evolution of the mind which makes all doctrines necessarily successive aspects of the same idea. Between them no real and complete opposition is possible: their diversity and opposition are reabsorbed into the unity of history. It is a fact...that the great speculative minds of the beginning of the 19th century, Hegel and Auguste Comte, sought in their turn for the rhythm and cadence of this

²¹ Benedict discerningly places "Pascal's distinction between the God of the philosophers and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" as the point of departure for the second wave of Dehellenization.

²² See Pierre Aubenque, "La question de l'ontothéologie chez Aristote et Hegel," en *La question de dieu selon Aristote et Hegel*, éd. Thomas de Koninck et Guy Planty-Bonjour (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1991), 259–83 and my "Why Heidegger's "History" of Metaphysics is Dead," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 78:3 (2004): 425-443.

²³ É. Bréhier, "The Formation of our History of Philosophy," in *Philosophy and History, essays presented to Ernst Cassirer*, edited by Raymond Klibansky and H.L. Paton, 1st ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936; reprint Harper Torch Books. New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 159–172 at 166.

evolution; for, in history as they conceive it, a doctrine...is...a necessary moment in the evolution which produces it and which carries it away.²⁴

The Middle Ages posed the greatest problem for the construction of this progressive history—a problem which was solved by Hegel when he “saw in Christianity...the essential principle of modern philosophy.”²⁵ For these progressive historians, as for Aristotle, the nature of a living being and also the stages of its growth can only be judged when it has reached its perfection. In consequence, as Bréhier writes:

This is why the history of philosophy in Comte and Hegel... is an inverted history, which really begins at the end, and disposes all its content in time according to its view of the issue of the process. It is in the philosophy of mind of Hegel and in the positivism of Comte that we must seek the explanation of the riddle of history, or rather, the authority for treating history as a riddle to be solved...[Previous historians] always write history as if we had arrived at what the Apocalypse calls the ‘end of time’. This allows the Hegelians to treat the history of philosophy as a revelation of the mind to itself, and to approach the history of thought with the respect which the theologian shows for the Scriptures: the *Entwicklung* is a *Selbstoffenbarung*.²⁶

As with Hegel, in this own work when he functions as an historian, Bréhier says of himself, “I remain a philosopher.” He writes of his history: “it is first a recitation as faithful as I am capable of making it; it is, however, not only a recitation and...my final purpose...is to disengage, in its purity, the essence of philosophy,”²⁷ the rationality, which he regarded as needing to be protected and promoted. Bréhier makes his dependence explicit: Hegel (and Comte) provide the basis, and Hegel (and Leibniz) give the model for unifying philosophy and history.²⁸ Nonetheless, for him the nineteenth-century predecessors represent an extreme position where “The past is no longer opposed to the present; the past conditions it and, justified by it, the past merely unfolds the unity of a systematic and preconceived plan.”²⁹ This criticism is not, however, a rejection. Bréhier identifies his own work in writing the history of philosophy with a conception of philosophical reason he finds in Hegel’s *Encyclopedia*:

²⁴ Ibid., 166-167.

²⁵ Ibid., 167.

²⁶ Ibid., 168 and 171.

²⁷ Bréhier, “Comment je comprends,” 7 & 9.

²⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁹ É. Bréhier, *The History of Philosophy*, i, 23.

The history of philosophy is the development of a “single living mind” taking possession of itself; it merely sets forth in time what philosophy itself, “liberated from external historical circumstances, sets forth in a pure state in the element of thought.”³⁰

Nonetheless, Bréhier’s following of Hegel is limited. At the beginning of the concluding chapter of his book on Plotinus, he writes:

Not that I consider Plotinian thought an entity in itself which was purely and simply added to prevailing ideas and maintained in full in later thought. The history of philosophy does not reveal to us ideas existing in themselves, but only the men who think. Its method, like every historical method, is nominalistic. Ideas do not, strictly speaking, exist for it.³¹

Furthermore, for Bréhier, “collective philological work pursued without intermission” must now correct the great systematic visions which have made modern history of philosophy possible.

Crucially for our investigation Bréhier shared Hegel’s negative view of what both of them called the “Oriental” and in terms of which Hegel defined Islamic philosophy. He had written:

We...see an utter inconstancy of everything; and this whirl of all things is essentially Oriental. But at the same time, this is certainly also a complete dissolution of all that pertains to reasonableness, in harmony with the Eastern exaltation of spirit, which allows of nothing definite.³²

Bréhier follows Hegel closely when he treats Islamic philosophy, something he does briefly under the rubric of “Philosophy in the East,” a chapter occurring within and in service to his survey of Medieval Latin philosophy.³³ For him

The Islamic concept of divine arbitrariness stands in sharp contrast to the concept of a rational order of development which the Greek philosophers introduced into the world.³⁴

³⁰ Ibid., 22.

³¹ Bréhier, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, 182.

³² *Hegel’s Lectures*, iii, 33.

³³ É. Bréhier, *The History of Philosophy*, vol. 3, *The Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, translated by Wade Baskin (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 88-112.

³⁴ Ibid., 89-90.

His section on “The Moslem Theologians” concludes with the same “atomistic theory advocated by the school of Askari (876-935)” in terms of which Hegel had summed up Muslim divinity.³⁵ The Islamic philosophy is “essentially a Neo-Platonic interpretation of the whole of Aristotle’s work,” which, in virtue of its religious and mystical aspects, Bréhier represented as betraying “the spirit of Aristotle.”³⁶ Its history seems to come to an end with Averroës. The externality of religion *vis-à-vis* philosophy (and the Oriental *vis-à-vis* the Occidental) which Bréhier finds here presented itself to him from the beginning of his historical studies. These had commenced with a consideration of the works of Philo of Alexandria.³⁷

Shortly after his book on Philo appeared, Bréhier published a monograph on *Chrysippus* and then moved on to finding “a disassociation between rational philosophy and positive philosophy” in Schelling, partly owed to religion. With this behind him, he undertook the study of Plotinus. There he found again the duality of Occidental reason and Oriental mysticism. In treating Plotinus, Bréhier determinatively follows Hegel, who is praised as “a man who was particularly qualified through his mental disposition to comprehend Plotinus.”³⁸ For the two of them, in Plotinian mystical elevation, there is not really a passage beyond thought; instead, Bréhier judges, quoting Hegel:

Replying to the objections of those who make of Plotinus a mystical enthusiast, Hegel says that for Plotinus ecstasy was “pure thought which exists in itself [*bei sich*] and has itself for object.” “Plotinus had the idea that the essence of God is thought itself and that the essence is present in thought.”...It follows from this that the One is not, as one might think at first, the region where philosophic thought leaves off in order to be transformed into the inarticulate stammering of the mystic. The reality of the One corresponds to the affirmation of the essential autonomy of the spiritual life when this life is comprehended in itself, not through isolated fragments but in its concrete fullness. That is why Hegel was right in saying that “the thought of the Plotinian philosophy is an intellectualism or a lofty idealism.”³⁹

For Bréhier, Plotinus’s quest for mystical union does not come from within Hellenism:

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

³⁷ See my *One Hundred Years of Neoplatonism in France: A Brief Philosophical History*, published with *Levinas and the Greek Heritage*, by Jean-Marc Narbonne, Studies in Philosophical Theology (Leuven/Paris/Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006), 120-130.

³⁸ Bréhier, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, 190.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 190–191. Bréhier is quoting Hegel, *Werke*, XV, 39–41.

[W]e find at the very center of Plotinus' thought a foreign element which defies classification. The theory of Intelligence as universal being derives neither from Greek rationalism nor from the piety diffused throughout the religious circles of his day.... Thus I am led to seek the source of the philosophy of Plotinus beyond the Orient close to Greece, in the religious speculations of India, which by the time of Plotinus had been founded for centuries on the Upanishads and had retained their vitality.... With Plotinus, then, we lay hold of the first link in a religious tradition which is no less powerful basically in the West than the Christian tradition, although it does not manifest itself in the same way. I believe that this tradition comes from India.⁴⁰

Among twentieth-century Plotinian scholars, Bréhier's theory of an Indian source for Plotinus and his analysis of Plotinian mysticism as a supreme intellectualism are altogether exceptional, placing him outside the overwhelming consensus.⁴¹ For Hegel, they are necessities of his progressive history of philosophy; it cannot in principle have returned from rational subjectivity to "the inarticulate stammering of the mystic." Equally with Bréhier they belong to how he understands philosophy and the purpose of his life's labour.

It is essential to Bréhier's understanding of Plotinus, as well as to his shaping of the history of philosophy generally, that philosophy, and intellectual contemplation, which are for him peculiar to the Occident, and the desire for mystical union beyond thought, which for him belongs to religion and is Oriental, be kept separate. Bréhier's separation and the rejection of that separation both by his contemporaries like Gilson and also by his successors are crucial to the debate about the history of philosophy in France, giving it life. Among his French contemporaries, the issues involved emerge clearly in respect to the history of medieval philosophy.

The mixture of Hegelian and positivist shaping of the history of philosophy comes out strongly in Bréhier's *The Philosophy of the Middle Ages*. Henri Berr, the editor of the series in which Bréhier's volume appeared—significantly titled: "Library of the Evolution of Humanity, collective synthesis; Second section, VII: the intellectual evolution,"—sums up Bréhier's argument in terms of a recovery of the authentic Occidental heritage of the Greeks by the elimination of this Oriental element.⁴² Bréhier himself writes that:

⁴⁰ Ibid., 116–18.

⁴¹ A.M. Wolters, "A Survey of Modern Scholarly Opinion on Plotinus and Indian Thought," in *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought*, edited by R. Baine Harris (Norfolk, Virginia: International Society for Neoplatonic Study, 1982), 293–308 at 296–99.

⁴² É. Bréhier, *La Philosophie du Moyen Âge*, Bibliothèque de l'évolution de l'humanité, synthèse collective; Deuxième section, VII: L'évolution intellectuelle (Paris: Albin Michel, 1937), ii.

Philosophy received its original impulse in Greece and, from this impulse, it has retained the love and the passion for freedom; I do not deny that philosophy is a rare plant in the whole of humanity, indeed we may even call it a fragile plant; and there has not been, so far as I know, any philosophy named and characterised precisely in this way elsewhere than in our Western civilization.⁴³

Preserving this rare and fragile plant by searching the history in order to discern the pure essence of philosophy was the work to which he devoted his life. Evidently openness to the ongoing association of philosophy and religion which characterises Islamic philosophy will not help guard the threatened life of this historically unique Hellenic and Western rationality.

If Bréhier writes a remarkably comprehensive history of philosophy which despite its inclusiveness tends to designate the Islamic as irrational, there are quite opposite currents in French philosophy and its constructions of history. I have touched on some of them:

1. the Heideggerian criticism of Hegel and his unification of being and logos, with history,
2. a totally opposed conception of Neoplatonism and of the relations of reason, mysticism, and religion which such a rethinking of Neoplatonism implies, and
3. the treatment of Islamic philosophy by Alain de Libera.

I shall close my treatment of French history of philosophy with remarks on two of these: Henry Corbin, who, under the influence of Heidegger and contemporaneously with those under the same influence who rescued Neoplatonism from Hegelian service to the progressive march of Western rationality, wrote the first history of Islamic philosophy taking it up to the present and making it philosophically actual, and Alain de Libera who in opposition to the Heideggerian account of Western metaphysics endeavoured to restore and reuse the philosophical bridge which the medievals constructed across the Islamic Jewish Christian divide. I begin with the younger, de Libera, not only because his work is more immediately intelligible within the categories we already have before us, but also because Corbin leads more directly to the last part of this paper.

(B-3) Alain de Libera

Alain de Libera is at present Ordinary Professor of Philosophy at the University of Geneva where he occupies the Chair in the History of Medieval Philosophy. Born in 1948 he belongs to the same generation as Jean-Luc Marion (he is two years younger than Marion) and they have been collaborators in rewriting the history of philosophy in France after Bréhier. He comes out of the same intellectual milieu as Marion having received much of his university formation at the *École pratique des hautes études*, V^e

⁴³ É. Bréhier, "Comment je comprends l'histoire de la philosophie," (1947) reprinted in idem, *Études de philosophie antique*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955), 1–9 at 8.

Section, Sciences religieuses. The EPHE, founded in 1868, is “pratique” because the teaching is conducted by research scholars introducing the auditeurs to the method and content of their research. It shares with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, a purely research organisation, the peculiarity of including Catholic priests who according to the laws of French “Laïcité”⁴⁴ are otherwise forbidden to teach in the public education system—which is the only one to give degrees recognised by the state! There de Libera studied under the great lay and clerical French scholars of Neoplatonism, and of Medieval and Islamic Philosophy like René Roques, Paul Vignaux, Pierre Hadot, and Jean Jolivet, and alongside historians of philosophy, philosophers, and philologists like Marion, Philippe Hoffmann, [Michel Tardieu](#), and Alain Segonds. Here philosophy is done and its history studied in the world’s greatest institute for Sciences religieuses having been founded in the later 19th century as an acceptable substitute for theology in the institutions of a secular state.⁴⁵ While the mentality in the V^e Section is not that of the theologian, all the relations of philosophy and religion, affirmative and critical, are investigated there. From 1975 de Libera taught in this section of the École eventually becoming Directeur d’études of Histoire des théologies chrétiennes dans l’occident médiéval, a Chair, which, under the title Histoire des doctrines et des dogmes, had been occupied by Étienne Gilson, and then, as Histoire des théologies médiévales, by Paul Vignaux. At the CNRS he was, from 1984 to 1998, responsable for l’équipe d’Histoire de la pensée médiévale du Centre d’études des religions du Livre, which evidently combines the study of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

With the teachers and fellow students he had de Libera could not have helped breathing in the Heideggerian philosophical air and many of his extraordinarily voluminous writings show the general preoccupation with the question of the so-called

⁴⁴ “Laïcité” has a widely varying group of meanings resulting from its long evolution within Western Christendom generally and in France particularly; at its harshest it is a notion which exceeds the American separation of church and state, being used by the French republic at present to assert the absolute autonomy of the secular power and excludes Catholic clergy and religious from teaching in the state schools or universities and recently persons who display religious symbols from state institutions. See “Laïc/laïcat,” *Dictionnaire critique de théologie*, sous la direction de Jean-Yves Lacoste, 2^e éd. (Paris: Quadrige/ Presses Universitaires de France, 2002) 639-642 at 639. For its effects on the university and scholarship, see my *Cent Ans De Néoplatonisme En France*, 123-268, 154ff. De Libera’s argument in *Raison et Foi* neither justifies, nor seems to intend to justify, the extreme exclusion and control of religion currently associated with *laïcité*. In appropriating the teachings of John Paul II, his interest does not seem to go further than the protection of the autonomy of research and teaching in the university from religious intolerance in a way that the Pope might well support.

⁴⁵ See Jean Baubérot, Jacques Béguin, François Laplanche, Émile Poulat, Claude Tradits, Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Cent ans de sciences religieuses en France à l’École pratique des hautes études*, Sciences humaines et religions (Paris: Cerf, 1987) and Paul Vignaux, (éd.) *Problèmes et Méthodes, d’histoire des religions. Mélanges publiés par la Section des Sciences religieuses à l’occasion du centenaire de l’École pratique des Hautes Études* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968).

onto-theological structure of Western metaphysics. Despite Heidegger's own judgments about it, this is one of the rare atmospheres in the Western contemporary world which gives life to Neoplatonism and its offshoots because it offers a philosophical alternative to the traps of ontology—and to writing the history of philosophy as the Hegelian march forward of subjectivity. Within this framework de Libera developed an understanding of the Arabic Peripatetics, whose work provided the philosophical foundation for Aquinas and the scholastics of the 13th century generally. He contributed to showing how their Aristotle conveyed Platonism. De Libera writes of them:

Il n'y a plus à concilier Aristote et Platon, car Aristote lui-même a absorbé le platonisme, non plus certes le platonisme de Platon, mais celui du Plotinus Arabus et du Proclus Arabus. Le fruit de cette improbable assimilation est le péripatétisme arab.⁴⁶

According to de Libera this “syncretistic” Neoplatonism, “which corrects Plato by Aristotle and completes Aristotle with Plato” and of which Albert the Great is the Latin propagator, enables the reception of “Peripatetic philosophy into the Christian, Platonist tradition.”⁴⁷

Without denying the correctness of any of his earlier work, de Libera has recently moved on—together with the rest of French philosophy generally—to a radical questioning of the Heideggerian framing of the history of philosophy. Once all the Neoplatonic alternatives within the history are admitted into the forum of philosophical metaphysics, the French are coming to judge with Jean-François Courtine “that Heidegger possessed a completely frozen and reductive notion of medieval metaphysics” and to determine, in consequence, with Rudi Imbach—who now holds the Chair in Medieval Philosophy at the Sorbonne—“that Western metaphysics is a barbarous and bastard, but vigorous, child of a formidable interbreeding.”⁴⁸ De Libera has contributed to showing what Neoplatonism gave to this “formidable interbreeding” and concludes:

By a certain type of subtle archaeology, liberated from the horizon of onto-theology, I believe, in any case, that it is possible to approach in a

⁴⁶ A. de Libera, *La querelle des universaux: De Platon à la fin du Moyen Age*, Des travaux (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 117 and see 68-124.

⁴⁷ de Libera, *La querelle*, 245-262 at 257 and to somewhat the same effect E. Booth, *Aristotelian Aporetic Ontology in Islamic and Christian Thinkers*, Cambridge Studies in medieval life and thought III, 20 (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 163-267 with the contrast between “Albertus Magnus: A logico-emanationist figure as a means of accepting Peripatetic philosophy into the Christian, Platonist tradition” and “Thomas Aquinas: the ‘Aufhebung’ of Radical Aristotelian ontology into a PseudoDionysian-Proclean ontology of ‘esse’”.

⁴⁸ R. Imbach, “Heidegger et la philosophie médiévale,” *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 49 (2002): 426–435 at 431 and 435; see J.-F. Courtine, “Métaphysique et Onto-théologie,” in *Actes du XXVII^e Congrès de l’ Association des Sociétés de Philosophie de Langue Française. La métaphysique: son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux*, édité par Luc Langlois et Jean-Marc Narbonne, Collection Zétésis (Paris/Québec: Vrin/Presses de l’Université Laval, 2000).

true historical way the plurality of medieval metaphysics, and at the same time it is possible also perhaps to throw a bridge between the metaphysics of yesterday and the metaphysics of today.⁴⁹

His erection of this bridge is of crucial interest to us.

Most of de Libera's work concerns epistemology and a great part of the work of two decades is gathered in his volume entitled *La querelle des universaux*. It makes Islamic philosophy actual insofar as it shows how the same problems bequeathed to the world by the opposed Platonic and Aristotelian approaches to knowing are taken up in different, and always illuminating, ways by the later Neoplatonists and Peripatetics, their Islamic philosophical heirs, the Latin medievals, German Idealism and 20th century Phenomenology.⁵⁰ It is not, however, to this that I would have us turn. His *Raison et Foi: Archéologie d'une crise d'Albert le Grand à Jean-Paul II*⁵¹ published in 2003 is part of his endeavour to use the study of the religious and intellectual culture of the Middle Ages—a period in which Judaism, Christianity, and Islam met through the medium of philosophy—to illumine both their meeting with one another and the clash of secular institutions with them in our contemporary societies. His last chapter is entitled: “Les enfants de Billy Graham et de Mecca-Cola.” De Libera sees an intolerance accompanying the religious revival which is taking place in the 21st century and judges that this intolerant religiosity is a threat both to what the French call *laïcité*, and also to the university which de Libera calls, “*institution de chrétienté*.” He writes: “the institution which has made the autonomy of research and science its founding charter sees itself reproached today because of its tolerance.”⁵² He makes the struggles within institutions, philosophy, and theology at the 13th century University of Paris actual for the problematic of our own versions of these by exhibiting how the disputes between the philosophers and theologians of 13th century Paris picked up from and restructured the disputes between the *Kalām* and *falsafah* within the Islamic world. He argues that Aquinas' polemic against the Parisian Aristotelians invented the notion of Latin Averroism and the

⁴⁹ A. de Libera, “Genèse et structure des métaphysiques médiévales,” in Langlois et Narbonne (éds.), *La métaphysique: son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux*, 159–181 at 181.

⁵⁰ de Libera, *La querelle*, 105-108, 206-212.

⁵¹ Alain de Libera, *Raison et Foi: Archéologie d'une crise d'Albert le Grand à Jean-Paul II*, L'ordre philosophique (Paris: Seuil, 2003).

⁵² *Ibid.*, 358.

doctrine of double truth with which its Parisien adherents came to be associated and for which they were condemned. For him the condemnations, which ultimately encompassed the positions of Albert and Aquinas, pushed scientific autonomy towards the “separatism” now dividing theology and philosophy which Popes Leo XIII and John Paul II found so destructive—we may add Benedict XVI to their number. He concludes:

The paradox is that the vision of John Paul II in regard to the relations between faith and reason, philosophy and religion, erects as a model the strategy and principles of autonomy condemned by the Magisterium in 1277...the condemnations of 1277 have been the most formidable measure of ideological control taken by the Church in respect to philosophy. They forbid Albert the Great’s conception of the autonomy of the sciences, inviting by the same act the movement of separation which the Magisterium proposes today to arrest in making its own the position condemned.⁵³

Les enfants de Billy Graham et de Mecca-Cola are analogues of Bishop Tempier, and those who worked with him to have the positions of the Masters of Arts in Paris, of Albert the Great, and of Aquinas condemned. They threaten the university and *laïcité* in a way analogous to the way the Bishop threatened the university in the 13th century. De Libera pictures the 21st century as “sleepwalking towards a censure worse than any which the Middle Ages experienced.”⁵⁴ By way of these carefully constructed analogues between philosophy’s role within Islam, 13th century Paris, and the Europe and America of the new millennium, de Libera endeavours to help us learn something from what established and what threatened the autonomy of philosophy across the religious divides in the Middle Ages which might be applied to the present conflicts between Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

(B-4) *Henry Corbin*

Henry Corbin (1903-1978), like de Libera a married layman, was also a student and professor in the Section for Sciences religieuses of the École pratique des hautes études, where he took full advantage of the liberty it provided from the wars between religion and secularity in France. He studied Medieval Philosophy there under Gilson⁵⁵

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 359.

⁵⁵ Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin*, 16.

and from 1954 to 1974 held the position of directeur d'études as the successor to Louis Massignon (1883–1962) of whom he had also been a student.⁵⁶ Massignon was another revolutionary in bringing together the Christian and Islamic philosophical and spiritual worlds and, though like Gilson a fervent Catholic, he knew Islamic philosophy from the Arabic inside, not only through the medieval Latin translations, Gilson's mode and interest. In 1946 Corbin organised the Department of Iranology of the Franco-Iranian Institute in Tehran. There he established and directed the Bibliothèque Iranienne Series, an important collection of editions of Persian and Arabic texts together with analytical studies. If de Libera has become more open to the character and diversity of medieval metaphysics in virtue of being part of the criticism of Heidegger's history of Western metaphysics, Corbin was liberated from the narrow rationalism of Western philosophy by the sage of the Black Forest. Corbin was the first to translate Heidegger into French, publishing in 1938 a collection of texts under the title "Qu'est ce que la Métaphysique?" Heidegger's insistence on the hermeneutical helped Corbin deal with the crucial problem of how what he designated as "prophetic philosophy" could be faithful to both the prophetic revelation and to philosophy. Equally, Corbin's openness to the Neoplatonic multiform syntheses which give continuing life to Iranian philosophy came out of the Heideggerian disclosure that Western metaphysics does not exhaust the history of Being. In consequence, he was one of the very first Westerners to immerse himself in Islamic philosophy with more than an historicist mentality. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a long time collaborator and friend, and the author of *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* published this year, writes of him:

Finally, there came into being... only during the second half of the 20th century, a school that began to study Islamic philosophy as a living school of thought rather than as a matter of purely historical interest. The inner need of Western man for new "existential" knowledge of the Oriental traditions turned a number of seekers to search within the Islamic philosophical tradition for answers to questions posed by the modern world on the intellectual level.⁵⁷

People like Corbin in the West and himself in the East:

began a new type of scholarship in Islamic philosophy, which without sacrificing in any way the scholarly aspect of such studies, turned them directly into the service of the philosophical and metaphysical quest of those contemporary men and women who were aware of the profound

⁵⁶ Corbin wrote the Liminaire for the Annuaire of the V^e Section of the École in 1960-61: "L'École shaykhie en théologie shi'ite." On the connection with Massignon see Pierre Lory, "Henry Corbin: His Work and Influence," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), 1149.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

intellectual crisis of Western civilization and were seeking authentic philosophical knowledge elsewhere.⁵⁸

Such actualization cannot be one-sided and Nasr reports that “the last decades of the 20th century were also witness to the gradual penetration into and interaction with Western philosophy...”⁵⁹

One of the first fruits of this mutual penetration of Western and Islamic approaches was the writing of a new history of Islamic philosophy which:

treated Islamic philosophy and its history in a completely different way from other works in European languages and took fully into consideration the rapport between philosophical speculation and revelation in Islam.

The first volume was as a collaborative work between Corbin, Nasr, and Osman Yahya.⁶⁰ Subsequently Corbin completed the work which has been translated into English.⁶¹ Building on the framework laid by Corbin, Nasr has, as I have indicated, erected a modified account of the whole history up to the present. I conclude this section of my paper with two points he makes about this edifice. The first concerns the history of Islamic philosophy itself and sums up the current view:

From its genesis twelve hundred years ago to today, Islamic philosophy... has been one of the major intellectual traditions within the Islamic world, and it has influenced and been influenced by many other intellectual perspectives, including Scholastic theology (*kalām*) and doctrinal Sufism... and theoretical gnosis... The life of Islamic philosophy did not terminate with Ibn Rushd nearly eight hundred years ago, as thought by Western scholarship for several centuries. Rather, its activities continued strongly during the later centuries, particularly in Persia and other eastern lands of Islam, and it was revived in Egypt during the last century.⁶²

The second is in some ways more immediately consequential for us as heirs of this way of thinking the Hellenes invented. When we read Islamic philosophy we discover there characteristics of that from which both the Western and the Eastern traditions developed, characteristics we once knew and celebrated and which we have now mostly forgotten.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 20.

⁶⁰ Henry Corbin avec la collaboration de Seyyed Hossein Nasr et Osman Yahya, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*, tome I: *Des origines jusqu'à la mort d'Averroës (1198)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964). For a summary of the new framework, see Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin*, 107-118.

⁶¹ Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London & New York: Kegan Paul, 1993).

⁶² Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin*, 108.

What Nasr writes will remind us of a point I have made repeatedly, viz., a great, or even the greatest, problem standing in the way of our comprehending the Islamic tradition is that it would require our making actual again forms of philosophy from which most of us seem to want to escape or ignore. Nasr writes:

Islamic philosophy was born of philosophical speculation on the heritage of Greco-Alexandrian⁶³ philosophy, which was made available in Arabic in the third/ninth century, by Muslims who were immersed in the teachings of the Quran and lived in a universe in which revelation was a central reality... Muslims considered Greek philosophy itself to have been rooted in prophesy, and in contrast to how the West was to view Greek philosophy later, Muslims continued to identify the origin of the Greek philosophical tradition that they were now mastering with revelation.⁶⁴

Indeed at the beginning of his history Nasr offers interpretations of the work of Parmenides, Epimenides, Pythagoras, and Empedocles, interpretations owing a great deal to Peter Kingsley, who looks at ancient philosophy in ways continuous with those of the Neoplatonists, to support the Islamic understanding of the common origins of our philosophic traditions.⁶⁵

C. Histories of Islamic Philosophy since 9/11

A consequence of the attack on the USA on September 9, 2001 is an effort to fill in the chasm of our ignorance about the Islamic world. This scholarly and journalistic enterprise includes new books, or the reprinting of older ones, on Arabic, Islamic, and Jewish philosophy. Historians who languished in obscurity now contribute to a torrent of articles and chapters on figures and periods which formerly attracted no or little interest. These books do more, however, than fill in individual gaps in what we know about the history of philosophy. When Arabic, Islamic, and Jewish philosophy is included in the history of philosophy it has a new shape: there are chapters or sections devoted to philosophy and religion and to philosophy and mysticism. As we have seen when considering the work of Henry Corbin, what has come forward in the last five years has been enabled by developments which preceded the turn of the millennium, and some of what has appeared since 9/11 was in press before bin Laden's attack. Nonetheless, it is striking that what now confronts those seeking to explore philosophy in the Islamic world generally requires that we recognise its connection to religion and mysticism.

Often the connection between these in Islam is shown to have patterns and problematics set by the Neoplatonic mediation of Hellenic philosophy and religion. This is certainly true of the books by Wisnovsky and Nasr I have mentioned already. The same

⁶³ By Alexandrian I suppose he means Neoplatonic.

⁶⁴ Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin*, 108.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-5. See Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition*, Clarendon Paperbacks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

holds for *Medieval Philosophy and the Classical Tradition in Islam, Judaism and Christianity* (2002), edited by John Inglis, in which one of the six sections is devoted to Neoplatonism,⁶⁶ and for the distinguished collection gathered by Peter Adamson and Richard Taylor, *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* (2005) with chapters on “Greek into Arabic: Neoplatonism in translation,” by Cristina D’Ancona, “Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition,” by Robert Wisnovsky, “Mysticism and Philosophy...” etc. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, edited by Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman, and published in 2003 has the learning and breadth of spirit one would expect from a work edited by these scholars. The “biblical and rabbinic background,” “the Islamic context,” Neoplatonism, the connection with Sufism (and of Sufism with Neoplatonism) are expertly handled. The massive *History of Islamic Philosophy*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, published by Routledge in 1996, reprinted in paperback in 2001 and again in 2005, which draws on a vast array of leading experts would be a dream come true had the role of Neoplatonism been worked out more exactly. There are whole multi-chapter sections on “Religion, intellectual and cultural context,” “Philosophy and the mystical tradition,” “The Jewish philosophical tradition in the Islamic world,” “Islamic philosophy in the modern Islamic world” and “Interpretation of Islamic philosophy in the West.” While the collection of *Medieval Philosophy*, edited by John Marenbon, first published in 1998 but reprinted in paperback in 2003, is not much more enlightened than is Cambridge generally, nonetheless, the articles by Jean Jolivet “From the beginnings to Avicenna” and by Colette Sirat on “Jewish Philosophy” bring something of French learning and sophistication across the Channel,⁶⁷ and the Neoplatonic necessities are recognised. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, edited by A.S. McGrade and published in 2003, does not venture outside Anglophone philosophical scholarship and is as retrograde as one might have feared. Nonetheless, the learned Thérèse-Anne Druart begins her treatment of “Philosophy in Islam” with a section on “Philosophy, religion, and culture.” Antony Kenny’s *Medieval Philosophy* which came out in 2005 as the second volume of his *A New History of Western Philosophy* published by the Clarendon Press is almost as reductive as it is beautifully produced—it has more than thirty pictures—and there is scarcely an old sin against Islamic philosophy it does not reiterate. Still there is a whole chapter on “Philosophy and Faith: Augustine to Maimonides” which contains three pages on Neoplatonism—although one is occupied by a full-page picture of a nude Hypatia on the way to her martyrdom for pagan philosophy! This incomplete survey of works in English, moving from best to worst, demonstrates again how the reshaping of the history of philosophy which would include the Islamic traditions is closely bound up with what we think philosophy is and how it is practised.

Conclusion

⁶⁶ Richmond [England]: Curzon Press, 2002.

⁶⁷ It was published by Routledge.

The most straightforward conclusion to be drawn from this study is that the Departments and Faculties of Philosophy in the Anglo-American world have no right to the unqualified use of the word “philosophy” in their titles. This would be true even if we limited “philosophy” to the continuation of the kind of thinking and spiritual life initiated by the Greeks and practiced in exemplary and foundational ways by Parmenides, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Virtually none of them include or recognise as philosophy the whole of what was practiced under that name in Greek and Latin antiquity and the Middle Ages or their modern heirs. So far as they were thus inclusive perhaps a very few might call themselves departments of “Western Philosophy,” some are departments of “philosophy as professional abstract theorising for secularised Calvinist universities,” others departments of “philosophy as professional abstract theorising for Roman Catholic universities,” or “philosophy as professional abstract theorising for conglomerate state or provincial universities,” etc. I am not committed to the exact form of these qualified titles so long as we recognise that we need some such qualifications for truth in advertising and for self-knowledge.

Before we could claim for our philosophical activities in this part of the world the unqualified title, we would need to encompass not only the whole Western history in our conception—including what was done under that name during the two millennia from Aristotle to Descartes—but also the philosophical continuation of the Hellenism Alexander spread by means of his imperial conquests undertaken, or at least represented as undertaken, by means of and for the sake of philosophical culture. We need to remember that the ideas and sciences of Plato and Aristotle were discussed and continued in the Egyptian Alexandria, in Damascus, and perhaps even in Kandahar—or at least still further East and North at Ai Khanoum⁶⁸—before they were known in Rome, Paris, or London. The continuity of the Hellenic philosophical tradition in the East makes itself apparent when we recollect that the Aristotelian philosophical sciences came to our Latin West in the 12th and 13th centuries by way most directly of Moslem Spain but indirectly first by way of Christian Syrians (Orthodox and Nestorian) and then by way of Islamic Baghdad.⁶⁹ It was not in the cities of the Mediterranean coast that the texts were translated for use in debate, and the sciences and the wisdom transmitted, but in centers further East and North—the places from which the likes of al-Farabi and Avicenna came. As F.E. Peters puts it:

The student of the Islamic reception of Aristotle continually finds himself looking in the wrong direction. Taught to regard the Byzantine Empire as the final extension of classical civilization, he comes to the study of

⁶⁸ See Frank L. Holt, *Into the Land of Bones: Alexander the Great in Afghanistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 149-164.

⁶⁹ See Richard Walzer, *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, Oriental Studies 1 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1962), 6-8.

philosophy in Islam with the expectation that the two cultures...will commingle where the former has left its deepest mark...⁷⁰

The opposite was in fact the case. Those seeking the crucial Eastern links in the mediation of sophisticated Greek philosophy to us need to swing further East and North before they can turn West and South to Italy and Spain. In our time, those few among us who have cared to know have learned that philosophy did not self-destruct in the East after it educated us. Indeed, it is primarily in Islamic Persia that the forms of association and differentiation between religion, philosophy, and mystical practice which had been developed among the Neoplatonic philosophers of Late Antiquity were continued in modern times. At first the Iranians were moving along a path parallel to the one on which the West was also walking and then we separated the elements which they continued to hold together.⁷¹

Perhaps none of this would matter if we were isolated from one another. Philosophy could then cease to search for universality or the mutual recognition of differing modes of reasoning and remain content with its sectarian character. However, we are, as they say, into one another's faces. At present Europe, America, and what were called the "white Dominions" have convinced themselves that they are confronting in Islam generally and in Iran particularly—the most philosophical of Islamic cultures at present—something deeply irrational. Because the Anglo-American imperium supposes that violent regime change, shock and awe, and bombing back to the Stone Age are the necessary responses to this irrationality, we need to look again at what reason is. As Henry Corbin put it forty years ago in the Preface to one of his works on Shī'ite Iran:

The spatial distances between humans are being more and more reduced in our day, at least if measured in terms of time; concurrently we hear talk of an "acceleration of history." On the other hand, the *real* universes—those by which and for which men live and die, which never can be reduced to empirical data because their secret reality exists before all our projects and predetermines them—those universes, it would seem, have never been so far from being able to communicate with each other, from being penetrable by one another.⁷²

⁷⁰ F.E. Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs: The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam* (New York/ London: New York University Press/ University of London Press, 1968), 41.

⁷¹ In the West the separation took place from both sides, i.e. on the religious side and the philosophical. See my "From St Augustine and St Denys to Olier and Bérulle's Spiritual Revolution: Patristic and Seventeenth-Century Foundations of the Relations between Church and State in Québec," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique*, in press and L. Cognet, *Crépuscule des mystiques: Bossuet Fénelon* (Tournai: Desclée, 1958), idem, *Post-Reformation Spirituality*, trans P.H. Scott (New York: Hawthorn, 1959), 116-141.

⁷² Henry Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shī'ite Iran*, trans. Nancy Pearson, Bollingen Series XCI:2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), vii.

The fundamental problem for us with penetrating the other to which Corbin devoted himself is that we would have to draw back into what we call philosophy parts of the history of Western thought from which we have struggled to liberate ourselves in order to turn ourselves into what we now are.⁷³ When we condemn the Islamic world as “medieval” and thus irrational, we pass the same judgment on something which we once were—it does not help to point out that it might be at least as accurate to make “Late Ancient” and “Neoplatonic” our abusive epithets. In the current circumstances it will take a good deal for us to be comforted by the Corbin’s conclusion that “the conditions of the⁷⁴ dialogue between Christianity and Islam change completely as soon as the interlocutor represents not legalistic Islam but [Iranian] spiritual Islam, whether it be that of Sūfism or of Shī‘ite gnosis”⁷⁵—the latter being a world with which we can begin a communication in virtue of the Neoplatonism which was the nursing mother of both in their formative periods. In consequence, I reiterate the statement with which I began this paper: There is nothing more significant about a philosophy than how it situates itself within or in respect to the history of philosophy, going on to add: and nothing more difficult for it.⁷⁶

⁷³ For one account of the divide from the 13th century onward, see Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin*, 232.

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⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, xi.

⁷⁶ This paper was originally delivered to the Atlantic Region Philosophical Association Meeting on October 27, 2006 in Fredericton.

Islam And The Principle Of Freedom

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M.B. Foster in three celebrated articles appearing in *Mind* in the 1930's argues persuasively that the sciences of nature which arose in the seventeenth century, what is generally called "modern science", and the philosophy which arose almost simultaneously, that is, "modern philosophy", have their origins in the Christian religion.¹ This position is in no way novel. What is especially valuable are the links he establishes between the two and the clarity with which he does this: first, that modern philosophy, insofar as it was concerned with a theory of nature, devoted itself to establishing the possibility (as in Descartes) or justifying the presuppositions (as in Kant) of that modern science of nature; and second, that in these modern doctrines of nature, the element in them which was alien to the Aristotelian doctrine of nature maintained by the Scholastic philosophy, is precisely the ground of the characteristics in which modern science is distinguished from the older science. Among those characteristics are the emergence of empirical methods in the modern science of nature, as well as the affirmation that its laws are fulfilled without exception and that only efficient causes are operative in nature.

What, he asks, is the source of these unGreek elements which constitute the "modernity" of modern philosophy and the consequent "modernity" of the modern science of nature? "The answer to the first question is: The Christian revelation, and the answer to the second: The Christian doctrine of creation."² That Foster is on the whole quite correct in his assessment with respect to the science of nature could perhaps be illustrated initially by a consideration of one who is called the "father of modern philosophy", and by some the "father of modern science", René Descartes. Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* are the foundation, among other things, for a doctrine of nature on which the modern sciences of nature can be erected. Writing before the appearance of, say, Newtonian physics, this work establishes the possibility of a science of nature, and *mutatis mutandis* when Kant turns to the Newtonian physics already established to ask how it is possible, he in turn identifies those elements which Descartes had put there.

But there has been a considerable shift in position nonetheless. Descartes easily appeals to theological presuppositions in setting out for himself what exactly is required when he shall turn his attention to the philosophic foundations for that modern science of nature. Those

¹ The first of the three articles is "The Christian Doctrine of Creation and the Rise of Modern Science" (*Mind*, 1935, 446-69)

² *Ibid.*, 448.

theological issues are at the heart of the enterprise itself, as we shall see. Kant on the other hand can look at an extant science of nature and does not find there any of those theological difficulties that had occupied Descartes, and certainly does not find as among the elements which makes a modern science of nature possible the Christian doctrine of creation. What has happened? Has Newtonian physics, by the time Kant reflects on it, gained such autonomy that, however much it might have owed to the Christian religion in its inception, it has cut itself free from those theological presuppositions and enjoys such independence that skeptic and atheist, and more to the point for this essay, that Hindu, Jew or Muslim, can prosecute it without inconsistency.

But if that is the case with respect to a modern science of nature, what about other consequences of modern philosophy? Again it is well established that modern presuppositions of equality, and specifically equality regardless of race, gender, religion, that modern doctrines of human freedom, together with democratic institutions, have the Christian religion at their origin. Have those doctrines so established themselves that they too can be affirmed by the secular world? Have they become so autonomous that their attachment to the Christian religion is hardly a memory anymore?

Much depends on whether and in what sense these principles concerning human freedom have achieved emancipation from the Christian religion. On the one hand, if the connection between the two is maintained, if liberal democracy is sustained by its attachment to the Christian religion, then for those who espouse a different religion, almost inevitably contrary in some respects to the Christian religion, there are perhaps untoward consequences which must be acknowledged. But if the emancipation is now complete, then it would seem that there is no impediment to Jew, Muslim, Buddhist remaining true both to his religion and the democratic state, no impediment, that is, except that which his own religion might erect against his loyalty to that state.

In a previous volume of *Animus* I published an essay, "Peace with Islam"³, which could as well have appeared in this volume on the theme of "War". That paper argued in part that democratic institutions, on which the peaceful coexistence of the citizens of a modern state is thought to depend, and the universal principle of freedom from which the relations of all men flow, have their origin in the Christian religion and specifically in the Reformation of the sixteenth century. It would be redundant to repeat that argument here. In this paper I shall pursue in detail the examination of the relation of the Christian religion and the modern science of nature, as prototype so to speak, for whatever light it might shed on the possibility of achieving complete autonomy from the Christian religion at the origin of both modern science and the modern democratic state. Then I shall address the question of the emancipation of democratic institutions from the Christian religion with specific reference to Islam.

A. The Emancipation Of Modern Science From The Christian Religion

³ *Animus* 9 (2004), [<http://www.swgc.mun.ca/animus/2004vol9/doull.htm>]

We begin with Descartes who himself begins with theological preoccupations which determine how he shall pursue his scientific studies. Only subsequently is he able to find his way to a properly philosophical statement of establishing the grounds for the foundation of a modern science of nature. It is a statement still attached to that trinity of ideas (God, self, nature) which Kant rejects, at least in the form in which they occur and the use made of them in the 'dogmatic' philosophy of Descartes. Kant seems to be able to find the grounds of the modern science of nature in the human understanding itself. Whether and in what sense this is the emancipation of modern science from the Christian religion is our primary question.

1. Descartes' Theological Preoccupation: The 'Creation Of Eternal Truths'

Descartes' early work, *Regulae ad directionem ingenii*⁴, is concerned simply with certainty, to be achieved through clear and distinct ideas. Its abandonment in the late 1620's (and he never returns to it again) reflects an impasse he had reached, a recognition that such certainty was not enough. Beeckman reports that when Descartes visited him in October, 1628, Descartes said that he had nothing more to accomplish in arithmetic and geometry, having done in the previous nine years all that was humanly possible.[AT x, 331] And on 15 April 1630, he wrote to Mersenne, "As for Problems [i.e. mathematical problems], I would send you a million to propose to others if you desire it; but I am so tired of mathematics and now hold it in so low esteem that I could no longer bother to solve them myself." [AT i, 139] The "way of clear and distinct ideas" was not a sufficient foundation for his scientific work, both because its uncritical application to a natural world with an empirical element did not work, revealing the need for a firmer foundation than mathematical certainty, and because a mathematics grounded in the imagination failed him, undermining his confidence and interest in what formerly had been the paradigm of clear and distinct knowledge. Descartes was now confronting the empirical, and would soon recognize that mathematical certainty was itself not enough for truth. Perhaps he was already in the grips of the theological preoccupation.

The initial statement of the theory of "the creation of eternal truths" in a letter of 15 April 1630 to Mersenne reflects on God as lawgiver: God establishes mathematical truths in nature after the manner of a king laying down laws for his kingdom. They depend on Him no less than the rest of his creation. But our relation to these truths is quite otherwise: there is no single one that we cannot grasp if our minds turn to consider it, for they are all inborn in our minds, much as a king would imprint his laws in the hearts of his subjects if he had the power to do so. "But" one might ask "could He not change these eternal truths as the king might change the laws of his kingdom?" Only if God's will can change, and we understand God's will to be eternal and unchanging. God's will is indeed free and his power beyond our grasp.[AT i, 145-6] In this first statement mathematical truths are understood as the products of God's absolute power. Taking this element by itself, one might conclude that Descartes was a voluntarist. But such an

⁴. The *Regulae*, it is now conceded, was composed in stages between 1619 and 1628, stages in the text corresponding to the development of Descartes' thought requiring modification and reformulations of the text itself. The later modifications reflect a growing concern with a "universal mathematics" which would comprehend not only mathematical interests but "physico-mathematics" involving objects of his corpuscular-mechanical philosophy.

interpretation is hard to sustain in the face of the other side, for the eternal truths are wholly necessary for our understanding, and possess an immutability and eternity from the divine immutability itself.

Descartes calls the doctrine 'metaphysical', presumably as an element of natural rather than revealed theology. It is an explicit reaction to positions concerning eternal truths which were then current and known to him. The Augustinian position was that mathematics and eternal truths, nearer to God's mind than human understanding, emanate from God as rays from the sun. In the subsequent letter to Mersenne, Descartes expressly rejected that position: "I do not conceive [eternal truths] as emanating from God like rays from the sun." [To Mersenne, 27 May 1630, CSMK 25; AT i, 152] It is abundantly clear why he must reject this view when his thoughts achieve philosophical expression, for eternal truths depend on God for their truth and could never themselves be used, as they were in St. Augustine, as grounds for affirming God's existence. As he explained in the same letter, eternal truths are true or possible only because God knows them as true or possible; they are in no way true independently of Him. Then he adds the rich theological statement that in God will and knowing are one thing "in such a way that by the very fact of willing something [God] knows it, and it is only for this reason that it is true." [To Mersenne, 6 May 1630, CSMK 24; AT i, 149] "In God willing, understanding and creating are all the same thing without one being prior to the other even conceptually." [CSMK 25-6; AT i, 153] This being the case, the immutability of the eternal truths is well-founded: if God's will could change, then the divine understanding, one with the divine will, would also change; that is, the divine understanding would have earlier been in error, or at least incomplete.

Mathematical truths are described as perfectly comprehensible to a finite understanding, thus not in content superior to human thought. But God, infinite, eternal, immutable, creator of all things, is spoken of as "cause whose incomprehensible power surpasses the bounds of human understanding". This recognition of the complete disparity of eternal, mathematical truths and the divine "cause" of those truths signifies an absolute break with the Neo-Platonic past which saw essences of created things as 'participations' of the divine essence and these truths as 'attenuations' of the divine understanding, where God, in contemplating them, does nothing but contemplate Himself.

What is the significance of this theological position on the creation of eternal truths? It is universally agreed that the doctrine is original to Descartes. The logic of the situation is clear enough: the impasse he had reached in his mathematical and methodological studies is enveloped, comprehended and overcome in the doctrine of the "creation of eternal truths", in his religious or theological consciousness. God who freely creates all things -- the universe and mathematics which embodies its truth -- has also freely created finite minds to understand those very truths. All the elements of a foundation for a Cartesian science of nature are there, but in the form of theological doctrine and faith. How shall they achieve philosophical form? The doctrine of the "creation of eternal truths" is a true revelation for him after he was forced to abandon the naive confidence of the *Regulae*. That same doctrine is the problematic which he must address philosophically in the *Meditations*. In doing so, Descartes established the possibility of a new science of nature.

Descartes knew that he must address these issues philosophically and had even begun a treatise on metaphysics to do just that as early as 1629.⁵ With these new insights into the relation of God to eternal truths and to nature, he turned his attention immediately to the treatise on physics incorporating these insights, if not appealing to them directly, *Le Monde ou Traité de la Lumičre*. In the early chapters of the work one finds a direct attack on the assumptions and methods of the Scholastic philosophy of nature, substantial forms and the search for final causes.. But in Chapter 6 he begins a first description of his mechanistic universe presented to the reader as a fable⁶:

For a while, then, allow your thought to wander beyond this world to view another world - a wholly new one which I shall bring into being before your mind in imaginary spaces. The philosophers tell us that such spaces are infinite, and they should certainly be believed, since it is they themselves who invented them. But in order to keep this infinity from hampering and confusing us, let us not try to go right to the end: let us enter it only far enough to lose sight of all the creatures that God made five or six thousand years ago; and after stopping in some definite place, let us suppose that God creates anew so much matter all around us that in whatever direction our imagination may extend, it no longer perceives any place which is empty. [CSM I, 90]

Since he is at liberty to construct this imaginary world just as he wishes, he proposes that it be perfectly intelligible to everyone, and so he imputes to it the simplest structure, conceiving it as a perfectly solid body filling uniformly every part of this huge space he has imagined, thus where each of its parts could neither fill a larger part of this space nor be squeezed into a smaller part. Then, in the manner of a lesser god over this universe of his creation, he supposes it divided into parts of all sorts of shapes, not in such a way that there is empty space or void between the parts, but parts differentiated by motions which God gives variously to the parts, some fast, some slow, and in all directions: the primeval chaos or 'formless void' of the first act of the 'first day' of creation.⁷

Descartes expresses in the image of fable, partly also in the image of religious language, elements of his philosophy which receive a pure intellectual expression later in the *Meditations*. Here the world he describes is a fantasy, but insofar as it possesses no hidden obscurity or contradiction (what it is is perfectly clear), it is a 'possible world', and God could therefore, as he says, have created such a world, "for it is certain that he can create everything we can imagine."

⁵ To Gibieuf, 18 July 1629, AT I, 17. At the time he did not expect to finish it for two or three years, but as it turned out he never finished it unless, perhaps, we regard the *Meditations* as its completion.

⁶ The word is Descartes' own: he has no other intention, he says, than 'raconter une fable', *Le Monde*, Chap. 7. For an excellent discussion of its character as a 'fable' or 'tale' for the skeptics, see James Collins, *Descartes' Philosophy of Nature*, Oxford, 1971, pp 5-9, a work on which I rely heavily for this part of the paper.

⁷ *Genesis*, 1:1.

He will argue in subsequent chapters that 'Nature' can itself untangle the chaos of this first act of creation. What is 'nature' in such a world, nature which has such powers?

First, what it is not: "I do not mean some goddess or any other sort of imaginary power." It is not a realm of 'occult causes', magic or miracles. As he will say later, it is not a realm of final causes: there is, he says, "considerable rashness in thinking myself capable of investigating the impenetrable purposes of God." Rather, 'nature' is "matter itself, in so far as I am considering it taken together with all the qualities I have attributed to it, and under this condition that God continues to preserve it in the same way that he created it." 'Nature' is this *nexus* of extension, motion and God's creative and conservative action. We might ask how it is possible for God to create, that is, to bring forth from nothing something different from Himself, and then, because of His own immutable nature, to preserve what is different, hence mutable, just as He created it? This requires that motion itself have a kind of immutability, that is, that it be under 'law'. Descartes is able to specify three of these 'laws of motion', since they come from the immutable God, and themselves have the stamp of that immutability. These are the principle of 'inertia',⁸ the principle of the 'conservation of motion',⁹ and the principle of 'rectilinear motion'.¹⁰ The 'laws of nature' must be conceived as 'laws for nature', in total dependence on God. Yet these laws are not so arbitrary as to be incoherent - they do provide us with an understanding of nature, and they possess a self-evidence emanating from the immutable nature of their creator.

In this same chapter, Descartes tells us that he need not suppose any other laws except those "which follow inevitably from the eternal truths on which mathematicians have usually based their most certain and most evident demonstrations - the truths, I say, according to which God himself has taught us that he has arranged all things in number, weight and measure."¹¹ What is significant here is the indirect reference to Descartes' doctrine of the 'creation of eternal truths', for God not only creates nature, that is, matter and the laws of motion, he also creates the truths of mathematics, of arithmetic and geometry.

Le Monde, in summary, presents a fable about 'nature': it is a hypothesis, a theory of nature. This is in part because nature is freely created, hence contingent, not something we could know through final causes. Yet it is also immutably created, hence under laws that are both self-evident to us and that admit of no exceptions. Descartes says of both these laws and the eternal

⁸ "Each individual part of matter continues always to be in the same state so long as collision with others does not force it to change that state." *Ibid.*, 93.

⁹ "When one body pushes another it cannot give the other any motion unless it loses as much of its own motion at the same time; nor can it take away any of the other's motion unless its own is increased by as much."

¹⁰ "When a body is moving, even though its motion for the most part takes place along a curved path and, as we said above, it can never make any motion which is not in some way circular, yet each of its parts individually tends always to continue moving along a straight line." *Ibid.*, 96.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 97, underlining mine.

truths that they are created, and thus need not be true; still when we conceive them distinctly, we could not doubt them. The work suffers from an incoherence in the thought of the 'laws of nature' and 'eternal truths' as both contingent in some radical sense, and at the same time self-evident to us. It suffers further in its fabular and quasi-theological presentation, not having achieved a philosophic form. Both of these deficiencies, as we shall see, are addressed and corrected in the *Meditations*, a work which provides the philosophical foundation for the physics of *Le Monde*.

The difference between the Cartesian and late medieval Aristotelian concepts of 'nature' is so great as to cause Étienne Gilson to remark that Descartes eliminates nature altogether, that older sense of nature where natural beings had within themselves principles of change¹². There is no room in the Cartesian philosophy for 'substantial forms', the source of activity in the natural being. In conceiving matter as extension, denuded of form, matter which depends at each instant on the continuous creation of God conserving it in each of its successive states, body is entirely passive with respect to motion. Bodies do not move themselves. Rather, God is the primary cause of motion, as Descartes says in many places, but no more eloquently and speculatively than in this passage from *Le Monde*:

According to this rule [Law of rectilinear motion], then it must be said that God alone is the author of all the motions in the world in so far as they exist and in so far as they are rectilinear; but it is the various dispositions of matter which render them irregular and curved. Likewise, the theologians teach us that God is also the author of all our actions, in so far as they exist and in so far as they have some goodness, but it is the various dispositions of our wills that can render them evil.¹³

The elements of a new science of nature are present in this work of Descartes, finished in 1633. It is the hypothetical-deductive method of modern science, mechanistic, mathematical and exhibiting laws which admit of no exception. The empirical entered into this new science in the thoroughly modern sense of providing evidence to test its theories.

2. Establishing The Possibility Of The New Science Of Nature In *Meditations*

The difficulty Descartes faced in 1630, that mathematical certainty was not enough for indubitability, he now expresses in the hypothesis of the Evil Demon. The further difficulty of the relation of indubitability¹⁴ to truth will require an argument not only that God exists but that he is not a deceiver or an arbitrary will, neither creating us with inevitably faulty intellectual faculties nor intruding into nature, by miracle or whatever, to thwart its laws. It is in this form that the *Meditations* addresses those theological problems associated with the doctrine of the

¹² Étienne Gilson, *Discours de la Méthode, texte et commentaire*, 1925, 243.

¹³ *Ibid.* 97.

¹⁴ What is indubitable is what cannot be *conceived* as false, even should there be a power exerting all efforts to undermine our thoughts. The mark of the indubitable is the 'clear and distinct idea'.

“creation of eternal truths”. Moreover, what is known about ‘nature’ in these Cartesian reflections is not ‘nature’ in itself, apart from the mind, but the “other” for mind, thought’s own nature which in knowing we come to know ourselves. Thought thinking itself, spirit taking possession of itself, becoming what it is, has its proper beginning in the Cartesian philosophy and is the foundation for the modern science of nature.¹⁵

The doubt of the First Meditation, which extends even to ‘eternal truths’¹⁶ through the hypothesis of the *malin genie*, is directed against all externality.¹⁷ The Aristotelian-Scholastic criterion of ‘truth’ as agreement of the mind with such externality is overthrown. There is no presupposition which can withstand this doubt, the doubt of the autonomous thinking self. This fresh beginning with a thinking that determines itself, alone with itself, is in philosophy what was first present in the Reformation, where Christian men and women attained their majority and knew themselves as free. There too all externality was banished. The authority of the priest was replaced by the inner authority of conscience, good works as things external counted for nothing without inner conviction, the mediation of saints and the absolution of priests were superfluous, for only in his presence to himself could the Christian find relation to God. Descartes begins his philosophy with that absolute reliance only on himself. In doing so, he is but anticipating the Kantian proposal in the Preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*: “Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects ... We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge.”

That doubt exercised with such thoroughness inexorably discloses the thinking subject exercising the doubt, the thinking that is not external to itself, or as Hegel expresses it, “is at home with itself.”¹⁸ This is the moment of certainty, of indubitability, prior to the knowledge of the truth, for the *cogito* is certain only while I think it. This would not be enough for the systematic knowledge of a discursive thinking which must pass from thought to thought. How

¹⁵ This is in the most thoroughgoing image of the divine life: “The eternal life of God is to find himself, become aware of himself, coincide with himself. In this ascent there is an alienation, a disunion, but it is the nature of spirit, of the Idea, to alienate itself in order to find itself again.” Hegel’s Introduction to Lectures on History of Philosophy, Knox translation.

¹⁶ These include not only basic mathematical propositions, e.g. $7+5 = 12$, but those principles employed in mathematical proofs (e.g. “Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other.”) and in physical proofs (e.g. the principle of inertia).

¹⁷ Descartes describes the scope as “everything that comes from the senses or through the senses”, that is, from observation or by way of reading, hearing and instruction.

¹⁸ Hegel expresses the same with regard to the Christian freedom of the Reformation: “Within the inmost aspect of the human being, therefore, a place was posited that is all that matters and where a person is present only with self and with God; and one can only be with God when one is at home with self. I must be at home in my conscience; this right of mine as the householder is not to be disturbed, no one else shall presume to have a say in it.” *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: The Lectures of 1826-1826*, vol III, Robert F. Brown, ed., 1990, 96.

can we be assured that what is certain, that is, clear and distinct, can be an element in a proof or what was proven yesterday can be used today? If science is to be well founded there must be this passage from certainty to truth. The way to that result is through a knowledge that God exists and that he has created us on the one hand and nature on the other in such a way that our understanding is perfectly suited to come to the truth about nature. The manner in which Descartes goes about this argument is well enough known and has appeared elsewhere in this journal.¹⁹ Some remarks about the development of the three elements, God, Self and Nature, and their relations in the Cartesian philosophy are in order here. Just as doubt leads ineluctably to the *cogito*, doubt being itself but a form of thinking, the *cogito* produces from itself the idea of God, for in searching for an idea not of its own creation, not even possibly a fiction or merely subjective, it inevitably comes to the idea of the ‘self-given’, *causa sui* – the idea of God which Descartes possesses in thought but cannot be thought to have caused. It is a presupposition of his thinking, “innate in me just as the idea of myself is innate in me.”²⁰

Again, as with the *cogito*, there is an immediacy about the union of thinking and being in this idea of God, for that is precisely what the idea is, this idea as alone having utterly necessary and eternal existence within it. God known then to exist, it is God’s veracity, ultimately God’s infinite goodness, that is the assurance that finite thinking exercised in accordance with the principle of finite understanding, that “what is clear and distinct is true”, will not be thwarted.. When therefore Descartes turns to the finite world in the role of scientist, it is with the confidence of one who knows that ‘nature’ coincides with his clear and distinct ideas concerning it. He finds in “extension” the perfect ‘other’ for his thinking: it is what is outside itself (thus “not at home with itself”) and under laws admitting of no exception (thus, not free). Moreover, “extension” has the properties of number and measure, properties wholly appropriate to sensibility and imagination which he finds in himself, faculties which would be superfluous were there not an extended realm to engage him. But ‘nature’ is more than simply extension. To pass from metaphysics to physics, to a world of particular bodies, Descartes must hypothesize motion externally given to matter, a step he does not take in his *Meditations* which is not physics but the foundation of his physics. That step we have seen already in *Le Monde* and it appears subsequently in his *Principles of Philosophy*. Descartes as a practicing scientist makes wholly appropriate use of experience and experiment, as is clearly evident in his scientific works.²¹

Descartes hypostasizes the three elements of his philosophy, God, Self, Nature, characterizing them as three substances. For this he will be criticized and corrected.. But as providing a philosophical foundation for the modern science of nature, his place in the histories of

¹⁹. Cf. Floy E. Andrews, “God, the Evil Genius and Eternal Truths: the Structure of the Understanding in the Cartesian Philosophy”, *Animus* Vol 3 (1998) and “Hegel’s Presentation of the Cartesian Philosophy in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*”, *Animus* Vol. 5 (2000).

²⁰ It is not adventitious since Descartes can think it up at will; it is not a fiction since he cannot add to it or subtract from it. It is the paradigm of the “innate idea”.

²¹ In *Les Meteores* and *Dioptriques* for example and in numerous letters. The “Treatise on the Rainbow”, Discourse 8 of *Les Meteores*, is a model of the hypothetical-deductive method of modern science, for example.

philosophy and science is assured. The foundation for the science of nature is in close harmony with the Christian religion, specifically the Christian doctrine of creation, as the movement in Descartes' own thought from the *Regulae* to *Le Monde* and then to the *Meditations* has shown. We turn to Kant to raise the question whether this modern science of nature can achieve an independence of the Christian religion.

3. Kant And The Autonomy Of The Modern Science Of Nature

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and its interpretation in the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* are primarily concerned with metaphysics, not natural science. But natural science was the paradigm, the standard against which metaphysics would be measured. It had achieved remarkable success since the time of Bacon and Galileo, possessing a method to which its practitioners all adhered, creating an ever expanding body of knowledge built from one generation of scientists to the next. When Kant asks "How is pure natural science possible?", it is the question of one who admires its achievement, and contrasts it with the obvious failure of metaphysics to 'enter upon the secure path of a science', unable to obtain such universal and productive agreement. In part, natural science succeeds because its theories and hypotheses admit of confirmation or refutation by experiment, a method Kant recommends *mutatis mutandis* in metaphysics. But more critically, reason in natural science "has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own ... constraining nature to give answer to questions of reason's own determining."²² The natural scientist from his own thinking produces the theory or hypothesis which guides the questions proposed to nature, and as an "appointed judge" compels nature to confirm or refute that hypothesis. This implicitly is the answer that Kant will give to the question "How is Pure Science of Nature possible?"

Natural science is a body of knowledge, a system of hierarchically ordered syllogisms, as it were, and the work therefore of "reason" in the scientist or, more significantly, in the scientific community.²³ But at its root are those empirical judgments which are produced by the understanding, the faculty of judging, the faculty of truth. Science depends on empirical judgments possessing objective validity, what in the *Prolegomena* are identified as "judgments of experience", as distinct from "judgments of perception" which are only subjectively valid.. "All our judgments are at first merely judgments of perception", holding only for us, and only subsequently do we give them a new reference, to an object, and declare they shall always hold for us and for everybody else. (*Proleg.* §18) Objective validity and necessary universal validity are thus equivalent. When we consider a judgment as possessing universal, necessary validity, it is not then a mere association of ideas in a perceiver (an empirical ego), but a characteristic of the object, valid for all. The mere validity for a consciousness ceases and is superceded by the transcendental Ego having as its content not merely finding-together but putting-together as in the spontaneous activity of the understanding, the change from "I feel" to "I think" Scientific

²² Preface to 2nd ed., CPR. Note the coincidence here with the Cartesian rejection of the Scholastic definition of truth as "agreement of the mind with reality".

²³ It is Kant who distinguished "understanding" (the faculty of judgment) from "reason" (the faculty of syllogisms). Aristotelian logic had long before made the distinction between "judgment" and its logic of the proposition and "reasoning" which produces the syllogism.

judgments are just such judgments of experience, asserted as objectively valid, not in the sense that they are true independently of all thought, of all subjectivity, but as true for all.

How does this happen? What has been at work in the understanding to enable this transformation from judgments of perception to judgments of experience? What concepts has the understanding brought to the judgment of perception to connect subject and predicate universally and necessarily? These are the “categories”, an ancient term with new significance. “Now the essential point in this new system of categories, which distinguishes it from the old rhapsody which proceeded without any principle and for which alone it deserves to be considered as philosophy, consists in this: that, by means of it, the true significance of the pure concepts of the understanding and the condition of their use could be precisely determined.” (*Proleg.*§39). This “true significance” is of utmost importance to the question at hand, “How is Pure Science of Nature Possible?”: these pure concepts of the understanding are “but logical functions” and as such do not themselves produce the smallest concept of an object ; rather they serve only to determine empirical judgments, “thereby procuring them universal validity and, by means of them, making judgments of experience in general possible.” The Kantian categories, which are essential to the pure science of nature, have no application beyond experience. Thus, just as no perception can ever arise which is not temporal, so no experience can ever arise which does not fall under the categories. In particular, no experience can ever clash with the principle of causality or any of the other universal principles of the science of nature²⁴, for only through the categories is there experience at all. But it also follows that the categories can only be applied to phenomena. To use the principle of causality to reason from the idea of God in the *cogito* to God’s necessary existence, as Descartes did, would on this account be an illicit use of the principle.

Kant’s critical philosophy, it should be noted, has widened the scope of subjectivity. The two elements in experience are the sensible element, given in perception, whose essential feature is its “being outside itself” in space and time, and the “I” of thought, at home with itself, drawing into unity with itself whatever it encounters. Kant identifies perception as the subjective element, since with regard to it the “I” is purely receptive, the “I feel” of an empirical ego. He calls the categories introduced by thought “objective” because they are the universal and necessary element in experience. But they too are something subjective – not because they belong to my feeling but because they belong to the pure I of self-consciousness. There is no objectivity apart from self-consciousness which, by the measure of an earlier philosophy is not objectivity at all. When Descartes sought for an escape from himself and his ideas, he sought for something outside his thinking, something true whether he thought it or not.

Neither mathematics nor natural science stood in need of an answer to the two questions Kant posed concerning them, for both, as he observes, have established themselves without any inquiry into their possibility. This is a strange statement in view of all the centuries between Aristotle and Newton when natural science was pursued using an entirely different methodology. The modern science of nature so established itself for Kant that what was practiced as natural

²⁴ These are rules for the objective use of the categories. Since they cannot be deduced from higher rules, they are “principles”; because they represent the union of phenomena necessarily, they are *a priori*.

science in former centuries was not science at all: "Newton's method in the natural sciences transformed the confusion of physical hypotheses into a sure procedure guided by experience and geometry."²⁵ In this Kant is a true man of the Enlightenment, without apparent interest in the theological questions that moved Descartes. The science of nature, as mathematics, were immune alike to Humean skepticism and religious censure. He saw a need to move beyond Humean skepticism, not as though it would have any effect on the forward march of Newtonian science, but concerning the question of metaphysics.

Kant describes the "root and peculiarity of metaphysics" as the occupation of "reason" with itself. Reason, he says in *Prolegomena* §40, is the source of certain Ideas, certain necessary concepts whose object cannot be given in any experience. Earlier Hume had been occupied with a related set of such ideas. When he formulated his account of where our ideas come from, he stated "All ideas are derived from impressions" (which are sensuous or introspective perceptions); further, he recommended, "When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea (as is but too frequent), we need but enquire, from what impression is that supposed idea derived." The three which greatly interested Hume, and are of great interest to Kant, are the ideas of Self, Material Substance and Cause.²⁶ Not only are these first two ideas difficult to reduce to impressions, they actually seem inconsistent with such impressions. We attribute to the Self an identity in spite of the never-ending flux of psychical events which any introspection into this purported Self reveals. Similarly, we attribute to Material Substance the character of self-identity and permanence when all impressions are of diversity, difference, change. If we insist on the empirical principle that all ideas are derived from impressions, these two ideas seem to be employed without meaning.

But it is the idea of Cause that triggers Kant's reflections in the *Prolegomena*:

Hume started chiefly from a single but important concept in metaphysics, namely, that of the connection of cause and effect ... He challenged reason, which pretends to have given birth to this concept of herself, to answer him by what right she thinks anything could be so constituted that if that thing be posited, something else must also be posited; for this is the meaning of the concept of cause. He demonstrated irrefutably that it was perfectly impossible for reason to think *a priori* and by means of concepts such a combination, for it implies necessity. We cannot at all see why, in consequence of the existence of one thing, another must necessarily exist or how the concept of such a combination can arise *a priori*.
[Introd.]

Kant's success in using the species of judgment, already established by long tradition, to derive the concepts of the understanding (the "categories") suggested to him an analogous procedure

²⁵ From the exposition of Kant's "The Only Possible Basis of Proof for a Demonstration of God's Existence", quoted in Ernst Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought* (trans. James Hadn), 1981, 67.

²⁶ These are, of course, forms of the fundamental trinity of God, Self, and World which engage any philosophy. Here the forms have a decidedly empirical character.

when he turned his attention to reason, to inquire about its “ideas”: he looked again where the traditional logic suggested, to the products of reason.²⁷ Thus, he says, "As I had found the origin of the categories in the four logical forms of all the judgments of the understanding, it was quite natural to seek the origin of the Ideas in the three forms of syllogisms" [§43], i.e. categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive.

Corresponding to the three types of syllogisms, there are three kinds of unconditioned unity postulated or assumed. Systematising through categorical syllogisms, reason tends toward something which is always subject and not the predicate of some further syllogism. Ascending by hypothetical syllogisms, reason tends toward an unconditioned unity in the form of presupposition which itself presupposes nothing else, an ultimate presupposition. If we ascend by disjunctive syllogisms, reason moves toward an aggregate of the members which makes the division complete. Thus, if the logical maxim becomes the “fundamental principle of pure Reason”, there is the demand for three kinds of absolute or unconditioned unity, three Transcendental Ideas: (1) the absolute unity of the thinking subject (Self) (2) the absolute unity of the totality of appearances (World) (3) the absolute unity of the condition of objects of thought in general (God).

There arise from these three Ideas the three branches of speculative metaphysics (in the Wolffian classification): speculative psychology; cosmology; theology. But instead of producing three new sciences, since reason produces these Ideas illicitly by unifying the conditions of experience all the way to the unconditioned, it proceeds to paralogisms (logically fallacious syllogisms, a four-term syllogism, for example, in rational psychology); produces antinomies (where a thesis and its antithesis can both be proved, as in cosmology); and brings forth fallacious arguments for God's existence. In short, reason produces results which are dialectical and illusory.²⁸

The Transcendental Ideas of Reason, illicitly explored as objects in metaphysics, "express the peculiar vocation of Reason as a principle of systematic unity in the use of the understanding." (*Proleg.* §56) These Ideas turned into Ideals are “regulative”²⁹, and in this proper employ are of the highest use. As Kant says, "Although an absolute whole of experience is impossible, the Idea of a whole of knowledge according to principles must impart to our knowledge a peculiar kind of unity, that of a system, without which it is nothing but piecework

²⁷ There are three acts of the mind in traditional logic: (1) simple apprehension, the product of which is the concept; (2) judgment, the product of which is the proposition; (3) reasoning, the product of which is the syllogism.

²⁸ 'Dialectic' for Kant is the 'logic of semblance (illusion)'. The "Transcendental Dialectic" is the critical treatment of the sophistical, illusory reasoning involved in metaphysics as actually practiced.

²⁹ The categories (and principles) of the understanding are ‘constitutive’ and make possible a knowledge of Nature. The three Ideas of reason are not ‘constitutive’, they give us no knowledge of corresponding objects, and do not increase our knowledge. But they do stimulate us to an ever greater systematization of phenomena.

and cannot be used for proving the existence of a highest purpose (which can only be the general system of all purposes) ... the highest purpose of the speculative use of Reason." (*Proleg.*, §56)

Kant has examined what is required for the modern science of nature with great precision and has found there no need to affirm the existence of God, human immortality or a created world. "...these Ideas of reason", he states "are of no service to the use of our understanding in experience, but quite dispensable, and become even an impediment to the maxims of a rational knowledge of nature." (*Proleg.* §44) He makes this indifference explicit: since we cannot render the concept of a simple substance empirical, the human soul is void with regard to the cause of experience. Similarly, whether the world is eternal or had a beginning is of no significance in explaining any event in the world itself. "And finally we must, according to a right maxim of the philosophy of nature, refrain from explaining the design of nature as drawn from the will of a Supreme Being, because this would not be natural philosophy but a confession that we have come to the end of it." How different from the position of Descartes who says in several places that an atheist cannot be a scientist because at any time doubts could assail him about his method, doubts which cannot be resolved without knowing that God exists!

Natural science, taking Newtonian mechanics as its model³⁰, is properly the result of the right exercise of the understanding. Understanding bestows universality on its content, and without its activity there is no fixity or determination. It separates and abstracts, brings to its objects clarity, distinctness, order. Through its 'categories' it elevates perception into objectivity, into 'experience'. But pushed to its extreme, as when it considers properly dialectical concepts, it confounds itself. The three Ideas of Reason exhibit just such a nullification, for it is the application of the categories of the understanding to the ideas of reason which produces antinomies, contradictions and four-term syllogisms when it reflects on God, Self and World. Kant characterizes dialectical results as "illusory", which from the side of the understanding so they must appear. But that is simply the limit of the understanding itself which in its abstract determinations, taken as such, turns into its opposite. We owe to Kant the definitive proof that the categories of the understanding are unfit determinations of the 'unconditioned', establishing the limits of the understanding to 'experience' which has appearances or phenomena as its content. If Kant recognizes only the negative outcome in his philosophy, that is, that understanding does not know the thing-in-itself, and can have no knowledge of infinite objects, his philosophy does not have the last word with regard to the Ideas of Reason. But this development of the speculative philosophy of Hegel lies outside the scope of our interest here.

B. The Emancipation Of Democratic Institutions From The Christian Religion

It is not difficult to understand the consequences for secular life when, at the Reformation, men repudiated the external authority of bishops and priests, together with all its trappings, and looked within for their relation to God. The corruption of the Church was by that

³⁰ There could have been another subjective approach to nature in addition to the mechanistic account, as Hegel remarks: a teleological view compatible with the principle of purposiveness. [*Encyclop. Logic*, §58] But this would not have fit the Kantian argument which required an extant science of nature, recognized as such.

time so thorough that it took only the final absurdity of selling indulgences to finance the building of St. Peter's to bring down the whole edifice. The sheer hypocrisy, deception and superstition men had lived under were recognized at the same moment and in the same realization that men knew their inner freedom, their self-determination, expressed as interior faith – not a belief in particular things, in something absent and in the past, but that Christ is an actual presence in faith and in Spirit. This called forth more than just the reform of the Church, but the transformation of the whole secular order as well – law, morality, government, the social order – in conformity with this new principle of freedom.

The first manifestations involved the overthrow of monastic life and the disappearance of all distinction between clergy and laity, but by no means the Christian principles espoused there. The three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience were now demanded of all the laity, but in a new form: marriage, wherein the family introduces children to the community, was thought holier than celibacy, and further it removed the distinction between clergy and laity; it was more commendable for men by their industry and labour to be independent than from a vow of poverty to depend on others; and obedience to the laws of the state, as following from the consent of the governed, was more properly the principle of conduct than obedience to the abbot.³¹ In short, Christian conduct now proceeded from the principle of freedom.

It would be tedious and redundant to trace the subsequent history of western civilization through the establishment of constitutional monarchies and the settlement of the New World to demonstrate what has been shown elsewhere and in much detail that from the principle of freedom there arose a secular order which, by the time of the Enlightenment, had become so well established, so universally accepted, that, as with the history of modern science, it achieved its own autonomy from its Christian roots. Indeed, the separation of Church and state was itself a consequence of that principle of freedom, an assertion on the one hand that nothing presupposed can hold authority over the consent of the governed, and on the other hand that one is in no way coerced in the matter of religious practice.³²

Even if a free society has achieved autonomy after a period of time from the creed which brought it forth, still this principle of freedom now thoroughly secular and the democratic rights and institutions it has established do not enjoy the universal approbation that its counterpart, the modern science of nature, seems to elicit. There are reservations expressed in other cultures, not very different from reservations expressed in the West, about this mechanistic science and its technology, especially as environmental concerns grip the world. But these are mild in comparison with the deeply felt resentment when we in the West criticize others across the globe

³¹ G.W.F.Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (trans. J. Sibree), New York, 1956, 422-23.

³² Some scholars who are Muslim do not see this separation as the consequence of the Christian religion but rebellion against it. Cf. Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, Boulder Colorado, 1994, 18-19, which leaves that impression, but also his *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought*, London, 2002, Chap.8, esp. 324, which sees the necessity of getting beyond the “binary thinking of religion versus secularism”; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam*, San Francisco, 2002, 116-118. That secularism stands opposed to religion is a common enough position of many Christians also.

concerning human rights and political freedom. The cultural differences between East and West are most strongly and vehemently expressed over political differences, the “clash of civilizations’ most evident over such issues. We in the West think that peace with Islam depends on the emergence of liberal societies in Muslim countries, and Muslims are astonished that we insist on making our own laws rather than simply following the divine law, God’s will, revealed to the prophets and codified in the *Shari’ah*. The West sees the countless human rights abuses in Muslim countries and is horrified, and the East observes the debauchery and material excess in the United States and is appalled. As recent events in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate, there is little appetite for what we in the West most cherish and offer freely to others, frequently at great cost and sacrifice to ourselves.

The Qur’ān is for Muslims the “uncreated word of God”, the divine word literally revealed, in a stronger sense than probably any other religious document, to the Prophet in the first quarter of the seventh century. Even the language, Arabic, is sacred since God has spoken in it, and for this reason translations are canonically illegitimate.³³ It declares itself to be the most complete guide for mankind and comprehensive of earlier revelations. In addition, during the period of the revelations and Muhammed’s own career, he himself gave many directions³⁴ on policy regarding war and peace, moral issues both public and private, and other practical matters, and he did this regarding actual situations of the time. “Thus the Qur’ān had from the time of its revelation a practical and political application.”³⁵ Not a mere text of personal piety, nor a set of universal commandments, it was directed toward the moral improvement of mankind both personally and communally, and from its earliest appearance as a text – recited at first, and later set down in writing – it was consulted as a repository of answers to practical questions of morality and even everyday life. What Rahman emphasizes, and for one who picks up the *Qur’ān* out of curiosity seems evident, is that these apparently disconnected historical and symbolic narratives, bits of moral advice, these elements of some moral law, together with the affirmation on every page of the One God, Creator and Sustainer, absolutely cry out for understanding them in a deeper unity. It is inconceivable that such a text could have been the source of the conversion of the Arabian peninsula and spread across the Middle East in such short order unless it possessed a deep unity, both spiritually and practically, which was compelling first to those of the Arabian peninsula and then to the wider world. This matter is strengthened by the realization that Muslims continue to live by that text to this day, almost fourteen centuries later, in great numbers and with firm conviction in its literal truth.

³³ Arabic as the sacred language of the *Qur’ān* must be thought to have certain characteristics not to be found in other languages essential to the Revelation. It is poetic rather than rational, and formularies roll off the tongue as so many mantras and consecrations.

³⁴ Collected in the *Sunnah* of all the doings and sayings of the Prophet, including *Hadith*, the sacred sayings in which Allah speaks in the first person through the mouth of the Prophet. Although not part of the *Qur’ān*, the *Sunnah* is regarded as canonical and constitute the first commentary on the *Qur’ān*.

³⁵ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, Chicago, 1982, 2.

There have been various overlays on the original text, some at least inconsistent with the original. There was the work of the jurists to extend the admonitions and principles in the *Qur'ān*, creating a whole body of law, sometimes taking as raw materials the customs of conquered peoples which were modified in the light of the *Qur'ān*, a procedure that worked reasonably well because of its practicality. What did not work were attempts to deduce law from the *Qur'ān* itself to cover new problems by the procedures of *qiyās* or analogical reasoning, and Rahman traces this to the failure to understand the deeper unity of the *Qur'ān* and a fixation then on isolated, atomistic elements easily contradicted by other elements in the work. There was the opposite tendency also. The Islamic philosophers, and the Sufis too, did approach the *Qur'ān* as a text to unify, but the unity was imposed from without rather than derived from the text itself, sometimes in a spirit antagonistic to the *Qur'ān*.³⁶ These two approaches have not ceased in our own times: western ideas have been imported with great approval as though from the *Qur'ān* itself in some Muslim quarters and rejected with abhorrence among others.³⁷

As a first effort to grasp the essential significance of the *Qur'ān*, its unity and the *Weltanschauung* it produced among many generations, across many lands, extant and thriving in our day, perhaps we could begin with what it was originally. In the words of Rahman,

The *Qur'ān* is the divine response, through the Prophet's mind, to the moral-social situation of the Prophet's Arabia, particularly to the problems of the commercial Meccan society of his day...The early *suras* of the *Qur'ān* make it abundantly clear that the acute problems of that society were polytheism (idol worship), exploitation of the poor, malpractices in trade, and general irresponsibility toward society (which there is good reason to believe the *Qur'ān* perceived as interconnected).³⁸

Anyone taking up the *Qur'ān* can find those elements in it. But if the work is to have more universal significance, one that moves it from Arabia to the wider world, one that is relevant over fourteen centuries, it must be said that the problems Muhammed addressed are no longer those of eighth century Arabia. How then is it to be read by those who have faith in it and intend it as their guide to life? Surely, many of the difficulties the non-believer finds with the work is that some would read it literally and thoughtlessly, would cut off the hand of the thief, treat a woman's testimony as worth only half of the man's, force nonbelievers living in Muslim countries to live as *dhimmi*, as though the problems to be addressed and the solutions given were still those of eighth century Arabia. There must be some other way it is to be read and practiced if thoughtful, serious people would find it a guide for their lives.

It must be read, and this is *sine qua non*, as a whole, as proposing a definite attitude and way of life, such that what is taken there as universally true has no inner contradictions, and

³⁶ Rahman identifies Ibn Sina's (Avicenna's) philosophy and Ibn 'Arab's mysticism here, positions easily shown by medieval scholars to be inconsistent with Islam.

³⁷ Rahman, 2-4.

³⁸ Rahman, 5.

moreover integrates the whole of life where the believer finds himself now. Read in any other way, as discrete admonitions and commands, it loses all integrity and easily falls into contradiction, with one sura opposed to another. What is the life that is proposed there? It is founded on the recognition and declaration of a strict monotheism revealed through the Prophet. What follows from that is a life according to the “Five Pillars” of Islam: the public act of faith, the *shahādatān* (“There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet”), the canonical prayer (*salāt*) repeated five times a day, involving both the mind and every muscle of the body, the tithe (*zakāt*) for definite social-political purposes, fasting for the month of Ramadan, and the pilgrimage (*hajj*) once in a lifetime to Mecca. It is not a life of contemplation, but active in the world, as Muhammad himself, who though “God intoxicated” left the solitude of his cave to found an ethical, political realm under Allah, never to return to that contemplative state again. It is a life of human accountability at God’s command, that is, in accordance with the revelation in the *Qur’ān* and the *Sunnah*. But it is a life in the presence of God, daily, monthly, yearly and one’s whole lifetime, as routine as the monastic “hours”, seeking equilibrium with everything in its place. One is a Muslim if he submits to the will of God and is obedient to His law in this way as laid down in the revealed texts. If this seems medieval, so it is, for time after the final revelation only brings with it corruption. The Prophet is quoted as saying, “No period will come which will not be worse than the period before it.”³⁹

All law for the Muslim is God given, and in this respect there is no difference between the laws of nature and laws governing human behaviour. Moreover, as in Judaism, “for Islam Divine Law is more central than theological thought to the religious life.”⁴⁰ Islam is thus more concerned with “orthopraxy”, the straight path of practicing and reaching the truth, rather than “orthodoxy”⁴¹ That men should presume to make laws for themselves, as in the West, is simply a secularism that destroys the holiness and universality of moral values. “Secularism is necessarily atheistic.”⁴² Thus, a call to Muslim countries to embrace democracy is in many respects antithetical to the heart of Islam. Freedom, the consequence and highest human expression of the Christian religion, is a work of evil for the majority of Muslims, because as we have indicated human institutions as founded in the Christian religion necessarily become secular institutions. There can be no greater opposition than that between cultures whose primary good is submission and obedience and those who treasure freedom above all else.

³⁹ Frithjof Schuon, *Understanding Islam*, Bloomington, 1998, 22, a revised edition of the first English translation which appeared in 1965.

⁴⁰ Nasr, 118.

⁴¹ “There is no magisterium in Islam...to determine the correctness of doctrine, and on the level of belief and doctrine Islam has been less stringent than Catholicism in determining what is orthodox. Usually acceptance of the testifications of faith, that it, “There is no god but God” and “Muhammed is His Messenger,; has sufficed, even if opposition has been made to other beliefs and interpretations of a particular person or group.” Nasr, 85.

⁴² Rahman, 15.

This is not universally the case in Muslim countries. When Ataturk determined to modernize Turkey in 1923, he concluded that this depended on two things principally, the principles of democracy and the teachings of science. As President he abolished the caliphate and Muslim religious courts, established a public school system free of religious instruction, gave women the vote and the right to divorce, adopted the Latin alphabet, and although he did not establish a democracy since that would have interfered with his agenda, by 1950, some eleven years after his death, the first free elections were held, and the Turkish army remains determined to protect the secularism Ataturk established. Turkey is virtually alone as a democratic secular state with a population overwhelmingly Muslim. But the example of Turkey has not been an unalloyed success. Ataturk destroyed and replaced so much as to be a wholesale shock to Muslim consciousness, and there remains a dividedness in the Turkish soul well expressed in their literature.⁴³

He attacked the semiological universe of Muslims by replacing the Arabic alphabet with the Latin alphabet, the turban and fez with the hat, and the *shari'a* with the Swiss legal code. Official ceremonies, cooking, furniture, architecture, urbanism, the calendar, all those semiological systems that affect individual and collective sensibilities and control the a priori forms of understanding, were officially abolished and slated for replacement by European systems in the space of a few years. It makes one think of the French revolutionaries who believed they could replace the Christian cult with that of the Supreme Being.⁴⁴

There are other Muslim countries with liberalized political systems and some degree of respect for individual freedom: Indonesia, Morocco, Senegal, Kuwait (after its liberation from Iraqi rule). Iran is probably the nearest to establishing a truly democratic state, in spite of the stumbling blocks put in place by Khomeini.⁴⁵ Interestingly, none of these states are Arab. It remains to be seen whether the obvious differences of other cultures will be permanent impediments to their democratization.

The emancipation of democratic institutions from the Christian religion is complete. But it is an error to regard that emancipation as without relation to the Christian religion, or as atheistic, since democratic institutions spring from that same subjectivity which creates in the world expressions of its freedom, a freedom formed in it through the Christian religion. Such secularity is the Christian religion incarnate in the world. If for many who are nominally Christian, if for many in the West, their expression of their freedom is in excess and wickedness, theirs is not a true freedom – it is the caprice of the foolish which is a source of scandal to other cultures. The proper expression of freedom is in the concrete realization of the equality of all people, the protection of their rights to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”, their pursuit of

⁴³ One need only read the novels of Orhan Pamuk, recent winner of the Nobel Prize for literature.

⁴⁴ Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, 25.

⁴⁵ See Ali Ghessari and Vali Nasr, *Democracy in Iran*, Oxford, 2006, for an interesting account of the Iranian history over the last century to establish a liberal democracy.

“Liberté, égalité, fraternité”, welcoming to their shores immigrants and refugees from everywhere (“Bring me your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free...”), and such other consequences of true brotherly love, not limited by race, creed or station.

Aristophanes On War: *Acharnians*

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The *Acharnians* is the first extant play of Aristophanes and was presented in 425 B.C., a few years after the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. Like all the plays of the poet, it reflects conditions brought on by the War and its aftermath. The customary adherence of men and women to the institutions of family and state was becoming fractured, and a more independent subjectivity began to assert itself. This new individuality sought to make itself master of the great institutions and the gods who supported these institutions. What differentiates one play of Aristophanes from another is the peculiar form of the interaction between the individual and the institutions. In *Acharnians* the comic poet himself (as Dikaiopolis) is the main character and he is searching for personal enjoyment of both an intellectual and sensual form in the midst of the War. This desire encourages him to take affairs of State into his own hands instead of the Sovereign Assembly and to make a private peace with the Spartans. This leads him to establish a pre-political common market with other Greek individuals, hoping to maximize his enjoyments through barter. After this, the drama takes a very surprising turn. The market is seen as unequal to the task of providing enjoyment. True enjoyment, it turns out, can be found only in a Festival of the god Dionysus that the State supervises. Even the individual enjoyment of the main character is seen as dependent on the gods and the civic order.¹

The journey of the main character began with the historical fact of the Peloponnesian war and ended with a festival of the god Dionysus. The War spelled the ruin of the total political order in which he has lived his life. The latter gives him satisfaction as an individual in the true sense: the festival that allows him to enjoy his individuality is celebrated under the aegis of the Athenian *polis* and communicates the same enjoyment to all the individuals of the State. This particular festival, called the Cups, is a drinking contest, and it unifies several aspects of Athenian life. It depends both on the production of wine and that love of competing so prevalent at Athens. To win in this contest is to enjoy all that is essential in the life of the City.

The play begins as the above-named Dikaiopolis, waiting in the Pnyx at Athens, addresses the audience in a monologue which considers his pains and pleasures. They all stem from the life of the City: he rejoices at the punishment of the demagogue Cleon, and he recalls his feelings of elation or misery at the form which the festivals devoted to poetry have taken. Never has he suffered worse than he does now, he says, waiting in vain for the Assembly to meet in order to discuss an end to the Peloponnesian War now waging. He addresses the audience and

¹ The critics tend to think that the play shows the triumph of a sole individual who impudently and shamelessly enjoys the good things he has won. For a statement of this view, see C. Whitman, *Aristophanes and the Comic Hero* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp.59-80.

thereby shows that his praise and complaints are directed towards the City of which both Dikaiopolis and they are citizens. His attitudes will arouse their interest, whether in approval or disapproval, and they will see themselves in his experience. That the main character should be a representative of Athenian life is not unique to Comedy. The questions raised in every tragedy of the 5th c. B.C. are contemporary to the spectators, though the action be set in the mythological past. Nor is it peculiar to Comedy to have a character of the drama address the audience, since this is done in Euripides as well. What is peculiar to Comedy is that a main character of the drama who is drawn directly from the common life of the day address the audience as his fellows. The audience is thereby made an aspect of the drama itself. It is anachronistic to say that the direct address to the audience is a “break” in the dramatic action, since this sharp division between the stage and the audience belongs really to the nineteenth century.

Although his name has not yet been revealed to the audience, it means ‘Just City.’ Only the whole drama will indicate what this name really means, since at first his actions seem both to define his name and to negate it. As a good citizen he wants the Assembly to meet, to consider a peace with Sparta. Athens was a direct democracy, and all pressing questions were decided by the male citizens in person. Yet Dikaiopolis seems also pre-occupied with his personal pleasures. This contradiction at the very beginning belongs to the drama itself: Dikaiopolis will experience the total tension between good citizenship and his particular interests. Bemoaning his few enjoyments, Dikaiopolis wonders whether the Assembly will add to them by taking up the subject of peace. Only peace, he says, can free him from the endless commerce of the City and restore him to the country. As with many Athenians, the War has compelled him to live in the City away from the more bountiful life of the country, and he yearns for a restoration.

As the Assembly opens, a certain Amphytheus appears to announce that, although the gods have commissioned him alone to make peace with the Lacedaimonians, he needs expense money for the trip: he is of divine origin, but in his human capacity, he travels like anyone else. This god has no real existence elsewhere; he oversees the potential bond amongst the Hellenic states and is thus a necessary invention of the poet. The Greek gods are not fictions in our sense but their existence lies in a poetic world where the Muses inspire those who give their being actuality.

Amphytheus is immediately expelled from the Assembly, since the higher officials, we soon discover, have no interest in peace, but in benefitting personally from the war. Thus the spiritual condition of Athens presents itself: Dikaiopolis, pre-occupied with his own pleasures and pains, desires peace to add to the former. The enemies of peace oppose it since their pleasures are dependent on war. This dependence shows itself with the appearance before the Assembly of an embassy that Athens had sent to the King of Persia eleven years ago. They were delayed ten years by the hospitality of the King and the difficulties of the case, they allege. They have now arrived with an official named the Eye of the King, who will give the Athenians money. Dikaiopolis notices that the Eye of the King is no more a Persian than he himself is: the whole Embassy is a fraud because the Athenian ambassadors are living high at public expense with no thoughts of peace whatsoever. He commissions Amphytheus to make a peace for himself and his family alone, and he agrees. This marks a true revolution, that what belongs to the whole State is now undertaken by a particular individual.

Dikaiopolis, however, has only deepened the state of fragmentation and alienation already subsisting. A War amongst the various Greek states is bad enough, but to appeal to the King of Persia is even worse. Almost within living memory the Hellenic states had united in their efforts to repel the Persian invasion, and now Athens has appealed to the descendant of that invader for help. Officialdom has broken down all the ties to wholeness in the civic realm, and it remains for an individual to restore these ties.

This collapse of the traditional order is the beginning of every Aristophanic comedy. This order depended on a primary customary allegiance to the established institutions of family and state, as these were presided over by the gods of the Olympian religion. After the Persian Wars (490-480) individuals began more and more to assert their independence either within or against that order. Sophism is an intellectual expression of this new independence, as is the spread of same-sex relation in the civic and familial realm. Both Comedy and Tragedy arise as festivals of the State under the aegis of the god Dionysus, as ways of relating this independent spirit to the civic and religious order. This god is said to be born of Zeus and a mortal woman and represents the subjective side of life in the *polis*. He has often been depicted merely as a god of drink and ritual drunkenness, but this is really his least developed side. He presides over the individual as he exists in a certain separation from the life of the *polis*. In the play *Bacchae* of Euripides his adherents flee an oppressive technocratic *polis* for the freer life of unity with nature. This has also its negative side; one of the Bacchantes has so lost her sense of civilized life that she unwittingly kills her own son, the king. Tragedy and Comedy refine the god's nature; these different forms of drama show the relation of the individual to the whole realm of the civic order and the gods. Since the chief god presiding over the civic order was Zeus, the plays are ultimately about the relation of Zeus to Dionysus, at the divine level, and in the human subject, the relation of his civic life to the whole range of his individuality.

Although each comedy of Aristophanes begins with a depiction of the historical breakdown of the civic order, the entire action is concerned with overcoming this breach.² The journey of Dikaiopolis to do this begins to take more definite shape when Amphytheus returns from Sparta with several possible peace-treatises. He is very agitated and explains that he is being pursued by certain Acharnians, said to be men who fought against the Persians at Marathon, who are opposed to any treaty because the Spartans have cut down their vines. The first result then of an individual peace with Sparta is a kind of civil war, a development which indicates why a personal treaty is a limited solution to the problems of our hero.

Amphytheus presents the peace treaties as if they were different vintages of wine. The Greek word for treaty is the plural of the word for libation, or wine poured out in honour of a certain god. One should notice here that this is rather more than a clever 'pun'. Instead, this form that the peace treaty takes represents what peace is for Dikaiopolis. It is not an abstract or spiritual bond but a very particular kind of pleasure. He has shown that he has a very definite

² Many commentators speak of this overcoming of the breach as fantasy. This is not a very useful category since it implies that the historical is real and the rest fictive. In *Acharnians*, however, and every Aristophanic comedy, the experience of the main character falls within the spirit of Greek religion and civic life. Each scene represents a stage in a spiritual journey that begins with the hero's expressions of dismay at how oppressive his life in the *polis* has become.

sense of what pleasure is. Since the name for the thing allows it, peace assumes a material and non-abstract form. As well, the enjoyment involved in drinking wine belongs more to a personal than a corporate or state peace.

Of the three peaces on offer, one vintage of five years, another of ten, and the third of thirty years, Dikaiopolis naturally chooses the longest. He then announces that, paying no attention to the Acharnians who have pursued Amphitheus, he will celebrate the Rural Dionysia and enjoy the country he has yearned for. This festival was one observed at the village level throughout Attica in December and early January; it was a fertility festival and thoroughly phallic. Just as Dikaiopolis had arrogated to himself as a citizen that privilege of making peace that belonged to the whole State, here he acts as the head of a family to decide when to celebrate a festival; the date of the celebration belongs really to the customs of the whole people. He has gained his end of returning to the country-side, and in worshipping the Phallus, companion of Dionysus, he revels in a natural vitality than can also be hostile to the good order of the Family. Thus he addresses the personified Phallus as both ‘adulterer’ and ‘paederast’. Dikaiopolis is clearly hoping to be freed of the structured order of familial life.

Dikaiopolis might have been indifferent to the Acharnians but they have him very much in mind. They have pursued him, whom they regard as a traitor, to his celebration. They barely allow him and his family to begin the rituals associated with it when they intervene forcefully. They regard anyone who would make peace with the Laonians as their enemy and initially they refuse to hear any explanation of his.³ The desire for peace with the Spartans is at first the interest of only one man, and the Acharnians resist a seemingly treasonable innovation.

Dikaiopolis can dissuade the Acharnians from killing him only through their obsessive devotion to charcoal-cutting. This was the main occupation of their district at Athens. Only by threatening to kill a charcoal can he gain their attention. To avoid this horror the Acharnians allow him to address them, with his head on the block, so that they can still kill him if necessary after they have heard him.

Before speaking, Dikaiopolis reflects on the difficulties that attend speaking to people like the Acharnians: they wish to hear themselves and their city praised, even if they are being fooled. Dikaiopolis reflects on what happened to himself, when he satirized various officials and had as a result been prosecuted by Cleon for maligning the state in front of foreigners. Here Dikaiopolis speaks for the first time as Aristophanes. To avoid trouble while he addresses the Acharnians, he says, he must visit Euripides, in order to be outfitted in a manner calculated to gain their pity.

This announced identity between the poet and Dikaiopolis is essential to the play. First, it is a method by which the dramatic action includes the actual City itself in the drama. We tend to assume that the poet is an inspired writer who brings a fictive world into existence. The

³ Every comedy of Aristophanes has an *agon*, or contest at this point in the dramatic action, where the hero’s plan has stirred controversy in the community. The *agon* reveals a duality within the hero, that although a representative Athenian, he is not directly so; at first he represents only a minority opinion, opposed by those who are not as revolutionary as the hero.

Athenians thought that poets were servants of the god Dionysus and that the dramatic action formed part of the festival of that god. A comic example of this thinking is Aristophanes's own *Frogs*, in which Dionysus descends to Hades in order to bring back the dead Euripides, but instead returns with Aeschylus, who, he thinks, can best advise the City. When we see a god in a comedy learning and determining the true end of tragedy, it is brought home to us very forcefully that the two forms of drama belong ultimately to Dionysus and to neither the audience nor the playwright. Moreover the inclusion of the comic poet himself is appropriate to the current dramatic plot. If the central character is looking for enjoyment free of the War, he performs the same function as a comic poet, who shows the city the relation of enjoyment to the whole State.

Dikaiopolis's visit to Euripides to prepare himself for addressing the Acharnians is not easily understood. Many commentators think that this is merely the occasion for a parody of Euripides.⁴ In reality the visit to Euripides is a necessary part of the plot. The most evident connection is that Dikaiopolis, who is also Aristophanes, is a fellow dramatist of Euripides: they have a similar *techne* or craft. Dikaiopolis had first appeared as a citizen, then as a husband and father. In his attempt to assert his own individuality, Dikaiopolis moved from that realm, the State, in which he is most like others, to the more particular realm of the family and finally to the least communal realm as craftsman. Further, the poets are fellow-craftsmen within the realm of the Dionysus who presides over both tragedy and comedy at the great festival, the City Dionysia. Dikaiopolis had earlier celebrated the Rural Dionysia as a member of the family, thinking to find true enjoyment through this festival. Now he thinks that he can appropriate the tragic rags that Euripides dressed many of characters in; he will use tragedy for personal and individual ends. As he makes his appeal to Euripides, it becomes clear that he has a very particular view of Euripides, that his costumes define his plays. This is not simply the view of Dikaiopolis but Euripides himself. Exasperated by his repeated requests for the costumes of his characters who endured great misery, Euripides maintains that Dikaiopolis will have soon deprived him of the very means of making dramas.

Provided with the clothing suitable to wretchedness Dikaiopolis reappears before the Acharnians, whom he now addresses as if they were the entire *polis*. He reminds them that even comedy can teach 'the just things' (*dikaia*). Then he attempts to win over their sympathy by asserting his own great dislike of the Lacedaimonians, who have also destroyed his vines, and he argues that the Spartans are not alone to blame for the War: the Athenians too must accept their share of the responsibility. The exclusion of Megarian goods from Athenian markets, he alleges, moved the Spartans to retaliate. Certainly, according to Thucydides, the Spartans gave this as a *casus belli*, and the Megarians would have been ruined by such an exclusion. This assertion immediately divides the listening crowd into two opposed factions: Dikaiopolis has begun to win them over.

⁴ Often when aspects of an Aristophanic comedy resemble something else, one is informed that we are in the presence of a parody. This term is of very little use in explaining the development of a plot and implies that Aristophanes is not especially interested in a plot, but really in a series of acts that comprise a kind of vaudeville show. In fact, parody is really a very low form of humour. It aims at making a person, an act or speech ridiculous by exaggerating parts of it. Before reducing Aristophanes to a parodist, the interpreter has the obligation to look for a connection between an alleged parodic scene and what went before.

The pro-War faction then appeals to their leader, a certain Lamachus, to aid them. Dikaiopolis treats him with scorn and contempt, pointing out that in the current war Lamachus and his kind, the rich, have drawn soft billets: they are sent at full pay on embassies or to places without fighting. The poor, for their part, must do the fighting without perquisites. Lamachus's constant reply to all charges is that the people have elected him. At the end of their mutual insults, Lamachus declares that he will wage perpetual war against the Peloponnesians. Dikaiopolis says that he will open an international trade mart in which all Greeks, including Peloponnesians, Megarians and Boeotians can trade with him, everyone but Lamachus. Thus the first part of the play ends.

Briefly put, the journey of Dikaiopolis has taken him from the full-blown political order of Athens at war to a kind of pre-political pan-Hellenic world of barter. This journey has included stops at the familial order and finally at the realm of *techne* and its craftsmen. Yet all this has clearly taken place within the realm of Dionysus and his theatre, not historically. Even in the midst of the degradation of the *polis* world, it is not possible to 'return' literally to a pre-political condition. That this is not simply our judgement but that of the drama itself is shown by the consciousness of the main character Dikaiopolis that he is at once the main actor and author of this play. More prosaically, perhaps, this return to a pre-political condition marks only the half-way mark of the drama. No comedy can end simply with a pre-political individuality.

There follows the parabasis, in which the chorus directly address the audience. This is imagined by some to be a 'break' in the dramatic action, mandated by tradition, in which the poet gives miscellaneous advice to the spectators. However, it is in reality more deeply integrated into the action; it more clearly brings to bear the action of the drama upon the life of the citizens. The parabasis falls into two main parts, praise of the poet and a plea for reform in the law suits between old and young that has little relation to the plot up to this point. The poet is praised by the chorus for teaching the 'just things' to the City, both because he has given good advice in previous plays and because he is now playing the part of the peacemaker in the current drama. The advice offered to the city, that the old not be ruined by the young in law-suits is a thought that occurs to the chorus by analogy to the main action. Just as there should be peace between cities, they imagine, so there should be peace within a city. In their remark the chorus anticipates the general drift of the drama, that peace contain the competitive spirit. Their purely formal method of containing it is inadequate to the proposed goal, and the parabasis can by no means conclude the play.

The next scene shows the proposed international trade mart in action. Dikaiopolis had imagined that through this pan-Hellenic individualism peace might be achieved. The result however of Dikaiopolis's attempt to barter with various Hellenes is that it shows the extreme instability of such an arrangement: the peace is established on the basis of personal economic imperialism. A half-starved Megarian arrives, desperate to save his daughters by selling them as pigs. Dikaiopolis, alive to the ruse, nevertheless agrees to a deal, taking the alleged pigs in exchange for some trifling articles of food. When a Boeotian later is willing to trade various of his delicacies for something uniquely Athenian, Dikaiopolis persuades him to accept an informer who had denounced the first deal with the Megarian. The informer is duly crated and sent off. The chorus eulogizes Dikaiopolis for establishing a mart in which all good things come to him of their own accord.

The initial desire for an increase in enjoyments that has moved Dikaiopolis from the beginning has here reached a certain completion. All that belongs to physical pleasure, whether of food or sex, is now his. He has subordinated every status that he had in the *polis*, whether as citizen, father or craftsman to the service of this desire. Further, he has overcome the indifference of the Assembly and the opposition of the Acharnians to his plan. Even a divine being has devoted himself to his scheme. Most recently, representatives of other Greek cities have served his ends. In brief, Dikaiopolis has made himself the master of his world.

If the play were a celebration of his clever self-assertiveness, it should end here, but it does not. No sooner has the second parabasis celebrated the great peace won by Dikaiopolis than he begins to fall under the authority of an objective order not dependent on him. The chorus celebrates the establishment of a paradise, in which war has been banished and *eros* can have its place. Despite this, a herald arrives to announce to everyone a wine-drinking contest to be held in accord with tradition. That this announcement has authority for Dikaiopolis is shown in his commands to some attendants that they prepare the elements of a feast that he will presumably take with him to the contest.

What will occur from here to the end of the drama is the joining together of Dikaiopolis's self-assertiveness and the authority of the Dionysiac feast of Cups. On the one side is the peculiar dominion that Dikaiopolis has made for himself in his trade mart; on the other is the enjoyment-through-competition announced by the herald. As we saw, the trading done by Dikaiopolis was of a most unusual kind. It involved not only what are usually called 'goods' but also young girls and an informer. A father converted his daughters into goods and a thoroughly annoyed Dikaiopolis had converted an informer into something that could be packed into a crate and shipped. So there were present not only actual foods that can be traded but persons from the realms of family and the state, respectively. Opposed to this is the simplicity of a state-sponsored Festival of Dionysus. Dikaiopolis belongs to both worlds, one that he has made for himself, and the other that subsists independently of him and is announced to him.

The experience of Dikaiopolis is contrasted with that of his old enemy Lamachus. He too wishes to participate in the Festival of the Cups, but between that participation and his warlike opposition to the Lacedaimonians there is a great gulf. Two somewhat odd scenes show how the character of Dikaiopolis can develop while that of Lamachus cannot. The scenes both involve visits from people who wish to share in Dikaiopolis's private peace, one a farmer and the other a new bride, or one from the realm of *techne* and earning a living, the other from the realm of the family and thus a deeper community. The farmer's tears over a bull destroyed in the war have harmed his vision, and he wishes to be cured; he is refused with little sympathy. A new bride has learned that Dikaiopolis possesses peace in the form of wine. Interpreting this in an almost magical sense, she asks for some peace-wine so that she can apply it to her husband's person. This will keep him amorous, she hopes, and away from the war-recruiters. Dikaiopolis acquiesces in her request: since she is a woman and removed from the political realm, she is in no way guilty of continuing the war. Her enjoyment will contribute to peace and militate against war. The farmer's potential enjoyment is merely individual and will in no way contribute to the peace.

That Dikaiopolis can make this distinction shows that he has moved beyond the merely selfish dominion that the trade mart has given him. Thus, when the priest of Dionysus summons him to the Festival, he can respond with alacrity. Lamachus has not prepared himself for the feast. He had attached himself to the War and had also benefitted from that attachment. Now he must experience the other side of that attachment, war itself, as he is summoned to the colours.

Soon after this summons, the one to a Festival, the other to War, we see the results. Dikaiopolis has triumphed in the contest and is returning home with two comely companions whom he has met at the Festival. Lamachus has suffered the wounds of war and bears them in his person. Dikaiopolis has competed on equal terms with his fellow citizens in the Festival and thus has the enjoyments of drink and sexual pleasure. Lamachus had parasitically enjoyed the benefits of his war with his Greek confreres. Now he must suffer it.

The Dionysiac festival includes all the elements that Dikaiopolis has been experiencing. The wine that he has drunk is a result of *techne* or that craft that can make something useful for humans out of nature. The drinking contest includes the kind of competition that war and economic imperialism had earlier expressed. Finally, only in a State festival has Dikaiopolis gained the enjoyment he has been searching for.

This festival moreover has clarified certain confusions that Dikaiopolis had earlier experienced. Though his enjoyment of two comely companions might seem an offence to a moralizing view, these women have a different character than the two daughters he had gained through barter. There commerce had violated the familial order. Here the two women are regarded simply as objects of enjoyment. A difference amongst commerce, familial life and sensual enjoyment has been established.

Although Dikaiopolis is also the comic poet, he finds his realization in another Dionysiac festival. The comic drama finds its conclusion in that which is similar to, but not identical to, itself. A comic poet is the craftsman of comedy, not its indwelling reality. Only many years later, in *Frogs*, can Comedy be more radically comprehensive of itself. In that drama, not the poet but Dionysus himself is the hero. He determines the plot of that comedy by going to Hades to bring back his favourite tragic poet, Euripides, but returns with Aeschylus who can educate the State. Only thus can Comedy include both the life of the *polis* and the Dionysiac spirit in their radical division.

Only through the entire journey of the main character does the poet's complete view of war emerge. Dikaiopolis regards war as that which takes away enjoyment of every kind; his first step is to make himself the centre of his own political and familial world. This leads him though to recapitulate the very evils that had led to the War. Like the officials who expel Amiphitheus or benefit from fake embassies, Dikaiopolis has separated his good from the good of the State. The topsy-turvy world he makes for himself in the trade mart is no solution. Only the surrender of hostilities against other Greeks, and a just order at home can secure real enjoyment. Lamachus had hoped for enjoyment at home and hostilities abroad, but this division has worked only to his ruin. Only a festival of the State can ground true peace. It includes both production and competition, but in a setting that is conducive to the enjoyment of all. The competitive spirit that can lead to war is thereby not simply denied but directed. The true comedy lies in the journey of

Dikaipolis from the corruption of the city at war to a deep self-assertion that is so manifestly absurd that he can find only in a return to the life of the city the satisfaction that he craves.

A Woman's War

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The contemporary names given to what we now call World War I—the Great War, the war to end all wars—reflect a belief that the war that tore Europe apart from 1914 to 1918 was different from previous wars. Instead of naming it for a specific cause or location, contemporary observers defined it as new in scale, perhaps in response to the new technologies in use—airplanes, automobiles, tanks, poison gases. The scale of destruction possible, the number of combatants, the range of countries involved, all demanded a new way to talk about the combat. Much of the literature coming out of the war also reflected these changes. Poets such as Wilfred Owen described the horrors of trench warfare at first hand, leaving readers with few illusions about the “glory” of battle. From the point of view of those at home in Canada, the war could be a distant event of no significance or a personal tragedy as family members or friends enlisted. For L.M. Montgomery, the war was a tragedy of giant proportions, although none of her close associates were combatants. According to her journals, she followed the war news assiduously, was enraged at the reports of German atrocities, could not concentrate on her work when things were going badly, and longed for someone to share her intense reactions. Yet despite her awareness of what was happening in the towns and villages of Europe and her full appreciation of the destruction the war caused, when she writes about the war in *Rilla of Ingleside*, Montgomery romanticizes the period by organizing her novel around the experience of a young woman in Prince Edward Island and making her love story the centre of the plot. Further, by showing that the work performed by women in Canada during the war is merely an extension or intensification of their pre-war activities and by demonstrating how easily they come to regard the activities as “normal,” Montgomery suggests that the war does not change the social life and structures of the village in which her characters reside.

Montgomery wrote *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921, “RI”) between 11 March 1919 and 24 August 1920. The main character, Rilla Blythe, is the youngest child of Anne Shirley and Gilbert Blythe, whose story Montgomery had already told in *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), *Anne of Avonlea* (1909), *Anne of the Island* (1915), *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917), and *Rainbow Valley* (1919). While the characters and setting of *Rilla of Ingleside* draw on a fictional world Montgomery had already created, the emphasis and organization of the novel owe a great deal to two war memoirs that she had read and a war movie she had seen. The two memoirs, *My Home in the Field of Honour* by Frances Wilson Huard and *A Hilltop on the Marne* by Mildred Aldrich, are mentioned in her journal entry of 18 March 1917, where she describes *A Hilltop on the Marne* as “a quite delightful little thing, though lacking the charm of ‘My Home on the Field of Honor’ (sic)” (Selected Journals II: 212, “SJ”). Montgomery records seeing DW Griffith's

war movie *Hearts of the World* on 3 September 1918, going partly because her half-brother Carl had recognized in one scene the site of a battle in which he had participated, and she describes the movie as “a wonderful thing” (*SJ* II: 267). In describing these works as “delightful” and “wonderful” Montgomery is ascribing to them characteristics not in keeping with expectations about accounts of the war. Although both *Hearts of the World* and *My Home in the Field of Honour* contain graphic depictions of battle, Montgomery is able to focus on the pleasure of seeing or reading them because the overall tendency of the works is to show continuity with a pre-war world that is happy, romantic, and pastoral. Because of her positive response to these works, the version of the home front experience Montgomery produces in *Rilla of Ingleside* draws on this cultural material about the war as much as on her own experience as recorded in her journals. All of these works show that during the war, women, whether near the battlefield or distant from it, perform the roles expected of them by their family and community, and since the expectations are based on class and gender, they rarely change their activities in kind, but only in intensity. Therefore, life in wartime, except when actually at the scene of battle, becomes simply an emotionally intensified version of normal life rather than a different type of life.

While she is very much in favour of the war and Canada's participation in it, Montgomery's journal records an intense emotional response to the war and engagement with war news and events that she tries to reproduce in her novel and which is reflected in her choice of incidents to use. For instance, Gertrude Oliver, the village school teacher, has prophetic dreams, as Montgomery did herself according to her journals. As well, the whole fictional household at Ingleside suffers as Montgomery did at news of particular setbacks and battles and in response to the reported atrocities in Belgium (*RI* 74; cf *SJ* II: 155) and the sinking of the *Lusitania* (*RI* 105-06; cf *SJ* II: 165-66). Montgomery's own excitement on receiving by telephone the news of Germany and Austria suing for peace and the response of her aunt as recorded in her journal are re-used in *Rilla of Ingleside*, except that it is Rilla who is so excited and a visitor who admonishes her in exactly the same words: “‘Sit down, child,’ said Mrs. Clow, who never got excited over anything and so had missed a tremendous amount of trouble and delight in her journey through life” (*RI* 266; cf *SJ* II: 269). In the novel Gertrude Oliver expresses Montgomery's idea that the world has changed when she comments on a Wordsworth poem that “Its classic calm and repose and the beauty of the lines seem to belong to another planet, and to have as little to do with the present world-welter as the evening star” (*RI* 153-54), echoing almost word for word a passage in Montgomery's journal (*SJ* II: 197). Montgomery also uses Gertrude Oliver to express her own hope for permanent change as a result of the war: “‘I wonder,’ said Gertrude dreamily, ‘if some great blessing, great enough for the price, will be the meed of all our pain? Is the agony in which the world is shuddering the birth-pang of some wondrous new era? Or is it merely a futile *struggle of ants/ In the gleam of a million million of suns?*’” (*RI* 165; cf *SJ* II: 160). By assigning her own emotional responses to the war to various characters in her fictional account “of Canada at war” (*SJ* II: 404), Montgomery suggests that an emotional reaction and hope for change are common responses.

The plot and thematic development of *Rilla of Ingleside* and *Hearts of the World* suggest that there is little reason to expect change. Although *Hearts of the World* is set in France, the type of story it tells may well have influenced Montgomery's plotting of *Rilla of Ingleside* as simultaneously a romance and a story of a country at war. The film, subtitled “The Story of a Village: An old fashioned story with a new fashioned theme,” tells the story of the war through

the experiences of two young Americans, Marie Stephenson and Douglas Hamilton, whose families live next door to each other in a quiet French village. Similarly, *Rilla of Ingleside* opens with news of a village, as Susan Baker is reading the "Jottings from Glen St. Mary" (the village in which the characters reside), in the provincial newspaper. Before the war, both girls have been sheltered from responsibility. In *Hearts of the World* there is some emphasis on the domestic femininity of Marie's life: we see her caring for goslings and making clothing, and it is specifically stated that she is interested in fashions. Although Rilla's interests up to the start of the war have not been domestic, neither is she ambitious for a career. In fact, she states that she is "devoid of ambition" and that the only thing she really wants to be is "Kenneth Ford's wife" (231). In the movie, when the general mobilization is announced, Douglas joins the army despite having just become engaged to Marie, just as in *Rilla of Ingleside* Kenneth Ford asks Rilla to wait for him just before he goes off to war. Thus the central romantic story of the young woman wondering if her lover will return is established in both works to make personal emotion the focus of the war story.

In plotting their stories, both Griffith and Montgomery rely on the traditional literary device of the foil, establishing class differences in paired romances, one serious and one comic. In *Hearts of the World*, the young female street singer called "The Little Disturber" first tries to attract Douglas Hamilton, who does his best to repulse her. At the same time, a young working man, Monsieur Cuckoo, tries to attract the singer and is rejected until Douglas is engaged to Marie, at which point the singer settles for Monsieur Cuckoo. Their relationship is never depicted in the same manner as that of the hero and heroine, for their encounters occur on the street, and "The Little Disturber" is clearly treating Monsieur Cuckoo as a poor substitute for the man she really wants, her disdain being shown in physical abuse of him, while the encounters of the young Americans take place in a garden and involve tender embraces and whispers. The farewell scene of Monsieur Cuckoo and "The Little Disturber" is comic, involving obvious cupidity on her part, while the farewell scene between the young Americans is touching and patriotic, as the photo Marie gives Douglas at parting is in a frame showing an American flag. Similarly, the romance between Miranda Pryor and Joe Milgrave in *Rilla of Ingleside* is presented as slightly ludicrous, while Rilla's own romance with Ken Ford is presented very seriously. Rilla assumes that Miranda's ability to love is limited (according to Rilla, Miranda is "as much in love with Joe as a china-blue girl can be with anyone" (151)) and she treats Miranda's difficulties in getting married over her father's objections comically. At Miranda's wedding the dog has a fit, the groom cries all the way through the ceremony, the groom's mother sits on a pie, and Miranda is "such a flat-faced, commonplace, uninteresting little bride" (159-60) that Rilla finds the experience unromantic. At the end, all Rilla can think of is writing "a perfectly killing account of it all to the boys" (161). While Rilla's farewell evening with Ken is disrupted, first by a crying baby and then by Susan Baker's recounting of "all the family spankings" (136), Rilla appears to Ken as a Madonna figure holding the baby in the lamplight (134) and the setting is a beautiful summer night romantically described with the scent of mint around them "like a soundless, invisible benediction" (138), establishing an almost religious atmosphere around their courtship. The presentation of the central romances in garden settings emphasizing the altruism of the characters—Douglas volunteering to fight for a country not his own, Rilla caring for someone else's child—draws attention to continuity with an innocent, idealistic prewar world, as a specifically romantic and pastoral tradition is drawn upon, just as the subtitle of the film emphasizes that the story is "old-fashioned."

While the fictional plots link the war to a traditional set of values and conventions, Montgomery's journals imply the continuity of the world at war with prewar life by linking the war news with routine events, as if it is as ordinary as the neighbour's harvest. Montgomery, for instance, links news of her son Stuart's birth to the war by suggesting that Constantine of Greece may have caused her to go into labour early (*SJ* II: 172); and in discussing her convalescence from delivery as a "dreary time", she gives equal weight to the "depressing despatches" and the fact that she does not care for her nurse (173). Similarly, the following winter her worries encompass family and war equally: "[husband] Ewan's voice was no better—the Germans were advancing—the baby had been failing for three weeks—I was wretchedly ill" (178), and a year later she still balances "[elder son] Chester's illness, the strain of the winter and the agony of Verdun" (188) in a single sentence. Commenting on being in Indiana to visit her husband's brother she writes, "It seems so strange to be in a country that is not at war! I did not realize until I came here how deeply Canada *is* at war—how *normal* a condition war has come to be with us" (191). Her concerns about the war are linked to even more mundane areas of life than her family's well-being: a beautiful day spent clearing the garden is spoiled by war news (227); an interview with fans occurs in a daze because of the news of the Halifax explosion (232); and her aunt's pleasure in her visit and Bulgaria suing for peace are given equal weight (268).

One reason for this "normalization" of the war news was undoubtedly the duration of the war – it lasted long enough to become a routine part of the news and to affect living conditions -- and Montgomery's characters share with her the perception that living in a country at war is normal. In *Rilla of Ingleside*, which is narrated partly through Rilla's diary entries, she reflects on how readily they have adapted to being at war in passages very similar to those Montgomery uses in her journal: "It seems strange that we can go on with ordinary life just as if nothing were happening overseas that concerned us Susan is putting in the garden, and mother and she are housecleaning, and we Junior Reds are getting up a concert in aid of the Belgians" (100-01). Later she says, "to me, the strangest of all the strange things since 1914 is how we have all learned to accept things we never thought we could—to go on with life as a matter of course" (146). Rilla includes putting on a concert in aid of the Belgians among items of "ordinary life". Although local concerts were a regular feature of village life in North America a hundred years ago, the usual aim would be to raise money for some local project. The continuity of this type of activity, if not the aim of the activity, with everyday life is also demonstrated in Montgomery's journal, which shows that Montgomery's war work is simply an extension of her normal activities. When a Red Cross Branch is formed in her village of Leaskdale, Ontario in November 1915, she naturally, as the clergyman's wife, becomes president, in addition to her "missionary societies, Guilds, . . . endless visits" (*SJ* II: 174). The activities of the Red Cross are similar to those of her other clubs, such as lectures and socials (189, 221), with the addition of preparing boxes for the soldiers (269). Just as Montgomery's social position determines her participation, the social position of Anne and Rilla Blythe as doctor's wife and daughter determine their roles in the village, including running the Red Cross and Junior Red Cross and Rilla becoming a foster mother. While caring for a baby is not something Rilla would normally do, it is the type of activity expected of women, and as one of the wealthier families in the village, the Blythes would be regarded as natural guardians of an orphaned child with no relatives.

Just as Montgomery and the Blythes must take on leadership roles due to their position, in *My Home in the Field of Honour* Frances Wilson Huard, the American wife of a French

landowner, must take charge of the estate when her husband is called to military service along with the men of the district, "especially as all those in my employ . . . were under twenty, and looked to me for moral support" (Huard 55). Because she is the *chatelaine*, not only her own household but also the people of the village look to her for guidance (157). When in September 1914 Huard and her household are traveling the countryside to escape battles in and around their village, it is she who decides where and when they will stop, what direction they will go in, even what they will eat: "The line outside the baker's shop warned me that I had a dozen hungry mouths dependent upon me and yesterday's supply of bread was well-nigh exhausted, let alone being stale" (177). Furthermore, when her party is lodged in a deserted bakery in the town of Rebais she takes it upon herself to cut up the stale bread there and distribute it to the soldiers before going to help care for the wounded at the local convent (183). That Huard's role as protector is part of the social structure of the village is illustrated when her notary comes to tell her that she must abandon her work of helping the wounded at Rebais and get her party on the road again: he says, "But think of all the young people who look to you for protection! You cannot desert them; you must go!" (191). This notion is further reinforced when she later refers to those traveling with her as "my people" (234).

In *A Hilltop on the Marne*, American journalist Mildred Aldrich, retired from Paris to a village where she can enjoy a pastoral life at low cost (Aldrich 15-17), is freer to choose her course of action than Huard is; however, in response to the presence of British and French forces in her village in the early days of the war she does take on the responsibility of providing food and facilities for washing to the British soldiers encamped near her home (91-92, 99), for entertaining the officers of the force (104-05), and for billeting a French officer (142-43). In these instances, her social position enters into the determination of what her role should be. When the French arrive seeking billets, Aldrich's servant interferes to ensure that "madame" is not inconvenienced by having to house several soldiers and gets only the "chef-major" as a billet (143). When Aldrich provides water and towels to allow the British soldiers to wash, one of the soldiers comments to her on the difference between her behaviour and that of British "ladies": he says, "there ain't no English woman of your class could have, or would have, done for us what you have done this morning" (106). Whether or not this is the case, the nature of Aldrich's voluntary support and the requests made of her by the armed forces are determined by perceptions of her place in the village hierarchy and her gender.

While the women in all of these works share a class and gender based obligation to provide support within the assumed normal range of their activities, there are significant differences between their experiences that raise questions about Montgomery's use of the words "charm," "delightful," and "wonderful" to describe the memoirs and film. For instance, while moving from place to place, Huard hears from those who have had direct contact with the fighting and is told that the women would be better off dead than having faced the German army (283). Similarly, the danger for families residing in Europe is graphically depicted in *Hearts of the World* when the village is virtually destroyed by shelling as the inhabitants are evacuating and Douglas' father and Marie's parents are killed, leaving Marie to wander the countryside in a disoriented condition while Douglas's mother and his three little brothers find refuge in a cellar. While Rilla is devastated when she loses a brother in the war, unlike Marie she never loses the security of her home. Rilla faces some of the same emotional situations as Marie, but not the physical danger: Marie is threatened with rape by a German officer and later must defend her

fiancé with a carving knife when he is struggling with a German soldier. Newspaper reports as well as Montgomery's knowledge from Huard's memoir and the film account for Walter's oblique reference to the danger of rape when he tells Rilla, "there were girls as sweet and pure as you in Belgium and Flanders. You—even you—know what their fate was," and says that one of his reasons for going to fight is "to make it impossible for such things to happen again" (RI 119).

While Montgomery merely depicts women doing additional work and facing changes to the way they must keep house during the war, Huard's memoir shows the direct impact of war on a village. Huard's wandering household group does not face much immediate danger, though she and a companion are shot at by German soldiers once (227); but they are unable to find shelter and must sleep outside with inadequate food, and when they are able to return to the chateau after moving around for some days, it is to find that the place has been pillaged and wantonly damaged once it is no longer needed as shelter by the German army. Everything worth stealing has been stolen, "then what remained was thrown into corners and wilfully soiled and smeared in the most disgusting and nauseating manner" (291). The Blythe family's regret at ploughing up the Ingleside lawn and peony bed to plant potatoes (RI 243) echoes the far greater distress felt by Huard on discovering that "All the wilful damage that human beings could do had been wrought on the contents of my home" (Huard 290). But the temporary loss of a lawn for the sake of producing food cannot compare to Huard's loss. Similarly, the Red Cross work done by the women of Glen St. Mary is a safe and mild version of the work done by Huard. While Huard provides hospital space in her chateau and actually assists a doctor performing emergency surgery on wounded soldiers (Huard 238-39), the women in PEI prepare sheets, bandages, and comforts for the soldiers in the knowledge that they will not have to put them into use themselves. The "charm" in these descriptions must lie in the depiction of women acting when required to and perhaps in the personality expressed in the narration, since the events themselves are disturbing.

With only old men left at home, the responsibility for the routine activities of the village as well as their normal activities falls on the women and children. This necessity is illustrated in the references in all the works to the process of getting the crops in. In the opening days of the war Huard must prepare three baskets of plums for preserving in the middle of her other preparations (48); as she travels to Soissons to meet the officials who can help her start a hospital she "observed that the harvesting was being done chiefly by women" (67); and trying to get back to her home she sees in the destruction of crops "signs of the invaders' passage" (272). Likewise Aldrich records the French government "calling on [the women] to go into the fields and get in crops and prepare the ground for the sowing of the winter wheat" and the women and children "climbing the hill at six in the morning" to "pick the black-currants, all of which go to England to make the jams and jellies" (60). Getting the crops in is one of the few instances in these works of women stepping outside their normal occupations in order to meet the demands of the war, though farm women have always worked in the fields to some extent, so again it may just be a matter of the women extending a normal activity rather than adding an activity. Rilla's safety from the harsher realities is demonstrated in *Rilla of Ingleside* when she does not go to work in the fields, although her friend Mary Vance and the Blythe's maid, Susan Baker, both do (RI 216). In *Hearts of the World* both Marie's unfitness for manual labour due to her class and the extraordinary conditions she faces are shown when, while working in the fields, she is flogged by a German officer for her inability to lift a basket of potatoes into a cart, though an

older peasant woman is able to perform the same task easily. Montgomery's awareness of the need to continue to produce crops and her experience of shortages and high wartime prices are recorded in her journal in the spring of 1917, when she writes that in planting her garden "not an inch of space has been left unutilized" (*SJ* II: 216). Montgomery, like the Blythes, is able to restrict her share of crop production to the needs of her own household, simply extending a routine part of the household work, while women in France must become part of large-scale production, performing functions that are not necessarily part of their normal lives.

While the absence of the men from the village may require the women to take on new roles and always causes them to perform extra work, the scenes in both the fictional and non-fictional works depicting the departure of the men from their home villages emphasize the expectation that the women will behave as if nothing extraordinary is happening. In *A Hilltop on the Marne*, describing the departure of the men to join their regiments, Aldrich writes, "There was no laughter, . . . but neither were there any tears" (52), a sight that moved her "as nothing I have ever met in life before has done" (52). In *My Home in the Field of Honour*, Huard describes "a most touching sight" as a man bids farewell to his family: "The couple bore up bravely until the whistle blew—then clasping each other in an almost brutal embrace, they parted . . ." (33-34). Perhaps recalling these descriptions of actual scenes as well as her own experience of seeing soldiers leave Leaskdale, in *Rilla of Ingleside* Montgomery depicts her women characters making a point of being composed and as cheerful as possible when seeing the soldiers off at the station, fulfilling the expectation that the women be as brave as the men and mask their emotional responses. In *Hearts of the World* the same point is made when Marie and Douglas part, and the title card informs the viewer that Marie's "sad heart" was "masked with smiles—as were millions of others in troubled France." By not showing their fear and sorrow, by minimizing their sense of the danger and risk, the women are meeting the expectation that they do what they can to instill courage in the men. The refusal to show excessive emotion creates the impression that the partings are routine and that the ordinary life of the village will continue uninterrupted in the absence of the men, and this is interpreted as a show of courage by the women. Marie in *Hearts of the World* must show physical courage and does so in protecting herself and her fiancé, as does Huard in protecting her household, but women in North America need only continue in their accustomed paths to rate praise. Walter Blythe tells Rilla that "It took more courage for you to tackle that five pounds of new infant . . . than it would for Jem to face a mile of Germans" (68) and Susan Baker is described by the narrator of *Rilla of Ingleside* as "one of the women—courageous, unquailing, patient, heroic—who had made victory possible" (247) because she has continued to do her job and care for the family throughout the war.

Both *Hearts of the World* and *Rilla of Ingleside* implicitly equate the village with civilization as a concept by conflating them in defining what the war is about and whom it will affect. In the film the point is made explicitly that the trenches are just outside the home village of the main characters, and although the army is described in a title card as fighting for "France and Civilization," in other cards it is stated that the soldiers are also concerned with the village itself, and know that with their retreat, it is doomed. In *Rilla of Ingleside* the characters are also aware that the war has both global and local implications. Mr. Meredith says that the war is essentially about preserving civilization and uses the standard opposition of black and white to emphasize that this is a battle between good and evil: "France is certainly very wonderful. It seems to me that in her I see the white form of civilization making a determined stand against the

black powers of barbarism” (165). While Rilla’s friend Mary Vance initially says of the war that “it doesn’t concern us,” Walter Blythe states that “Before this war is over . . . every man and woman and child in Canada will feel it . . . millions of hearts will break” (33), claiming that the effects of war reach into individual homes and that those effects are primarily emotional. The depiction of the war as concerning both the abstract civilization and the concrete emotional lives of individuals implies that the war, even when not fought at home, is fought for home, in Montgomery’s case a village in Prince Edward Island. As Douglas’s thoughts of the village while in the trenches and Walter’s comment about rape show, the soldiers fighting on the side of France are also defending the safety of women, particularly women of the upper classes, who are not expected to have significant responsibilities outside their own households. Thus in both the novel and the film while the goals of the war are stated in abstract terms, the response to war is depicted on a local, personal, and emotional level.

Montgomery’s own essentially emotional responses to the events of the war needed to be placed in a framework that channeled the emotions into recognizable paths to make a readable novel. The romance framework that guarantees a happy personal ending in both *Hearts of the World* and *Rilla of Ingleside* also justifies intense emotional response to the events of the war, since the future happiness of the young women is at stake. At the end of both the novel and the film the couples are reunited and the villages are returned to ordinary pre-war life, and at the end of the memoirs the writers apparently continue their lives in the now ravaged countryside. The restoration of individual happiness at the end of *Rilla of Ingleside* and *Hearts of the World* suggests that the world will go back to its old ways, with the end of the war being a restoration of what was rather than the new world Montgomery hoped for. Thus Montgomery’s description of war memoirs that recount only the hopeful opening weeks of the war and a romantic war film as “delightful” and “wonderful” are justified because those works assert the continuity of the world she is familiar with despite the temporary insanity of war. Therefore, despite knowing what actual dangers women may face in a war zone, Montgomery is able to take from the first-hand accounts only those aspects that suit her own need to show continuity and stability. In making her war novel a village love story Montgomery creates a version of the war that allows her female characters to appear heroic simply by meeting the expectations of their communities, thus ensuring a post-war world that is essentially unchanged.

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Dirty Hands, Cosmopolitan Value And State Evil: Reflections On Torture

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The debate about state use of torture has surged in the last 5 years. Oren Gross, Alan Dershowitz, Michael Gross, and Fritz Alhoff are a sample of those arguing either for the legitimation of, or excusing, the use of torture by state officials in prosecuting struggles against other states or non-state actors. Although the arguments for torture vary, I intend to explore, evaluate, and reject one specific argument first made by Michael Walzer in his 1970's paper "Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands".

I will first locate this within the general ethical division we remark in the history of western philosophy. Of the deontological, utilitarian, and virtue-ethical traditions only the first seems to be unequivocally opposed to the state use of torture. Not one of the defences of torture that I have encountered relies on the deontological principle, and I think not surprisingly, for deontology offers the strongest foundation for unconditional prohibition of torture. It takes its cue from the Kantian categorical imperative, in particular the end in itself formulation. This specifies that one may never use an individual merely as a means to prudential purposes, no matter how pressing. The categorical imperative stresses the absolute worth and dignity of the individual will. Since state torture essentially requires the state agent to break the will of individuals and groups through the infliction of intense physical and psychological suffering, it is a direct attack on the most fundamental value of deontological theory.

The utilitarian and virtue ethical traditions are divided on the question of torture. Utilitarians like Fritz Alhoff unequivocally support the use of torture provided that the amount of torture employed is minimal, that there are no alternatives, and that there is a reasonable prospect of a greater good being achieved through the employment of torture than would otherwise happen. However, W.E. Twining and William Casebeer both note that careful consideration of the consequences of the use of torture in terms of unintended harms, destruction of political and social institutions, generation of an aggrieved and increasingly hostile population, and the like, could be sufficient for some utilitarians to support an absolute practical ban on torture, even if they might be willing to consider its use in principle.

I want to emphasize the following point here: on Alhoff's analysis, there is a prior right not to be tortured, but that this may conflict with the rights others have not to be

killed by acts of violence. If the balance of goods and harms shows that torture is required, then the order to torture can be given and the commander and the torturer both should then operate with a clear conscience because they have done nothing wrong. Not only have they done nothing wrong, but they have done something morally obligatory and so they should have a clean conscience having made such difficult choices. On such an analysis, torture is neither good nor evil except in terms of its consequences. But if it is good, then one is morally obligated to torture and torturing another human being would then be the right thing to do.(Alhoff 2005)

Recognizing the role of conscience is important because it is one distinguishing feature of the problem of dirty hands. The problem of dirty hands, or the problem of tragic choices, is primarily an issue within virtue ethics. Virtue ethics is concerned with character, with the kind of person that one ought or ought not to be. Good characters have the dispositions to act well and to do good things. They choose the mean between vices and, in virtue of their practical wisdom, do not choose the bad.

At first sight one might conclude that this means that the good person could never willingly choose evil, but the issue is not so clear. According to Stephen de Wijze, the dirty hands problem is a difficulty specifically for the moral person, not for the immoral person. Dirty hands will arise only when a good person, through unfortunate circumstances, is compelled to deliberately and knowingly choose to act in an evil manner for the sake of some greater good.

So what precisely is the problem of dirty hands?

Alan Dershowitz, while praising Amnesty International for doing its job and taking the high road, says that such a high road is not open to the government official. State officials have to make hard judgments about choices between evils and are often not in the position simply to refuse to act in an evil fashion.(Dershowitz 2004) Michael Walzer argues that it is impossible to govern innocently, and that a given action might be a moral wrong and yet considered in utilitarian terms still be the right thing to do.(Walzer 2004) To act with dirty hands you must do something wrong in order to achieve some higher good.

More precisely, Michael Stocker defines a dirty hands situation in the following way:

An act is one of dirty hands if (i) it is right, even obligatory, (ii) but is, nonetheless somehow wrong, shameful, and the like.(Stocker 1986)

And de Wijze affirms that

The political world is one characterized by what Stuart Hampshire calls 'Experience' (as opposed to 'Innocence'), the 'idea of guilty knowledge and the expectation of unavoidable squalor and imperfection, of necessary disappointments and mixed results, of half success and half failure. A

person of experience has come to expect that her usual choice will be the lesser of two or more evils.(De Wijze 1994)

Dirty hands reasoning involves balancing evils one against another. One acquires dirty hands by knowingly choosing an act that is evil for the sake of some desired greater good. What distinguishes dirty hands from standard utilitarian justifications of deliberate infliction of suffering is that the dirty hands act remains evil no matter the consequences. It is evil if it fails, and it is evil if it succeeds. The individual with dirty hands is culpable and guilty even though he may have acted rightly in the circumstances.

Dirty hands situations involve what De Wijze and Stocker call ‘impossible oughts’. Normally we recognize the Kantian maxim that ought implies can, that to claim that we ought to do something presupposes that it is possible for us to carry out that act and that it is possible for us to act otherwise. But the problem with dirty hands situations is that we are put into a position where we have conflicting obligations, conflicting oughts where satisfying the one obligation entails violating the other.

The classic Kantian dilemma is worth mentioning here. Suppose you live in a racist state in which laws have been enacted requiring the arrest and imprisonment of all members of the hated race in a concentration camp. Suppose further that you are helping members of that group by hiding them in your house. A police officer comes by and asks you whether you know the location of any of that ethnic minority. How do you act? You have an unconditional obligation to obey the law. You have an unconditional obligation not to tell lies. But you also have an unconditional obligation to protect innocent individuals from harm. You ought to do all of those things. But meeting one obligation entails violation of the others. In a situation like this, dirty hands theorists argue that there are correct ways to act, but that these correct actions require you to violate at least some of your obligations.

An appropriate description of the problem is the following: in a dirty hands situation, the official morally ought to do *a* and morally ought to do *b*, while he cannot do *a* as well as *b*.”(de Haan 2001; Morscher 2002) There is no logical incoherence because there is no propositional conflict. The problem is rather that there are two different cherished principles in the premise set, the satisfaction of one of which requires the violation of the other. It is a problem of incompatibility of values in specific circumstances.

Furthermore, Stocker and de Wijze ensure the compatibility by making the principles contingent on desires. They are absolute, but they are not absolutely action-guiding. They are only action-guiding contingent on wise choice in the given circumstances. This has the unfortunate consequence of making the norms only formally absolute. That is, according to logical form they are universally quantified obligations and prohibitions. But to be action-guiding they have to be relativized to the circumstance

of choice¹ Here the appropriateness of choice is dependent upon practical wisdom and desire.

De Wijze introduces the following analogy to illuminate the point.

Consider the desire to eat a large jam doughnut and the mutually exclusive desire to lose weight. Deciding to eat the doughnut does not abolish the desire to lose weight. It simply overrides it and leaves one feeling guilty. There may be good reasons to eat the doughnut and in a certain set of circumstances the right thing to do, politeness to a host, for example. But because deciding to eat the doughnut is the right thing to do the desire to diet does not disappear.(De Wijze 1994)

Substitute any pair of valued moral principles, and suppose that in some given set of circumstances they become mutually exclusive, and we see the point. In that situation neither principle can be action-guiding by itself. Desires for the realization of cherished principles can conflict, and in some cases can do so in a manner where our desire for the one principle excludes the possibility of realization of the other. We think that we ought to do both, but we cannot achieve both. Hence, in that given situation, it is impossible for the norms to be action-guiding. Their action-guiding nature is contingent on our adoption of the relevant desire, here guided by circumstantial considerations and cost-benefit calculation.

The way Stocker puts the issue is that these impossible ‘oughts’ are taken into account both in judging that an action ought to be done and in evaluating the morality of the action itself. Hence they are double counted, for although they yield the conclusion that we ought to do the immoral thing for the sake of some perceived greater good, nonetheless, they are still counted as evil. This yields the consequence that the prohibited act remains evil, but that nonetheless it is an evil that we are morally obligated to commit under certain circumstances.

In virtue of its being evil, the official who orders it, as well as any subordinate officials who carry it out, should feel ashamed at having used such means. It is appropriate that they feel sullied by having engaged in such actions. Indeed, for the dirty hands theorists, the fact that they are ashamed and sullied is the mark that they are moral. What gives us hope that they will not inappropriately choose evil is precisely their sense of their own shame at having committed evil.

What constraints obtain for dirty hands choices? To distinguish it from flatly immoral actions it can only be done for moral reasons. We incur dirty hands when we *justifiably* betray a person, value, or moral principle. One cannot betray the principle for selfish reasons or because it gives pleasure. One can only do the evil in order to achieve a

¹ The use of the words ‘absolute’ and ‘unconditional’ are mine, but I think the description is faithful to the claim that these really are evils – they are not relative evils that become sublated under the circumstances. They remain evil come what may. But I am unsure of the point of treating them as unconditional evils once you make them contingent on desire and practical judgment.

higher good. The costs of the action have to be reasonably calculable and there has to be a reasonable chance that the choice of the immoral action will prevent the greater evil. (De Wijze 1994) Furthermore, as no general account of reasonableness can be given, the cost-benefit calculations depend on the particular circumstances of the case.

The Dirty Hands Argument As Used To Defend Torture.

How do dirty hands considerations generate an argument in favour of torture? Well, in international law torture is absolutely forbidden. Article 2 of the CAT forbids torture unconditionally. This prohibition is non-derogable even under conditions of state emergency. Dirty hands theorists agree with the convention's prohibition against torture. However they disagree about its non-derogability. The state official can act rightly in violating the convention against torture, provided that it is done for the sake of a higher good and has a reasonable prospect of success under the circumstances.

Suppose then you have reasonable information of a substantial terrorist threat against your state. Assume further that you have captured an individual whom you have reasonable grounds to believe has vital information about this threat. The individual is recalcitrant and refuses to divulge the information voluntarily. Time is short and normal interrogation techniques have already been tried and failed. The dilemma then is the choice between torturing the individual and failing to meet the obligation to look after public security. Meeting one obligation compels you to violate the other.

There are many good reasons for treating the above 'ticking bomb' dilemma as a priori incoherent, but I will not explore them here. It does at least allow the modelling of a moral dilemma. This in turn sheds light on how the tragic choice theorist reasons in cases of deliberate evil-doing. Dirty hands theorists do not conclude from the thought experiment that all choices are equal. They agree that the choice to torture the suspect will be the right action. Consequentialist considerations are the tie-breaker here, as the suffering experienced by the torture victim will sometimes be outweighed by the consequences that will be suffered by the state the public official is obligated to defend. The dirty hands theorist does not believe that the wrong of torture is sublated by the good consequences hopefully attained through its use. It remains a wrong no matter its good consequences. Nonetheless, in the relevant circumstances it is the right thing to do and the public official is morally obligated to torture the suspect.

Why Dirty Hands Dilemmas Do Not Morally Entail Torture

I have a number of worries. The first is that there does not seem to be any place for the concept of an indefensibly wicked action. Dershowitz offers cautious support for an exceptionally wide range of actions provided they are subject to accountability and judicial control. He explicitly states his cautious heuristic support for the use of rape as a form of torture. (Dershowitz 2004) De Wijze lays out a set of 10 possible examples of dirty hands situations, and then excludes the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and

Nagasaki as well as the terror bombing campaigns in Europe as flatly immoral acts even if they save lives and minimize troop casualties. I think he is right to do this, but he offers no argument as to why he can infer this. Further he neglects to explore how the correctness of this argument generates an absolute opposition to torture and severely circumscribes the kinds of evils that may be deliberately done. What is there to rule out the idea that such things might be the right thing to do assuming that the situation is sufficiently grim for a given state? (or rather, assuming that the state officials *believe* the situation to be sufficiently grim)

Perhaps dirty hands theorists have an argument they can offer in support of the simply wicked act, but if they do I have not seen them offer it. If they do, then there will be no possible circumstances in which they can commit such acts. Further they will have to circumscribe the number of cases in which we can choose evil. We will then have to show why it is that those cases are importantly demarcated from those acts in which we can knowingly will that which is evil. The fact that such demarcations do not take place in any systematic way in discussions of tragic choice reasoning is worrying, because it raises the possibility that the dirty hands situation is far too permissive. If the conflict of values really exists as they suggest, and if the judgments are entirely based on circumstance and cost-benefit analysis, then I see no *a priori* reason as to why the statesman might be morally obligated to choose any evil act, in principle, should that be dictated by circumstance and cost-benefit analysis.

How do these reflections bear on torture? Well, I have raised the question about what kinds of actions are permitted. There is enormous variation in torture techniques, some more violent and destructive than others. Some of these techniques involve the torture of more than one individual. So suppose then that the only way that will work to get the suspect to reveal this information he holds will be to force the brutal rape, torture, and murder of his or her loved ones, including children. This has been a tactic employed by some interrogators in the past, and so is not a fantastic option. If you are prepared to torture the suspect to avert the ticking bomb threat, and if there are no principled reasons for rejecting torture above all else, then why would you not conclude that we should so torture the suspects' loved ones?

Although I will not argue the point here, I would like to suggest that such an action is flatly and indefensibly evil. It is the kind of action which happens for the usual kinds of consequential state reasons that interrogators employ. But what is the difference really between that and employing the same tactics on the suspect him or herself. Part of what disgusts people about such cases is the innocence of the third parties. In cases of state torture of non-state actors, the actors are suspects and the probability is far higher than in a court situation that they are likely to be non-complicit. In all of the cases under consideration here, the interrogators have some reason to believe the individuals have information, but then in the conditions under which such interrogations occur, the information is only ever of limited reliability. As dirty hands theorists concede, public officials have to act under conditions of often horribly inadequate information.

Dirty hands public figures, unlike those who are simply immoral, will never choose an evil means unless they believe that there is no alternative. But having made that choice, dirty hands theorists offer nothing to clearly rule out any of the available possible evil actions except for consequentialist reasoning and the specific historical circumstances. The dirty hands public official will order that evil which he or she believes to have the greatest chance of producing the desired good consequences. In principle, he or she might then order any torture whatsoever, provided that it offers some reasonable prospect of success.

A second problem concerns the reasonableness requirement for choosing evil. Dirty Hands theorists insist that you have to maximize the chance that the choice of evil will bring about the desired good. Otherwise you are not acting morally. In the case of torture, what will be required to maximize the chances that the torture is successful in alleviating the perceived threat? Well, if you are going to torture well, then you have to be prepared in advance to do it. There is no point giving a suspect to untrained interrogators, because they will use the wrong torture methods, ask the wrong questions, and increase the risk of inadvertently either killing the prisoner or perhaps driving him insane and thereby rendering him useless for intelligence purposes. Either way, this has little reasonable chance of success. To do evil well, one has to practice and research it.

But consider the institutional conditions that the statesman now has to establish. You will have to conduct research on effective torture methods to maximize efficiency and ensure that counter-productive techniques are not employed. Gary Jones explicitly advocates this (Jones 1980). This means that you will have to have psychological and medical personnel performing and evaluating the research. Hence you will have to suspend or alter a crucial range of medical ethical research norms and principles. Trained medical personnel will also be necessary to evaluate torture victims to ensure that they can survive the torture, or to temporarily repair any damage caused so that the interrogations can continue. Furthermore judicial and police ethical norms and principles will have to be altered to allow for the proper functioning of torture interrogations. Not to mention that you will have to establish torture training institutions and provide any necessary logistical backup required. If you are talking about a military or an intelligence agency, then these are far reaching provisions indeed. Not only that; since news of the torture is bound to leak out eventually, the population will have to be taught or at least encouraged to think that the use of torture is occasionally legitimate.

If you care about the corrosive effects of torture on public institutions and civil liberties, these reflections are merely a starting point for concern and not even remotely exhaustive. Part of the reason absolutist opponents of torture are disturbed by arguments in favour of torture goes well beyond compassion for the victims of torture. It extends to recognizing the inevitable impact of torture on the character of public life itself.

But there are further consequences that should also lead us to absolutely forbid the practice. In reading the dirty hands scenarios, one gets the impression that the threat to character is incurred by the public figure who issues the order. However the evils are far worse than that. Those who institutionalize atrocities damage not only their individual

character, but also those of any individuals unfortunate enough to carry out the orders. In instituting the policy, a whole range of individuals have to participate and risk becoming accustomed to these procedures. Some of them will have strong character, some of those will be simply immoral, but most are likely to be somewhere in between, the impressionable subjects who, like the subjects of Milgram's prison experiments, will simply carry out orders and gradually become acclimatized to inflicting violence on others. In issuing orders to torture, public figures do not just damage their own souls; they also harm that of their states. What is not recognized is that the harms are inevitable. This is not a matter of identifying possible risks and taking steps to minimize them. Certain evil-doing policies inevitably wreck individual and social character. Torture is simply a paradigmatic class of such practices.

Furthermore, the use of torture historically has had a radicalizing effect on the populations which identify with the tortured individuals. The French use of torture in Algeria was fuel to the fire on the Algerian War for Independence. The British use of torture in Northern Ireland in 1972-73 was a key contributor to the increase in violence during the troubles. Israeli use of 'moderate physical pressure' is a continuing radicalizing irritant for Palestinians that has produced no clear reduction in violence levels, and the use of torture at Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib and other prisons known and hinted at has contributed to a massive increase in hostility towards the United States. What this suggests is that torture is a violence intensifier.

A further problem is hinted at by Stocker. He remarks "I here will follow Aristotle in not discussing the possibility that one might lose one's virtue, perhaps even become base, as a result of doing or even having to do morally required base acts." (Stocker 1986) This is the possibility that choice of evil means itself might destroy the character of the person making the choices. The idea is that the taking of such choices, especially if repetitive, might transform a just individual into an evil person. The problem is, once you start getting your hands dirty, how do you stop? Further if you are incapable of stopping because of the evil times in which you live, then how can you any longer say that the person has dirty hands, rather than being flatly immoral?

For those who use dirty hands considerations to defend torture, this is a crucial issue and one that cannot responsibly be avoided. For if we deliberately order torture, an act that we know to be unconditionally evil, and since state torture requires institutional policy, training, and some form of broad state support, it is not clear that public officials can preserve their good character as the tragic choice theorists envision. In an interview with Mark Danner, author of *Torture and Truth: American, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror*, Tom Engelhardt asks Danner the following question: "How does the US get up to its elbows in blood so regularly?" (Engelhardt 2006)" Danner's reply is that if you persistently deceive and tell lies, then such filth is inevitable.

The problem of dirty hands generates a further difficult question: once you start getting your hands significantly dirty, and once you institutionalize the dirt, then how can you ever stop? In the context of torture, for example, tragic choices commit state officials not just to a single act of torture but to its institutionalization in public life. Not only that,

it contains its own logical imperative always to torture in those situations where the circumstances dictate. Logically it is not just about one act in a unique circumstance, but a universal set of acts in possible circumstances. The combination of the institutionalization along with the generalization means that torture is neither conceptually nor empirically going to be a single act committed once. It must be repeated, and its evils must be far more extensive than the standard over-simplified cost-benefit examples suggest. It requires utilization of torture in every possible situation in which the circumstances dictate. Additionally preparation for possible situations involves advance research and training, and regularization to maximize the likelihood of political success. If it is not a matter of the choice of a single act employed on discrete occasions, but demands policy decisions that change the shape of public institutions across the entire society, then how do you avoid the conclusion that the society gradually *but consciously* becomes evil.

Cosmopolitan Value Commitments As A Possible Solution

As mentioned above, De Wijze is rightfully and laudably concerned to limit the scale of violence that dirty hands reasoning can unleash, but apart from simply denying that great evils may be committed, he does not explore why these can never be integrated into a lesser evils calculus and he does not explore the criteria or values which might prohibit them. Yet if they are flatly evil, as he seems to suggest, then he must tacitly be invoking something more than contextual moral reasoning. Supplementing the dirty hands reasoning with cosmopolitan values offers one possible solution.

As its theorists typically envision it, the dirty hands position stresses the messy, murky, and confusing nature of politics. Mistakes and foul-ups are effectively inevitable. For Max Weber, for example, the region of human political affairs is deeply paradoxical and irrational. In this context, the pursuit of an ethic of love or any unconditional ethic is a catastrophe. (Weber 2004) For Weber, as well as for those like Richard Posner who follow him, a public official who pursues such an ethic is a disaster waiting to happen. Posner goes so far as to say that you should never allow such an altruist into a position of responsibility. (Posner 2004)

Here a remark of Martha Nussbaum is valuable. She discusses the way in which various thinkers, including Nietzsche and Bernard Williams, assert the importance of constructing politics on the recognition that the world is horrible and unintelligible. It lacks any intelligible rational structure and provides no reason to hope for progress. (Nussbaum 1997) For tragic choice theorists, to make decisions with altruistic and cosmopolitan considerations in mind is utopian and a recipe for disaster.

A cosmopolitan, for Nussbaum, is a world citizen. To be a cosmopolitan is to believe that one's allegiances are owed to humanity as a whole (not to mention, perhaps, to other species and the environment). This means that moral consideration can never extend merely to my own children or to the members of specific communities. For a cosmopolitan there is no special prior obligation to the state; other human beings and

ethnic groups count as well, and certain moral obligations to them are not trumped by considerations of community interest or national security. Ethnocentric political considerations should never trump the obligations to humanity as a whole. The consequences of neglecting this are appalling, yet the dirty hands position is anti-cosmopolitan.

We can see the antithesis to cosmopolitanism in the dirty hands commitment that the obligation of political figures is owed to the state. They lie under no obligations to maximize the happiness of the greatest number of sentient beings. Nor are they morally compelled to respect the autonomy of all rational beings. They are not committed to do what they can to realize a kingdom of ends or to otherwise make the world better. These can be subordinate hopes of a public official, but should they become primary, then the public official will make decisions that are against the interests of his own state – such as refusing to institute torture policies, drop atomic bombs, or make other decisions that they might believe to be necessary to resolve a state of emergency.

Since the political world is irrational and unintelligible, there is no better world to attempt to make. Still worse, the attempt to create a better world, if carried out by politicians under conditions of emergency, will create a catastrophic state for their communities. Hence their obligations lie against cosmopolitan values. They are resolutely anti-utopian and also anti-egalitarian. The only possible egalitarianism is internal to the specific state that responsible politicians represent. There, the egalitarianism is itself an entirely contingent matter. Public officials as conceived by tragic choice theorists lie under no unconditional obligation to try to make their states recognize the humanity in its own citizens, for example. Their obligation is to the public good as they and their communities conceive it.

The absence of a categorical imperative or other suitably cosmopolitan principle is terrible, especially combined with the resulting moral parochialism. The preservation of the well-being of one's own community is perfectly compatible with the disproportionate infliction of suffering on another community. Walzer's defense of the use of terror bombing by the English in the earlier stages of World War II is one example. (Walzer 1977) Perhaps, although this is deeply disputed, the terror bombings were consequentially necessary for the defense of England. But in tragic choice reasoning the well-being of one's own citizens are taken to be morally prior to that of any others. Consequently it is perfectly possible to treat the welfare of the others as less or effectively non-existent. Terror bombing and other horrific means can thereby be justified provided the state of emergency is believed to exist and provided there are no perceived alternatives for mitigating the threat. Dirty hands reasoning has also been used to justify Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as widespread torture and murder during Argentina's dirty war. A dirty hands argument can be and is formulated for pretty much every act of state violence.

Unlike sophisticated utilitarian or Kantian theories, and unlike cosmopolitan virtue ethical theories, the dirty hands theory excludes from consideration the costs to the populations of other states. Or, rather, it is not that they are necessarily excluded from

consideration, but they are always trumped by the priority ascribed to the obligations public officials have to their states. So, in the case of a conflict, and provided the state of emergency is judged to be serious enough, almost any level of casualties and suffering can be inflicted upon another state or population.

This also helps to show how it is that public officials can use dirty hands reasoning to justify the deaths of half a million children due to sanctions, or launch illegal invasions that kill hundreds of thousands or millions of people and destabilize entire countries, while believing that they are acting morally in doing so. In the absence of a cosmopolitan imperative, they have no clear moral restrictions. Although they agree that the killing of over half a million people is wrong, and a wrong not made right by any ‘success’ that might be had (if it is had), nonetheless, some dirty hands theorists are prepared to accept that level of suffering as justifiable under the circumstances.

In a discussion of the causes of the Bengal famine in 1943 and 1944 in India Amartya Sen observes that although it was not the sole contributing cause to the starvation of over three million people, the British government refused to divert shipping from the war effort to help feed the starving people, because the shipping was needed for the war. Furthermore, they also diverted a section of the available grain to the troops at the front, again tolerating the sacrifice of huge amounts of people and consequent enormous suffering – all for the sake of a perceived national security good.

I mention India because the absence of cosmopolitanism allows the ugly faces of racism and sexism to rear their heads. The British government was not fighting the war for the sake of the Indian population. It was fighting it for the sake of the preservation of the British empire, of which the home Islands were the primary population to be defended. Given a food shortage and a conflict between the feeding of the Indian population, and a similar food scarcity in England, to where would English political loyalties lie? On dirty hands grounds, an English public figure will differentially evaluate populations and sacrifice the ‘less important’ where a choice has to be made.

A way of thinking about the problem is that the dirty hands claim that the evils are real is irrelevant. It is irrelevant because the evils do not really count for anything. The only thing that happens is that the dirty hands individual feels guilty afterwards – by which time it is too late. The only thing you can do, possibly, is to punish the public figure who has acted ‘correctly’, and perhaps provide some reparations to those who have suffered. Quite how this is possible given the scale of many of the evils is beyond me. The evils are held to be real, but it makes no difference. It is not merely that tragic choice thinking fails to prevent them; it actively supports their occurrence. Tragic choice theorists still infer an obligation to do them when a lesser evils calculation requires it

The Good Of The State Is The Good

When we speak of public decision-making, we have to recognize that there is an epistemic gap between those actions which are genuinely good for a given community, and the political judgments of specific public figures. In debates about deliberate evil

doing, the problem has to do with specific judgments that may or may not help the community to thrive. These are fallible and made in the context of confusing and morally unintelligible contexts. Hence, in the absence of prior non-derogable cosmopolitan norms, it is perfectly possible to systematically oppress women, even though one might believe it to be a wrong. All that is needed are the convictions that such oppression is necessary for the good of the community, that the sexism and other oppression are a lesser evil in comparison to the alternatives, and that the situation is sufficiently exigent to warrant it.

In such a context, questions of racism, sexism, and political and economic justice will inevitably be suppressed in favour of whatever values the public official believes his state represents. And, in the use of the tortures and other atrocities to save England, Argentina, the US, and other countries from various perceived threats, as a matter of fact racist and sexist strategies are deliberately chosen. Why? Because the sacrifice of those concerns is held to be *a priori* less significant to the relevant public officials than are the obligations they owe to their states.

Work on feminism and other issues of justice and equality are cosmopolitan issues. If dirty hands theorists prove unable to integrate cosmopolitan concerns into their theory, then they will inevitably justify situations of deliberate oppression of women and other cultures, provided that in the judgment of the relevant public officials the oppression is a lesser evil in comparison to the perceived alternatives.

It is here that I think we should keep in mind an important remark of Thomas Nagel's:

What I shall offer, therefore, is a somewhat qualified defense of absolutism. I believe it underlies a valid and fundamental type of moral judgment – which cannot be reduced to or overridden by other principles. And while there may be other principles just as fundamental, it is particularly important not to lose confidence in our absolutist intuitions, for they are often the only barrier before the abyss of utilitarian apologetics for large-scale murder. (Nagel 1979)

Nagel speaks of absolute values, where I prefer to speak of cosmopolitan ones. But I believe the intuition is the same. We have to concede that there is at least a small set of non-derogable principles and act-classes. If we prove incapable of doing so, then tragic choice considerations will and do provide the justification for staggering levels of deliberately inflicted suffering and murder.

We can outline how the tragic choice dilemma might be restricted by considering the invalidity of the inference that all universal principles hold only *prima facie* and can be over-ridden whenever the needs of the situation demand it. One can infer from the situational character of moral decision-making that some moral principles hold *prima facie*, but not that all can be so treated. That is not a valid virtue-ethical inference. There

are good virtue ethical reasons for thinking that some classes of acts are pernicious a priori.

We can identify this class as that set of actions that are inevitably vice creating. If there is such a set of actions, a set of actions that inevitably makes individuals and communities bad, and if the point of moral education and practice is to make communities good, then there is no plausible circumstance in which such actions could count as either justifiable or excusable. If there are such classes of actions, then virtue ethicists can support absolute principles. They can just as much support an absolute prohibition against terror bombing or torture as can the utilitarian or the deontologist. But they can only do this if they allow a carefully chosen and defined set of cosmopolitan prohibitions to have force. If they remain parochial and ethnocentric, then the dirty hands problem permits just about everything. The only constraint is that the circumstances have to demand the atrocity.

The preceding argument is not intended to show that dirty hands dilemmas are impossible. What I have argued is that careful reflection on the preconditions for state torture of suspected state and non-state actors has consequences which entail that torture should be absolutely forbidden. It suggests that virtue ethics supports and needs cosmopolitan principles and values. I doubt that any exercise of practical wisdom could prevent the corruption of public institutions that the efficient deployment of torture entails unless certain cosmopolitan moral principles are taken as absolute limits even in states of emergency.

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