

A Flourishing Human Future

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Editorial Appraisals:

Beginning in 2019 we are asking qualified reviewers to offer at their discretion a brief evaluation of the book under consideration. Otherwise most of our content represents the authors' own words as a preview of the style and point of view represented in the volume. <>

[When One Religion Isn't Enough: The Lives of Spiritually Fluid People](#) by Duane R. Bidwell
[Beacon Press, 9780807091241]

An exploration into the lives of people who embrace two or more religious traditions, and what this growing community tells us about change in our society

Named a best book of 2018 by Library Journal

In the United States, we often assume religious and spiritual identity are pure, static, and singular. But some people regularly cross religious boundaries. These “spiritually fluid” people celebrate complex religious bonds, and in the process they blur social categories, evoke prejudice, and complicate religious communities. Their presence sparks questions: How and why do people become spiritually fluid? Are they just confused or unable to commit? How do we make sense of them?

When One Religion Isn't Enough explores the lives of spiritually fluid people, revealing that while some chose multiple religious belonging, many more inherit it. For many North Americans, the complicated legacies of colonialism are part of their family story, and they may consider themselves both Christian and Hindu, or Buddhist, or Yoruban, or one of the many other religions native to colonized lands.

For some Asian Americans, singular religious identity may seem an alien concept, as many East Asian nations freely mix Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist, and other traditions. Some African American Christians are consciously seeking to reconnect with ancestral spiritualities. And still other people are

born into religiously mixed families. Jewish-Christian intermarriage led the way in the US, but religious diversity here is only increasing: almost four in ten Americans (39 percent) who have married since 2010 have a spouse who is in a different religious group.

Through in-depth conversations with spiritually fluid people, renowned scholar Duane Bidwell explores how people come to claim and be claimed by multiple religious traditions, how spiritually fluid people engage radically opposed truth claims, and what this growing population tells us about change within our communities.

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Editorial Appraisals:

This friendly book takes an easy look at American peoples' religious promiscuity in the behavior of many loosely aligned “christians” and other faiths' declaration of old-fashioned doctrine and practice. It describes how past rigid norms of exclusivity and exclusion so common to historic Christendom, Islamic militants, and other fundamental tendencies in nationalized religion affiliation, is dissolving in a consumerist individuality toward religious and spiritual This religious and spiritual pluralism describes the sea change in the practitioners of multifaith and spirituality perspectives in and out of the churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, zendos, covens or living-rooms. Recommended for the questions it raises and the norms it describes that contradicts many ideological assertions.

Excerpt: Where I Stand

WHEN NBA PLAYER JOAKIM NOAH—a center for the Chicago Bulls—isn't on the basketball court, he wears a Christian crucifix and Muslim prayer beads. Some days he also sports an Ethiopian cross

made with Tibetan Buddhist stones. "I believe in God," Noah says, "but I won't say that I'm a certain religion. I think I'm a little bit of everything." In *The Life of Pi*, a best-selling book and an award-winning film, the main character calls himself "a practising Hindu, Christian and Muslim." Asked by a priest, an imam, and a pandit to choose one religion, he declines: "I just want to love God." Some well-known Buddhist teachers in North America were born and raised as Jews; one of these teachers has rewritten the Psalms from the Hebrew Bible as Buddhist prayers. During the 2008 presidential campaign, one of the most contentious questions about Barack Obama wasn't about politics but concerned religion. Taught by Catholics, taken to Christian churches and to Buddhist temples by his mother, influenced by a Muslim father who also honored animism and Hinduism, and now worshipping at a black Christian Protestant congregation—is Obama a Christian, a Muslim, an agnostic, or something different altogether? (Obama received Christian baptism, but even after his formal religious affiliation was made clear, CNN famously asked, "Is Obama the 'wrong' kind of Christian?")

Religious multiplicity—the experience of being shaped by, or maintaining bonds to, more than one spiritual or religious community at the same time—is occurring more frequently in the United States and Europe. In other parts of the world, religious multiplicity has long been a norm. As more and more people transgress religious boundaries, this multiplicity becomes more visible. We increasingly encounter spiritually fluid people in public life, at school, at work, at backyard cookouts, and at the health club. Spiritually fluid people evoke prejudice and curiosity, uncover assumptions, and disrupt our typical labels; they undermine religious authority, complicate religious communities,

and blur social categories. Their lives question ordinary assumptions about pure, static, and singular religious identities. Above all, spiritually fluid people spark questions: How and why does someone become spiritually fluid? Are spiritually fluid people simply confused, syncretistic, unable to commit? Are they idolaters? How should we make sense of spiritually fluid people? Do they belong in our religious and spiritual communities? What might

they teach us? And what do complex religious bonds imply about our own religious and spiritual identities, practices, and commitments?

This book explores multiple religious bonds as a human experience. It describes religious multiplicity rather than evaluating it. It asks how people come to claim—or be claimed by—religiously multiple identities, practices, and lives. And it concludes that religiously multiple people belong among us. Their visibility and voices bring gifts to benefit our communities and our common life.

The lives of spiritually fluid people pulse with complexity and contradiction. One person's experience could never exhaust what it means to be formed by two or more religions. By necessity, then, this book includes contradictory voices. Those voices tell stories and make points far different from mine. I celebrate these differences.

Still, no writer can transmit another person's stories without shaping them. A retold story never comes to readers in as pure a state as when the original storyteller entrusted it to a writer. We tell stories, even other people's stories, for our own purposes. We make them do what we want. Because the stories in *When One Religion Isn't Enough* have percolated through my mind and intentions, they've absorbed meanings and flavors that weren't there at first. Even if I quote someone directly, you're not hearing the tale the way the person would tell it; you're hearing my account of the experience. This translation process scares me a bit: telling other people's tales is a privilege. They entrust their words, thoughts, and feelings to me, and I can distort these even without trying.

Nonetheless, I'm accountable to the people who shared their stories with me. I'm also accountable to readers. Throughout the book, I've tried to convey—with accuracy, responsibility, and sympathy—the voices of spiritually fluid people. I know many through friendships, research, counseling, and spiritual direction. I've also tried to convey the ideas and voices of scholars who think and write about the topic. My intention is to create a thoughtful and reflective book, one that doesn't tell people what they should think or experience but takes a clear stand when it seems necessary. I rarely made judgments about which beliefs or

ideas are the most true or legitimate. Nonetheless, I disagree with certain voices in the book. So it seems important to clarify a few of my beliefs.

Where I Stand

I am Buddhist and Christian. Jesus is my savior, and the Buddha is my teacher. Jesus restores me over and over again. He gives life. He heals (although not usually all at once), and sometimes that healing can be painful. Jesus asks me to be honest with him, to be present to him, and to agree to measure my life against his. For me, Jesus is divinity con carne, holiness with meaty ribs, an ultimate reality that breathes and sweats and feels. He enables me to see and hear and feel and understand Mystery with a capital M, by which I mean the ultimate sources, identities, meanings, and truths that orient human lives and give them meaning. I am Christian primarily by God's action and invitation. I affirmed that identity through baptism, but I did not request or choose it. God acted first.

But it's hard for me to follow Jesus. I need a schematic, a rational step-by-step guide to waking up to Mystery. Jesus doesn't provide that. The Christian Bible, after all, isn't a user's manual or a book of rules; it's a collection of vignettes, a gathering of voices. Attempting to live like Jesus requires art, not science: he teaches with metaphors and parables, not flow charts. Jesus just doesn't provide a well-marked trail you can follow directly to your final destination.

This is where the Buddha comes in. His teaching is coherent. He provides a precise eight-step path toward awakening and an overarching account of reality, or metaphysic, that fits a Western scientific worldview. (The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead once said—somewhat too neatly, I think—that Buddhism is a metaphysic in search of religion, while Christianity is a religion in search of a metaphysic.) I am Buddhist primarily by choice. Receiving nourishment from both traditions satisfies my longing for both a metaphysic and a religion. It gives me wise teaching and loving practices, a holy relationship, and a path to awakening—sustenance I wouldn't have if I were only Christian or only Buddhist.

Yet my connection to Buddhism isn't only pragmatic or instrumental. It claims me emotionally, too; I am

more apt to feel tearful or joyful when chanting at the temple than when I am worshipping in church. Buddhism changes the way I know and experience God. It broadens and deepens my understanding and experience of Christianity. Likewise, Jesus helps me understand more fully why the Buddha insisted that virtue, meditation, and wisdom must be linked. Jesus calls me to action in the world in ways the Buddha does not. I have a relationship with God; I have admiration for the Buddha.

I don't need to justify my complex religious bonds. (In fact, not needing to defend themselves is a fundamental right of spiritually fluid people.) But I do want to position myself philosophically and theologically so that readers know where my feet are planted. My stance shapes what I see in the landscapes of this book.

First, I've written this book without making a sharp distinction between religion and spirituality. They are different and yet not different, distinct and closely related. Both can be lifegiving. In general, I think of religion as the formal structures and practices that shape a community's relationship to Mystery and to the world. As such, religions carry and speak with authority to particular communities that identify as part of the tradition. Religions are public expressions of a community's values, practices, and understandings. Spirituality overlaps with religion but tends to be local and idiosyncratic. It expresses a person's way of relating to Mystery through rituals, prayers, physical movements and postures, spiritual disciplines, beliefs, values, commitments, relationships, and other ways of connecting to the sacred while running errands, raising a family, and figuring out the meaning of life. Sometimes, spirituality works through religious structures, communities, and traditions, but often it functions apart from them.

Second, I am a minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA), part of the Reformed tradition of Christianity. I am authorized to represent that tradition, and I'm accountable to it. The church trusts me to guide its people and maintain the distinct character of Presbyterian theology. I trust the church to hold me accountable and to sustain me in my own spiritual life as a follower of the Way of Jesus. I am also a practitioner of Theravada Buddhism. I have never been a Buddhist monk or

novice. I do not have a degree in Buddhist philosophy, and I have no authority to represent the tradition formally. My primary teacher, the Vietnamese master Thich Pháp Nhân, permits me to teach anapanasati—mindfulness of breathing—to others as preparation for vipassana, the practice of insight meditation. I do not teach vipassana; despite thirty years of personal practice, I am not appropriately trained and supervised to teach it to others. In my spiritual and religious life, I pray the Lord's Prayer and sit in vipassana meditation. I take communion, the sacramental bread and wine of the Christian Eucharist, and I take refuge in the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha. I chant sutras and the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible. I read the Heart Sutra and the Gospel of Mark.

These practices are not contradictory. The two traditions remain distinct in my life; they do not merge or create something new but complement and inform each other. They overlap in some places, and they stand apart in others. I don't fear God's judgment for having simultaneous bonds to Buddhism and Christianity, because although the Mysteries that I know in both Jesus and the Buddha are not identical, they meet us where we are, wearing the form that best suits our desires at a particular moment or season. As the Jesuits say, God (or the sacred) is not foreign to our desires.

Third, religious multiplicity for me is not entirely a choice. I sought Buddhism, but I was drawn to Christianity. After several years of contemplation and study, I sensed a call, a draw, to Christian practice and Christian ministry. A particular Christian community confirmed and affirmed that call. I identify as Buddhist/Christian because that's what I understand God to be asking of me. I'm not worried about salvation, and I don't mind incompatible doctrines. (Doctrine is only a small part of my connection to each tradition.) The tensions between Buddhism and Christianity feed me, challenge me, and help me grasp the richness of both paths. Complex religious bonds create a lifegiving dance for me. I'm still learning its steps, and I suspect the choreography will change as I age. My Buddhist/Christian life isn't simply a choice; it's a vocation, a response to (for lack of a better, more inclusive term) the sacred, and it's

been shaped by the people and communities that make up my life.

Fourth, I do not believe that God is one or that all paths reach the same mountain. Religions are not different descriptions of a single reality; they describe different (and sometimes related) realities. The orishas of the Ifá tradition are not identical to Buddhist emptiness, and sunyata is not identical to the (purportedly) monotheistic God of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Heaven and the Pure Land, nirvana and union with God—these ideas differ. As the Dalai Lama says, Buddhist practice results in Buddhist liberation; it is not the same as Christian salvation.

Each religious and spiritual path leads to its own mountain. Each mountain connects, no doubt, to others, perhaps offering a view of peaks more distant. But the microclimate, the geology, the topography, and the view from each mountain are unique. It seems likely that diverse religions point toward (or even elicit) a variety of possible ultimate realities.

How can there be more than one ultimate reality? I'm not sure; it's a paradox. I've decided to live with that unknowing. For me, it's more important to preserve the possibility of multiplicity than to reconcile it all with a logical solution. To insist on a singular ultimate reality beyond or behind all religious expressions becomes, for me, a type of violence; it risks the erasure of real differences. It's dangerous to reduce everything to a "logic of the One," because the qualities of the ultimate "one" usually look suspiciously like the ultimate reality proposed by the tradition of the person making the claim to unity. To me it's more important to preserve diversity than to be logical (in a Western, philosophical sense). Besides, the coherence of multiple realities only seems incoherent from particular cultural or philosophical perspectives, as colleagues from Asia-Pacific cultures often remind me.

Why This Book?

This book attempts to participate in a small way in the mending of creation. I have two goals: to contribute to abundant life and to reduce suffering. Most of the religiously multiple people in North America and Europe live in a spiritual closet. There

are a few well-known examples in the academic world and in popular culture (like scholar Paul Knitter or the singer Madonna), but most keep their multiplicities to themselves. It's usually a pragmatic choice to avoid judgment and shame. When they are visible, ordinary people with complex religious bonds are apt to be dismissed as dilettantes, New Agers, or people who can't commit; they are accused of practicing "cafeteria religion"—picking and choosing from a spiritual buffet—and therefore appropriating, exploiting, and dishonoring the traditions they engage. They're seen as immature, naive, facile, heretical, and occasionally even as a danger to others.

Some people with complex religious bonds earn such pejorative labels. They engage in spiritual materialism, building their egos by collecting spiritual teachings, experiences, and practices from a variety of traditions to seem more advanced, spiritually and psychologically, than other people.¹ But in my experience, most spiritually fluid people resist spiritual materialism; they are thoughtful, passionate, and integrated. Their lives challenge the "logic of the One" that shapes most approaches to religion and philosophy in Europe and North America. A majority of spiritually fluid people don't choose religious multiplicity; they're born into it or find themselves compelled, somehow, to honor more than one tradition to preserve their own integrity. They suffer when institutions and communities demand a singular religious identity.

I confess that complex religious bonds are primarily positive for me. I was born and baptized into Christianity, yet from childhood was attracted—naively and illogically at first—to meditation, contemplation, and the practices and doctrines of Buddhism and other nondual types of spirituality. Growing up as a middle-class white male in a Midwestern university town, I was surrounded by people who encouraged and affirmed that exploration, implicitly and explicitly. I know from my students, counselees, and research partners that such openness doesn't surround everyone; significant suffering can result. But that wasn't the case for me. Religious multiplicity sometimes created existential anxiety and intellectual confusion, but I haven't suffered greatly from

maintaining bonds to two religious traditions at the same time. Other people are not so lucky.

I've written this book in part to reduce the suffering of spiritually fluid people. I want their families, friends, employers, coreligionists, and others to understand them better, to listen to their voices without first rejecting the possibility or morality of multiple religious bonds. I'm not making a doctrinal argument, but offering a practical description of a common human experience. I hope skeptical readers—especially those who enjoy some measure of religious privilege in our culture (meaning, primarily, mainline and evangelical Christians)—will set their assumptions aside long enough to do two things: entertain the experiences of spiritually fluid people, and imagine what it's like to live a spiritually fluid life daily.

Not everyone can or should live with multiple religious bonds. But those for whom spiritual fluidity becomes life-giving need acknowledgment, support, and welcome from both monoreligious individuals and monoreligious communities. Mystery remains too large, too complex, too playful, and too dynamic to be captured fully in words, logic, and concepts.¹ Monoreligious and multiply religious people can learn from each other by exploring the contours of the sacred together, finding ways to cooperate in mending the brokenness of our relationships, communities, and the natural world. The mending can only be partial; cracks always remain, and once-fractured places might always be weak, but that doesn't make the effort hopeless or useless.

What to Expect

The book you are reading avoids intellectual or academic argument. I don't have an endpoint in mind. Each chapter is like a stop on a commuter train. The stations are connected to each other, but each station stands alone, offering a particular view and playing a specific role in the local ecology, just as my experience of the San Gabriel Mountains changes from the bedroom community of Rancho Cucamonga to the small town of La Verne. So as you read the book, spend time in the places that intrigue you. Get a sense for how each place is different and how it's connected to the others.

I've tried to reflect the complexity of the topic by refusing to approach it from a single perspective. The book reflects the complexity, multiplicity, and multilayered nature of its subject. I've tried to avoid neat distinctions between the past and present, the private and communal, the institutional and popular. I've emphasized theory and practice, the general and the specific. (These things aren't nearly as separate as some might assume.) The book treats its topic as both-and, rather than either-or. At the same time, my attempts to make complex religious bonds clear and manageable will erase some of the complexity of human experience. At times, the book minimizes the conflict, the struggle, and the confrontations that can accompany complex religious bonds. Engaging in multiple religious traditions might seem easier or more harmonious on the pages of a book than it does in life. That's OK. I'm not trying to entertain or offer a scholarly treatise; I'm writing to celebrate, describe, and analyze complex religious bonds.

In general, I find religious multiplicity useful, beautiful, and good, but I also know it can harm people, traditions, and communities. Some followers of Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), for example, adopt ideas from nondual and nonpersonal Asian traditions (like Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism) for instrumental reasons. They use these ideas to sell books, promote workshops, and develop consumer product but don't typically share the wealth with the religious communities whose ideas they've used or stolen. Likewise, a follower of one tradition can distort or bastardize concepts from other spiritual traditions. This practice promotes a simplistic and inaccurate understanding of some spiritual ideas, such as Donald Trump's assumption that all Muslims accept violence or follow "Sharia law" (although what he calls "Sharia law" is a caricature promulgated by the Islamophobia industry).

These issues are real and important, but they are beyond the scope of the book. Instead, I've focused on three questions: How do people come to claim (or be claimed by) more than one religious tradition at the same time? How do spiritually fluid people navigate in a world that rewards singular religious commitments? And how do complex religious bonds contribute to human flourishing? The

chapters that follow offer intriguing possibilities, both for reimagining what it means to be religious and/or spiritual and for recognizing how the gifts of spiritually fluid people contribute to the common good. <>

[The Philosophy of Spirituality: Analytic, Continental and Multicultural Approaches to a New Field of Philosophy](#) edited by Heather Salazar, Roderick Nicholls [Value Inquiry Book Series, Philosophy and Religion, Brill-Rodopi, 9789004376298]

The essays in [The Philosophy of Spirituality](#) address spirituality as a subject of philosophical interest independent of religion and respecting diverse spiritual traditions: African, atheist, Indigenous, Indian, Stoic, and Sufic perspectives, as well as Western analytic and continental views.

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Why This Book, Now?

In 1987, before beginning his historical account of the role played by “spiritual exercises” in Western philosophy, Pierre Hadot cautioned: “it is no longer fashionable these days to use the word ‘spiritual.’” Well at least in popular culture, the word is now back in fashion. Public opinion polls reflect the fact that while traditional religions have lost large numbers of adherents over several decades, more people within an increasingly post-religious Anglo-European world enthusiastically self-identify as spiritual, but not religious. For example, although a majority of people in the United Kingdom do not conceive themselves to be religious, a significant majority of those people have strong spiritual beliefs (regardless of age). The United States is often seen as an anomaly – a highly developed, prosperous country that seems to be getting more religious – but the Pew Research Center not long ago published data suggesting that Americans are, in fact, getting less religious (where that is defined by conventional criteria) and at the same time, becoming more spiritual. Not surprisingly, a multi-billion dollar industry has sprung up to satisfy this demand for programs, products, and motivational leaders by masses of people who want to improve their lives and, more specifically, live well-balanced, spiritually enhanced lives.

Globally, the attraction of traditional religions (such as Christianity and Islam) remains very strong. Yet mainstream religious collectives (identified with Churches, Ummah, or the like) are now augmented by groups embracing reinvented beliefs, sensibilities, and practices that can be at odds, sometimes jarringly so, with traditionally affirmed norms. For obvious reasons, the Western media has focused on so-called Islamism but there are many other interesting and far less politically charged

instances, for example, the exponential growth of Pentecostalism and closely related charismatic Christian sects in Latin America and Africa. And these religious variations are characterized by a fervent spirituality noticeably absent in formerly mainstream Christian churches in the Anglo-European world. At the same time, a whole “generation of seekers” in the West over the last forty years has drawn freely on non-Christian spiritual resources (and those of non-Western philosophy) including the practices and/or beliefs of Sufism, Advaita Vedānta, Buddhism, diverse Indigenous spiritualities, and so on.

Sociologists have paid sustained attention to the reappearance of spirituality as a commonly used term. North American interest in non-religious spirituality can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century with eclectic movements such as Swedenborgian mysticism, Mesmerism, Transcendentalism, Spiritualism, and the like. Robert Fuller makes the broad generalization that those who claim to be spiritual have a common belief “in a Higher Power of some kind” and aspire “to connect or enter into a more intense relationship with this Higher Power.” The necessity of including a Higher Power in the understanding of spirituality is questioned in this book. Yet it is not the task of sociology to ask traditional theological questions regarding the nature of this Higher Power or to consider, for example, where a person or group is actually connecting to some God who could authenticate their spirituality, so to speak; and it does not ask ontological and metaphysical questions about the very existence of the allegedly ultimate source of spirituality. The truth value of relevant beliefs and other such abstract philosophical questions are simply not of concern to sociologists.

Nor are sociologists concerned with defining criteria for ascribing the word spiritual on other than empirical grounds. Quite the contrary, judging a practice to be a spiritual practice is a matter of accurately reflecting how interviewed subjects characterize it. Providing a neutral taxonomy to capture what spiritual individuals say about themselves is desirable. Yet there is no methodological rationale for developing certain kinds of evaluative arguments, for example: in this

case the vocabulary of spirituality obscures the reality of what is believed or practiced and it would be simpler and more precise to describe it as aesthetic or ethical, not spiritual; or that there is nothing to be gained in this instance by treating an exercise relieving stress and facilitating a more optimistic outlook on life, as spiritual rather than physical and/or psychological. The research of Wade Clark Roof exemplifies impressive research which leaves the underlying philosophical questions almost completely unaddressed. Over more than three decades, he studied sizable numbers of people who were disturbed or distressed by the superficial life-styles cultivated in late capitalist societies. Religion, in the representative words of one interviewed person, is defined by traditional “doctrines” and “lots of rules” whereas understanding spirituality as an “inner feeling” provides a way to accommodate the aspirations of unique individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds; in what Roof tellingly describes as the contemporary “spiritual marketplace,” the beliefs and practices of all traditions are on offer to a panoply of seekers who can tap spiritual potential in a highly customized way on the assumption that “spirituality” is whatever “enters you and lifts you up and moves you to be a better person.”

This book is motivated by the idea that spirituality does not necessarily resist serious, sustained philosophical analysis. It also affirms that we are indeed living in an age of resurgent spirituality. Myriad varieties are overflowing traditional religious containers or being developed, consciously or not, in opposition to them by diverse people(s) yearning for a spiritually enhanced life. This notable cultural change has not resulted in a comparable shift within philosophy where the word spiritual appears more frequently but it is far from being fashionable. We suggest that this might be due largely to the absence of an established framework for studying spirituality and well-vetted criteria for using the concept as more than a means of rhetorically valorizing beliefs and practices. In short, the time is right to start developing a philosophy of spirituality.

The Aims of a Philosophy of Spirituality

Collectively, the essays in this book offer more than enough evidence to encourage a broad range of philosophers to pursue such a project deliberately, intensively, and collaboratively. We are not suggesting, of course, that a philosophy of spirituality would have to be developed from scratch. Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age* is one of the best and most widely known examples of recent work that has raised the philosophical profile of spirituality. Taylor is acutely aware that relevant social science research tends to be tacitly anchored in simplistic over-arching concepts such as secularity, religion, and spirituality itself. Yet unlike many philosophers he has extensive knowledge of the literature and uses empirical findings adeptly, to flesh out an argument that is a vehicle of normative evaluation. It concludes with an admiring look at the “spiritual itineraries” of selected figures who embody “new spiritual directions” capable of breaking the hold of stifling versions of secularity. While the argument of *A Secular Age* is embedded in an ambitious narrative, two themes merit brief consideration. The first – spiritual problems are distinguishable from ethical problems – provides support for developing a philosophy of spirituality; the second – the concept of spirituality is normatively contained by religion – provides support for the skepticism that some philosophers will have regarding the prospect of a field that examines spirituality independently of religion. Considered together, they illuminate the central aims of this book.

First, according to Taylor all cultures have some conception of “a fulfilled life” or “human flourishing” but many of them offer something “independent of human flourishing” which is spiritually indispensable but systemically repressed in secular societies. Taylor ties this indispensable element to the notion of transcendence. Regardless of how the latter is theoretically articulated, however, there is now a pervasive belief among religious and non-religious spiritual seekers alike that transcendent experiences are those moments in which the aspiration to a truly flourishing life is achieved. In short, transcendence and flourishing (completion or self-fulfilment) necessarily converge. Taylor’s claim that the telic movement of spirituality is toward something independent of flourishing is,

therefore, at complete odds with the Zeitgeist. But it is well-justified. As Mark Johnston notes, “there are certain large-scale structural defects in human life that no amount of psychological adjustment or practical success can free us from.” Until we take our dying breath, we remain vulnerable to seemingly undeserved events that horribly blind-side us in an apparently unjust world. And traditionally, Johnstone argues, a primary function of many religions has been to offer a spiritual solution to a spiritual problem: “a way to go on” while “keeping faith in the importance of goodness, and an openness to love.”

If these “large-scale structural defects” can be addressed constructively only with reference to criteria independent of human flourishing, then the resolution of the defects is beyond the scope of the most robust form of ethics. This point is corroborated by Aristotle when he more than once notes that “the role of fortune raises a puzzle” about the nature of his ethical ideal. After all, the best and most complete form of human life is realized in the achievement of eudaimonia but if the person achieving it over the course of a long life is still vulnerable to being struck by destabilizing misfortune then eudaimonia cannot, it seems, signify final, teleological completion. Yet Aristotle’s attempt to resolve the puzzle amounts to a philosophical *deus ex machina*. No one achieving eudaimonia “could ever become miserable,” he argues, but if they do suffer “severe misfortunes,” he concludes: “we suppose” they will bear up “just as a good shoemaker will produce the finest shoe from the hides given him” and continue to live as “blessed as a human being” can be. To the talents and attributes of the fully actualized, practically wise person, in other words, Aristotle requires that one integrates the most horrible contingencies into an ongoing life ... as a guarantee that it remains a complete and truly fulfilled life despite severe misfortune (and to ensure, of course, that eudaimonia still signifies the highest form of human life). A corollary of this philosophical *deus ex machina* is that there exists no need to speak of spiritual or religious attributes which are above and beyond ethical ones.

Eudaimonia has proved to be enduringly valuable in ethics, particularly because over the last five

hundred years happiness has been increasingly understood in terms of an inherently transitory, unstable feeling of well-being. Indeed, it is not only the theoretical source of ‘flourishing’ in virtue ethics but also of ‘authentic happiness’ in the field of ‘positive psychology’ which expands into extensive interdisciplinary research in sustainable happiness. Work in these fields, however, often operates on the assumption that the large-scale defects of human life can be addressed as an ethical or therapeutic problem. So if, on the contrary, they pose a distinctively spiritual problem then the scope of flourishing ought to be limited (and opportunistic attempts to bring spirituality and flourishing together into one conceptual space are best approached with a good degree of skepticism.) A reasonable limitation such as this can, therefore, constitute an important step toward establishing a philosophy of spirituality. But that step does not follow necessarily. Indeed, another of A Secular Age’s recurring themes illuminates one of the main obstacles to moving in this direction.

Regarding this second theme, consider Taylor’s emphatic statement that the religious spirituality of a Buddha or Jesus is defined by a “radical change of identity,” a change that does not “negate the value of flourishing” but does “make a profound inner break with the goals of flourishing.” On the face of it, this simply elaborates the first theme which by limiting the ethical, appeared to open the door to independent philosophical examination of spirituality. In fact, however, Taylor closes this door tightly. For he insists that the experiences and practices that a person considers spiritually enlivening, have lasting value only insofar as one “develops a religious life” and “continues into formal spiritual practices” integral to such a life. Johnstone, following a similar line of thought, alleges that spiritual but not religious persons are characteristically incapable of breaking free from the desire for self-actualized flourishing. This results in a harsh criticism, namely, they are “spiritual materialists.” Following the original meaning of the term coined by Chögyam Trungpa, Johnstone describes those who undergo “no fundamental change in their orientation to life;” the “ordinary unredeemed self” remains their motivational center as they appropriate practices from religious spiritualities or utilize standard

counter-cultural means (psychedelic drugs, sex, music, and so on) to connect with a “supposedly spiritual realm” disclosed in moments of full actualization.

In many cases, this criticism is probably well-justified but the background philosophical presumption that authentic spirituality follows a trajectory tracking into the realm of the religious, is dubious. Nuanced discussion of this question, however, has been made more difficult by the so-called new atheism controversy that has raged over the last decade or so. The polarizing atmosphere created by debates between critics and defenders of religion is not conducive to clarifying the nature of spirituality. For advocates of religion will be prone to see spiritual but not religious persons as fence-sitters who indirectly and unintentionally confirm simplistic views of religion held by the new atheists. Alternatively, identifying oneself as spiritual but not religious can invite those on either side of the debate to join together in criticizing a spiritual materialist. Terry Eagleton, for example, is contemptuous of a perceived cultural type which is “just the sort of caricature of the spiritual one would expect a materialistic civilization to produce”; he confidently assumes that a spiritual but non-religious person holds a “sentimental disembodied understanding of the spiritual” belying the “hard-headed materialism” of its bourgeois practitioners.” Eagleton’s position is part of a defense of liberation theology but it resonates with neo-Marxist Continental philosophers such as Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek. Although atheists, the latter are great admirers of the emancipatory political power of the Judeo-Christian tradition and, on this basis, they criticize Western non-religious spiritual seekers for exploiting diverse (frequently Eastern) spiritual traditions in the pursuit of a form of self-fulfilment made possible only by passively accepting the structures of a late capitalism which oppresses masses of people elsewhere.

In sum, the first Taylor theme gives reason to think that a philosophy of spirituality is a promising prospect whereas the second highlights one of the main obstacles preventing movement toward it. The explorations of spirituality in this book draw on diverse sources and probe its conceptual

relationships with other areas of philosophy. Explicitly or not, most aim to expand its scope. Nevertheless, caution is necessary. For the vocabulary of spirituality will invariably intersect with core concepts of religion and ethics but also aesthetics, science, and the like. It has been well-demonstrated, moreover, that a populist tendency to constantly expand the conceptual reach of spirituality without proposing normative limiting criteria, has hindered any desire to pay serious philosophical attention to its cultural resurgence. To reiterate, therefore, we aim to walk a fine line between ambition and necessary caution.

This Collection of Essays

The eclectic collection of chapters comprising this book have been sorted into three parts: 1. Understanding Spirituality; 2. Spirituality a cross Traditions; and 3. Critical Perspectives and Re-inventions of Spirituality. These sectional divisions, however, do not presuppose that there is an ideal pathway through the book. Each chapter is self-contained, and divisions intend to reflect broad thematic commonalities. Nevertheless, readers will be able to identify a multitude of connections between various chapters in different sections, according to their own interests and/or academic backgrounds. For a central aim of the book is to generate discussion of some of the kinds of spirituality that appear within diverse cultures. There is a meaningful multiplicity of spiritualities to be explained, for example: both theistic and non-theistic varieties; naturalized and non-naturalized ones; those that celebrate the body and those that celebrate the soul; those that use artistic expression as a means of communion and those that use meditation to channel awareness of a deep connection among all things. These perspectives on what is a widespread cultural phenomenon will also resonate with the lives of many students. So instructors using this collection will be able to assign chapters organized according to desired themes, methodologies, or overall pedagogical goals.

As noted above, another central aim is to help develop a field of philosophy focused on spirituality qua spirituality, independent from religion and religious studies. As a new area, we recognize that there will be a wide divergence of opinion on the meaning of the concept and what

that entails for individual or cultural practices (even within any given tradition). Moreover, there will be those who will question the need for a philosophy of spirituality and criticize the suggestion that it should be clearly distinguished from the philosophy of religion (or religious studies). We do not aim to dispel those concerns completely. In fact, this collection includes the sort of honest questioning of the concept and practices of spirituality that is essential to philosophy. Some chapters take positions that are very much at odds with those of others. Yet the clear overall intention is to take a fresh look at spiritual experiences and traditions in a way that gives them life outside of a religious context. As philosophers make efforts to do so, better communication between people coming out different traditions will be possible and perhaps some common ground will emerge. In sum, this book intends to show that there are legitimate and enticing methods of understanding spirituality that make sense to people outside of any specific religion, hold up to rigorous philosophical analysis, and shed light on our experiences in socially respectful, aesthetically appealing, and scientifically plausible ways. <>

[The Oxford Handbook of Spontaneous Thought: Mind-Wandering, Creativity, and Dreaming](#) edited by Kieran C. R. Fox, Kalina Christoff [Oxford Library of Psychology, Oxford University Press, 9780190464745]

Where do spontaneous thoughts come from? It may be surprising that the seemingly straightforward answers "from the mind" or "from the brain" are in fact an incredibly recent understanding of the origins of spontaneous thought. For nearly all of human history, our thoughts - especially the most sudden, insightful, and important - were almost universally ascribed to divine or other external sources. Only in the past few centuries have we truly taken responsibility for their own mental content, and finally localized thought to the central nervous system - laying the foundations for a protoscience of spontaneous thought. But enormous questions still loom: what, exactly, is spontaneous thought? Why does our brain engage in spontaneous forms of thinking, and when is this most likely to occur? And perhaps the question most interesting and accessible from a scientific

perspective: how does the brain generate and evaluate its own spontaneous creations?

Spontaneous thought includes our daytime fantasies and mind-wandering; the flashes of insight and inspiration familiar to the artist, scientist, and inventor; and the nighttime visions we call dreams.

This [Handbook](#) brings together views from neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, phenomenology, history, education, contemplative traditions, and clinical practice to begin to address the ubiquitous but poorly understood mental phenomena that we collectively call 'spontaneous thought.'

In studying such an abstruse and seemingly impractical subject, we should remember that our capacity for spontaneity, originality, and creativity defines us as a species - and as individuals. Spontaneous forms of thought enable us to transcend not only the here and now of perceptual experience, but also the bonds of our deliberately-controlled and goal-directed cognition; they allow the space for us to be other than who we are, and for our minds to think beyond the limitations of our current viewpoints and beliefs.

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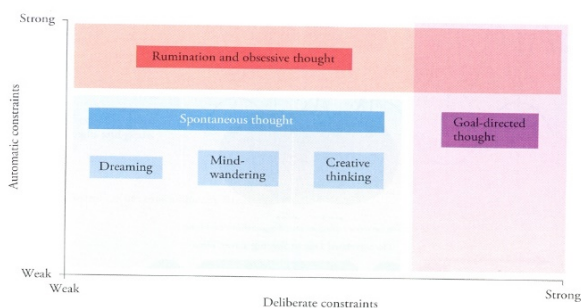
Excerpt: Toward an Interdisciplinary
 Science of Spontaneous Thought by
 Kieran C. R. Fox and Kalina Christoff
 Abstract: Enormous questions still loom for the
 emerging science of spontaneous thought: What,
 exactly, is spontaneous thought? Why does the
 human brain engage in spontaneous forms of
 thinking, and when is this most likely to occur? And
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 address the ubiquitous but poorly understood
 mental phenomena collectively known as
 "spontaneous thought." Perhaps no other mental
 experience is so familiar in daily life, and yet so
 difficult to understand and explain scientifically.
 The present volume represents the first effort to
 bring such highly diverse perspectives to bear on
 answering the what, when, why, and how of
 spontaneous thought.

Key Words: mind-wandering, creativity, dreaming,
 daydreaming, spontaneous thought, self-generated
 thought

Where Do Spontaneous Thoughts Come From?

It may be surprising that the seemingly
 straightforward answers "from the mind" or "from
 the brain" are in fact an incredibly recent, modern
 understanding of the origins of spontaneous
 thought. For nearly all of human history, our
 thoughts—especially the most sudden, insightful,
 and important—were almost universally ascribed
 to divine or other external sources. Cultures around
 the world believed that dreams were messages
 sent from the gods; inventions like writing and
 agriculture were credited to ancient culture heroes
 and tutelary deities long lost in the mists of legend;
 and the belief that artistic creativity was inspired
 by the Muses held sway for two millennia. Even the
 original sense of the word inspiration was that the
 divine had been "breathed into" a mere mortal,
 accounting for the new idea or insight. There were
 of course exceptions—Aristotle, for instance, put

forward the naturalistic hypothesis that dreams were created by the mind of the dreamer—but nowhere, it seems, was there a widespread belief



Conceptual space relating different types of thought and their constraints from Christoff et al. (see below). in the spontaneity, originality, and creativity of the unaided human mind.

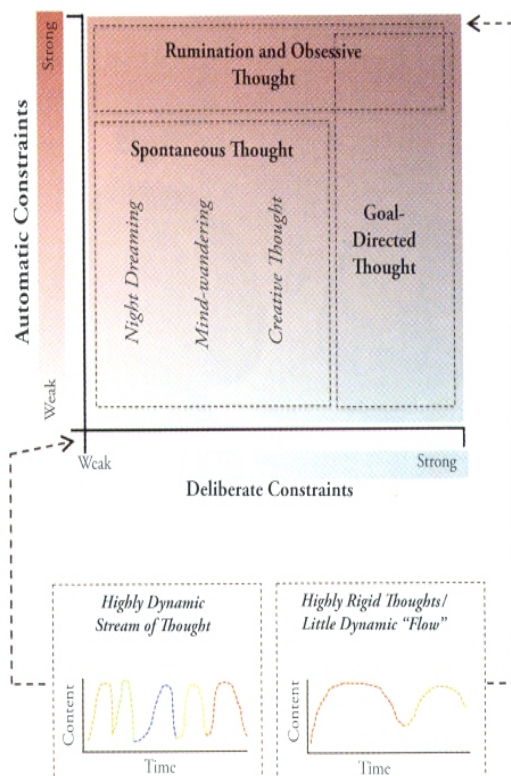
We still sometimes worship our great intellectual innovators—artists, scientists, philosophers—as semi-divine figures. But somewhere, somehow, our perspective changed and we began to see ourselves as the authors of our own thoughts, however inexplicable their origins might seem. Perhaps the beginnings of this shift in perspective are echoed in the ancient myth of Prometheus, who "stole and gave to mortals" the "fount of the arts, the light of fire"—in other words, the power of conjuring up novel thoughts. Although this internalization of thought's origins began long ago, only in the past few centuries have human beings truly taken responsibility for their own mental content, and finally localized thought to the central nervous system—laying the foundations for a protoscience of spontaneous thought.

This shift has broadly answered the who and the where of spontaneous thought: we are the source of our thoughts, and these thoughts seem to be constructed in our heads. But enormous questions still loom: What, exactly, is spontaneous thought? Why does the brain engage in spontaneous forms of thinking, and when is this most likely to occur? And perhaps the most interesting and accessible question from a scientific perspective: How does the brain generate, elaborate, and evaluate its own spontaneous creations? Each chapter that follows aims to provide at least preliminary answers to these perplexing questions.

The central aim of this volume is to bring together views from neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, phenomenology, history, education, contemplative traditions, and clinical practice in order to begin to address the ubiquitous but poorly understood mental phenomena that we collectively call "spontaneous thought." Perhaps no other mental experience is so familiar to us in daily life, and yet so difficult to understand and explain scientifically. The present volume represents the first effort to bring such highly diverse perspectives to bear on answering the what, when, why, and how of spontaneous thought.

Although "spontaneous thought" as a term has been used throughout the last decade in both the psychological and neuroscientific literature, recent years have marked tremendous progress in our theoretical understanding of what spontaneous thought is and what phenomena it encompasses. Spontaneous thought can be defined as thought that arises relatively freely due to an absence of strong constraints on its contents or on the transitions from one mental state to another. In other words, spontaneous thought moves freely as it unfolds (conceptual space).

There are two general ways in which thought can be constrained (conceptual). One type of constraint is flexible and deliberate, and is implemented through cognitive control. Another type of constraint is automatic in nature. Automatic constraints can be thought of as a family of mechanisms that operate outside of cognitive control to hold attention on a restricted set of information. Examples of automatic constraints are emotional significance and habits, both of which can constrain our thoughts without any effort or intention on our part.



Spontaneous thought can also be understood as a broader family of mental phenomena, including our daytime fantasies and mind-wandering; the flashes of insight and inspiration familiar to the artist, scientist, and inventor; and the nighttime visions we call dreams. There is a dark side to these mental phenomena as well—the illumination of which is yet another major goal of this volume. Repetitive depressive rumination, uncontrollable thoughts in obsessive-compulsive disorder, the involuntary and life-like re-experiencing of post-traumatic stress disorder—all these, we suggest, can be considered dysfunctional alterations of spontaneous thought, and need to be understood in relation to our natural and healthy propensity toward novel, variable, imaginative thought.

Spontaneous should in no way suggest random or meaningless. Another key aim of this volume is to highlight the ample evidence in favor of the idea that goal-related and "top-down" processing often co-occurs with and can sometimes guide spontaneous thought. Although the cause and meaning of specific thoughts or dreams often elude

A DYNAMIC MODEL OF SPONTANEOUS THOUGHT

A dynamic model of spontaneous thought. Spontaneous thought spans a conceptual space, inclusive of night dreaming, mind-wandering, and creative thought, that is relatively free from two kinds of constraints: (1) deliberate constraints (x-axis), and (2) automatic constraints (y-axis). According to this model, adapted and extended from Christoff and colleagues (see below), ruminative and obsessive thought are not truly spontaneous in nature due to strong bottom-up, "automatic" constraints that bias their content. The dynamics of thought—the way thoughts unfold and flow over time—represent an important element of this model. As shown in the bottom left box, thoughts that are free from both kinds of constraints should transition relatively quickly and span different phenomenological content (represented by different colors). Conversely, excessively constrained thoughts should have longer durations with similar content (← bottom right box).

us, the rare but sensational occurrences of transgressive thoughts or highly bizarre and emotional dreams tend to obscure just how mundane (but, quite possibly, useful) most of our self-generated mental content really is. The degree to which mental processes that are ostensibly spontaneous and beyond our control appear to be planned, relevant, and insightful with respect to our personal goals and concerns is striking—and, we believe, deserving of further exploration.

These ubiquitous spontaneous mental phenomena raise some intriguing questions: Can we engage in planning and other executive processes in the absence of conscious awareness? To what extent are "we" in control of our own minds? The true qualities and content of spontaneous thought also

fly in the face of many culturally sanctioned but unwarranted beliefs about the inexplicability of our fantasy lives, the randomness and meaninglessness of dreams, or the disorderliness of creative thoughts and insights in artists and scientists. A closer look at psychological, neuroscientific, and philosophical work shows not only the co-occurrence of cognitive processes like planning, mentalizing, and metacognition with various forms of spontaneous thought, but also a compelling correspondence between the content of one's spontaneous thoughts and the content and concerns of one's daily life. The Oxford Handbook of Spontaneous Thought is the first volume of its kind to bring together experts from so many diverse fields to explore these phenomena, and should therefore be of interest to psychologists, neuroscientists, philosophers, clinicians, educators, and artists alike—indeed, to anyone intrigued by the incredibly rich life of the mind.

Overview of the Handbook

This Handbook is divided into seven separate but closely interrelated parts. This introductory chapter comprises Part I, providing an overview of spontaneous thought in general and the many chapters of this book in particular.

Part II dives right into fundamental theoretical issues surrounding the definition and investigation of spontaneous thought. In Chapter 2, Caitlin Mills, Arianne Herrera-Bennett, Myrthe Faber, and Kalina Christoff ask why the mind wanders at all, and propose the default variability hypothesis: the idea that by default, spontaneous thought tends to exhibit high variability of content over time—variability that serves as an adaptive mechanism that enhances episodic memory efficiency and facilitates semantic knowledge optimization. Chandra Sripada, in Chapter 3, puts forward a theoretical framework within which spontaneous and deliberate thought can be compared, respectively, with "exploration" of the environment in search of new resources versus "exploitation" of the resources we already have at hand. In Chapter 4, Carey Morewedge and Daniella Kupor provide an overview of people's metacognitive appraisals of the meaning and relevance of spontaneous thoughts, with the surprising conclusion that people tend to attribute more importance to thought whose

origin is mysterious—perhaps hearkening back to the ancient human view of the origins of thought discussed at the outset of this chapter. Dylan Stan and Kalina Christoff, in Chapter 5, propose that a key quality of mind-wandering is an accompanying subjective experience of ease, or low motivational intensity. In Chapter 6, Georg Northoff proposes a novel theory aiming to explain how spontaneous brain activity generates and constitutes subjectively experienced spontaneous thought. Finally, in Chapter 7, Jonathan Smallwood, Daniel Margulies, Boris Bernhardt, and Elizabeth Jeffries present their component process framework of spontaneous thought, explaining how different types of thought can arise through the interaction of specific underlying neurocognitive processes.

Part III explores broader philosophical, evolutionary, and historical perspectives on spontaneous thought. In Chapter 8, Zachary Irving and Evan Thompson provide an in-depth introduction to the philosophy of mind-wandering, reviewing several psychological and philosophical accounts and providing a new view of their own. Thomas Metzinger, in Chapter 9, addresses the question, "Why is mind-wandering interesting for philosophers?" In Chapter 10, Dean Keith Simonton relates the spontaneity of human thought to other spontaneous generative processes, highlighting the connections with "selectionist" views of evolution and creativity. John Antrobus, in Chapter 11, offers an analysis of how the brain in both waking and sleeping can so effortlessly produce a constant stream of visual imagery and thoughts—and what use they might have. Rounding out Part III, Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, in Chapter 12, explores how spontaneous thought was viewed in the past, how it was used by creative people to further their endeavors, and how deep historical research could lead to an understanding of the role of spontaneous thought in the history of ideas.

Part IV focuses on mind-wandering and daydreaming. In Chapter 13, Jessica Andrews-Hanna, Zachary Irving, Kieran Fox, Nathan Spreng, and Kalina Christoff present an interdisciplinary overview of the rapidly evolving neuroscience of

Mind-wandering as spontaneous thought: a dynamic framework by Kalina Christoff, Zachary C. Irving, Kieran C. R. Fox, R. Nathan Spreng & Jessica R. Andrews-Hanna [*Nature Reviews Neuroscience* volume 17, pages 718–731 (2016): www.nature.com/articles/nrn.2016.113]:

Abstract: Most research on mind-wandering has characterized it as a mental state with contents that are task unrelated or stimulus independent. However, the dynamics of mind-wandering — how mental states change over time — have remained largely neglected. Here, we introduce a dynamic framework for understanding mind-wandering and its relationship to the recruitment of large-scale brain networks. We propose that mind-wandering is best understood as a member of a family of spontaneous-thought phenomena that also includes creative thought and dreaming. This dynamic framework can shed new light on mental disorders that are marked by alterations in spontaneous thought, including depression, anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Key points:

In the past 15 years, mind-wandering has become a prominent topic in cognitive neuroscience and psychology. Whereas mind-wandering has come to be predominantly defined as task-unrelated and/or stimulus-unrelated thought, we argue that this content-based definition fails to capture the defining quality of mind-wandering: the relatively free and spontaneous arising of mental states as the mind wanders.

We define spontaneous thought as a mental state, or a sequence of mental states, that arises relatively freely due to an absence of strong constraints on the contents of each state and on the transitions from one mental state to another. We propose that there are two general ways in which the content of mental states, and the transitions between them, can be constrained.

Deliberate and automatic constraints serve to limit the contents of thought and how these contents change over time. Deliberate constraints are implemented through cognitive control, whereas automatic constraints can be considered as a family of mechanisms that operate outside of cognitive control, including sensory or affective salience.

Within our framework, mind-wandering can be defined as a special case of spontaneous thought that tends to be more deliberately constrained than dreaming, but less deliberately constrained than creative thinking and goal-directed thought. In addition, mind-wandering can be clearly distinguished from rumination and other types of thought that are marked by a high degree of automatic constraints, such as obsessive thought.

In general, deliberate constraints are minimal during dreaming, tend to increase somewhat during mind-wandering, increase further during creative thinking and are strongest during goal-directed thought. There is a range of low-to-medium level of automatic constraints that can occur during dreaming, mind-wandering and creative thinking, but thought ceases to be spontaneous at the strongest levels of automatic constraint, such as during rumination or obsessive thought.

We propose a neural model of the interactions among sources of variability, automatic constraints and deliberate constraints on thought: the default network (DN) subsystem centred around the medial temporal lobe (MTL) (DNMTL) and sensorimotor areas can act as sources of variability; the salience networks, the dorsal attention network (DAN) and the core DN subsystem (DNCORE) can exert automatic constraints on the output of the DNMTL and sensorimotor areas, thus limiting the variability of thought; and the frontoparietal control network can exert deliberate constraints on thought by flexibly coupling with the DNCORE, the DAN or the salience networks, thus reinforcing or reducing the automatic constraints being exerted by the DNCORE, the DAN or the salience networks.

spontaneous thought. Investigating what we have

Herrera-Bennett develop an intriguing account of

the "flow" state as a form of spontaneous thought characterized by a cascade of successive insights and learning experiences. Oshin Vartanian, in Chapter 25, delves into how self-referential thoughts can be elicited by aesthetic appreciation of artworks, such as paintings. Finally, in Chapter 26, David Beversdorf provides an extensive review of the neurochemical basis of flexible and creative thinking.

Spontaneous thought does not cease when we close our eyes and turn out the lights. Part VI explores the many normal, extraordinary, and sometimes pathological varieties of spontaneous thought that take place throughout the sleep cycle, and how these are related to memory consolidation and involuntary memory retrieval. In Chapter 27, G. William Domhoff provides an overview of the neural basis of dreaming and REM sleep, while Chapter 28, by Kieran Fox and Manesh Gim, provides a comprehensive review of what is known about the neural correlates of all sleep stages throughout the sleep cycle. In Chapter 29, Jennifer Windt and Ursula Voss provide an in-depth treatment of the phenomenon of lucid dreaming, bringing psychological, philosophical, and neuroscientific perspectives to bear to better explain this remarkable mental state. Tore Nielsen, in Chapter 30, explores the fascinating topic of "microdreaming" and hypnagogic imagery as a paradigm for a fine-scaled neurophenomenological approach to inner experience. In Chapter 31, Elizaveta Solomonova offers an interdisciplinary look at the little-known phenomenon of sleep paralysis, and the spontaneous visions and emotions that accompany it. Erin Wamsley, in Chapter 32, explores how spontaneous thought in both waking and sleep can be seen as an expression of memory consolidation and recombination, and John Mace, in Chapter 33, provides a comprehensive overview of involuntary memories—how often they occur, how they can chain together, how they differ from voluntarily recalled information, and what their function might be.

Part VII takes us to the fringes and also the cutting edge of research on spontaneous thought: its relationship to clinical conditions and altered states of consciousness. Dylan Stan and Kalina Christoff begin, in Chapter 34, by outlining the many

potential clinical benefits and risks of spontaneous thought. In Chapter 35, Claire O'Callaghan and Muireann Irish describe the neural underpinnings of how spontaneous thought changes in relation to aging and dementia syndromes. Elizabeth DuPre and Nathan Spreng, in Chapter 36, explore the relationships between depression, rumination, and spontaneous thought. In Chapter 37, Aaron Kucyi explores the intriguing relationships between mind-wandering and both chronic and acute pain, and how these interactions are mediated by largescale brain networks. Halvor Eifring, in Chapter 38, investigates how religious and contemplative traditions around the world have tended to see mindwandering as an obstacle, while at the same time viewing spiritual attainment and liberation as a spontaneous process of transformation that cannot be actuated deliberately. In Chapter 39, Wendy Hasenkamp outlines how meditation and mindfulness practices can provide a window into the rapid fluctuations of mind-wandering. Peter Suedfeld, Dennis Rank, and Marek Malas offer in Chapter 40 an account of spontaneous thought in extreme and unusual environments, exploring rarely seen records of the thoughts and experiences of polar explorers, astronauts, and those undergoing severe sensory deprivation. Finally, Michael Lifshitz, Eli Sheiner, and Laurence Kirmayer detail in Chapter 41 how the powerful unconstrained cognition brought on by psychedelic substances can be guided by culture and context.

All told, these chapters provide the most comprehensive overview of the wide-ranging field of spontaneous thought to date—and there could be no better guides to this realm than the 64 outstanding scientists, historians, philosophers, and artists who have come together to write them.

Spontaneous forms of thought enable us to transcend not only the here and now of perceptual experience, but also the bonds of our deliberately controlled and goal-directed cognition; they allow the space for us to be other than who we are, and for our minds to think beyond the limitations of our current viewpoints and beliefs. In studying such an abstruse and seemingly impractical subject, we need always to remember that our capacity for spontaneity, originality, and creativity defines us as a species—and as individuals.

The painting adorning the cover of this Handbook is by artist and neuroscientist Greg Dunn, who draws inspiration for his work from the ancient sumi-e tradition of ink wash painting still practiced in Japan. The essence of sumi-e, which has deep roots in Taoism and Zen Buddhism, is to combine discipline with spontaneity, to evoke a complex essence with simplicity—to bring order, so to speak, out of chaos, and to give rise to a creation that is coherent and integrated, yet natural and unforced. We could think of no better artist to provide a visual overture to the multifaceted exploration of these same themes throughout the pages of this book.

Philosopher Alan Watts eloquently captured the tension and interplay between spontaneity and purpose when he wrote, "spontaneity is not by any means a blind, disorderly urge, a mere power of caprice. A philosophy restricted [by] conventional language has no way of conceiving an intelligence which does not work according to plan, according to a one-at-a-time order of thought. Yet the concrete evidence of such an intelligence is right to hand ...". We hope the chapters that follow help to illuminate this elusive wisdom of spontaneous thought in all its many manifestations. <>

[Integrative Spirituality: Religious Pluralism, Individuation, and Awakening](#) by Patrick J. Mahaffey [Routledge, 9781138610385]

In [Integrative Spirituality](#), Patrick J. Mahaffey elucidates spirituality as a developmental process that is enhanced by integrating the teachings and practices of multiple religious traditions, Jungian depth psychology, and contemplative yoga. In the postmodern world of religious pluralism, Mahaffey compellingly argues that each of us must fashion a unique path to wholeness which integrates aspects of life and of the self that have become disconnected and disowned.

[Integrative Spirituality](#) uniquely conjoins four components: exemplary religious pluralists from three traditions, individuation, the forms of contemplative Hindu yoga that have been successfully transmitted to the West, and a presentation of two models for integrating psychological growth and spiritual awakening. The book presents pioneering practitioners in each field who exemplify how we may fashion our own

approach to integrating both spiritual awakening and psychological development and delineates an array of spiritual practices that integrate the somatic, psychological, interpersonal, and spiritual aspects of life. Ultimately, Mahaffey contends that integrative spirituality is a mode of being that fully embraces the divinity inherent in each of us and in the world.

[Integrative Spirituality](#) will be essential reading for academics and students of Jungian and post-Jungian studies, transpersonal and Jungian psychology, and religious studies and contemplative education. It will also be of interest to analytical and depth psychologists in practice and in training, and to anyone seeking a greater understanding of spirituality, psychological growth, religious traditions, individuation, and contemplative yoga.

Editorial Appraisal:

Mahaffey provides an ingenuous approach to spiritual traditions and offers his own patchwork quilt of devotion and contemplative discipline to the reader, not so much as to be emulated in its particulars, but to invite each seeker of life values and significance to pursue their own spiritual center without too much worry about sectarian or traditional divisions. Mahaffey's own orientation is in Hindu diaspora yoga and bhakti, but the point of view is also inspired by transpersonal and Jungian psychologies.

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Excerpt: This book is written for those who, like myself, desire a spirituality that is informed by religious traditions, Jungian depth psychology, contemplative yoga, and related modes of thought. While I do not conflate the aims and processes of psychotherapy and yoga's spirituality, I do explore how these two approaches to human development are complementary. I invite you to think anew and to journey with me on a quest to investigate our deepest existential questions and concerns. As a synthetic thinker, I look for converging insights that I can integrate into the fabric of my own thinking. I discuss the perspectives of writers who have deeply informed my spiritual quest. I believe their views will be useful to others who pursue psychological wholeness and spiritual awakening. The ideas of leading-edge theologians, religious philosophers, and depth psychologists are elucidated and integrated. Careful attention is also given to yogis, mystics, and contemplatives who embody insights and wisdom that align with and augment the theorizing of the academic authors discussed in the book. My conviction is that real change comes from inner work, one person at a time, and cumulative changes in our inner world shape the conditions of our shared social reality. Therefore, I have made the cultivation of interiority the primary focus of this book.

When I was nine years old I was concerned that my childhood friends across the street might not go to heaven because they were not baptized. With considerable urgency I asked my mother, "What will happen to my friends if they accidentally die?" Though she tried to answer my question reassuringly, I continued to feel troubled. The more I pondered the question, the more complex it became. "What happens to people born in countries where Christianity is not practiced?" and "What about people who lived before Jesus was born? God would not exclude them from heaven, would He?" While these were the simple questions of a child, they persisted into my adolescence and adulthood.

Later, my childhood questions morphed into more mature concerns, ones that continue to animate my academic career and my spirituality. How can religious pluralism flourish in a secular, postmodern world? How can the study of religious thinkers and contemplatives from different traditions inspire and inform one's spirituality? What is the nature of

divinity? How does one's God-image relate to one's self-understanding? What is the relationship between psychological individuation and spiritual awakening?

My early religious experience was influenced by my family. I was born in Detroit and while my mother was a devout Lutheran, my father, with an Irish Catholic heritage, was agnostic and not very interested in religious matters. My earliest memories of the divine were often overwhelming. I experienced an immense power and silent presence that evoked fear and aloneness. I felt that I could not communicate these experiences to my parents or anyone else, believing that I would not be understood or that the experiences would be disavowed. Later, when I studied religion as an undergraduate, I realized in retrospect that I had experienced the numinous as described in Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*. The numinous, he writes, is the *mysterium tremendum*—a tremendous mystery that evokes feelings of fear, urgency, and fascination.¹ My experiences were pervaded by the *tremendum* aspect, the fear and dread in the presence of the sacred that Otto characterized as "wholly other." Such an encounter, he says, entails "the emotion of a creature, submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures," and a primitive feeling of "daemonic dread."

During this period, while lying in bed at night, I also had experiences of imagining heaven, which for me was more a state of consciousness than a visual landscape. This initially felt peaceful and safe, but it invariably changed into a condition that was unsatisfying and constrained. Consequently, I would need to imagine another heaven beyond the one I was in until that heaven also felt like a bound condition. I continued imagining still further heavens with the same result. These imaginings ended with a strong sense that the peace I sought could only come by ceasing to exist. I understand now that this feeling was not a death wish, but rather an early intuition that egoic existence is incomplete and ultimately becomes wearisome (which no heaven can resolve) and is something from which one needs to be released. In the language of the Buddha, the separate sense of self or ego needs to be extinguished for one to enter the realm of real freedom and joy called nirvana.

My spiritual quest began in earnest when I decided to major in religion. I was an undergraduate at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, one of the first public universities to have a department of religion. I was fascinated by the traditions I was studying and longed to find a spiritual path I could practice. While taking a course on Hinduism, I learned from a classmate that weekly meditation sittings were held at the home of Dr. Robert Shafer, a professor of English and Asian classical literature. I showed up at his home the following week. I enjoyed my first experiences of meditation and the conversations that followed as we drank tea together. Robert would typically read a letter he had received from his guru, Sri Raushan Nath, a Hindu yogi and meditation master, who lived with his family as a householder in New Delhi, India. One evening early on, I was quite surprised to learn that Nath-ji, as we called him, whom I had never met and who could have known nothing about me, had commented on my character and my presence in the group.

Nath-ji visited Kalamazoo that summer, and I met him for the first time at a retreat. When Robert introduced us, Nath-ji referred to me as a "lost child." I did not know what he meant, and I was too shy to ask. I later learned that he saw me as a person who was not at home with the family and culture into which I was born. He also saw that I had a restless desire to experience God.

From Nath-ji I received an initiation called shaktipat, a transmission of spiritual energy from a guru to a devotee. He chanted Om and touched me on the forehead. I felt the effect a few weeks later while meditating with Robert, when I was suddenly pervaded by a blissful energy. The experience was formless, yet personal. The energy felt like boundless love and conferred the feeling that I was completely acceptable and at home in the universe.

Shaktipat also led to profound, transpersonal experiences with Robert. A few weeks later while talking, we were spontaneously enveloped by a presence that left us silent and transfixed. There was a flow of spiritual energy (non-erotic) between and around us, and we experienced a loving presence. Robert's face morphed many times as I gazed at him. In that moment, I felt as though I had known him for many lifetimes.

We refrained from trying to analyze the experience; we both acknowledged that it was precious and numinous, a gift—an experience of grace—that came to us unbidden. Robert understood it to be what Jewish theologian Martin Buber describes as an I-Thou encounter. That characterization fit for me and is how I continue to understand relational mysticism. In the weeks and months that followed, whenever I saw Robert this powerful experience would happen spontaneously. Since these experiences were catalyzed by eye contact, I viewed them as darshan, a Hindu word that means seeing and being simultaneously seen by the divine. Given the mutuality entailed in these encounters, I believe we saw a divinity within one another that included—yet transcended—both of us. These experiences changed my relationship to the divine. Whereas my childhood encounters with the numinous evoked feelings of fear and estrangement, my experience of bliss in meditation and the I-Thou experiences with Robert were characterized by love, belonging, and wonder.

To continue my academic study of religion, I moved to California. At Claremont Graduate School I was a research assistant to Arabinda Basu, a visiting scholar from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, India. Basu, a direct disciple of Sri Aurobindo and his spiritual collaborator called The Mother (Mirra Alfassa), was the Director of the Sri Aurobindo Research Academy located at the ashram. The Center for Process Studies was scheduled to host a conference on Whitehead and Vedanta later in the year. My role was to work one-on-one with Basu and help him prepare his paper for the conference. Due to a problem with his vision, Basu had difficulty writing and typing. We met several times a week that year, and I served as his scribe. I marveled at how he dictated the paper in eloquent sentences that rarely needed revision. He worked without notes or texts and picked up effortlessly where he had left off during preceding sessions. A good deal of our work together entailed sidebar conversations about philosophy and spirituality. These discussions were precious to me and akin to the tradition of the Upanishads where students sit close to the teacher and receive instruction via intimate dialogue. From Basu I received a transmission of Sri Aurobindo's teachings that have deeply informed my views regarding the nature of divinity and my

contemplative practice. The epigraph of Aurobindo's magnum opus, "All life is yoga," conveys the essence of his world-affirming, evolutionary mysticism that locates the divine in the world and in the body.

My year at Claremont was rich, but the school was not a good fit for me. Although I was enrolled in a department of religion, the School of Theology, which was a separate institution, was setting the agenda for my program as well. While I had respect for the liberal version of theology taught at Claremont (the leading-edge place to study process theology, based on the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne), I was uncomfortable with the Christian context of these studies; instead, I longed to study with scholars who were specialists in Hindu traditions and the comparative philosophy of religion. I decided to enroll at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where I had the opportunity to study with Raimundo Panikkar, Gerald Larson, and Ninian Smart. Panikkar had recently published the *Vedic Experience*, an extensive commentary on the Vedas, as well as *Intrareligious Dialogue*, a book that advocated entering deeply into religious traditions to understand them. Larson had established himself as one of the foremost scholars of yoga and Indian philosophy. Smart, a leading-edge philosopher of religion, was largely responsible for establishing the field of religious studies in the United Kingdom. Deeply conversant with Hindu and Buddhist thought, he broadened the scope of traditional philosophy of religion by grounding it in the history of religions rather than limiting it to Christian theology. He characterized his comparative approach as the study of worldviews. In my dissertation, *Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*, I utilized his comparative approach to analyze Christian and Hindu religious thought. My own beliefs and practices, however, were undisclosed or bracketed, exemplifying the stance of an objective scholar.

Writing my dissertation was difficult, more for personal than academic reasons. I became stuck, like Sisyphus pushing his boulder up a mountain. Simultaneously, my first marriage was coming apart, and I sought help through marriage counseling. Later, my first experience of individual psychotherapy entailed a descent into melancholy. Completing my doctorate while grieving my

divorce was a complex experience of death and rebirth. After navigating this transition, I remarried and experienced a new zest for life. I obtained a core faculty position at Pacifica Graduate Institute in a newly formed, interdisciplinary doctoral program in mythological studies that conjoins the study of religious traditions, literature, and depth psychology. For more than twenty years, I have taught courses on Hindu and Buddhist traditions and evolving God-images from the perspective of an "engaged scholar." In other words, instead of the bracketing required by my doctoral studies, I actively practice the traditions I teach. This stance aligns with the depth psychological ethos of Pacifica where the study of one's subjectivity, particularly the unconscious factors that shape and condition one's life, is of central importance. In this context, congruent with my own belief that each person must fashion a path to wholeness, C. G. Jung's concept of individuation—that unending process in which, as much as humanly possible, one gradually integrates the different and often fragmentary aspects of one's life—can be viewed as akin to a religious vocation.

Adjusting to the demands of my new position at Pacifica was challenging. Engaging in Jungian analysis helped with the transition and enabled me to better understand the depth psychological ideas taught at the institute. When my dreams signaled that the analysis was coming to an end, I felt compelled to revivify my meditation practice. I joined the local Siddha Yoga Meditation Center and made the first of several trips to the Shree Muktananda Ashram in the Catskills. On the first occasion, I received shaktipat from Gurumayi Chidvilasananda, the current guru of the lineage who succeeded Swami Muktananda. Muktananda transmitted the teachings of Siddha Yoga to the West.

For my first sabbatical, I traveled to India and made a pilgrimage to the places associated with the lineages of my spiritual teachers. I had dreams that foreshadowed the journey's significance for me. In one, I saw my face morph as I gazed into a bathroom mirror. Within the dream, I consulted an analyst who informed me that I would be another person when I returned. In a second dream, I encountered a giant Ganesha, the elephant-headed deity, and felt an intense influx of energy as he slowly extended his trunk towards my face. I

placed my hands in the Namaste gesture and pronounced a mantra, "Om Ganesha," as the presence of this figure began to feel overwhelming. These dreams intimated that I was in the midst of a transformation of self-understanding. I visited the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville in Pondicherry; lived in Nath-ji's household in New Delhi and participated in an annual festival in Jammu where he and his master's samadhi shrines are located; and spent several weeks at Gurudev Siddha Peeth in Ganeshpuri, the mother ashram for Siddha Yoga. I also traveled to the ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi, a great twentieth-century Vedantic sage, and made a pilgrimage to Vaishno Devi, a goddess temple at the apex of a mountain in north India, where I made offerings to Lakshmi, Sarasvati, and Kali.

My first journey to India felt like a homecoming. My wife and I were graciously hosted by Nath-ji's family, and I was deeply touched by the warmth and generosity of the Indian people. I experienced the silent, luminous presence of the divine at many places: the tombs of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother; Sri Aurobindo's bedroom; the room where Ramana Maharshi had given darshan to devotees; and at the shrines for Nath-ji and his master. While I had long felt a deep affinity to Hinduism, my first sojourn to India confirmed that I am a Hindu, a Western yogi who feels deeply connected to several lineages of contemplative yoga.

The culminating event of my second sabbatical in India was a twenty-one day silent retreat at Gurudev Siddha Peeth. Upon its completion, I felt complete contentment with my life. Ironically, I soon experienced what Jung calls an enantiodromia, a situation that turns into its opposite. Once I returned home and resumed my meditation practice, I was repeatedly flooded with erotic energy so powerful that I could not contain it. Subsequently, I succumbed to a tryst with a friend that could have destroyed my marriage. The chaos that ensued was the opposite of contentment. In Jungian terms, I experienced an inflation and, unable to integrate the spiritual energy generated by the retreat, I projected it onto another and was forced to grapple with the consequences. While the meditation retreat was a peak experience, the therapeutic work that followed was a descent into the underworld. Through a second round of analysis, I retrieved the energy and qualities I had

projected, and I was able to restore trust in my marriage. A dream revealed that the therapeutic work was complete. Henceforth, I engaged my sadhana, or spiritual practice, and my life in a more grounded and less naïve manner. By working through the inflation, I came to understand that the integration of masculine and feminine energies of the psyche, the alchemical coniunctio, must occur primarily within one's being.

My eight years of affiliation with Siddha Yoga were truly edifying. Weekly satsangs with fellow practitioners, weekend meditation intensives, and week-long retreats offered great support for my sadhana. I particularly loved the devotional chanting that is a core practice. During that period, I also deepened my understanding of yoga philosophy, especially the tantric teachings and practices of Kashmir Shaivism. After Gurumayi Chidvilasananda withdrew from public teaching, I established relationships with groups and Western Hindu teachers who belong to the lineage of Bhagavan Nityananda and Swami Muktananda. I studied with Swami Shankarananda, a former Siddha Yoga teacher, and visited his ashram in Australia several times, where my practice of his original form of Self-inquiry was enhanced. Along the way I also participated in a series of local Santa Barbara retreats led by B. Alan Wallace, scholar-practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism; while these deepened my meditation practice, they confirmed this realization: that my sensibility is deeply Hindu. Hinduism is the tradition in which I feel most at home.

Currently my teachers include several Western Hindu yogis. I receive spiritual direction from world-class spiritual teacher Sally Kempton, formerly a Siddha Yoga swami, who infuses meditation with contemplative practices that engage the archetypal energies of the Hindu goddesses of yoga. I sit regularly with meditation master Mark Griffin, a disciple of Swami Muktananda, and his sangha at the Hard Light Center of Awakening near Los Angeles.

I have been initiated into Neelakantha Meditation and study nondual Shaiva Tantra with Paul Muller-Ortega, a direct disciple of both Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Gurumayi Chidvilasananda. He is a world-renowned scholar-practitioner of the

philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism and the founder of Blue Throat Yoga.

I align with the Vajrayana Buddhist perspective that distinguishes between a practitioner's root guru and other teachers as one's sadhana unfolds. The Vajrayana tradition also speaks of the outer, inner, and secret guru. The outer guru initiates a person's practice and helps one establish a connection with the inner, archetypal guru. One may also receive periodic empowerments from outer gurus. The relationship to the inner guru may be cultivated through a devotion practice called deity yoga. Ultimately, one experiences the secret guru that is the luminosity of one's true nature. Viewed in this way, Nath ji, who initiated my practice of contemplative yoga, was my root guru. Subsequent teachers have helped me refine particular aspects of my spirituality: meditation, contemplation, Self-inquiry, textual study, and devotional practices. (In this light, my Jungian analyst could be considered a kind of outer guru who helped me investigate my emotional complexes, dreams, shadow material, and relationship issues.) While the need for a guru is often debated among Western contemplative yogis, I personally have found the guidance of gurus to be essential.

In the first chapter, I examine how our worldviews are shaped by the zeitgeist, the spirit of the times in which we live. While we live in a secular age, in the wake of the death of God in the West, religion persists, as does our longing for a spirituality that gives our lives meaning and purpose. I assert that recovering spirituality involves cultivating a more inclusive mode of consciousness that embraces traditional/religious, modern/secular, and postmodern/pluralistic modes of being and knowing. Chapter 2 investigates the challenges posed by religious pluralism. Can more than one religion be true? Can I practice more than one? I also explore the relationship between religion, spirituality, and myth and view faith as a developmental process. Chapters 3 through 5 reveal ways in which exemplary Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists address these challenges, offering ways of envisioning ultimate reality and of engendering harmony among those who practice particular religions. Chapter 6 considers how C. G. Jung's depth psychology can function as a psychological mode of spirituality. Attention is given to Jungian perspectives concerning

individuation, God-images, the divine feminine, and the chakra symbolism of kundalini yoga. Chapter 7 elucidates forms of contemplative yoga spirituality that have been effectively transmitted to the West, while Chapter 8 presents seminal ideas from the Integral Theory of Ken Wilber and the Diamond Approach of A. H. Almaas, two pioneering exemplars of contemporary spirituality who integrate spiritual awakening and psychological development. In the final chapter, I discuss my credo and the practices that comprise my form of integrative spirituality.

While this book is written for a general audience, it contains a number of specialized terms associated with particular religions. For instance, Chapters 4 (Hinduism) and 7 (Contemplative Yoga) contain many Sanskrit terms. To make the text more user-friendly, I have avoided diacritical marks, italicizing the transliterated terms except for words such as karma, yoga, and nirvana, which are now commonly used in English discourse. Similarly, I have italicized Christian and Buddhist words that convey meanings essential to these traditions. Hindu tradition and Jungian psychology both use the word Self (upper case) though the meanings are somewhat different in these respective modes of thought. The Self, for Hindus, refers to the true nature of a human being, said to be the birthless/deathless witness of all experience. For Jung and Jungians, the Self refers to the regulating center of the psyche that includes ego awareness and the unconscious, also described as the archetype of wholeness. In both cases, the Self is distinct from the ego or personality. Although the translators of The Collected Works of C. G. Jung allow the context to determine when self refers to the ego personality and when it refers to the archetype, I follow the convention of many contemporary writers who use upper case to clearly distinguish the archetype of wholeness from the ego.

My heartfelt wish is that this book will deeply inform and empower your unique path of spirituality. May your journey to psychological wholeness and spiritual awakening be a path with a heart—one that benefits not only yourself but all sentient beings.

Credo

I offer salutations to the God and the Goddess:

the infinite parents of the world.
 The lover, out of boundless love, has
 become the beloved.
 Because of Her, He exists
 And without Him, She would not be.
 Jnaneshwar Maharaj

I present an array of perspectives—from the religious thought of three traditions, and from Jungian depth psychology, contemplative yoga, Integral Theory, and the Diamond Approach—to glean insights that I believe are useful for those who wish to craft their individual paths to wholeness and awakening. Yet, spirituality is a matter of direct experience, and is, therefore, inherently personal. Each of us, I have maintained, must find our own way. While our ideas, insights, and practices are most alive when they remain open to change, it is important to know where one stands as the process of individuation and awakening unfolds. In the Introduction, I recounted some of the experiences that impelled my own spiritual quest. Here in this final chapter, I share my credo and the contours of my integrative practice with the hope that it may inspire you to clarify your own faith convictions and to engage in forms of inner work that align with what the spirit of the depths calls you to do and to be.

The word credo may lead us to think of creedal statements or articles of belief we must affirm to be a member of a religion. My discussion of faith and belief in Chapter 2, however, clarified that belief originally meant "to love" and "to hold dear." Recalling this meaning, credo, or "I believe," means I commit myself or I engage myself. And faith, we have seen, pertains to how we orient ourselves and interpret reality and, at a practical level, is about doing things that engender love and compassion toward others. William James expresses this pragmatic stance in his classic work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, where he notes the intimate connection between how we see the world and how we act in it. He argues, as I have in this book, that the visible world is but a part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its significance, and that union or harmonious relationship to that vaster, nonmaterial domain is the true aim of our existence. Through prayer or other forms of inner communion with that world, spiritual energy flows in and produces psychological and material effects within the phenomenal world. How we understand that which is beyond, yet continuous with, our higher

nature is a matter of what he calls over-beliefs. Over-beliefs elude empirical proof but are the ideas that one finds most persuasive for understanding life's ultimate questions and for deciding how to act in the world. James expresses his own over-belief in God or the divine, asserting the hypothesis that by opening ourselves to it we not only fulfill our deepest destiny, but the universe takes a turn, for the worse or for the better, to the extent that we fulfill that destiny.

View

In the Indian traditions, the first and most important step on the spiritual path is getting oriented to the View (darshana) of the path you will walk. Recall that darshana means worldview, vision of reality, and way of seeing. View, then, serves as an understanding of reality that inspires and supports the efficacy of spiritual practice; the term is analogous to the Western notion of credo and James's over-beliefs. While I accept all forms of contemplative yoga presented in Chapter 7, I align most closely with the nondual, tantric Shaiva theology of Kashmir Shaivism, referred to here as Shaiva Tantra.

I regard God as the creative energy that underlies, animates, and sustains all existence. God is the ground of all being, the source of all that is, and the power that sustains and regenerates the universe. I am a panentheist. Panentheism is formed by inserting en, which means "in," to pantheism. While pantheism affirms that all is God, panentheism means that God is in the world but not that the world is God. In other words, God is transcendent and formless and fully immanent in the myriad manifestations of divinity that comprise the world. As Judith Plaskow explains, God is more than the totality of creation while including and unifying creation. Panentheists affirm that, "Despite the fractured, scattered, and conflicted nature of our experience of both the world and ourselves, there is a unity that embraces and contains our diversity and that connects all things to each other." Though Plaskow is Jewish, this statement expresses the essence of the Hindu conception of divinity. The world, for Hindus, is a unity-in-diversity, and is exemplified in the nondual Shaiva Tantra vision of reality rendered by scholar-practitioner Christopher Wallis, which I paraphrase below:

All that exists is one infinite divine Consciousness, free and blissful, which projects within the field of its awareness a vast multiplicity of apparently differentiated subjects and objects. Each object is an actualization of a timeless potentiality inherent in the Light of Consciousness, and each subject is that plus a reflexive movement of self-awareness. Creation is a divine play, the result of a natural impulse within the divine to express the totality of its self-knowledge in action. This is a purely voluntary movement of the universal into the particular. Infinite Consciousness contracts into multiple finite embodied loci of awareness out of its own free will.

When finite subjects identify with the limited and circumscribed cognitions that make up this phase of their existence, instead of identifying with the trans-individual overarching pulsation of pure Awareness that is their true essence-nature, they experience existential suffering. To rectify the suffering, we may feel an inner urge to take up the path of spiritual gnosis and yogic practice to undermine our misidentification and to trigger a recognition that one's real identity is that of the highest divinity, the All-in-all. This experiential gnosis is repeated and reinforced through various means until it becomes the non-conceptual ground of every moment of experience. Through such contemplative practice, our contracted sense of self and separation from the whole are finally annihilated in the incandescent radiance of the complete expansion into integrated wholeness.

This View, for me, is a joyous cosmology to which I give my heart's full consent. To be sure, suffering is an integral part of the picture. But the good news is that suffering can be ameliorated through diligent practice, and the salutary results reveal the grandeur and splendor of our true nature and the divinity that inheres in the world. The French philosopher Blaise Pascal, a Christian, formulated a famous wager. He proposed that humans all bet with their lives whether God exists or not. Expressed in its most succinct form: If one bets that God does exist, and he does, you win everything, to lose, you lose nothing. Should one bet that God does not exist, and win, you win nothing, but to

lose? You lose everything. While I don't accept the Christian premise, the point is well taken. I wager that by engaging in inner work, especially contemplative yoga, I gain the opportunity to transform the suffering that arises from the unconscious and my habitual behavior into a more conscious—potentially enlightened—mode of being that is personally fulfilling and beneficial to others. If the cosmology and over-beliefs I hold are not accurate, I may flourish nevertheless. Conversely, if I do not engage in inner work, I may forfeit opportunities to reduce my suffering and to benefit others irrespective of whether or not the divine exists in the way I envision it. Therefore, I engage in sadhana with enthusiasm and joy!

I also embrace nondual Shaiva Tantra because it enables me to view God as both formless and with form and to personify the divine as both masculine and feminine. The God-image of Shaiva Tantra is Shiva-Shakti, a singularity that is comprised of Consciousness (Shiva) and Creative Energy (Shakti). Hinduism, one might say, is polymorphously perverse; I revel in its diverse ways of imaging and relating to the divine! As the description of my practice below reveals, I engage the divine in multiple ways that enliven and actualize different aspects of my being.

Integrative practice

Whether a practice is daily or occasional, the aim is to cultivate balance, integration, peace within, and harmonious relationships with others. Here I share the array of practices that address the somatic, psychological, interpersonal, and spiritual aspects of my life.

Somatic practices

My daily sadhana begins in the morning with an Integral Life Practice (ILP) called the 3-Body Workout that attunes me to the causal, subtle, and physical bodies. Standing and breathing naturally, I notice the suchness, the is-ness of the present moment. Silently I affirm to myself, "I am this suchness in which all things arise." The palms of my hands are together at the heart and then crossed over the chest. With the last exhale, I release into the spacious, formless source of my being. Next, I move my arms in a sweeping, circular motion for several rounds and nourish the subtle, energetic body by breathing into the fullness of life; breathing out, I return to the source of vital energy

that animates life. Finally, I touch my belly and silently affirm, "Infinite freedom and fullness appear in my precious human body"; I touch the earth declaring that "I am connected to all beings." I complete the practice, bowing in the four directions, with a silent dedication—"May my consciousness and all my behavior be of service to all beings, liberating all into the suchness of this and every moment." I follow with twenty minutes of hatha yoga asanas. In the late afternoon, I alternate aerobic exercise with yin yoga classes to alleviate the stress of the day and to stay physically fit. Yin Yoga consists of holding select poses for five to seven minutes and surrendering to gravity in a gentle fashion that increases somatic awareness and flexibility in the joints.

Contemplative reading

After morning exercise, I engage in contemplative reading for a half-hour while drinking tea. Over the years, I have slowly read and re-read books from different traditions that inspire my spiritual practice. Some of the works include classic contemplative texts like the Upanishads, Dhammapada, Tao Te Ching, Bhagavad Gita, and St. Teresa of Avila's *The Interior Castle*. Other reading, by psychological writers, include works such as *The Red Book: Liber Novus* by Jung, Wilber's *The Religion of Tomorrow: A Vision for the Future of the Great Traditions*, and Almaas's *The Inner Journey Home: Soul's Realization of the Unity of Reality*.

I also engage in more formal study of scriptural and yogic texts with spiritual teachers who are steeped in the traditions that inform my practice. I have studied the *Yoga Sutras* and *Pratyabhijnahridayam* (Heart of Recognition) with Christopher Wallis, the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Spanda Karikas* with Sally Kempton, and the *Shiva Sutras* and *Abhinavagupta's Tantraloka* with Paul Muller-Ortega. I agree with these scholar-practitioners who maintain that yoga sadhana is most efficacious when knowledge obtained through intellectual study is conjoined with the wisdom that arises from experiential practice.

Puja

The Hindu word for worship is puja. When I first started meditating in my early twenties, I had little interest in ritual or prayer. I proceeded directly to meditation, first chanting Om in the manner of my

teacher, until the chant dissolved into silence. Later in my early forties, after joining the faculty at Pacifica Graduate Institute, I felt a desire to pray, but was unsure how to begin or whether it was even a possibility for me. Engaging in a willful suspension of disbelief, I tried an experiment—I put aside the question of whether there was a being or beings who could hear me; instead, I assumed a creative attitude, believing that prayer could be viewed as an imaginal activity that evoked the energies and qualities in my unconscious. Within a few weeks I not only felt comfortable doing this, but also began with relative ease to create a personal liturgy that has evolved and changed over time. My liturgy, which includes invocations to great beings and spiritual teachers, has kindled my devotion and is a core element of my practice. In this way, I cultivate a second person, I-Thou relationship to the divine. In recent years, I have focused on the divine feminine, personified by the Hindu goddesses of yoga, as expressed in my daily puja described below:

I cut a fresh flower from the garden each morning and place it on my puja table or altar. I chant Om three times and quietly chant in Sanskrit a prayer to Shiva (rendered in English):

You are my Self. Parvati [Shiva's consort] is my reason.

My five pranas are Your attendants, my body is Your house, and all the pleasures of my senses are objects for Your worship.

My sleep is Your state of samadhi. Wherever I walk, I am walking around You.

Everything I say is in praise of You. Everything I do is in devotion to You, O benevolent Lord.

I light a candle, place it on a tray, and wave it before the objects and images on my puja. This practice, called arati in Hindu tradition, is performed in India by priests in the temples and by householders in their homes.

My liturgy continues with invocations, including the bija (seed) mantras, which invite the divine into my life while activating archetypal energies in my psyche. Bija mantras are concise syllables that evoke the energetics of deities represented below in bold font with diacritical marks for the long vowel sound. Because they are most potent when

pronounced as precisely as possible, they are best learned from a practiced teacher. I learned these mantras from Sally Kempton, one of my primary teachers, in her Wisdom Goddess Empowerment courses. She has written a splendid book, [Awakening Shakti](#), on the transformative power of the goddesses of yoga.'

O Ganesha, salutations you. I seek your blessings. Remove the obstacles that impede my sadhana and that block the flow of divine creativity and spontaneity in my life.

Om gum ganapatayai namaha
O Shiva, salutations to you. I seek your blessings and take refuge in you. By the closing and opening of your eyes the world is absorbed and comes into being. Empower my sadhana, deepen my meditation, and establish my awareness in the Heart.

Om namah shivaya
Ma, salutations to you. I seek your blessing and take refuge in you. Descend into my body-mind and awaken in my body-mind. I invoke you as Kali to experience liberation from kleshas, malas, samskaras, vasanas, complexes, and karmas that bind my existence so that I may realize the freedom and bliss inherent in my true nature.

Om aim hrīm klīm chamundaye viche svaha
O Ma, I invoke you as Saraswati to expand wisdom and to receive inspiration for my teaching, writing, and all forms of communication.

Om aim saraswatyai namaha
Ma, I invoke you as Bhuvaneshwari to experience and express the spacious, loving awareness in which all things arise, are supported and held, and into which they dissolve.

Om hrīm bhuvaneshwarayai namaha
O Ma, I invoke you as Lalita Tripur Sundari to perceive life and the world as a play of Consciousness and to experience and express divine Eros.

O aim hrīm shrīm lalita ambikayai namaha
O Ma, I invoke you as Sri Lakshmi to experience and express beauty and abundance.

Om shrīm maha lakshmyai namaha
Ma, I invoke you as Kundalini Shakti to experience and express the power of

awakening in, as, and through this body-mind.

Om aim hrīm shrīm krīm namaha
Sri Guru, salutations to you. Lead me from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from samsara to freedom. Salutations to all enlightened beings, gurus, and teachers who support my journey to wholeness and awakening.

Chanting and svadhyaya

I have also cultivated the affective aspect of sadhana through kirtan, the devotional group chanting of the names of divinities in a call and response manner, a practice common among Hindus, especially in bhakti traditions. Siddha Yoga, for instance, includes kirtan as a core practice, one that I thoroughly enjoy. Cultivating devotion in this way engages my emotions, kindles longing for the divine, and deepens my capacity to feel love for others; it also makes it easy to glide into meditation. Svadhyaya, the chanting of texts, focuses more on internalizing the meaning of scriptures, though it can also be done as a prelude to meditation. Hindu traditions regard the chanting of texts as study of the Self. While kirtan engages affect, svadhyaya focuses more on the cultivation of self-knowledge (jnana). I have found both practices to be edifying and regard them as essential, complementary elements of my sadhana.

Mantra and japa

Hindu traditions place great emphasis on mantra, or sacred sounds that attune one to the divine. My personal liturgy includes bija or seed mantras to invoke different aspects of the divine feminine, and I also use Om namah shivaya and the heart-seed mantra I received from my meditation teachers to invoke the divinity that dwells within me. In the nondual tradition of Shaiva Tantra, Shiva is not an anthropomorphic deity but pure Consciousness, the formless Self from which all forms take shape; thus, Om namah shivaya means "I bow to the Self," an understanding expressed in Swami Muktananda's signature teaching:

Honor your own Self.
Meditate on your own Self.
Worship your own Self.
Kneel to your own Self.
Understand your own Self.
Your God dwells within you as you.

During the day, I often practice japa, repetition of a mantra, to turn my mind toward the divine and to ease stress or break free from troubling thoughts that feel unproductive or are likely to lead to unskillful action. Typically I do japa while walking or while easing into sleep.

Meditation

While devotional practices are intrinsically valuable, I engage them as preparation for meditation, which I regard as the royal path to spiritual awakening. The attitudes and feelings engendered by devotional practices ease the entry into silent meditation. For each hourly session, I set a timer so I can forget about tracking time and use a mantra until it dissolves into a state that is relatively free of thoughts and emotions. When thoughts and feelings do arise, I merely witness them; if necessary, I return to silent repetition of the mantra until I am able once again to settle into the simple feeling of being. When the timer chimes to signal the end of the sitting, I pray that I may integrate the meditation for the benefit of all.

Self-Inquiry and Bhavana

Self-inquiry is essential to my practice in two respects. At the most practical level, it is a way to become aware of unconscious feelings that block awareness and that impede conscious functioning. While journaling about troubling matters serves this purpose, I also use a form of Self-inquiry called Shiva Process that I learned from Swami Shankarananda. Inquiry, he explains, asks us to be present and to investigate present experience. The basic practice is to make A-statements, accurate statements of present feeling.

I feel afraid.
I feel angry.
I'm bored.
I want ...
I feel depressed.
I feel hopeless.
I feel peaceful.
I feel happy.
I feel energized.

Though this process is simple to perform, it has powerful effects. It has enabled me to be much more conscious of my inner world, to dissolve confusion that impedes decisions, and has allowed me to respond rather than react to troubling

interpersonal situations. It has also greatly enhanced my creativity energy.

At a deeper level, Self-inquiry is integral to jnana yoga, the path of knowledge. Ramana Maharshi taught inquiry in the form of the question "Who am I?" This question is to be brooded over, like a Zen koan, rather than repeated like a mantra. Shankarananda's Shiva Process entails another form of such inquiry in the form of G-statements (great or God statements), such as, "I am the Self." G-statements include great sayings of the Upanishads such as "That Thou Art" (tat team asi) and the 112 bhavanas or contemplations contained in the Vijnana Bhairava Tantra, a core text of Shaiva Tantra. I find these particularly beautiful, ecstatic, and inspiring since they focus on both somatic and aesthetic experience as well as introverted meditative states. Moreover, they arise from a dialogue between Shiva and his beloved Goddess, two aspects of the singular divinity that personify the Shaiva Tantra vision of reality. These contemplations provide glimpses of awakening that can expand awareness gradually, evoke wonder, and synergistically inspire the practices we engage to cultivate an integrative spirituality.

Journaling

Keeping a journal functions as a form of self-inquiry and a way of metabolizing daily experience. I track important aspects of my life—dreams, physical health, emotions, marital dynamics, work, and spiritual practice. While narrative writing is mostly a form of witnessing life experiences, I also use it for active imagination dialogues that help me see issues from a less egocentric perspective. Writing about interpersonal conflicts enables me to attend to shadow material by identifying and investigating complexes that have been triggered and feelings I may be projecting onto others.

Council

Nath-ji, my root guru, was a householder yogi who extolled not only the Hindu ideals of Self-realization but also what he referred to as marriage realization. Like many of the great Shaiva Tantra masters, he regarded the sadhana of householder yogis to be as noble as the paths traversed by renunciates and monastics. Inspired by this ideal, I view marriage as relational yoga, an intimate relationship in which partners engage in

a mutual process of individuation and awakening. Naturally there are challenges and crises along the way. While my partner and I have on occasion engaged in marriage therapy to deal with particularly complex difficulties, we have consistently been able to deepen our connection and work through issues on our own by utilizing the practice of council. Derived from Native American tradition, council involves one person speaking for as long as they wish without interruption of any kind from the other. The partner who listens intentionally suspends grievances, reactions, defenses, questions, comments, and judgments and attempts to open to what needs to be understood; the partner who speaks can then be fully seen and completely heard. The experience of being keenly attended to is profound—relationship tensions soften and issues often resolve themselves when both partners learn to hold space for one another and lovingly work to understand the other's perspective.

Service

Central to the Hindu worldview is the idea of yagna, often translated as "sacrifice." The meaning in contemporary terms, however, is best rendered by the notions of exchange and service—"Gotta serve somebody," as Bob Dylan puts it. For Hindus the entire universe is a process of mutual sacrifice or exchange, wherein the elements sacrifice to each other, plants and animals sacrifice for humans, and parents for their children. In Hindu spirituality, yagna takes the form of seva, selfless service or karma yoga. "Selfless" action, in my view, means non-egocentric action that takes others into account and that is beneficial to them. We, in turn, benefit from the non-egocentric actions of others. I view my work as a professor—my relationships with students and colleagues—as karma yoga. Serving in the role of program chair for eighteen years provided me with ample opportunity to perform my work, as best I could, for the sake of others. I believe that a great deal of my psycho-spiritual development has resulted from navigating the needs of students and working through issues, including interpersonal conflicts, that arise in collegial relationships.

Retreat and pilgrimage

Daily practice is, I believe, the most essential element of spirituality. In addition, the efficacy of daily practice is greatly enhanced by periodic experiences of deep spiritual retreat. For the past

twenty-five years, I have engaged in full-day meditation intensives about six times a year as well as longer retreats. I have also made six pilgrimages to India to visit the home and sanctuary of Nath-ji; the ashrams of Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Swami Muktananda, Mark Griffin, and Meher Baba; and other sacred sites including Varanasi, Vaishno Devi in north India, and Kanyakumari at the southernmost location of the Indian subcontinent. As I pen the final pages of this book, I am anticipating my seventh sojourn to India. Once more, with a grateful heart, I will pay homage to the sages and places that have inspired my journey to wholeness and awakening.

In closing, I dedicate this book to my kindred travelers on the path to an integrative spirituality. I offer the heartfelt prayer I repeat each morning as I emerge from daily meditation.

May all beings be safe.
May all beings be free from suffering.
<>

[Science and Spiritual Practices: Transformative Experiences and Their Effects on Our Bodies, Brains, and Health](#) by Rupert Sheldrake
[Counterpoint, 9781640091177]

"I have personally adopted many of the practices Rupert describes in his book and experienced more love, joy, empathy, gratitude, and equanimity as a result. We are all indebted to Rupert, who has tirelessly brought us deep insights from both science and spirituality." —Deepak Chopra

The effects of spiritual practices are now being investigated scientifically as never before, and many studies have shown that religious and spiritual practices generally make people happier and healthier. In this pioneering book, Rupert Sheldrake shows how science helps validate seven practices on which many religions are built, and which are part of our common human heritage: meditation, gratitude, connecting with nature, relating to plants, rituals, singing and chanting, and pilgrimage and holy places.

Sheldrake summarizes the latest scientific research on what happens when we take part in these practices, and suggests ways that readers can explore these fields for themselves. For those who

are religious, Science and Spiritual Practices will illuminate the evolutionary origins of their own traditions and give a new appreciation of their power. For the nonreligious, this book will show how the core practices of spirituality are accessible to all.

This is a book for anyone who suspects that in the drive toward radical secularism, something valuable has been left behind. Rupert Sheldrake compellingly argues that by opening ourselves to the spiritual dimension, we may find the strength to live more fulfilling lives.

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Excerpt: This book is the result of a long journey through the realms of science, history, philosophy, spiritual practice, theology, and religion, as well as physical journeys through Britain and Ireland, continental Europe, North America, Malaysia, India, and other parts of the world. Science and spiritual practices have been part of my life since I was a child, and I have thought about the relationships between them in many different contexts.

I was born and grew up in Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire, a market town in the English Midlands. I had a fairly conventional Christian upbringing. My family was Methodist, and I went to an Anglican boarding school for boys.

From a very early age I was interested in plants and animals. I kept many kinds of animals at home. My father was an herbalist, microscopist, and

pharmacist, and he encouraged my interests. I wanted to be a biologist and I specialized in science at school. Then I went to Cambridge University, where I studied biology and biochemistry.

During my education, I realized that most of my science teachers were atheists and that they regarded atheism as normal. In England at that time, science and atheism went together. An atheist outlook seemed to be part of the scientific worldview, which I accepted.

When I was seventeen, in the gap between leaving school and going to university, I worked as a lab technician in the research laboratories of a pharmaceutical company. I wanted to have research experience. When I took the job, I did not know that I would be working in a vivisection facility. I wanted to be a biologist because I loved animals. But now I was working in a kind of death camp. None of the cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, mice, or day-old chicks that were used in the experiments ever left the lab alive. I experienced a great tension between my feelings for the animals and the scientific ideal of objectivity, which left no place for personal emotions.

After I expressed some of my doubts, my colleagues reminded me that this was all for the good of humanity; these animals were being sacrificed to save human lives. And they had an undeniable point. All of us benefit from modern medicines, and almost all of these drugs have been tested on animals first. It would be irresponsible and illegal to test untried, potentially toxic chemicals on humans. Humans have rights, so the argument goes. Laboratory animals have almost none. Most people implicitly support this system of animal sacrifice by benefiting from modern medicine.

Meanwhile, I read Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx, who reinforced my atheist views, and when I went to Cambridge as an undergraduate I joined the University Humanist Society. After going to a few meetings, I began to find them dull, and my curiosity took me elsewhere. The event that has stuck most in my mind was an address by the biologist Sir Julian Huxley, a leading light of the secular humanist movement. He argued that humans

should take control of their own evolution and improve the human race by eugenics, namely selective breeding.

He foresaw a new breed of genetically enhanced children, who would be fathered by artificial insemination using donated sperm. He enumerated the qualities that the sperm donors should have in order to create this uplift in humanity: They should be men who come from a long, scientific lineage, who have great personal achievements in science, and who have risen to a position of high esteem in public life. The ideal sperm donor turned out to be Sir Julian himself. I later learned that he practiced what he preached.

As an atheist and as a budding mechanistic biologist, I was expected to believe that the universe was essentially mechanical, that there was no ultimate purpose and no God, and that our minds were nothing but the activity of our brains. But I found all this a strain, particularly when I fell in love. I had a beautiful girlfriend, and in a phase of intense emotion, I was going to physiology lectures on hormones. I learned about testosterone, progesterone, and estrogen, and how they affected different parts of male and female bodies. But there was a huge gap between the experience of being in love and learning these chemical formulae.

I also became increasingly aware of the great gulf between my original inspiration—an interest in living plants and animals—and the kind of biology I was being taught. There was almost no connection between my direct experience of animals and plants and the way I was learning about them. In our laboratory classes, we killed the organisms we were studying, dissected them, and then separated their components into smaller and smaller bits, until we got down to the molecular level.

I felt that there was something radically wrong, but I could not identify the problem. Then a friend who was studying literature lent me a book on German philosophy containing an essay on the writings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the poet and botanist.¹ I discovered that Goethe, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had a vision of a different kind of science—a holistic science that integrated direct experience and understanding. It

did not involve breaking everything down into pieces and denying the evidence of one's senses.

The idea that science could be different filled me with hope. I wanted to be a scientist. But I did not want to plunge straight into a career of research, which my teachers assumed I would do. I wanted to take some time out to look at a bigger picture. I was fortunate to be awarded a Frank Knox Memorial Fellowship at Harvard and, after graduating from Cambridge, I spent a year there (1963-4) studying philosophy and the history of science.

Thomas Kuhn's book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* had recently come out, and it made me realize that the mechanistic theory of nature was what Kuhn called a "paradigm"—a collectively held model of reality, a belief system. Kuhn showed that periods of revolutionary change in science involved the replacement of old scientific models of reality with new ones. If science had changed radically in the past, then perhaps it could change again in the future—an exciting possibility.

I returned to Cambridge in England to work on plants. I did not want to work on animals, my original intention, because I did not want to spend my life killing them. I did a PhD on how plants make the hormone auxin, which stimulates the growth of stems, the formation of wood, and the production of roots. The hormone powder that gardeners use to promote the rooting of cuttings contains a synthetic form of auxin. I then continued with research on plant development as a fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, and a research fellow of the Royal Society, which gave me tremendous freedom. For that, I am very grateful.

During this period, I became a member of a group called the Epiphany Philosophers, based in Cambridge.² This group was an unlikely confluence of quantum physicists, mystics, Buddhists, Quakers, Anglicans, and philosophers, including Richard Braithwaite, who was a professor of philosophy at Cambridge and a leading philosopher of science; his wife, Margaret Masterman, director of the Cambridge Language Research Unit and a pioneer of artificial intelligence; and Dorothy Emmet, a professor of philosophy at Manchester University who had studied with the philosopher Alfred North

Whitehead. Four times a year, we lived as a community in a windmill on the Norfolk coast, in Burnham Overy Staithe, for a week at a time. We had discussions about physics, biology, alternative medicine, acupuncture, psychic research, quantum theory, the nature of language, and the philosophy of science. No idea was banned.

During this seven-year period, I was free to do whatever research I liked, wherever I liked. Funded by the Royal Society, I went to Malaysia for a year, because I wanted to study rainforest plants. I was based in the botany department of the University of Malaya, near Kuala Lumpur. On the way there, in 1968, I traveled through India and Sri Lanka for several months, and it was a major eye-opener. I found that there were totally different ways of looking at the world for which nothing in my education had prepared me.

When I returned to Cambridge, I continued with my research on plant development. In particular, I focused on the way the hormone auxin is transported from leaves and stems toward root tips, changing the plant as it flows through. Although this work was very successful, I became more and more convinced that the mechanistic approach was incapable of giving an adequate understanding of the development of form. There had to be top-down organizing principles, not solely bottom-up ones.

An architectural analogy for a top-down principle would be the plan of a building as a whole. A bottom-up explanation would concern itself with the chemistry and physical properties of the bricks, the adhesive properties of the mortar, the stresses in the walls, the currents in the electric wiring, and so on. All these physical and chemical factors are important for understanding the properties of the building, but by themselves they cannot explain its shape, design, and function.

For these reasons, I became interested in the idea of biological fields, also known as morphogenetic or form-shaping fields, which were first proposed in the 1920s. The concept suggests that the shape of a leaf is not only determined by genes inside its cells that enable them to make particular protein molecules, but also by a leaf-shaping field, a kind of invisible plan or mold—or attractor—for the

leaf. This is different for oak leaves, rose leaves, and bamboo leaves, even though they all have the same auxin molecules and the same kind of polar auxin transport system, moving auxin in one direction only, from the shoots toward the root tips and not in the opposite direction.

While I was thinking about how morphogenetic fields might be inherited, a new idea occurred to me: There might be a kind of memory in nature creating direct connections across time, from past to present organisms, providing each species with a kind of collective memory of form and behavior. I called this hypothetical transfer of memory "morphic resonance." But I soon realized that this was a highly controversial proposal, and that I would not be able to publish it until I had thought about it much more thoroughly and looked for evidence, a process that might take years.

At the same time, I became increasingly interested in exploring consciousness through psychedelic experiences, which convinced me that minds were vastly greater than anything I had been told about in my scientific education.

In 1971, I learned Transcendental Meditation, because I wanted to be able to explore consciousness without drugs. At the Transcendental Meditation center in Cambridge, there was no need to accept any religious beliefs. The instructors presented the process as entirely physiological. That was fine by me; it worked, I was happy doing it, and I did not need to believe in anything beyond my own brain. I was still an atheist, and I was pleased to find a spiritual practice that agreed with a scientific worldview and did not require religion.

I was increasingly intrigued by Hindu philosophy and yoga, and in 1974 I had a chance to go and work in India at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), near Hyderabad, where I became the principal plant physiologist. I did research on chickpeas and pigeon peas and was part of a team breeding better varieties with higher yields and greater resistance to drought, pests, and diseases.

I loved being in India and spent some of my spare time visiting temples and ashrams and going to discourses by gurus. I also had a Sufi teacher in

Hyderabad, Agha Hassan Hyderi. He gave me a Sufi mantra, a wazifa, and for about a year I did a Sufi form of meditation. One of the things I learned from him was that in the Sufi tradition, pleasure is God-given. His religion was not puritanical or ascetic. He wore wonderful brocade robes, was a connoisseur of perfumes, and sat running his fingers through a bowl of jasmine blossoms as he recited poetry in Urdu and Persian. I had always associated religion with a denial of pleasure, but Agha's attitude was completely different.

Then a new thought crossed my mind: What about Christianity? Since my teenage conversion to atheism and secular humanism, I had not given it much thought, even though the Epiphany Philosophers was a Christian group; we chanted psalms together in plainsong every morning and evening at the windmill.

When I asked a Hindu guru for his advice on my spiritual journey, he said, "All paths lead to God. You come from a Christian family and you should follow a Christian path." The more I thought about it, the more sense it made. The holy places of Hinduism are in India or nearby, like Mount Kailash. The holy places of Britain are in Britain, and most of them are Christian. My ancestors were Christian for many centuries; they were born, married, and died within the Christian tradition, including my parents.

I began to say the Lord's Prayer, and I started going to the Anglican Saint John's church in Secunderabad. I rediscovered Christian faith. After a while, at the age of thirty-four, I was confirmed in the Church of South India, an ecumenical church formed by the coming together of Anglicans and Methodists. I had not been confirmed at school, unlike most of the other boys.

I still felt a huge tension between Hindu wisdom, which I found to be so deep, and the Christian tradition, which by comparison seemed spiritually shallow. Then, through a friend, I discovered a wonderful teacher, Father Bede Griffiths, who lived in a Christian ashram in Tamil Nadu, in the south of India. He was a British Benedictine monk who had been in India for more than twenty years.

He introduced me to the Christian mystical tradition, about which I knew very little, and to medieval Christian philosophy, particularly the works of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Bonaventure. Their insights seemed deeper than anything I had heard about in sermons and churches or in universities. Father Bede also had a profound understanding of Indian philosophy and gave regular discourses on the Upanishads, which contain many of the core ideas of Hindu thought. He showed how Eastern and Western philosophical and religious traditions could illuminate each other.

While I was working at ICRISAT, I continued to think about morphic resonance, and after more than four years, I was ready to take some time off to write about it. I wanted to stay in India to do this, and Father Bede provided the perfect solution by inviting me to live in his ashram, Shantivanam, on the banks of the sacred Cauvery River.

Father Bede's ashram combined many aspects of Indian culture with Christian tradition. We ate vegetarian food off banana leaves while sitting on the floor; there was yoga every morning, and one-hour periods of meditation in the morning and the evening. I usually meditated in the shade of some trees on the riverbank. The mass in the morning started with the chanting of the Gayatri mantra, a Sanskrit mantra invoking the divine power that shines through the sun. I asked Father Bede, "How can you chant a Hindu mantra in a Catholic ashram?" He replied, "Precisely because it's catholic. Catholic means universal. If it excludes anything that is a path to God, it's not catholic, but just a sect."

I stayed there for a year and a half, from 1978-9, living in a palm leaf—thatched hut under a banyan tree where I wrote my book *A New Science of Life*. I then went back to work at ICRISAT on a part-time basis for several more years, spending part of each year in India, part in Britain, and part in California.

Back in Britain, I had a wonderful time rediscovering my native traditions. I loved the fact that just as Indians have pilgrimages, Europeans have pilgrimages, too. I went on pilgrimages to cathedrals, churches, and ancient sites like Avebury. It felt like coming home, reconnecting with my

native land and with those who had lived there before. I made it my practice to go to church on Sundays, wherever I was, usually in my local parish. I still do so.

Soon after *A New Science of Life* was published in Britain in 1981, I was back in India working on my field experiments, when I was invited to speak at a conference in Bombay called "Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science." I took a few days off from harvesting my crops and went there to give a talk on morphic resonance. While I was at the conference, I met Jill Purce, who was speaking as part of the ancient wisdom program. Jill had written a book called *The Mystic Spiral: Journey of the Soul*, and she was also the general editor of a series of beautiful books on art and imagination, published by Thames & Hudson, which are still in print today.

Jill and I met again a few months later in India, after she had been on a retreat in the Himalayas as part of her practice of Dzogchen, a form of Tibetan Buddhism. Later that year we met up again in England, where we came together. We were married in 1985 and have lived in Hampstead, in north London, ever since.

When I met her, Jill had developed a new way of teaching chanting, introducing people to the power of group chant and drawing on traditions from many different cultures and religions. In the workshops she taught, and still teaches, a form of overtone chanting, traditionally practiced in Mongolia and Tuva; it makes audible high, flute-like notes, harmonics of the fundamental tone of the chant. She also shows how chanting can have powerful, consciousness-shifting effects and bring people into resonance with each other.

Over the last thirty-five years I have been doing experimental research on plant growth, morphic resonance, 'homing pigeons,' dogs that know when their owners are coming home, 'the sense of being stared at,' tele-phone telepathy, and a range of other subjects. From 2005 to 2010, I was the director of the Perrott-Warrick Project for research into unexplained human and animal abilities, funded by Trinity College, Cambridge.

The results of this research have convinced me that our minds extend far beyond our brains, as do the

minds of other animals. For example, there seem to be direct telepathic influences from animals to other animals, from humans to other humans, from humans to animals, and from animals to humans. Telepathic connections usually occur between people and animals that are emotionally bonded.

Such psychic phenomena are normal, not paranormal; they are natural, not supernatural. They are part of the way that minds and social bonds work. They are sometimes called "paranormal" because they do not fit into a narrow understanding of reality. But the phenomena themselves can be studied scientifically, and they have measurable effects. They are about interactions between living organisms, and between living organisms and their environment. However, they are not in themselves spiritual phenomena.

There is a distinction between the psychic and spiritual realms. Phenomena such as telepathy reveal that minds are not confined to brains. But we are also open to connections with a far greater consciousness, a more-than-human spiritual reality, whatever we call it. Spiritual practices help us to explore this question for ourselves.

Jill's work is one of my inspirations for writing this book, because she has developed a way of teaching spiritual practices that includes anyone who is interested, whatever their religion or nonreligion. As I found with Transcendental Meditation, and as I have seen over and over again with Jill's workshops, people can learn spiritual practices and practice them without having to start by articulating their beliefs or doubts. Their practices can lead to a deeper understanding, but direct experience comes first.

The same principles apply to all the practices I discuss in this book. All of them are open to Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, animists, neo-shamans, people who are spiritual but not religious, New Agers, secular humanists, agnostics, and atheists. I myself am a Christian—an Anglican—and I take part in these practices in a Christian context. But all of them are practiced by followers of other religions, and also by atheists and agnostics. No religion or nonreligion has a monopoly on these practices. They are open to everyone.

Many scientific studies have shown that these practices confer benefits on those who do them. For example, people who make a practice of being grateful are, on average, happier than people who do not. I am writing this book because I believe that, in our secular age, there is a great need to rediscover these practices, whatever one's religion or nonreligion.

There are many kinds of spiritual practice. In this book, I discuss a selection of seven, all of which I participate in myself. <>

[Spirituality without God: A Global History of Thought and Practice](#) by Peter Heehs [Bloomsbury Academic, 9781350056206]

[Spirituality without God](#) is the first global survey of "godless" spirituality. Long before "spiritual but not religious" became the catchphrase of the day, there were religious and spiritual traditions in India, China, and the West that denied the existence of God.

Peter Heehs begins by looking at godless traditions in the ancient world. Indian religions such as Jainism and Buddhism showed the way to liberation through individual effort. In China, Confucians and Daoists taught how to live in harmony with nature and society. Philosophies of the Greco-Roman world, such as Epicureanism, Stoicism, and Skepticism, focused on enhancing the quality of life rather than buying the favor of the gods through sacrifice or worship. Heehs shows how these traditions, rediscovered during the Renaissance, helped jump-start the European Enlightenment and opened the way to the atheism and agnosticism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The personal, inner, approach to religion became known as "spirituality."

[Spirituality without God](#) is a counterbalance to theistic narratives that have dominated the field, as well as an introduction to modes of spiritual thought and practice that may appeal to people who have no interest in God.

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Prologue: a Religion is Born

I live in a town in southern India. My building stands midway between a Hindu temple and an ashram. I've never been inside the temple but I walk by its entrance a couple of times a day and am familiar with its routine. A little before six in the morning, a thundering of drums and a blare of conch-trumpets announce the start of daily worship. The presiding deity is Ganesha, the elephant-headed god who is the Remover of Obstacles. A real elephant, Lakshmi, has visiting hours in the evening and she never fails to attract a crowd. But the crush to take selfies in front of this much-loved pachyderm is nothing compared to the chaos on Wednesday and Friday evenings. That's when people bring motorbikes and cars to be blessed.

The ceremony, called vandi puja or vehicle worship, is one of the temple's specialties. It consists of a series of ritual acts that have to be performed in just the right way: The owner drives the vehicle, which is draped with garlands, to a spot on the road outside the temple. A priest waves a plate with a piece of lighted camphor, a lemon, and a few other items while chanting the necessary mantras. Then he puts the lemon on the ground. The driver inches the vehicle forward, squashing the lemon, and then puts an offering on the plate. The purpose of the ritual is to ward off accidents. I can understand the drivers' anxieties. Indian roads are among the most dangerous in the world. Part of the problem is widespread laxity in regard to traffic rules. The idea that certain vehicular actions have to be performed or avoided to avert accidents hasn't really caught on.

In the opposite direction is the gate of the ashram. I've been inside it thousands of times because I am a member. Here too I know the routine. In the morning women place floral decorations on the samadhi or tomb of the founders. People sit quietly

on the perimeter of the courtyard or chat with friends near the entrance. During the day some sit in meditation, others approach the tomb with flowers or incense, still others walk through the courtyard on their way to the administrative offices. A few pause in a room where there is a photograph of one of the founders. It has been there for more than eighty years. Its original purpose was to give visitors an idea of what he looked like because he did not meet visitors or even his own disciples. Later some people began to prostrate before the photograph. He tried to discourage this, writing in a letter that he didn't want the room to become a place of public worship. During the time I have been here, acts of public worship have become more and more common.

When I go to the ashram, I sit near the samadhi and meditate or just look around. When I was younger I sometimes put flowers on the tomb but the ritual didn't feel right. I received no religious training when I was a child and have never regretted it. Here mothers teach their children how to bow and make offerings when they can scarcely walk. When I see this, the word "indoctrination" comes to mind but the kids seem to enjoy being told what to do.

I became interested in the teachings of the founders during the 1960s, when Eastern religions were enjoying a moment of vogue in the United States. Lots of swamis were setting up shop in New York, and yoga and meditation became part of the countercultural mix. I too began to meditate, starting with a mantra technique that was popular at the time. I also learned some hatha-yoga postures, which I practiced desultorily without getting really proficient. (I still envy people who can do the puma shalabhasana or full lotus.) Then some friends introduced me to an American teacher who ran a yoga center on the Upper West Side. I ended up staying a couple of years, looking after the business, doing a good deal of meditation, and reading a lot of books, especially those by the founders of my ashram. One of the things I liked about their teachings was their insistence that yoga was not a religion. The phrase "spiritual but not religious" became current around that time and I

was one of those who trotted it out when asked whether yoga wasn't some sort of cult.

After three years of study and practice in and around New York I decided to go to India. A few days after landing in Bombay, I arrived in the town where the ashram is located. A week or so later I began working under a man who had been there since the 1930s. He was looking for someone to help him publish a complete edition of the works of one of the founders and asked if I wanted to help. I was thrilled to accept. After a year of apprentice work I began preparing his uncollected writings for publication. I also went to different parts of India looking for material. The founder had been a revolutionary politician before becoming a yogi, and records of his speeches, transcribed by British spies, were lying in government archives. Dusty books in libraries contained uncollected prose pieces and letters. But by far the most copious source of new material was his handwritten manuscripts. Piled up in his secretary's room since his death twenty years earlier, they had never been systematically catalogued. Hundreds of pages remained unpublished. It was up to me and my colleagues to transcribe them and send them to the press. Other people were learning how to microfilm and preserve his manuscripts. In time our little office became an archive.

When I asked the director about the founders of the ashram he would lapse into silence or just say quietly that he thought their work was very important.

This low-key approach was typical of those of his generation. When I spoke with people who came a decade or two later, they were likely to elevate the founders to the heavens—and themselves along with the founders. This hyperbole had two sources: the ancient tradition of devotional poetry and modern mythologizing. I learned about the myths from a guy I used to work out with in the gym. His parents came to the ashram when he was just a child and he grew up listening to stories about its incredible past and still more incredible future. There was a widespread belief that the spiritual work of the founders was going to transform the

world and that the people of the ashram would be the first to feel the effects.

The founders had more modest aspirations in regard to the members of the ashram. They hoped that individuals would overcome their problems and make some inner progress and that the community as a whole would function harmoniously and serve as a model for others. Many people in the ashram did make some progress, and the community grew and prospered. Then the founders died. The community survived and many of its members held on to their millennial expectations. My exercise buddy did not. After a while he left the ashram and made a life for himself elsewhere. I felt no urge to leave. I had always taken seriously the founders' affirmation that yoga was a matter of individual effort. However much one depends on the guidance of teachers and the support of friends, one has to do it oneself. With this in mind I settled down to a routine of meditation, work, study, writing, and sports.

The disciples who took charge of the running of the ashram were firm in their faith but open-minded. As time went by, and the first generation passed away, the atmosphere became more stilted and the devotionism more ostentatious. For a while I was too busy to notice. I had begun to publish articles and books on the Indian freedom struggle and the founder's contribution to it. These were more appreciated by readers outside the ashram than within. The fact that I adhered to normal historiographical methodology was taken by some as a slap in the face. Things came to a head in 2008 when I published a biography of the founder with an American university press. A couple of hardliners picked through the book and found grounds for filing four cases against me and one against the ashram trustees, who were deemed unfit to serve because they refused to expel the author of a "blasphemous" book that was "deliberately and maliciously intended to insult religious beliefs of millions of Indians." This case was dismissed by the Supreme Court of India after five-and-a-half years of costly hearings.

At that time I was working on a history of the idea of the self as told through first-person literature. I found that people in early cultures did not have a sense of self of the sort that most of us take for

granted today. The self-idea emerged over the course of many centuries and recently has begun to decline. As I went through my sources, I saw that the history of the idea of self ran parallel to the history of the idea of God. People who played leading roles in the history of the self—Plato, Augustine, Rousseau—also were important in the history of God. People who had doubts about the idea of self—the Buddha, Nagarjuna, David Hume—were skeptical about the God-idea.

The search for spiritual wisdom unfettered by the gods goes back thousands of years. From the days of the Upanishads up to the present there have been traditions of nontheistic spiritual thought and practice that flourished alongside religions based on the worship of spirits, gods, or God. This book is a history of these nontheistic traditions. After looking briefly at the religions of the ancient world, I turn to the therapeutic philosophies of India, China, and Greece. Some of these survived during the thousand-year heyday of theistic religion, which ended around 1600. The rise of materialistic science and atheistic philosophy during the Age of Reason did not mean the end of spiritual seeking. Since the mid-nineteenth century, secular substitutes for religion—literature, art, philosophy, and so forth—have for many taken the place of God-centered religions.

More recently millions of people have taken up religious traditions, such as yoga practices associated historically with yoga and mindfulness meditation, but discarded the religious packaging. Theistic religions are useful for many but they have a built-in weakness. All of them have different conceptions of God and these differences can never be resolved because they are based on revelations that believers are forbidden to question. To protect divinely revealed certainties, people are willing to persecute and even kill those who accept other revelations. We see this all around us now. One way to prevent religious violence is to encourage spiritual ideas and practices that are not dependent on irreconcilable ideas about the gods.

Many people today reject all religions but still believe there is more to life than mindless consumption and obsessive communication. For such people this brief study of the history of godless

spirituality may serve as an introduction to a very large field and provide a basis for further exploration. <>

[The Inner Church is the Hope of the World: Western Esotericism as a Theology of Liberation](#) by Nicholas Laccetti [Resource Publications, 9781498246231

Throughout history, Western esoteric movements have provided meaning and power for what the Rosicrucians of the early modern period called the quest for "Universal Reformation"—the utopian restructuring of religion, science, the arts, and human society. Yet Western esotericism has been roundly ignored as a source of reflection in mainstream Christian theology, including the radical theologies of liberation that might otherwise see in esotericism a kindred spirit to their commitment to radical social change.

In [The Inner Church is the Hope of the World](#), guided by his work in contemporary movements for social change, Nicholas Laccetti puts Western esotericism in dialogue with liberation theology, treating esotericism as a legitimate source of spiritual and theological insight. If, as Gustavo Gutierrez writes, "God is revealed in history;" then we will also encounter God within the particular history of human religious expression that is Western esotericism. And from these theological reflections, the Inner Church of the esotericists, occultists, and mystics is revealed to be the true ekklesia of all who have conformed themselves to God's vision of freedom and liberation, and who struggle to enact that vision in human society. The Inner Church is truly the hope of the world.

NICHOLAS LACCETTI is a Christian esotericist, a theologian, and a practicing occultist. He holds an MDiv from Union Theological Seminary in the city of New York. Outside of his esoteric interests, he serves as the communications coordinator for the Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice, an institute based at Union. He writes a personal blog on Christian theology and esotericism, "The Light Invisible," at thelightinvisible.org.

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Excerpt: Universal Reformation

In 1947, protestant theologian, Karl Barth introduced the phrase *Ecclesia semper reformanda est*—"the church is always to be reformed." Barth used the phrase to express the Reformed conviction that the Christian church must constantly examine itself and continue to evolve and reform, a teaching that thinks of the Reformation as a permanent state rather than an historic event. Since the Second Vatican Council, certain radical Catholic theologians like Hans Küng have also used the saying to express their desire for a church that remains open to the world and to the spirit of the times.

Yet before the Second Vatican Council, before Karl Barth, and even before the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation, there was a major philosophical, theological, and spiritual drive to reform the church. This has been called, by some, the Hermetic Reformation.¹ Its proponents saw it as a universal reformation—one that would transform all aspects of the church and European society. Rather than a return to the Bible or to traditional Christian dogmas, this reformation would be rooted in Hermetic philosophy, Renaissance Neoplatonism, and Christian Cabala—the primary sources of the Western esoteric tradition.

Marsilio Ficino, through his translations of the Hermetica, Plato, and Plotinus, provided a corpus of ancient wisdom that he and other Renaissance philosophers believed to represent a *prisca theologia*, a perennial philosophy that stretched from Zoroaster and Hermes Trismegistus through Plato and Moses, all the way to Jesus Christ and the apostles. Ficino and his brilliant student, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, thought that a return to this pristine theology would reform the Catholic Church and usher in a new golden age of utopian society, united under a philosopher-priest that some humanists saw as an enlightened role for

the pope. Pico's Renaissance manifesto, the *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, suggested that the human vocation, expressed through the universal tradition of the perennial philosophy, is a mystical vocation that joins together morality, the scientific study of nature, and the regeneration of society according to eternal, divine principles.

Ficino and Pico drew on Platonism, Neoplatonism, Hermetism, and Cabala to make their arguments for the *prisca theologia* and the universal reformation of the church and society. They also practiced a form of Christian natural magic, or astral magic—the drawing down of the powers of the stars and the astrological planets into talismans and other images. Ficino even suggested that it might be possible to create "a universal image, an image of the very universe itself," in order to draw down the power of the whole macrocosm.¹ Inspired by the teachings of the hermetic text the *Asclepius*, Ficino argued that such magic was acceptable for Christians because it worked with natural, created forces rather than through the use of demonic pacts or other supernatural feats. The more conservative elements of the Roman Catholic Church were not so sure—both Ficino and Pico suffered from periods of ecclesiastical censure, as well as periods of official patronage and support. It would be the more radical doctrines of Giordano Bruno, the later Hermetist and Neoplatonist who argued for a full return to the ancient Egyptian magical religion, that would be roundly condemned by the militant Counter-Reformation church, leading to Bruno's execution by burning at the stake in February 1600.

As readers of Frances Yates and other scholars of Hermetic philosophy know, however, the story didn't end there. The Rosicrucian Manifestos, in their own unique post-Reformation context, provided a new esoteric key for the aspiration to universal reformation, and the traditions of utopian texts like Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* and Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun* kept alive the dream of a new universal civilization ruled by an enlightened class of philosopher-priests.

In this same seventeenth-century milieu, John Amos Comenius, the Czech philosopher, pedagogue, and Moravian theologian, a correspondent of Johann Valentin Andreae (probable author of the *Chymical*

Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz), promoted the notion of pansophy or Pansophism, a program of universal education and an attempt to organize all human knowledge. Comenius's pansophic ideas prefigured the later encyclopedic movement of the eighteenth century, but were tinged with Hermetic and Rosicrucian concepts. As Manly P. Hall explains, "Comenius's concept of a pansophic university combines the function of a college and a temple ... The plan is Utopian in the education field.... Through Pansophy the human being was to be led gently and wisely through the knowledge of things to the love and service of God, the source of all things."

The concept of Christian pansophy was linked to the utopian schemas of Bacon and Campanella, as well as to the Rosicrucianism of Andreae. One of the only previous uses of the term Pansophia, according to Hall, was in Frater Theophilus's Rosicrucian tract *Speculum Sophicum Rhodo-Stauroticum*, which purported to give an "extensive explanation of the Collegium and of the rules of the specially enlightened Brotherhood of the Rosicrucians." The *Speculum* is unique in that it contains a description of the Collegium Fraternitatis:

It is a building, a great building, without doors or windows; a princely, yes, imperial palace, to be seen from everywhere and still hidden from the eyes of men.... It is ... so rich, so artistically and marvelously constructed that there is no art, science, riches, gold, precious stones, money, possessions, honor, authority and knowledge in the whole world which cannot be found in this most blessed palace in the highest degree.

As Hall concludes, in Theophilus's description of the Collegium we have "a direct reference to a Pansophic College published nineteen years prior to the outline for such an institution with the same name prepared by Comenius."² The pansophic college, then, as a part of the Rosicrucian mythos, is both a schema of education and the systematization of knowledge for the purposes of universal reformation, and a mystical parable about the way of return to God both for individuals and for society.

Since the Renaissance era of Ficino, Pico, and Bruno, and the Rosicrucian era of Comenius,

Andreae, Campanella, and the manifestos, the *prisca theologia* has survived through the work of the esoteric orders, fraternal societies, and occult teachers of the Western esoteric tradition. Yet while mentions of universal reformation are still made in various currents of Western esotericism, these are not usually programs for social reform like Comenius's pansophic college. Instead, the occult teachers and esoteric gurus make vague overtures toward a coming spiritual new age—the Era of the Holy Spirit during the French occult revival, the Age of Aquarius in America during the 1960s, or the (unfulfilled) cosmic transformation of 2012. Some orders do suggest a program of reform or revolution—the original Bavarian Illuminati supported the Enlightenment ideals of the eighteenth century, while the moral philosophy and symbolism of Freemasonry may have indirectly influenced the French and American Revolutions. And Ordo Templi Orientis, reorganized around the Book of the Law by the notorious magus Aleister Crowley, does hold some utopian notions of a future Thelemic society (Crowley's new religion based on his channeled texts) blossoming in force and fire during the later years of Crowley's Aeon of Horus.

But few esoteric orders do much concrete work toward organizing such a massive reformation of human religious and civic institutions as that envisioned by Pico, Bruno, or the early Rosicrucians. To put it mildly, the accumulation of the political and social power necessary for movement building is not a strong suit of occultists in general. Instead, a post-Jungian psychologizing and internalizing of esoteric doctrines has made Hermetic magic more of a gnostic pursuit of inner knowledge—or, worse, a self-help fad—rather than a cosmogonic enterprise that would radically transform the entire macrocosm through the mediation of the microcosmic human being.

Liberation Theology

In this respect, the modern iterations of the Western esoteric tradition—the secret societies, initiatory lineages, and magical orders that purport to maintain to this day the hidden knowledge announced so explosively by the first Rosicrucian Manifestos—are socially and culturally anemic compared to some of the work being done among

more mainstream, and traditionally less radical, branches of Western religion, including orthodox Christianity. Since the development of the Protestant social gospel and Catholic social teaching in the early twentieth century, and the later blossoming of liberation theology across the world in the 1960s, many mainline Christian denominations (or at least their more radical fringes) have embraced the idea that religious believers must engage with the world and its structures in order to radically transform the socially and economically oppressive status quo. Christian liberation theologians like Gustavo Gutierrez, Juan Luis Segundo, or James Cone would agree that the world is in need of a universal reformation, or even a universal revolution.

While studying for my Masters of Divinity degree at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, a liberal seminary focused primarily on the social gospel tradition, liberation theology, and empire-critical biblical studies, I was sometimes frustrated by the lack of emphasis on mystical approaches to the Christian theological tradition. This would include any appreciation of the Western esoteric traditions, new religious movements, or the occult. It sometimes seemed that only a materialist analysis of politics and religion was possible at Union. And yet I found myself devoting my field education internship while at Union, and my professional life now, to working for an organization that examines the power of religion for human rights and social justice, specifically the work of organizing a broad social movement to end systemic racism, poverty, militarism, and ecological destruction, inspired by the work and theology of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr."

At Union, I exulted in reading elaborate examples of philosophical and mystical theology, just as I spent most of my free time delving into obscure occult texts, but I divided that time with work for social justice, with supporting political organizing through communications and other practical skills, and with studying the history of social change within the Christian tradition. And now, as I sit down to introduce a book on the dialogue between Western esotericism and Christian theology, I find that my sources and examples of Christian theology are firmly within the tradition of liberation

theology. I believe that the core of the Christian tradition is liberationist—freedom and abundance for the poor and dispossessed. The difficulty now is in seeing how these examples of Christian theology interact and intersect with the sources of Western esotericism, a field of interest that often brings to mind the ideas of secret knowledge, personal spiritual attainment, and elitist spiritual hierarchies—not to mention mushy new age individualism—in esotericism's more recent expressions.

It would be exhausting to merely catalogue the historical and contemporary examples of how Western esotericism has been used in the service of radical politics. Just as many, if not more, examples could be amassed for esotericism in the service of conservative politics, or in the service of an apolitical stance toward contemporary social issues. Instead, in this attempt at establishing a dialogue between Christian theology and esotericism, I will focus on two more important factors in Western esotericism and its relationship with radical social change:

1. The (esoteric) commitment to the universal reformation of the whole wide world, in the service of a new and transformed humanity, expressed more or less consistently in most examples of historic Western esotericism, though often obscured in more recent examples of the individualist and consumerist spiritualities of the new age and contemporary occultism.
2. The (theological) stance that expressions of Western esotericism represent examples of what Dorothee Sölle calls the "silent cry" and what Edward Schillebeeckx labels eruptions of the humanum, expressions of human yearning and hope for abundance and meaning in lives that are often marked by suffering, oppression, and meaninglessness.

I will execute this dialogue between these two unlikely bedfellows—Western esotericism and Christian liberation theology—by following the basic structure of Christian salvation history: Creation and Fall, Liberation (or the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ), and Consummation (or

eschatology). In the chapters to come, though my overall theological stance is guided by the teachings of Christian liberation theology and my work in contemporary movements to establish social justice, my sources or theological loci will not only be the usual suspects in a book on liberation theology, but will be the occultists, magicians, and mystics of the Western esoteric tradition. I will treat esoteric sources as genuine sources of spiritual and theological insight, and as legitimate interlocutors for more traditional theologians. If, as Gustavo Gutiérrez writes, "God is revealed in history, and it is likewise in history that persons encounter the Word made flesh"—describing a position that is shared by many proponents of the theology of liberation—then we will also encounter God, we will encounter the Word, within the particular history of human religious expressions that is Western esotericism.

Pansophy and Liberation

One significant strand of the Western esoteric tradition—pansophy—would agree wholeheartedly with liberation theology that it is in history (and in nature) that we encounter God, and that it is the responsibility of the Christian to seek radical social change. Although little known in contemporary discourse outside of scholars of Western esotericism, the drive to reform all of human society—labeled universal reformation by the reformers of the early modern period—was maintained under the broader esoteric discipline called pansophy, a term that, as we have seen, is closely related to Rosicrucianism and to Christian theosophy. Antoine Faivre describes pansophy as "a kindred term" to theosophy, "fashionable with Rosicrucians and Paracelsians, first used by the Platonic and Hermetist philosopher Francesco Patrizi." As he goes on to explain:

This term combines two notions of theosophy, Wisdom by divine illumination and Light from Nature. In 1596, Bartholomäus Scleus opposed particularist or sectarian theologians with his "Mystica Theologia Universalis und Pansophia," which for him was the same as "Magia coelestis" or celestial magic. It is more customary to mean by "Pansophy," as it was defined a little later by Jan Amos Comenius, a system of universal

knowledge, all things being ordered and classified by God according to analogical relationships. Or, if you prefer, a knowledge of divine things acquired via the concrete world, i.e., the entire universe, in which the "signatures" or hieroglyphics must first be deciphered. In other words, the Book of Nature helps us understand better Holy Scripture and God Himself. This would reserve the term theosophy for the reverse procedure, knowing the universe thanks to our knowledge of God. But, practically speaking, especially from the eighteenth century onward, "theosophy" is generally used to designate the Pansophic progression as well."

The "essential message of the Rosicrucian Manifestos," according to Faivre, is a pansophic vision of universal reformation:

the union of the light of grace and the light of Nature, the marriage of religion and science—what, Gorceix wrote pertinently, "Will-Erich Peuckert called, a little hastily, pansophia" ... fundamentally, the ideal is still this synthesis of a science in progress and a living religion.

Pansophia thus encompasses both the progression from a knowledge of the "Book of Nature" to the knowledge of God through decoding the "signatures" of the divine in the natural world, as well as the drive to reform all human institutions, including the sciences, religion, the arts, and society, according to this newly acquired universal knowledge. Comenius, with whom the term pansophy is most often associated, provided the clearest explication of these goals in his multi-volume *Consultatio Catholica*, which includes books on the universal reform of education, religion, politics, and language, among other subjects. During his lifetime, only the first volume of the *Consultatio* was published, the introductory book *Panegersia*, or *Universal Awakening*. Comenius was thus producing volumes of what twentieth-century theology would label the social gospel many centuries before the reformist awakening of the modern liberal Protestant churches, theological books in which the drive to reform society was directly linked with the Christian quest to understand God and the nature of God's creation.

The notion that nature contains signatures or hieroglyphs of the divine that can be retraced in an

ascent to God from nature is an essentially Neoplatonic schema derived from Plotinus and Iamblichus's notion of there being temporal traces of the One in the material cosmos. But Western esoteric sources frequently go beyond a mere embrace of nature understood as the earthly ecological world to include the holistic idea of Nature as the whole integral macrocosm—all of created existence in time and space understood as the manifestation of God, the "Infinite Plenum of All Perfection" according to the grandiose phrase of twentieth-century occultist Frater Achad. This means that the pansophic Book of Nature also includes history—both of the cosmos itself and of human beings and human societies. As Sasha Chaitow explains,

Pansophy is understood as a way of ... viewing human history through a form of allegorical hermeneutics, whereby events are interpreted as part of a larger narrative in which events within the human microcosm reflect the celestial macrocosm, and can be revealed through myths, legends, and their correspondences.

On this basis, there is a clear possibility of fruitful dialogue between Christian liberation theology and Western esotericism (particularly those branches of it that continue to espouse some version of pansophy), both of which argue that traces of the divine can be found in the upheavals and struggles of human (and cosmic) history, and that a utopian vision of radical social transformation is a necessity for the faithful religious believer.

Shadows of a Future Aeon

Yet the choice of Western esotericism might still seem like an outlandish option for a dialogue with mainstream theology. Some of the occult speculations drawn upon in this study seem to fall into the popular critique often applied to the scholastic theology of the High Middle Ages: weren't the Scholastics more interested in abstract and unsolvable questions like "How many angels can fit on the head of a pin?" than they were in simple evangelical truths and Christian discipleship? In the case of the occultists, perhaps the straw man question with which the figures in this study would be concerned would be something more like, "How many spirits are evoked through the magical chakra-gate of the star Sirius?" Yet the point

stands: Isn't most of what I'm referencing here, speculative as it is, a distraction at best, and a deviant and destructive alternative to simple biblical truth at worst? And even if only a distraction, how can any of these people prove this stuff, anyway?

To this critique, I would like to apply the important point that the Thelemic enfant terrible, Kenneth Grant, famously made at the end of the introduction to his book, *Outside the Circles of Time*. Grant is often considered one of the strangest and most difficult modern occult writers, but this is perhaps his most lucid moment:

One final point is here relevant, and I state it without apology. It is not my purpose to try to prove anything; my aim is to construct a magic mirror capable of reflecting some of the less elusive images seen as shadows of a future aeon.

This eschatological purpose, this attempt to catch a glimpse in the mirror of some "shadows of a future aeon," should be understood to be at the religious heart of many seemingly bizarre, implausible, or downright ridiculous claims made within speculative occultism. Grant goes on to conclude his introduction by stating that, in esoteric writing as in magical practice, it is often by an "architecture of absence" that the real building is revealed—the "reality-structure" of a future aeon, which is the true content of the work, is only made visible through carefully building an "alien structure" with his words and images.

In this sense, occultism emerges from what Catholic theologian Edward Schillebeeckx called "negative contrast experience"—the resolute sense by human beings that our experience of reality, often marked by suffering, injustice, and a lack of meaning, cannot be the whole story. In these moments of lack we feel certain that what we see and experience isn't everything; there must be more meaning to this seemingly cold and empty universe—a telos, an end-point, a future transformation. The religious practices, art, culture, and activism that emerges out of these moments attempt to express our sense that there must indeed be meaning and wholeness to our cosmos.

Occultism is one of these practices, regardless of its bizzareries. And, according to Schillebeeckx, what

emerges from these practices—diverse as they are, and united only in their unshakeable sense that real human flourishing and meaning might be elusive but must be possible, somewhere or sometime—is not a positive picture of what Schillebeeckx calls the humanum, the glorified human being in its eschatological completeness, but in fact is an apophatic image, as in the negative of a photograph, of what the humanum will look like at the eschaton. In other words, a "shadow of a future aeon," revealed through an "architecture of absence," through an "alien structure" haunted by the shape of the real building.

In the end, Kenneth Grant is not too far off from St. Paul here in arguing that the shape of the human and of human society in the last age—as distant to our present imaginings as the farthest star—can only be grasped "through a glass, darkly." What Grant and the other esotericists are willing to do, unlike many mainstream Christian theologians, is to embrace the darkness of the glass.

Throughout history, Western esoteric movements have provided meaning and power for what the Rosicrucians of the early modern period called the quest for "Universal Reformation"—the utopian restructuring of religion, science, the arts, and human society. Yet Western esotericism has been roundly ignored as a source of reflection in mainstream Christian theology, including the radical theologies of liberation that might otherwise see in esotericism a kindred spirit to their commitment to radical social change. <>

[Spiritual Practices in Community: Drawing Groups into the Heart of God](#) by Diana Shiflett [IVP Books, ISBN 9780830846481]

Diana Shiflett has been leading groups of all descriptions in spiritual practices for many years, and she understands the difficulties involved: the potential for awkwardness and self-doubt, the nagging question of whether anyone's getting anything out of this at all. But more than that, she understands the value of spiritual practices: their deep roots in the history and worship of God's people, and their ability to calm our distracted minds and hearts so we are ready to hear the voice of Jesus. In this personal, hands-on guide, Shiflett walks us through a wide array of spiritual

practices, from communal silence and Scripture meditation to active prayer and corporate discernment. She proves a reliable guide, offering step-by-step instructions, pointing out hazards and pitfalls, and sharing her own experiences with honesty and humor. With this book as a guide, these spiritual practices can become life-giving resources in your ministry setting for years to come.

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Excerpt: Going Deeper Together

Many years ago, as I was reflecting on how I lead, I asked God to reveal his heart to me. An image came to mind: a fountain flowing from above, with me filling a cup and taking the living water to those I was leading. Either I got water too quickly, not allowing the cup to fill, or I spilled it along the way. By the time I got to those I was leading, I no longer had much to share. And I never had enough in my glass to give to all the people I was leading.

In that moment, I realized I needed to change the way I was leading, so I let God continue to reveal things from this image in my mind. Slow down at the fountain, I thought. So I walked slowly with my very full cup toward those I was leading.

After that time with God, I took more alone time with him than ever before. And then it hit me: I needed to invite people to stand under the fountain with me; I didn't need to tell everyone what they needed to know about God. I started to trust God to speak directly to his people. I also realized I couldn't possibly know everything God wanted to say to every person, but I could introduce them to God. I realized God longs to speak life and truth into everyone's souls—not just mine.

The final image that came to mind was me standing under the flow of Jesus' fountain and inviting others to stand under my cup. My cup was overflowing and so were their cups. In ministry, I found that I no longer had a cup that emptied every time I led a group.

All of our cups are overflowing with what God has for us. My hope for you is that you lead in a new way spiritually, inviting others into the heart of God.

Leading a group in a spiritual practice requires encountering God yourself. Throughout the Scriptures, God encourages his people to draw near to him. He invites us to come and drink living waters without cost (Isaiah 55:1). And Jesus interrupted a festival to say, "Come drink the living waters."

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (John 7:37-39)

We live in a thirsty world that's looking to leaders to lead well. This book is an opportunity to learn to lead differently. It will help you to not only tell people about the living water that Christ has to offer but also invite them to experience the thirst-quenching Spirit of Jesus Christ for themselves alongside you.

Over the years I've served as a pastor, I've heard these three statements often:

- "I am not feeling fed at church."
- "Thank you for your sermon today!"
- "Christ is transforming my life."

If you're like me, you hear the first two phrases far more than you hear the last. Yet we do ministry so that people will be transformed spiritually. I'd much rather people tell me their lives are being transformed spiritually than hear the first two phrases.

Simply put, spiritual practices are different ways of connecting with God. Over twenty-three years of ministry, I've gotten in a rhythm of using them. They have transformed me and the ministries I'm a part of. When I'm living into the practices and using them well as I lead, I feel fully alive in Christ—and often so do the people around me.

When I teach about spiritual practices, listeners often ask how they can lead the practices themselves in their own ministry contexts. We usually take a few moments right then and there to discuss different ideas, but a few minutes is not enough. People need more than a quick conversation; they need a book. My hope is that *Spiritual Practices in Community* gives you what you need to lead certain practices well in your context. Since everyone's context is different, you'll need to adjust each practice to fit yours.

Over the years, spiritual practices often have been referred to as spiritual disciplines. Some date back to the Old Testament, such as fasting and prayer. Others were created and refined during the hundreds of centuries of church history. Some of the ones in this book I've created along the way. Others I've learned from partners in ministry.

Each person is wired differently, and spiritual practices give us different ways to engage with God, according to how we best connect with him. In this book, you'll find more than thirty different ways to engage with God. Encourage a group you're in or leading to try different practices that may help them connect with God.

Helping Individuals and Groups Engage

Sometimes people assume they won't like an activity because they didn't like it in a different context. A woman in one of my spiritual practices groups said she didn't like to journal. I said, "Just try it in class when we're together, and you'll never have to do it again." Months later, she told the class she loved it.

There's something about connecting with God in new ways; it can awaken our souls. When we focus on listening to and talking to God, mundane things can suddenly have life. Recently I taught a class of first through sixth graders. First I asked them to draw what I was reading from the Scriptures. One

third grader chimed in right away and said, "I don't like to draw."

"Do you like to write?" I asked.

"No," she said.

"Okay, well, how about you just try, and I will try too, and we'll see what happens," I answered.

She agreed, and as I read, I drew some terrible pictures. Seeing what I was doing, the whole class started to draw and to write. As we finished the practice, I asked her how she liked it, and she said, "It was kinda fun." All the children were given time to show their picture to the group and share what they'd learned about God.

Almost every time I lead a practice, and no matter what age I lead, some don't want to participate. I validate their feelings and request their engagement or silence. It seems the quicker I validate and encourage the group, the better it goes for everyone.

At the end, sometimes someone still feels it wasn't a good practice. I acknowledge that and say that it's good to learn what works and doesn't work for us so we can connect with God in ways that are best for us.

There's a time and a place for traditional messages and sermons, but there also need to be places where we listen for the voice of God together. As leaders, we need to start making more space for spiritual practices to help people learn how to meet and experience God. It's important that we live into ways in which we are connecting with and hearing from God so we can lead and teach others to do the same.

You can't lead where you aren't willing to go. As a leader, I experience spiritual growth when I lead practices. I learn from others as we share what God is doing in each of us. Because of this, I hope that as you move through this book, you experience God for yourself and then lead others in these practices so they too can enter into the presence of God. I give you full permission to do what we have all done in ministry: jump into a particular spiritual practice that you need to lead right now—whether it's for your edification or for those you will lead. My prayer and hope for you is that you will go and be with God yourself first. I hope you long for

spiritual practice spaces—and find them. The best moments in leadership for me have come from experiencing God before I led a group.

Using Spiritual Practices in Community

The first chapter of this book shows how to lead spiritual practices in general. The rest of the chapters lay out how to lead more than thirty different practices (and in the back of the book, you'll find an alphabetical list of every practice in the book, with corresponding page numbers). Each chapter includes spiritual practices, and each practice can be used in multiple settings with multiple age groups. I'll explain how you can do each spiritual practice yourself and then how you can lead the practice.

Each practice works well with any size group. You'll also find several examples of how you as a spiritual leader can use a specific spiritual practice in different arenas, such as in worship, meetings, or ministry to adults or children, and also in your own family and your own life. Some of these practices can even help you experience more intimacy in your marriage.

As you read, let these ideas be springboards for finding creative ways to help those you lead to enter deeply into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Don't feel you have to do the practices exactly the way I present them. Because only you know your context, let the practices come alive as you lead in the way God is calling you to lead. <>

[The State of the Evangelical Mind: Reflections on the Past, Prospects for the Future](#) by Todd C. Ream and Jerry A. Pattengale [IVP Academic, 9780830852161]

Two decades on from Mark Noll's [Scandal of the Evangelical Mind](#), could we now be on the threshold of another crisis of intellectual maturity in Christianity? Or are the opportunities for faithful intellectual engagement and witness even greater now than before?

"The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind." So begins this award-winning intellectual history and critique of the evangelical movement by one of evangelicalism's most respected historians.

Unsparring in his judgment, Mark Noll asks why the largest single group of religious Americans—who enjoy increasing wealth, status, and political influence—have contributed so little to rigorous intellectual scholarship in North America. In nourishing believers in the simple truths of the gospel, why have evangelicals failed at sustaining a serious intellectual life and abandoned the universities, the arts, and other realms of "high" culture?

Noll is probing and forthright in his analysis of how this situation came about, but he doesn't end there. Challenging the evangelical community, he sets out to find, within evangelicalism itself, resources for turning the situation around.

The essays in [The State of the Evangelical Mind](#) invite readers to a virtual "summit meeting" on the current state of the evangelical mind. The insights of national leaders in their fields will aid readers to reflect on the past contributions of evangelical institutions for the life of the mind as well as prospects for the future. Contributors include:

- Richard J. Mouw
- Mark A. Noll
- Jo Anne Lyon
- David C. Mahan and C. Donald Smedley
- Timothy Larsen
- Lauren Winner
- James K. A. Smith
- Mark Galli

[The State of the Evangelical Mind](#) frames the resources needed for churches, universities, seminaries, and parachurch organizations to chart their course for the future, both separately and together, and provides readers an opportunity to participate in a timely conversation as they consider what institutional and individual role they might play. This is not a book to define or diagnose evangelicalism broadly, and there's no fear-mongering or demonizing here, but rather a call to attend to the evangelical mind and the role played by interlocking institutions in its intellectual formation and ongoing vitality. It will encourage—and challenge—those who want to be part of the solution in a time of need.

Cheerful and Comfortable Faith; Still: Notes on a Mid-Faith Crisis; and most recently, a book on overlooked biblical tropes for God, *Wearing God*. She is completing a book called *Characteristic Damage*, which examines the effects of sin and damage on Christian practice. Winner's research has been supported by numerous institutions, including Monticello, the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, the Center for the Study of Religion at Princeton University, and the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University. She has appeared on PBS's Religion & Ethics News weekly and has served as a commentator on NPR's "All Things Considered." She has written for The New York Times Book Review, The Washington Post Book World, Publishers Weekly, Books & Culture, and Christianity Today, and her essays have been included in several volumes of The Best Christian Writing. Winner, an Episcopal priest, is vicar of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Louisburg, North Carolina.

Mark Galli is editor in chief of Christianity Today. He has previously served as associate editor of Leadership Journal and editor of Christian History. Before entering the world of journalism, he was a Presbyterian pastor for ten years, serving an international congregation in Mexico City and a congregation in Sacramento, California. He has written many books, which fall into two categories. He has written in the areas of Christian spirituality, such as *Jesus Mean and Wild: The Unexpected Love of an Untamable God* (Baker, 2008), *Beyond Bells and Smells: The Wonder and Power of Christian Liturgy* (Paraclete, 2009), and *Beautiful Orthodoxy: The Truth, Goodness, and Beauty of the Life in Christ* (Christianity Today, 2016). The other area of writing interest has been history, especially popular biographies, such as *131 Christians Everyone Should Know* (B&H, 2010), *Francis of Assisi and His World* (InterVarsity Press, 2002), and *Karl Barth: A Biography for Evangelicals* (Eerdmans, 2017). He resides in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, with his wife, and he has three married children and five grandchildren. His extracurricular interests include golf and smallmouth bass and trout fly fishing, and he's hoping to take up clay shooting in his retirement years.

Richard J. Mouw is president emeritus and professor of faith and public life at Fuller Theological Seminary. A philosopher, scholar, and author, he served as Fuller's provost and senior vice president for four years prior to his presidency, and as professor of Christian philosophy and ethics beginning in 1985. Before coming to Fuller he served for seventeen years as professor of philosophy at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has also served as a visiting professor at the Free University in Amsterdam. Mouw has a broad record of publication. He has been an editor of the Reformed Journal and has served on many editorial boards. He is the author of more than twenty books, including *The God Who Commands*, *The Smell of Sawdust*, *He Shines in All That's Fair*, *Culture and Common Grace*, *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World*, *The Challenges of Cultural Discipleship*, *Talking with Mormons: An Invitation to Evangelicals*, and most recently, *Adventures in Evangelical Civility: A Lifelong Quest for Common Ground*.

Timothy Larsen is Carolyn and Fred McManis Professor of Christian Thought at Wheaton College. In addition to his efforts at Wheaton College, Larsen is an honorary research fellow at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and has been a visiting fellow in history at Trinity College, Cambridge, and All Souls College, Oxford. Larsen is a fellow of both the Royal Historical Society and the Royal Anthropological Institute. He is the author of six books, including *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford University Press, 2006), *A People of One Book: The Bible and the Victorians* (Oxford University Press, 2011), and *The Slain God: Anthropologists and the Christian Faith* (Oxford University Press, 2014). He has edited nine books, including *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*.

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Excerpt: The State of the Evangelical Mind: Tales of Prosperity and Peril by Todd C. Ream, Jerry Pattengale, and Christopher J. Devers

In 1994, William B. Eerdmans published one of its most influential titles—Mark A. Noll's [The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind](#). This "epistle from a wounded lover" reflects Noll's desire to hold together two commitments others would often perceive at odds with one another: a love for both the life of the mind and a faith in Christ inspired by the love of fellow evangelicals.'

In his "historical meditation in which sermonizing and the making of hypotheses vie with more ordinary exposition," Noll's aspiration was nothing short of inciting an intellectual renaissance.' The challenge was in the opening line of his first chapter: "The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind.'" Where then would scholars incited to an intellectual renaissance turn for inspiration?

Part of what offered that inspiration came in the pages that followed. Contrary to what was just noted and what Noll claimed to pursue, his own book not only laid bare how such a scandal had come to pass but also how evangelicalism, when properly understood, was not bereft of inspiration.

For example, Noll turns to Jonathan Edwards, "a defender of the Great Awakening," to whom "there was no antithesis between heartfelt devotion and the most recondite labors of the mind"

Evangelical scholars have often believed the bewildering array of challenges before them were unprecedented. With figures such as Edwards, however, they have not been alone. Noll was quick to point out that "Edwards lived through a period of rapidly changing conceptions of the world, God, and humanity." However, Noll was equally quick to point out that "the intellectual achievement of Jonathan Edwards was his refusal to admit that these assumptions were in fact the starting points of thought.' Instead of simply rejecting the intellectual currents of his age, Edwards's work "dealt constantly with ideas at their foundations."

With Edwards in their lineage and Noll inciting them to commit prayerfully to the intellectual labor needed to deal with ideas at their foundations, evangelical scholars got to work. Admittedly, evangelical scholars such as Arthur Holmes had made similar pleas in the recent past. But rising enrollments at many evangelical colleges and seminaries in the 1980s and 1990s, a healthy global economy, and rapidly warming relations between evangelicals and brethren from other Christian traditions (such as Catholicism and, in particular, its ressourcement movement) who came bearing additional intellectual resources accented the timeliness of Noll's challenge. A tangible expression of the intellectual renaissance Noll sought to incite came when Christianity Today launched Books & Culture just one year after the publication of Scandal.

Moving ahead to 2015, the twentieth-anniversary edition of Books & Culture came with the question "What Scandal?" emblazoned across its cover. What then were scholars to make of the state of the evangelical mind when Books & Culture closed one year later? Was Christianity Today's decision to do so the result of the challenges facing the wider publishing industry by a public prone to expect in the age of the digital platform that content was available apart from any financial commitment? Were other economic, political, or even theological forces at work? Regardless, if the

launching of *Books & Culture* was a triumph for the state of the evangelical mind, what was its closure?

Supported by the generosity of Indiana Wesleyan University president, David W. Wright, and provost, Stacy Hammons, scholars gathered at the Sagamore Institute in Indianapolis in September 2017 to ponder that question. (Considerable credit also goes to Jack Gardner and his colleagues at Jax Café, who graciously hosted planning discussions for this event.) The chapters in this volume, along with the essays found in the summer 2017 theme issue of *Christian Scholar's Review*, are the outgrowth of those conversations. Before offering details concerning prosperity and peril for the evangelical mind, as well as of the chapters that follow, defining evangelicalism is in order.

Defining Evangelicalism

In *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham*, D. G. Hart opens on a personal yet telling note about struggles to define the term evangelicalism. Hart, a Presbyterian, and a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) at that, questions whether being referenced as an evangelical was apt and, if so, desirable. He thus poses the question, "Why is it, then, that evangelicalism has become so elastic as to include believers whose beliefs and practices are at odds with the low-church revivalistic form of piety produced and distributed by numerous successful parachurch organizations?" He then goes on to argue that "born-again Protestants would be better off if they abandoned the category altogether ... because it does not exist!"^o

While Hart's point concerning the elastic nature of evangelicalism is apt (especially when compared to his own OPC), it does not necessarily follow that evangelicalism does not exist. In the United States and in a number of other contexts around the world, evangelicals, however loosely configured, are a historically, sociologically, and theologically identifiable Christian tradition. That sense of tangible identification comes, as Hart argues, in parachurch organizations. As implicitly argued in the chapters in this book, tangible identification also comes in churches, colleges and universities, and seminaries that in their own ways contribute to the cultivation of the evangelical mind.

Even if Hart's assertion is not entirely accurate, the concern he raises about the amorphous nature of evangelicalism still stands. Perhaps the best way to address that concern is through what is arguably the most widespread definition offered to date and known popularly as "the Bebbington quadrilateral," framed by David Bebbington in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*:

There are four qualities that have been the special marks of Evangelical religion: conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; activism, the expression of the gospel in effort; biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be termed crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Together they form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of Evangelicalism."

Bebbington's quadrilateral has pliability. This was important for its traction among scholars striving to identify evangelicalism from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds. In particular, those marks bear a measure of theological specificity while also allowing for empirical confirmation of groups of believers as well as institutions they populate—such as churches, parachurch organizations, colleges and universities, and seminaries.

A Tale of Prosperity?

As previously noted, the years following the publication of Noll's *Scandal* were defined by relative prosperity. The rise of *Books & Culture* was one expression of that prosperity, but other important expressions are also available. The indication of those signs of prosperity had become so widespread that in 2007 the monograph series sponsored by Association for the Study of Higher Education and published by Jossey-Bass offered *Christian Faith and Scholarship: An Exploration of Contemporary Developments*. While that volume includes a record of work being done among Catholic scholars and a few mainline Protestant scholars, the bulk of its focus is on the work being done by evangelicals. Thirteen years following the publication of *Scandal*, some of those details, further signs of prosperity, are worth noting.

First, many evangelical scholars not only became involved at higher levels—and in some cases, even the highest of levels within the professional

associations defining their disciplines—but also worked to launch or strengthen professional associations represented by Christian scholars. Disciplines in the humanities such as English, history, and philosophy, and in the behavioral sciences such as psychology and related fields, probably saw the greatest gains in these areas. For example, Nicholas Wolterstorff, once a member of the philosophy department at Calvin College and then the Noah Porter Professor of Philosophical Theology at Yale University, was the American Philosophical Association Central Division president and an American Academy of Arts and Sciences fellow. However, he also served as president of the Society of Christian Philosophers, whose journal, *Faith and Philosophy*, grew to be among the most highly regarded journals in the field.

While Wolterstorff may rightfully be among the most prominent of Christian scholars, and philosophy may be one of the disciplines in which Christian scholars exerted some of the greatest influence, such gains were seen in other areas. For example, one exhibit found in *Christian Faith and Scholarship* lists over forty Christian professional associations in disciplines ranging from the humanities to the social sciences to the natural sciences. Some disciplines even have organizations representing subdisciplines such as neuroscience. Many of these organizations now also sponsor academic journals. For example, the Conference on Faith and History sponsors *Fides et Historia*, the Society of Christian Psychology sponsors *Christian Psychology*, and the Association of Christians in the Mathematical Sciences recently moved from sponsoring the *Journal of the Association of Christians in the Mathematical Sciences* to publishing its refereed conference proceedings.

At the same time, the evangelical colleges and universities where many of these scholars served were seeing unprecedented growth. Part of this growth came through the establishment of programs initially designed to meet the educational needs of working adults. Some components of those programs were then made available online once the technology was widely available. However, the infrastructures of these institutions designed to meet the educational expectations of "traditional-age" college students (eighteen to twenty-two years of

age and residential) also grew at unprecedented rates.

For example, between 1990 and 2004, the U.S. Department of Education data suggests that there was 12.8 percent growth for four-year public institutions, 28 percent growth for four-year independent institutions, and 70.6 percent growth for evangelical colleges and universities (memberships in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities). While the state of the evangelical mind in the United States is the primary focus of this volume, those numbers prove to be more dramatic when the circle of institutions is expanded to include the fact that seventy-nine new Protestant colleges or universities were started in Asia, Africa, and Oceania between 1980 and 2009.

Beyond the associations and institutions many evangelical scholars populated, other institutions grew during this period of time in terms of both the quantity and quality of their efforts, institutions upon which evangelical scholars also came to depend when sharing their work. Of greatest importance may be publishing houses. Evangelical scholars began publishing books with university presses and various trade publishers with greater frequency during the 1990s and 2000s. However, publishers such as William B. Eerdmans, the previously noted publisher of *Scandal*, Baker Academic, and IVP Academic became even more critical partners in this process. At the same time, new or revamped publishers such as Abilene Christian University Press, Baylor University Press, Kregel Publications, and Wipf and Stock, to name only a few, joined those ranks in their own ways. As a result, evangelical scholars were not only generating more work but also had access to a wider network of publishing partners who were increasingly capable of sharing that work.

Finally, in ways comparable to the recognition evangelical scholars such as Nicholas Wolterstorff were receiving from various academic associations, the work of others was garnering prizes of considerable significance. Among the most noteworthy was when George M. Marsden's *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* received the Bancroft Prize in 2004. "The Bancroft Prizes were established at Columbia University in 1948 with a bequest from Frederic Bancroft, the historian,

author and librarian of the Department of State, to provide steady development of library resources, to support instruction and research in American history and diplomacy and to recognize exceptional books in the field." In relation to Marsden's work, jurors for the prize noted, "Moving easily from the expansive realms of transatlantic thought to the narrow precincts of town and gown squabbles, Marsden captures both the man and his times in all their color and complexity."

Two years later, the "wounded lover" who set out to incite an intellectual renaissance amongst evangelical scholars would be a National Humanities Medalist. The award Mark Noll received "honors individuals or groups whose work has deepened the nation's understanding of the humanities and broadened our citizens' engagement with history, literature, languages, philosophy, and other humanities subjects." Other individuals receiving the National Humanities Medal that year include Nobel Prize winning economist James M. Buchanan and Nikolas Davatzes, founder of the History Channel, the A&E Network, and the Biography Channel. In relation to Noll's contributions, the National Endowment for the Humanities noted, "As a historian, Noll has established himself as a leading scholar on the history of Christianity in the United States."

A Tale of Peril?

Shortly after Noll's National Humanities Medal was minted, the state of the evangelical mind, albeit slowly but surely, began to change. In 2007, cracks were beginning to form in the global economy, and by 2008 the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression was underway. For example, institutions such as many evangelical colleges, universities, and seminaries were fortunately, at that time, not heavily endowed. As a result, their tuition-driven status served them well in the short run. Individuals who lost jobs sought to enhance their expertise or change professions and returned to school.

As has been historically proven, however, being heavily endowed, even if painful in the late 2000s, yields greater financial security than being heavily dependent upon tuition revenue. As the stock market rose, so did college endowments. However,

the lingering effects of the recession eventually came calling for heavily tuition-dependent institutions. Part of the reason for this mounting challenge came at the nexus of concerns over personal debt and the seemingly ever-increasing cost of tuition at private institutions. In the early 2010s, facing the possibility of enrollment downturns, many Christian colleges and universities sought to maximize their discount rates or the level of financial aid they could offer in relation to their costs for tuition—and in some cases, room and board as well. An arms race in financial aid thus ensued as many institutions, afraid of posting declining enrollments, allowed their discount rates to rise to unsustainable levels. At the same time, some schools had no choice but to face the reality of "right-sizing," or laying off staff, administrators, and faculty members.

If these financial challenges were not enough to at least initiate a more cautious spirit among institutions called to cultivate the evangelical mind, a confusing political climate unleashed even more anxiety. While never simple, the landscape shared by evangelicals and American political life in the months leading up to the 2016 presidential election proved even more complicated than in recent years. Racing toward the finish line were two candidates with the lowest favorability ratings in history—Hillary Rodham Clinton and Donald J. Trump. According to a Gallup poll released on election day, "Trump's 61% unfavorable score is worst in presidential polling history," while "Clinton's 52% unfavorable score is second-worst." Early the next day, predictions that the candidate with the second-worst unfavorable score would win proved to be wrong as Trump emerged as the forty-fifth president of the United States.

White evangelicals historically tend to vote in larger numbers for Republican presidential candidates than Democrats. Despite garnering the worst unfavorable score in history, that voting trend, despite some predictions, only continued in relation to Trump. The Pew Research Center noted, "White, born-again/evangelical Christian[s] voted for Trump to the tune of 81% in 2016. In comparison, 78% of white evangelicals voted for Mitt Romney in 2012, 74% voted for John McCain in 2008, and 78% voted for George W. Bush in

2004." In *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Frances FitzGerald notes white evangelical leaders decided that "Trump wasn't so bad: At least he wasn't Hilary Clinton."

If challenges posted by the wider economic and political climates were not enough, evangelicals also found themselves dealing with an uncharted set of theological questions that revolved in particular around questions of same-sex attraction. On June 26, 2015, the United States Supreme Court issued its opinion in *Obergefell et al. v. Hodges, Director, Ohio Department of Health, et al.* Writing for the majority, Justice Anthony Kennedy offered men and women seeking to marry members of the same sex hope "not to be condemned to live in loneliness, excluded from one of civilization's oldest institutions. They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right."

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act signed into law by President Barack Obama on March 23, 2010, raised considerable questions for religious institutions in relation to the latitude they would possess concerning how they provided health care for their employees.

Such questions already made their way to the Supreme Court via cases such as *Burwell, Secretary of Health and Human Services, et al. v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, a case decided no more than one year before *Obergefell*. Beyond the decision itself, however, *Obergefell* exposed fault lines among evangelicals that existed prior to the decision but had generally gone unrecognized.

In *Still Evangelical? Ten Insiders Reconsider Political, Social, and Theological Meaning*, Mark Labberton, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, writes, "As the East and West Coasts of the United States have led the way in the growing affirmation of LGBT people and lifestyles, evangelicals in these regions have quietly done likewise." In particular, Labberton offers, "Perhaps even more noteworthy is the generational divide over the acceptance of LGBT relationships, with affirmation from 47 percent of white evangelicals under the age of 30, despite their otherwise more traditional views."

Cumulatively, these financial, political, and theological realities, among others, called into question the confidence of evangelicals and, in the case of this particular work, of evangelicals called to cultivate the mind. Churches, parachurch organizations, colleges and universities, and seminaries were now often more consumed with navigating these realities than they were with advancing an agenda of their own creation. For example, research and the fruits it yielded came to seem like a luxury to college and university administrators trying to balance budgets. Regardless of the quality of their work, faculty committed to those tasks, especially if those tasks came with lighter teaching loads and thus lower tuition generation, were vulnerable to layoffs. How then would these leaders navigate such a future for their institutions? After years of prosperity, was the state of the evangelical mind now once again a story of peril?

Charting a Way Forward

Amid these realities, the contributors to this volume collectively seek to assess the state of the evangelical mind, identify its unique contributions, and chart a way forward. As already suggested, doing so primarily focuses on four sets of institutions historically charged with the cultivation of the evangelical mind: churches, parachurch organizations, colleges and universities, and seminaries. While the efforts of individuals are critical to the cultivation of the evangelical mind, sustained change often comes through contributions they make in various ways through one or more of these types of institutions.

While rightfully quick to note institutions "make possible, and perpetuate in the deepest and most lasting ways, the twin distortions of idolatry and injustice," in *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power* Andy Crouch also boldly claims that "institutions make image bearing possible." For these reasons, the contributors to this volume, both individuals of considerable influence in the lives of the institutions about which they write, focus on how churches, parachurch organizations, colleges and universities, and seminaries contribute to the life of the evangelical mind.

We know of no better way to open such a conversation than to turn to Mark Noll himself and

ask him to offer a more detailed set of reflections on the recent past—the past since the publication of *Scandal*. Respectively, Jo Anne Lyon, David C. Mahan and C. Donald Smedley, Timothy Larson, and Lauren F. Winner focus their energies on churches, parachurch organizations, colleges and universities, and seminaries. To conclude, James K. A. Smith details prospects for the future, while Mark Galli seeks to clarify what is unique about evangelicalism and the evangelical mind.

Despite their expertise, none of these contributors claim to offer all of the answers. However, what they do offer is a context in which conversations concerning the present state and the future of the evangelical mind can be processed. What then is needed is for all who care about the cultivation of the evangelical mind to process what they offer and prayerfully consider what unique contributions they are called to make. If done in a context defined by our own capacities, considering the future likely brings fear. However, if done in a context defined by God's grace, considering the future comes with hope—hope granted by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and the knowledge of what is to come. What is left to do is prayerfully consider and then act on the details.
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[Secular Nations under New Gods: Christianity's Subversion by Technology and Politics](#) by Willem H. Vanderburg [University of Toronto Press, 9781487523039]

The ongoing political muscle-flexing of diverse Christian communities in North America raises some deeply troubling questions regarding their roles among us. Earlier analyses including Herberg's [Protestant, Catholic, Jew](#) showed that these three branches of the Judaeo-Christian tradition correspond to three forms of the American way of life; while Kruse's *One Nation Under God* showed how Christian America was shaped by corporate America. Willem H. Vanderburg's *Secular Nations under New Gods* proceeds based on a dialogue between Jacques Ellul's interpretation of the task of Christians in the world and Ellul's interpretation of the roles of technique and the nation-state in individual and collective human life. He then adds new insight into our being a symbolic species dealing with our finitude by living through the

myths of our society and building new secular forms of moralities and religions. If everything is political and if everything is amenable to discipline-based scientific and technical approaches, we are perhaps treating these human creations the way earlier societies did their gods, as being omnipotent, without limits. Vanderburg argues that until organized Christianity becomes critically aware of sharing these commitments with their societies, it will remain entrapped in the service of false gods and thereby will continue to turn a message of freedom and love into one of morality and religion.

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Excerpt: Before I can help you decide whether or not this book is for you, I need to briefly step back because its topic is one against which our life in North America has largely been poisoned. In my teenage years I entered an engineering faculty to study technology. This gradually made me realize

that I was entering into a problematic relationship with a world dominated by all manner of technological gadgets, large systems that provided most of the necessities of life, and an urban habitat that may be regarded as a technical life-milieu of our own making that we had inserted into our natural life-milieu. By this I mean that my engineering mindset and its related approaches that were becoming my own were making it very difficult, if not impossible, for all of us to be ourselves, and that all our efforts to "move forward" were no longer under the control of our aspirations. I could not dismiss a growing sense that I was learning to use a tool without simultaneously learning when to put it down when another one was required for the job. Worse, neither my faculty nor the university had any answers or showed any interest in this dilemma. They were supported in all this by a society that appeared to live with its technology as if it had no limits — or at least no limits that we needed to be concerned about. Consequently, the outcome would be the same as if we had hired a contractor who was so lacking in experience that he believed his hammer was the right tool for all the different repairs that needed to be made to our home. Our society appeared to be in the grip of a kind of frenzy to increase its economic fertility, accompanied by a willingness to surrender a great deal of ourselves, to the point that we would never be able to achieve our aspirations because we were constantly adjusting them in a downward fashion.

When I admitted these kinds of reservations to others, it was not uncommon to be greeted by disbelief as to how I could possibly be so pessimistic. A few people even became hostile, accusing me of technology bashing and of wanting to go back to the dark ages. At the time I could not understand their reactions; it appeared to me that I was only asking common-sense questions as to what technology could and could not accomplish and how to respond to this situation.

To get a better grip on these dilemmas I plunged into the social sciences as soon as I had completed my doctorate in engineering. They provided me with a deeper understanding of our economic, social, political, and environmental situation, including what appeared to work well for us and

what did not. At the same time, there was something unreal about it all: the works I read in the social sciences made little or no reference to science and technology, as if human life and the world at that time could be understood with minimal reference to them, while to me it appeared that our lives and our world have become unthinkable without them. The practical implication of all this was that I was completely frustrated in becoming a better engineer who knew exactly how my "tool" was affecting everything in a positive or negative manner or whether it left things relatively unaffected. From cultural anthropology and some other disciplines I did learn that the accusation of technology bashing was essentially equivalent to a taboo against touching something sacred in a traditional society. Moreover, although we had generally become increasingly aware of how everything was related to, and evolved in relation to, everything else as a consequence of the power of our technical means, all earlier societies had lived with certain entities in this interrelatedness as if they were autonomous, without limits, and thus all powerful, so as to shield them from any external influences. These entities were symbolized and lived with as a sacred or as myths in the traditional pre-industrial societies. It slowly began to dawn on me that our failure to deal with technology in a common-sense manner was the result of our having a secular religious attitude towards it, thus treating it in exactly the same way as earlier societies had dealt with their gods — gods who needed to be brought around to aiding human life by the means of a morality and a religion through which these gods were served.

The more I learned and the more I used it to take stock of who we were and where we were going, the more I was uncomfortably reminded of past societies who saw their agricultural fertility threatened by a lack of rain and who engaged in all kinds of magical and religious rituals to have their gods co-operate to grant them this rain. We used to scoff at these stories when we heard them in our Sunday school classes because we could not make any sense of them. Surely, these people would have been better off if they had developed some technology to deal with droughts directly, which could provide water for agriculture in other ways. Nevertheless, the more I learned about our

own civilization, the more I could not shake the idea that such stories essentially described our problematic relationships with science, technology, the state, and politics by treating them as if they had no limits.

With a great deal of hindsight and decades of struggle, it now appears surprisingly obvious how to demonstrate the validity of the above intuitions regarding our so-called secular civilization. As will be shown in greater detail later, almost every aspect of our contemporary ways of life is organized, adapted, and improved on the basis of discipline-based approaches to scientific knowing, technical doing, and political organizing. These approaches essentially deal with human life and the world one category of phenomena at a time, since the specialists of each discipline deal with only one such category to the exclusion of all others from each domain of their disciplines. Consequently, these discipline-based approaches to human knowing, doing, and organizing have proved themselves to be spectacularly successful for dealing with situations characterized by the influence of one category of phenomena, so dwarfing the influences of all other categories that they can be neglected. These approaches are entirely unsuited to all the other situations characterized by multiple categories of phenomena making non-negligible contributions. As a result, such situations cannot be examined one category of phenomena at a time without a significant loss of understanding, which will distort the situation if we act on it by means of these discipline-based approaches.

Our problematic relationships with our most significant undertakings have thus come into focus. The kinds of situations to which discipline-based approaches are eminently suited are almost entirely found within those parts of our world that are organized like classical or information machines and everything built up with them, including the complex socio-technical systems by which we accomplish almost everything. In contrast, the kinds of situations to which discipline-based approaches cannot be applied without significant distortions and aberrations are mostly found in everything living. Any biological life is highly enfolded because the "design" of any organism is enfolded

into each cell as well as expressing the architecture of all life via the DNA pool. Consequently, the architecture of life is not amenable to being divided into distinct and separate parts that can be defined on their own terms, measured, and mathematically represented, to be added to our overall understanding of that life. Its complexity is such that an overall comprehension cannot be arrived at by adding the understanding of all parts one at a time. In attempts to understand ourselves as a symbolic species, matters are even more complex because the lives of the members of a community are also dialectically enfolded by the way they are suspended in its language and culture. All this can explain how our civilization succeeds so brilliantly in some endeavours and fails so spectacularly in others. The latter may be summed up as endangering the liveability and viability of our societies as well as the life-sustaining capacities of the biosphere.

In sum, if what we truly desire is a happier, more livable, meaningful, and purposeful life, our endless stimulation of our scientific, technical, and organizational "fertility" is without sense or purpose. Once we recognize the limitations of our discipline-based approaches, it will not be very difficult to find alternative ones in order to transcend these limits and thus complement the discipline-based approaches. We will then be able to use the discipline-based approaches where they are appropriate and use others where they are not. It is no different from having different tools in a toolbox, each eminently suited to a particular purpose that is circumscribed by limits that are overcome by other tools. Consequently, what really stands in our way is not the limitations of our endeavours as such but our secular religious attitudes towards our discipline-based approaches with which we build up our science, technology, and organizations of all kinds. It has nothing to do with philosophy or metaphysics. Take a look around you and try to identify a university doing research on finding the limits of discipline-based approaches in order to transcend them with complementary alternatives. You will not be able to find one, nor will you find such efforts in any other institutions. Once again, we live with these discipline-based approaches as if they have no limits — or at least none we need to be concerned about. We are thus

no different from all the other civilizations that have preceded us whose member societies treated certain entities in their experience as godlike, that is, as being omnipotent, autonomous, and without limits, to the point that the only way to influence them was by means of religious approaches.

It has become strategically important to understand why all traditional societies, without any exceptions, symbolized some entities in the experiences of their members as godlike and thus without limits, and why this persists in our present civilization in the form of secular religious attitudes towards those human works furthest removed from anything moral or religious. Although the sociology of religion has provided us with some answers, recent developments have made it possible to go much further. Our discipline-based approaches to human knowing, doing, and organizing have largely displaced their cultural counterparts. This has had a powerful de-symbolizing effect on the symbolic cultures of our contemporary societies. It has resulted in a diminished capacity of the symbolic cultures to sustain human life. The traditional and the new media compensate for this lack by submerging everyone in a bath of images that collectively accomplish much of what customs and traditions did in earlier societies — but not by words and with a lesser existential depth. These developments have made us more aware of the complexity of our links with what we refer to as reality than have the explanations of our simplistic scientism with its objective and detached observers capable of uncovering the "facts" without any decisive internal or external influences, and so on. From the perspective of the social sciences, this capability is simply impossible. It compelled me to carefully examine our being a symbolic species, with the humanity of its members completely dependent on listening to human words in order to suspend them in a language and a culture.

The difficulty faced by any such language or culture is that it symbolizes everything in human life and the world by relating it to everything else, thus opening ourselves up to a potential chaos that could result from relativism, nihilism, and anomie. Every language and culture has dominated this threat by creating absolute points of reference based on the body of experience of a community.

This experience is absolutized by essentially interpolating and extrapolating all experiences of a person into a life, and these lives of the members of a community into a way of life with a history. At the same time, the unknown is thus symbolized as more of what a community knows and lives, and this symbolization corresponds to what in disciplines such as cultural anthropology have been referred to as a sacred and myths.

All this reminded me of a parallel explanation in the opening chapters of the book of Genesis in the Jewish and Christian Bibles. The only threat to humanity, against which it was warned by God, was constituted by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In Hebrew this latter expression can also mean "everything," with the result that what is symbolized here is also the living of human life by symbolically appropriating everything and thus refusing to live as a creature, by putting oneself in God's place. Good and evil thus have no moral or religious content, and these chapters of Genesis mount an attack against all morality, religion, and magic.

This interpretation is consistent with the entire so-called creation account and everything that follows in the Jewish and Christian Bibles. It opens by telling us that light, interpreted as "time" by early Jewish commentators, is created, and thus begins a powerful polemic against the culture that made time into a god. In the periods of creation that follow, we are told that everything that surrounds us in this universe is also created and thus not a god. The stars, the crocodile, the hippopotamus, the serpent, or anything created cannot become sacred other than through religious attitudes towards it. Hence, the creation account is also a powerful polemic against all cultures that, following the break with God, found it necessary to treat one or more created entities as being sacred, autonomous, and limitless. Consequently, faithful Jews and Christians ought to behave in ways that show that there cannot be anything sacred in this creation, while understanding from insights gained from cultural anthropology, the sociology of religion, and history that the relativity of everything in human life and in this creation imposes the necessity of struggling against the constant threat of relativism, nihilism, and anomie. Some of us cannot

escape serving two masters: the living God in whom we believe and the false gods that make human life in a time, place, and culture possible. The entire Jewish and Christian Bibles speak to this dilemma.

If, at this point, you my reader are tempted to close this book because of what in North America passes for Christianity, I could hardly blame you. What the churches have collectively revealed about it is so contradictory, confusing, and judgmental, and so detached from our daily lives, that it may be difficult to imagine the possibility that it should all have been very different given this attack on morality and religion in the opening pages of the Jewish and Christian Bibles. Neither Judaism nor Christianity was supposed to fill the moral and religious needs that human life had following the break between God and a humanity that now desired to know and decide everything for itself. Hence, if my reader can bear with me for a few more paragraphs, I will briefly attempt to provide a preview of what is set out in this work as an alternate interpretation of the task of Judaism and Christianity to the benefit of all humanity, which is as strategically important today as it was in earlier days.

This task was clearly understood by a faithful remnant in Israel that was usually opposed and often even persecuted by the religious and political establishments. The role of Christianity in Western civilization, from which our global civilization was born, rarely gave any evidence that there was no possibility whatsoever of anything being sacred or godlike; and this being the case, there was a total impossibility of any absolute points of reference that could anchor a morality or a religion. In other words, Christians rarely lived in total freedom in a perfectly secular universe, with God being its creator. Given the deeply religious and moral world in which they lived, they rarely lived as if, following the break between God and humanity, this architecture of the creation became unlivable without religious enslavement. Humanity was not God, and thus every society was faced with the threat of anomie, which the Greeks understood as the impossibility of human relationships resulting from lawlessness. Anomie would result from relativism and nihilism unless absolute reference points could be created in a world in which

everything was related to, and evolved in relation to, everything else, thus making everything relative. A society therefore had to spiritually name itself by means of the creation of a sacred and myths that permeated daily life by means of a morality and religion.

The early Christians found themselves in a unique situation, where they had to interpret their faith and life in relation to their Jewish roots, the Christian gospel, and the pagan cultures in which they lived. It gave them a unique iconoclastic orientation, which appears not to have lasted beyond an influx of converts from more affluent and educated strata of the societies of the Roman Empire. With this influx came a growing influence of Greek philosophy on Christianity at the expense of its Jewish roots. Nevertheless, for a time, because of the way the early Christians lived by refusing anything sacred and religious, their presence in the Roman Empire shook everything for which it stood. Eventually Rome recognized that there was no other solution but to make Christianity the official religion of its empire — but when Christians accepted this, Christianity was lost. It simply became another religion and morality serving the sacred and the myths that societies needed to provide life with absolute meaning, direction, and purpose. Christianity thus became dedicated to absolutizing those entities in human experience that were so important and essential that without them this life would simply be unimaginable and unlivable: How would people live, how would they do anything, and what would their world be like without these entities? It was as if these entities had created human life and the world to be who and what they were. They were the greatest good a community could know, were therefore sacralized as such, and were related to by means of gods and idols appeased by a religion and a morality. In this way the institutionalized Christian church became the sacred of the medieval societies of Western Europe. It completely ignored the orientation of its gospel, which taught that the only religion acceptable to God was to serve the weakest and most vulnerable members of society, as is evident from the letter of James and the parables of the kingdom of heaven, for example.

We have become so accustomed to the idea that we live in secular mass societies that we have not bothered to investigate whether there continue to be sacred entities in our midst. Had the Jewish and Christian communities understood the opening chapters of Genesis (and especially their reinforcement by Qohelet) with the hindsight of the history of the Jewish people, the course of events in North America during the last few centuries might have been entirely different — and this most likely would have been the case in Europe as well. The Jewish and Christian presence would have been one that refused anything sacred, omnipotent, or limitless. However, this does not mean that these communities would have "bashed" science, technology, the state, and politics any more than the early Christians bothered to "bash" the gods of the Roman Empire. Their behaviour was a great deal more disturbing than that, and it unsettled the societies of their time. As a result, today's Jews and Christians would have recognized that the discipline-based approaches to scientific knowing are very effective within their limits, but that beyond these limits they treat everything as being non-living. Consequently, it would have become obvious that this approach to scientific knowing could be extremely destructive beyond its limits of validity. The same is true for technology. The discipline-based approaches to human doing are very powerful within their limits and equally destructive outside of them, where they have created almost all the crises by which we are surrounded today. It is no different than the previously referred to contractor who hammers away at everything. Our banging away at everything with our discipline-based approaches is also making a big mess within everything living. In sum, our secular religious attitudes to science and technology have robbed us of our ability to behave sensibly in a truly secular creation.

It would appear that Jews and Christians need to reinterpret what they understand by religion and morality, while at the same time we all need to rethink our sociological and historical conceptions of religion, which had their roots in the interpretations of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and others. Had Judaism and Christianity lived by the first three promises of the Decalogue, these communities would have demonstrated how we can maintain our

freedom in relation to our most powerful works and avoid becoming enslaved to them. It is but one aspect of the way in which Christianity addresses every aspect of our lives, making its reduction to an enslaving morality and religion the antithesis of itself. All this takes us right back to God's setting aside the Jewish people for this task. Following their liberation from slavery, he gave them permission to live without gods, without idols, and thus without morality and religion, and took the necessary steps to make this possible. Instead, the Decalogue itself was quickly turned into a morality and a religion.

God had made new life possible by restoring a relationship between himself and his people to the extent that they would permit it. With the incarnation, this link became permanent and could never be eliminated; the architecture of the creation in terms of the fundamental relationships between God, humanity, and the creation was changed for all time.

This "structural" dimension of Christianity was entirely eliminated when it was engulfed by the upheavals that accompanied industrialization, urbanization, and so-called secularization. As we will show later in greater detail, Christianity became split into two streams. One stream was so bewildered by the turmoil and the tremendous suffering unleashed by these developments that it clung to the "vertical" dimension of Christianity at the expense of the "horizontal" dimension, thus separating the two great commandments that jointly summed up everything. There was an emphasis on our relationship with God through Bible-reading, prayer, and devotional activities at the expense of everything else. Its significance can readily be explained by using a biblical metaphor in which Jews and Christians are to bear the Light of the revelation as a lamp illuminating their way in a world of darkness. The lamp they carry represents the Light in so far as they have understood it. Consequently, conservative Christians made their lamps almost into ends in themselves, and by concentrating on their lamps their eyes grew accustomed to them as opposed to the dark world that they no longer actively illuminated. They promptly lost their way and became irrelevant in

terms of their roles as Light, yeast, or salt for the world, to use other biblical metaphors.

In contrast, the liberal stream was so concerned about the turmoil and the suffering it had caused during the early phase of industrialization, urbanization, and so-called secularization, that it found it necessary to emphasize the second great commandment dealing with the "horizontal" dimension associated with relationships among people. Their lamps were thus affected in another way, one that initially helped them understand the world, but they quickly did the equivalent of putting their lamps down in order to free both hands to be more effectively of help in the world. Soon they moved out of range of their lamps and also lost their way in the world.

Simply put, the conservative stream of Christianity opened itself up to becoming assimilated by the way of their society, which they essentially complemented by filling a supposed void with a Christian morality and religion. The liberal stream of Christianity opened itself up to the way of its society by contributing what it perceived was the social good so urgently needed in the turmoil and suffering all around it, in the context of which people once again had to learn to be their brothers' and sisters' keepers. In neither stream were the lamps used to illuminate the way of God in the world, and over time their ways became essentially indistinguishable from the cultural way of their society. This resulted in everyone serving two masters: the secular sacred and myths of a society, and God. Both streams, each in its own way, lived as if they could have both good and evil and thus have it all. This serving of two masters continues to characterize our situation today. Only if Jews and Christians walk with their lamps to light their ways in a dark world are they able to be in the world but not of the world, and only thus can they transform the world by being what yeast is to dough and salt is to food. Today this kind of integral Christianity is almost entirely missing in North America. For this reason my analysis concludes that the Christian presence in North America is a false one. It also means that the creation of new secular sacreds and myths to shield contemporary societies from relativism, nihilism, and anomie has gone unchallenged by the presence of

people who ought to have been completely indifferent to anything sacred or religious, and who by their presence ought to have called everything into question.

If my reader is still with me, I invite you to embark on a journey that has left none of my received ideas standing. I trust it may do the same for you because beyond them you will most likely encounter something infinitely more beautiful and liveable. This journey represents a dialogue between a number of passages from the Jewish and Christian Bibles and the new awareness of ourselves as a symbolic species under the enormous pressure of de-symbolization — an awareness that has lifted the veil on our claims of being secular. We, as members of a symbolic species, interact with the Jewish and Christian Bibles in ways that are necessarily reciprocal in character. With our human words we inevitably project something on these texts, but, by the Spirit, these texts may create something new in us that is greater than what our human words can contain. Moreover, because we read these texts as a revelation from a transcendent God, they represent something radically other than the way of our culture. There is always, however, a strong possibility of what Devereux examined as counter-transference reactions, through which we reduce the anxiety and tension that results from coming in contact with something that threatens all our received ideas and our lives. At the same time, this reciprocal interaction can also help us to become more aware of what we are projecting on the text as we read it in the language and culture in which we are suspended. Such a reading thus confronts the two masters we inevitably serve. The complexity of this relationship will be developed further in this work.

In sketching the scope and aim of this work, I cannot suppress the sentiment of being back in graduate school and having just proposed a near impossible thesis project to my supervisor. In case my reader shares this feeling, I should explain that the present work seeks to elaborate what may be regarded as a kind of "intellectual base map" of what is happening to individual and collective human life in an increasingly global civilization at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This map was previously developed by "re-symbolizing" the findings of

discipline-based approaches through a dialectical reinterpretation of the meaning and significance of each finding relative to all the others. This was done in dialogue with broader interdisciplinary studies that had attempted to create alternative base maps of how everything in human life is related to, and evolves in relation to, everything else. Such maps were implicit in all the great classical works such as those of Karl Marx, Max Weber, Arnold Toynbee, and, most recently, Jacques Ellul. The present work seeks to enrich this intellectual base map by filling in the critically important role played by our secular religious attitudes towards our most powerful and successful creations and how, especially in North America, Christianity has become enslaved to them. This work thus continues a kind of intellectual ecumenism aimed at overcoming the fragmentation of our knowing and doing by discipline-based approaches.

I began the development of this base map as a post-doctoral fellow in France under Jacques Ellul. It contained societies and civilizations as the cultural entities of human history prior to the emergence of discipline-based approaches. When it was completed, we agreed that it was entirely implicit in Ellul's own work. Its publication was followed by four volumes that jointly examined the evolving relationship between technique and culture. Technique refers to the system of discipline-based approaches for knowing, doing, economic growing, and political organizing, and culture refers to the alternative approaches by which we make sense of and live in the world by symbolizing everything in human experience via a language and everything associated with its acquisition. With my engineering background, I was able to establish detailed "sub-maps" of the inner workings of technique, since it may be argued that the engineering discipline is to technique what the discipline of physics is to science.

The intellectual base map elaborated in this volume also builds on Jacques Ellul's interpretation of Christianity as a non-religion and a non-morality, which he illuminated by examining the relevant parts of the Jewish and Christian Bibles. These studies were an integral part of his reading the Bible with students and colleagues who had

approached him with existential questions that were triggered by events in their lives and by following his courses or reading his publications. During the time that I was able to attend these discussions, the groups were carefully balanced between Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and agnostic participants. I found these discussions so helpful and so unlike anything I had heard in churches that I urged Jacques Ellul to publish the presentations he made to these groups for the purpose of drawing together our discussions. He was reluctant to do so until we met for the last time about a year before his death, when he knew he would be unable to do it himself, and he gave me permission to proceed. This resulted in a two-volume intellectual base map of his understanding of Christianity, which has also profoundly influenced the present work. His interpretation of Christianity as a non-religion and a non-morality would shock many people, but it is partly rooted in the works of Soren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth, and the very possibility was acknowledged by some agnostic thinkers, including Karl Marx. Of course, this interpretation pulls the rug out from under much of institutionalized and politicized Christianity in North America, making it highly controversial with so much at stake.

To reach out to as many readers as possible, I did what I could to make this volume understandable to people who have not read the above seven volumes and who may not be familiar with the work of Jacques Ellul. Doing so involved some difficult strategic choices as to what parts of the intellectual base map to include and which sub-maps could simply be referenced for readers interested in the interrelatedness of some of its "parts." It was, without doubt, the most complex interdisciplinary task that I have tackled thus far. Hence, I was delighted when two of my anonymous reviewers explicitly stated that I had made this volume readable by itself. However, my strategic choices had two unavoidable consequences. Since the references I chose were designed to support readers seeking to inquire into important segments of the "map" that had to be left relatively undetailed, these references have been largely limited to the above seven volumes, the work of Jacques Ellul, and the scholarship this produced. It turns out that much of the scholarship based on the work of Jacques Ellul is not very helpful for reasons

that become apparent from Frederic Rognon's interviews with some sixty scholars who were influenced by Ellul. Simply put, much of this body of scholarship neither elaborates nor evolves the intellectual base map, especially for the developments that occurred after Ellul's death. Generally speaking, this also applies to the biblical scholarship carried out in particular denominational contexts.

It is via the sub-maps to which the references primarily refer that this work is connected to the broader literature.¹ The sub-maps generally require a re-symbolization that encounters a variety of intellectual obstacles because the architecture of the findings of discipline-based approaches is fundamentally different from that of their alternatives, as Benson Snyder's distinction between numeracy and literacy helps to explain. Moreover, numeracy is separated from experience and culture, while literacy is embedded in them, which has led to distinctions in the literature such as that between "intuitive physics" and "school physics." These kinds of reinterpretations were thus much more integral to the works referred to in the references than to the present volume and the reader should consult the works cited for specific entry points into the broader literature.

The second unavoidable consequence of my strategic decision to make this volume as readable as possible on its own was the difficulty of including specific page numbers in these references. They point to descriptions of sub-maps and patterns of connections. Consequently, when these descriptions are entirely contained within one chapter, I indicated this; but in most cases the context of the entire reference is indispensable.

I trust that this work continues the spirit of my French mentor, Jacques Ellul, who was always much more interested in dialogue with students who understood his work but disagreed with him, than with those who understood it but took it no further, as if it answered all questions. I have always told my students that what I fear most as a teacher is to discover something I have overlooked or misinterpreted that could call my entire intellectual life into question. The possibility of wasting your life and that of your students in this way ought to make us do all we can to remain "intellectual

extroverts," constantly interested in dialogue. In sum, the strategic choices I made in relation to this work and its references were done to support informed dialogue.

My greatest debt is obviously to Jacques Ellul, who is among the few intellectuals using their lamps to understand human life (including his own) and our world while at the same time questioning the possibility of this understanding being imposed on the very texts that fuel his lamp. This includes the counter-transference reactions that are unavoidable when our secular sacred collides with and is challenged by what is holy (what is set apart by God for his work of reconciliation and the making of all things new). Since his lamp is not the Light itself, my responsibility and that of my reader is to make their own discernment of his and my interpretations. Another model for living with and thinking with the Light as a lamp for understanding our life and our world is that of Søren Kierkegaard, who I understand less well. Apart from these two Christian thinkers, I am not aware of any other models of this approach, but this may be my own limitation. <>

[Gods and Robots: Myths, Machines, and Ancient Dreams of Technology](#) by Adrienne Mayor
[Princeton University Press, 9780691183510]

The fascinating untold story of how the ancients imagined robots and other forms of artificial life—and even invented real automated machines

The first robot to walk the earth was a bronze giant called Talos. This wondrous machine was created not by MIT Robotics Lab, but by Hephaestus, the Greek god of invention. More than 2,500 years ago, long before medieval automata, and centuries before technology made self-moving devices possible, Greek mythology was exploring ideas about creating artificial life—and grappling with still-unresolved ethical concerns about biotechné, "life through craft." In this compelling, richly illustrated book, Adrienne Mayor tells the fascinating story of how ancient Greek, Roman, Indian, and Chinese myths envisioned artificial life, automata, self-moving devices, and human enhancements—and how these visions relate to and reflect the ancient invention of real animated machines.

As early as Homer, Greeks were imagining robotic servants, animated statues, and even ancient versions of Artificial Intelligence, while in Indian legend, Buddha's precious relics were defended by robot warriors copied from Greco-Roman designs for real automata. Mythic automata appear in tales about Jason and the Argonauts, Medea, Daedalus, Prometheus, and Pandora, and many of these machines are described as being built with the same materials and methods that human artisans used to make tools and statues. And, indeed, many sophisticated animated devices were actually built in antiquity, reaching a climax with the creation of a host of automata in the ancient city of learning, Alexandria, the original Silicon Valley.

A groundbreaking account of the earliest expressions of the timeless impulse to create artificial life, *Gods and Robots* reveals how some of today's most advanced innovations in robotics and AI were foreshadowed in ancient myth—and how science has always been driven by imagination. This is mythology for the age of AI.

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Excerpt: *Made, Not Born*

Who first imagined the concepts of robots, automata, human enhancements, and Artificial Intelligence? Historians tend to trace the idea of the automaton back to the medieval craftsmen who developed self-moving machines. But if we cast our nets back even further, more than two thousand years ago in fact, we will find a remarkable set of ideas and imaginings that arose in mythology, stories that envisioned ways of imitating, augmenting, and surpassing natural life by means of what might be termed *biotechné*, "life through craft." In other words, we can discover the earliest inklings of what we now call biotechnology.

Long before the clockwork contraptions of the Middle Ages and the automata of early modern Europe, and even centuries before technological innovations of the Hellenistic period made sophisticated self-moving devices feasible, ideas about making artificial life—and qualms about replicating nature—were explored in Greek myths. Beings that were "made, not born" appeared in tales about Jason and the Argonauts, the bronze robot Talos, the techno-witch Medea, the genius craftsman Daedalus, the fire-bringer Prometheus, and Pandora, the evil fembot created by Hephaestus, the god of invention. The myths represent the earliest expressions of the timeless impulse to create artificial life. These ancient "science fictions" show how the power of imagination allowed people, from the time of Homer to Aristotle's day, to ponder how replicas of nature might be crafted. Ideas about creating artificial life were thinkable long before technology made such enterprises possible. The myths reinforce the notion that imagination is the spirit that unites myth and science. Notably, many of the automata and mechanical devices actually designed and fabricated in Greco-Roman antiquity recapitulate myths by illustrating and/or alluding to gods and heroes.

Historians of science commonly believe that ancient myths about artificial life only describe inert matter brought alive by a god's command or magician's spell. Such tales certainly exist in many cultures' mythologies. Famous examples include Adam and Eve in the Old Testament and Pygmalion's statue of Galatea in classical Greek myth. But many of the

self-moving devices and automata described in the mythical traditions of Greece and Rome—and in comparable lore of ancient India and China—differ in significant ways from things animated by magic or divine fiat. These special artificial beings were thought of as manufactured products of technology, designed and constructed from scratch using the same materials and methods that human artisans used to make tools, artworks, buildings, and statues. To be sure, the robots, replicants, and self-propelled objects described in myth are wondrous—marvelous beyond anything fashioned on earth by ordinary mortals—befitting the sublime abilities of gods and legendary inventors like Daedalus. One might consider the myths about artificial life as cultural dreams, ancient thought experiments, "what-if" scenarios set in an alternate world of possibilities, an imaginary space where technology was advanced to prodigious degrees.

The common denominator of mythic automata that took the forms of animals or androids like Talos and Pandora is that they were "made, not born." In antiquity, the great heroes, monsters, and even the immortal Olympian gods of myth were the opposite: they were all, like ordinary mortals, "born, not made." This distinction was a key concept in early Christian dogma too, with orthodox creeds affirming that Jesus was "begotten, not made." The theme arises in modern science fiction as well, as in the 2017 film *Blade Runner 2049*, whose plot turns on whether certain characters are replicants, facsimiles of real humans, or biologically conceived and born humans. Since archaic times, the difference between biological birth and manufactured origin marks the border between human and nonhuman, natural and unnatural. Indeed, in the stories of artificial life gathered here, the descriptive category made, not born is a crucial distinction. It separates automata described as fabricated with tools from lifeless objects that were simply enlivened by command or magic.

Two gods—the divine smith Hephaestus and the Titan Prometheus—and a pair of earthbound innovators—Medea and Daedalus—were involved in Greek, Etruscan, and Roman tales of artificial life. These four figures possess superhuman ingenuity, extraordinary creativity, technical virtuosity, and superb artistic skills. The techniques,

arts, crafts, methods, and tools they employ parallel those known in real life, but the mythic inventors achieve spectacular results that exaggerate and surpass the abilities and technologies available to mere mortals in the quotidian world.

With a few exceptions, in the myths as they have survived from antiquity, the inner workings and power sources of automata are not described but left to our imagination. In effect, this non-transparency renders the divinely crafted contrivances analogous to what we call "black box" technology, machines whose interior workings are mysterious. Arthur C. Clarke's famous dictum comes to mind: the more advanced the technology, the more it seems like magic. Ironically, in modern technoculture, most people are at a loss to explain how the appliances of their daily life, from smartphones and laptops to automobiles, actually work, not to mention nuclear submarines or rockets. We know these are manufactured artifacts, designed by ingenious inventors and assembled in factories, but they might as well be magic. It is often remarked that human intelligence itself is a kind of black box. And we are now entering a new level of pervasive black box technology: machine learning soon will allow Artificial Intelligence entities to amass, select, and interpret massive sets of data to make decisions and act on their own, with no human oversight or understanding of the processes. Not only will the users of AI be in the dark, but even the makers will be ignorant of the secret workings of their own creations. In a way, we will come full circle to the earliest myths about awesome, inscrutable artificial life and biotechné.

Finding felicitous and apt language to describe the range of automata and nonnatural beings designated in ancient mythology as made, not born is daunting. The magical and the mechanical often overlap in stories of artificial life that were expressed in mythic language. Even today, historians of science and technology acknowledge that robot, automaton, cyborg, android, and the like are slippery terms with no fixed definitions. I tend to use informal, conventional understandings for android, robot, automaton, puppet, AI, machine, cyborg, and so on, but for clarity, technical

definitions are given in the text, the endnotes, and the glossary.

This book surveys the wide range of forms of artificial life in mythology, which includes tales of quests for longevity and immortality, superhuman powers borrowed from gods and animals, as well as automata and lifelike replicants endowed with motion and mind. Although the focus is on the Mediterranean world, I have included some accounts from ancient India and China as well. Even though the examples of animated statues, self-moving objects, and simulacra of nature imagined in myths, legends, and other ancient accounts are not exactly machines, robots, or AI in the modern sense, I believe that the stories collected here are "good to think with," tracing the nascent concepts and imaginings about artificial life that preceded technological actualities.

It is important to avoid projecting modern notions of mechanics and technology onto antiquity, especially in view of the fragmentary nature of the ancient corpus about artificial life. This book is not intended to suggest direct lines of influence from myth or ancient history to modern technology, although resonances with modern science are noted. Here and there, I point out similar themes in modern mythologies of fiction, film, and popular culture, and I draw parallels to scientific history to help illuminate the natural knowledge and prescience embedded in mythic material. Along the way, the age-old stories, some very familiar and others long forgotten, raise questions of free will, slavery, the origins of evil, man's limits, and what it means to be human. As the evil robot Tik-Tok in John Sladek's 1983 science-fiction novel remarks, the very idea of an automaton leads one into "deep philosophical waters," posing questions of existence, thought, creativity, perception, and reality. In the rich trove of tales from the ancient mythic imagination, one can discern the earliest traces of the awareness that manipulating nature and replicating life might unleash a swarm of ethical and practical dilemmas, further explored in the epilogue.

So much of antiquity's literary and artistic treasure has been lost over the millennia, and much of what we have is incomplete and isolated from its original contexts. It is difficult to grasp just how much of

ancient literature and art has vanished. The writings—poems, epics, treatises, histories, and other texts—that survive are but a tiny slice compared to the wealth that once existed.

Thousands of artistic works have come down to us, but this is a small percentage of the millions that were created. Some art historians suggest that we have only about 1 percent of the Greek vase paintings ever made. And the modicum of literature and art that remains is often randomly preserved.

These cruel facts of loss and capricious preservation make what we do have that much more precious. They also determine one's approach and path of discovery and interpretation. In a study like this, we can analyze only what has managed to persist over millennia, as if we are following a breadcrumb trail in a deep, dark wood. And the birds have eaten most of the crumbs. Another analogy for what has perished and what survived derives from the nature of devastating wildfires cutting paths of destruction, driven by winds across a landscape of grass and trees. What remains after terrible fires is what foresters call a "mosaic effect": wide swaths of burned regions punctuated by patches of flowery meadows and copses of still-green trees. The random ravages of the millennia on Greek and Roman literature and art related to artificial life have left a patchwork dominated by blackened, empty spaces dotted here and there with vital passages and pictures from antiquity. Such a mosaic pattern necessitates a wandering path between evergreen oases, fortuitously preserved and elaborated over thousands of years. Following that path, we may try to imagine the original cultural landscape. A similar approach, "mosaic theory," is also used by intelligence analysts to try to compose a big picture by amassing small bits of information. For this book I have gathered every text and scrap of ancient poetry, myth, history, art, and philosophy related to artificial life that I have been able to find—and enough compelling evidence emerges to suggest that people of antiquity were fascinated, even obsessed, with tales of artificially creating life and augmenting natural powers.

This is all by way of saying that readers should not expect to find a simple linear route in these chapters. Instead, like Theseus following a thread to

navigate the Labyrinth designed by Daedalus—and like Daedalus's little ant making its way through a convoluted seashell to its reward of honey—we follow a meandering, backtracking, twisting thread of stories and images to try to understand how ancient cultures thought about artificial life. There is a narrative arc across the chapters, but the story lines are layered and braided, as we travel along what Artificial Intelligence futurist George Zarkadakis calls the "great river network of mythic narratives with all its tributaries, crisscrossing and circling back" to familiar characters and stories, and accumulating new insights as we go.

It may come as a relief to some, after wending our way through the vast memory palace of myth, that the final chapter turns to real, historical chronology of inventors and technological innovations in classical antiquity. This historical chapter culminates in the proliferation of self-moving devices and automata in the Hellenistic era, centered in that ultimate space of imagination and invention, Alexandria, Egypt.

Together these stories, both mythical and real, reveal the surprisingly deep roots of the quest for life that is made, not born. Let us join that quest.

<>

[Modern Technology and the Human Future: A Christian Appraisal](#) by Craig M. Gay [IVP Academic, 9780830852208]

Technology is not neutral. From the plow to the printing press, technology has always shaped human life and informed our understanding of what it means to be human. And advances in modern technology, from computers to smartphones, have yielded tremendous benefits. But do these developments actually encourage human flourishing? Craig Gay raises concerns about the theological implications of modern technologies and of philosophical movements such as transhumanism. In response, he turns to a classical affirmation of the Christian faith: Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God, took on human flesh. By exploring the doctrine of the incarnation and what it means for our embodiment, Gay offers a course correction to the path of modern technology without asking us to unplug completely. The doctrine of the incarnation

is not neutral either. It presents us an alternative vision for the future of humanity.

Technology Is Not Neutral

How did you come to write a book about how technology shapes human life?

Craig M. Gay: The book is part of a larger intellectual project that has sought to appreciate the impact of "modernity" on Christian faith and practice. More specifically, the book emerged out of a graduate course at Regent College (Canada) called "Christianity and Modern Technology." The course was premised on the assumption that modern technology is a significant social fact that Christians need to take care to understand if they are to be "salt and light" within contemporary culture.

How has your trajectory as a scholar and professor impacted your research and writing for this book?

Gay: My scholarly focus has been on unpacking "modernity" (and "postmodernity") for the sake of trying to discern just how and why contemporary societal conditions are impacting Christian faith and practice. I've researched and written on money and capitalism, on the process of "secularization," and on modern media and the demise of genuinely personal communication. Modern technology is obviously a crucial piece of this larger puzzle.

What makes your particular focus unique among other literature available?

Gay: The book's thesis is that modern technological development is, for a variety of reasons, trending away from—and thus diminishing—ordinary embodied human existence. Problematic in and of itself, the diminishment of ordinary embodied human existence by automatic machine technology must be seen—and must be declared—to be at odds with the Christian confession of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The problem is not simply the technology, however; rather it is the way we moderns view the world and our purposes within it. Both now stand in need of correction and renewal by way of basic Christian convictions.

What do you hope readers take away after reading Modern Technology and the Human Future?

Gay: The book explains that much of the momentum of technological development owes chiefly (though not exclusively) to economic requirements and the logic of money, a crucial connection that is very often overlooked and/or misunderstood.

The book also offers a concise and lucid account of what sets "modern" technology apart from its premodern antecedents, i.e., that peculiar way of "seeing" our world such that it appears to us as a neutral field of objects that stand ready for whatever uses we might devise for them. And the book moves beyond analysis and criticism of modern technological development to suggest a way of evaluating and constructively disciplining this development. It encourages Christian readers to remember what, from the point of view of basic Christian theology, the world is as well as who we are and the kind of work we have been called to do in this world.

Excerpt: On Eucharistic Embodiment

"What is Christianity? Likeness to God as far as is possible for human nature." Basil of Caesarea, *On the Human Condition*

The mechanical world picture and what we have called modern gnosticism are, of course, two sides of the same coin. The mechanical world picture leaves so little room for human personality that modern men and women have been all but compelled to posit another realm—conceivably a region of pure spirit or perhaps a virtual reality made possible (ironically) by advanced technology—to which we will one day escape and within which we will at last be truly ourselves, free from the confines of actual reality as well as from the interference of others. Once the stuff of science fiction, such aspirations are uttered quite seriously today in tech circles.

Unlike our third- and fourth-century forebears, those of us in the Christian church are not currently offering a great deal of resistance to the gnostic modern drift. Protestants, in particular—in both our "liberal" and "conservative" guises—have tended to succumb to a kind of discipleship that is either indistinguishable from secular "wisdom" or removed altogether from the exigencies of ordinary life-in-

this-world. Liberals speak of a "spirituality" derived from a "gospel" that has been so thoroughly demythologized that it is difficult to distinguish from ordinary well-wishing.

Conservatives, on the other hand, often stress the importance of being saved from this world but remain studiously vague as to what this salvation might actually be for.

Our difficulties no doubt stem from the fact that Protestants have spent so many of the last several hundred years in dialogue with modern science and technology and may even be considered responsible for the modern mechanical outlook in certain respects. Whatever the reasons, modern Protestant worship tends to reference a sacred that is outside of and largely unrelated to this world. Modern Protestant spirituality, furthermore, tends to emphasize the individual's private experience of God and encourages believers to anticipate being released from the limitations of this world altogether.

It is perhaps not surprising that modern Protestant believers have not been particularly sensitive to the threat modern automatic machine technology poses to human embodiment. Our experience of the world has been so disenchanting—or, more accurately, desacramentalized—that we tend to see little in ordinary embodied existence that discloses the life of God. A kind of mechanical frame of mind has prevented us from seeing that the entire world, including our own lives, participates in and proceeds moment by moment from the living God, the God "in whom we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). We have apparently also forgotten that when "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14) this both vindicated and immeasurably exalted ordinary embodied human existence.

What can we do about this? How can we re-absorb the implications for us that Jesus Christ was, and remains, as the Athanasian Creed states, "Perfect God; and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting?" How can we re-sacramentalize our experience of the world?

First, as suggested above, we need to recover the basic Christian doctrines of creation, incarnation, and resurrection, along with all their implications.

These are astonishing declarations of the relation of the Creator of all things to his creation, including ourselves. As Leonard Vander Zee observes, God's story and the creation's story come together in Christ, making things more than bits of matter, and opening our eyes to their ultimate transfiguration. Creation, incarnation and the ultimate re-creation of the cosmos reveal a God for whom matter matters, and material things open our eyes to the One who is above and beyond all things.'

Next, we must strive to put this theology into practice. This was discussed in chapter five, where I suggested that this labor might be helpfully conceived in terms of "practicing resurrection." While we await the general resurrection of the dead, we said, we can nevertheless try even now to anticipate—even if only in the sense of pointing to it—life in the new creation. As a kind of coda to this discussion, I would like to suggest that there is no better place to begin practicing resurrection, and no better way to celebrate human embodiment, than in celebrating the rite that has from the very beginning constituted the Christian church: that simple yet momentous act of remembering Christ's sacrifice in the sharing of the bread and wine in what the church has traditionally called the Eucharist.

What Happens in the Eucharist?

A number of profoundly important things happen in the Eucharist. Let's start by considering the most obvious: the Lord's Supper is a focal practice that brings us together in the name of Christ to prepare and eat a simple meal around a common table. It is an intrinsically embodied rite that centers in the basic bodily requirements of nourishment and sociality as well as the basic human practices of cooking and gathering around a table to eat.

The Eucharist is also the church's principal rite of remembrance, of recounting who Jesus was (and is) and what he did (and does) for us. As the apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian church,

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying,

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Cor 11:23-26)

But why remember and proclaim the awesome significance of the Lord's death (and resurrection!) in this peculiar way? Why around a table with a simple meal of bread and wine? Why are the bread and wine consecrated with the words "This is my body" and "This is the new covenant in my blood"?

The physical and material aspects of the Lord's Supper may be said to reflect a kind of divine accommodation to our physical weakness. Our Lord commanded us to use common, ordinary, and earthly elements in our sacramental proclamation of his death and resurrection because we are common, ordinary, and earthly beings. Seen in this light, the bread and wine may be said to manifest God's gracious condescension to us. Just as the Christ "became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14), so he has deigned to continue to dwell among us in the creatures of bread and wine. "The blessing of sacramental worship," Vander Zee writes,

is the thrill and comfort of knowing that God meets us where we are, washing us, feeding us, quenching our thirst for grace. We not only believe it, we sense it, see it, taste it, feel it, smell it and swallow it. What my mind doubts, my mouth tastes as the Lord's goodness. When my faith falters, my fingers can touch the truth.

In his teaching on the Eucharist, John Calvin emphasized this "fleshing out" of the Eucharistic remembrance. While the intellectual capacity of our souls enables us to confess that "Christ is Lord," Calvin noted, nevertheless we most fully and personally experience Christ's saving work through the bodily senses of taste, touch, smell, and sight. As physical creatures, Vander Zee stresses (recalling Calvin's teaching), we need more than simply to hear the gospel. Rather, we need to touch it, to smell and taste it, just as lovers need more than the words "I love you" but also a kiss and an embrace. In short, we require more than words to bring us into a relationship with Christ. We need things.

Yet the Eucharist doesn't merely symbolize our union with Christ in a way that we—frail, earth-bound creatures—can begin to comprehend it. It is not simply, as is sometimes (mischievously) said, a kind of "divine flannelgraph." Rather, the church has always insisted that the Eucharist actually enacts our union with Christ; that is, that the reception of "the most precious Body and Blood" of Christ of which we speak in the liturgy is not simply metaphorical, but real! Calvin, for example, went on to insist that our actual union with Christ—a union not just with his spirit but also with his body—was the essence of the Christian life.⁶ In participating in the Eucharist, he insisted, we are not simply reminded that this union will someday take place but instead that, in having physically eaten the bread and having drunk the wine, our union with Christ has actually—if mysteriously—been accomplished. In this connection, Calvin simply recalls the church's ancient teaching, formulated by Augustine, that the sacrament is an "effective sign," which is to say, it confers what it signifies.⁷ The significance of this for the Christian life simply cannot be overstated. As Ian McFarland writes,

If Christ's entire humanity has been glorified in the resurrection, and if the body and blood of the risen Christ are confessed as present in the consecrated elements of the Eucharist, then it follows that in the Eucharist we come into direct contact with glorified matter (viz., Christ's body and blood) in the world of time and space.

Our participation in Christ's real presence in the sacramental elements is not simply a kind of temporary accommodation. Christ does not meet us where we are provisionally, only then to return to a purely spiritual reality, to which we will someday also be called. Rather, just as the incarnation of God the Son was permanent and indicated an enduring transformation of created reality, so our union with Christ in the Eucharist signals that we are ourselves enduringly transformed in our ingestion of the consecrated bread and wine. Just as the incarnation signals that God has determined to indwell created reality in such a way as to render it even more real than it was before, it is precisely into this "more" that we are graciously introduced in the celebration of the Eucharistic feast.

Can we actually experience this "more," this newly intensified reality in the here and now? Of course! We experience it in the actions of believers, and indeed in our own actions, as we are "made new in the attitude of [our] minds" (Eph 4:23) and thus freed to do those good works that "God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph 2:10). As the apostle Paul insists in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" Still, although the New Testament insists that the new creation is manifest and that we should be looking for the signs of it, this does not necessarily imply a change in physical appearances, just as the elements of the Eucharist do not look any different after they have been consecrated with the words of institution. We must trust in the Lord's promise to be present to us in the consecrated bread and wine. We must walk by faith.

It is God the Holy Spirit who unites our bodies with Christ's resurrected body. For, as the Apostles' Creed affirms, the embodied Christ is now seated in "heaven" and "at the right hand of God the Father?" Although he will, as the Creed continues, "come again to judge the living and the dead," we must at present be lifted up in order to be united to him. This lifting up of our own bodies to be united with Christ's resurrected body, Calvin stressed, is the mysterious work of God the Holy Spirit:

Even though it seems unbelievable to us that Christ's flesh, separated from us by such a great distance, penetrates to us, so that it becomes our food, let us remember how far the secret power of the Holy Spirit towers above all our senses.... What, then, our mind does not comprehend, let faith conceive: that the Spirit truly unites things separated in space.

For Calvin, therefore, the liturgical phrase "lift up your hearts" was not simply metaphorical. Rather, at the Lord's Table our hearts are—in the power of the Holy Spirit—actually lifted up to Christ in heaven and united to his glorified humanity. Again, in ingesting the consecrated bread and wine our bodies are mysteriously united to his resurrected body. As Christ's resurrected body is the "firstfruits" of the resurrection (1 Cor 15:20), furthermore, so in the Eucharist we become—for the first time—fully

embodied, fully and eternally real. Irenaeus wrote about this reality already in the second century:

For, as the bread that comes from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God is no longer ordinary bread but the eucharist which comprises two elements, an earthly and a heavenly, so our bodies which participate in the eucharist are no longer corruptible, since they now have the hope of resurrection.

Finally, it is crucial to stress that the Eucharist is a communal meal. At the Lord's Table we eat bread and drink wine together. In the modern context of rationalized and atomized individuality, it is crucial to stress that the Eucharist both commemorates and effects our incorporation into the one body, making us members not simply of Christ but also of one another (1 Cor 10:17). As Peter Leithart observes, "Because we eat together of one loaf, we are one body.... called to radical Christlike, self-sacrificing love, to use whatever gifts we have for the edification of the body, to live lives of forbearance, forgiveness, and peace." Celebrating the Eucharist frequently, Leithart suggests, must surely help to "inoculate" the North American church against the gnostic tendencies of our technological culture.

Eucharistic Embodiment

While we await the resurrection and glorification of our bodies (cf. 1 Cor 15:12-58), the Eucharist suggests how this glorification needs now to be understood. For while the present form of things, bounded as it is by time, is necessarily "passing away" (1 Cor 7:31), this should not be taken to imply the dissolution of embodied existence. For God in Christ has not promised to make all new things, such that the Christian hope is someday to leave this world—including our bodies—entirely behind. Rather God has promised to make all things—including our bodies—new! We thus look forward to a renewal and not a replacement of created order, a renewal in which things will be "new" because God indwells them in a new way. God cannot be any nearer to his creation than he already is. What remains to be revealed, then, is a kind of deepened divine intimacy in which his servants will continually "see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads" (Rev 22:4). In the

celebration of the Eucharistic feast, we are given a taste of this future glory in the present. We are also embedded in the new creation. As McFarland writes,

The Eucharist draws us upward by drawing us together, binding us not only to one another but also to the bread and wine, which in their organic connection with soil, water, sun, and air implicate the whole web of creaturely relations that makes our life specifically and genuinely human.

In Christ, McFarland continues, God the Creator has also become a creature of earth. In eating the bread and drinking the wine that are Christ's body and blood, we proclaim that it is precisely because God has become a creature of earth that we, the creatures of earth, have also become the children of God. When, in the twinkling of the eye and at the last trumpet, we are "changed" (1 Cor 15:52), the nature of this change will not be such as to disembodied us, somehow releasing us from the limitations of space, time, and matter. Rather, we will be changed to become more fully and more gloriously embodied in a newly re-created order. We will then, as the apostle Paul puts it, finally be fully "clothed" with imperishability and immortality (1 Cor 15:54). McFarland cites Maximus the Confessor in this connection: "For the Word of God wills always and in all things to accomplish the mystery of his embodiment." Within Eastern Orthodoxy, the Eucharist is understood in terms of our priestly vocation within created order. Alexander Schmemmann writes:

The first, the basic definition of man is that he is the priest. He stands in the center of the world and unifies it in his act of blessing God, of both receiving the world from God and offering it to God.... The world was created as the "matter," the material of one all-embracing eucharist, and man was created as the priest of this cosmic sacrament.

The Eucharist is the sacrament of human embodiment, celebrating the astonishing incarnation of God the Son as an embodied human being, mysteriously uniting—in the power of God the Holy Spirit—our bodies to Christ's resurrected body and anticipating a gloriously embodied life within a resplendently renewed creation, to the glory of God the Father.

The Eucharist and Human Technology

The Eucharistic proclamation of "the Lord's death until he comes" should in no way be taken to imply the denial of human technology. On the contrary, the outward and visible signs of our union with Christ's body and blood are precisely the remarkable cultural—and, indeed, technological—achievements of bread and wine, both of which may be said to represent human ingenuity at its best. In the Eucharist, what we eat and drink is not simply what God gives to us but also that which we have labored, often by means of sophisticated technology, to produce.

Yet it is also true that the technologies employed in the Eucharist celebration are those that both require and nurture our resourcefulness and skill, that bring us together around a common table, that are a delight to our eyes, ears, noses, and tongues, that nourish our bodies, and that fill our hearts with joy. They are technologies that bespeak the remarkable fruitfulness of the created order and our unique place within it, reminding us just where we are as well as who we are. They are technologies that render our experience of ourselves, of each other, and of created reality more vivid and more real.

The technologies that lie behind and beneath the Eucharistic feast do not diminish us. Rather, they enable us—in and of themselves—to become more fully ourselves. It has been given to them to play an instrumental role in that rite that enables us to become most fully ourselves in Christ, and that is wonderful indeed. The Eucharist is surely a foretaste of heaven, when the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:24).

For all of our concerns about modern technology and the diminution of ordinary embodied human existence, our technologies can surely also enable us to become more fully ourselves, more delightfully related to one another, more thoughtfully engaged in and with created reality, and better attuned to the voice and will of the living God. We just need to be clear that these things are, finally, what our technologies are for. <>

[Into the Deep: An Unlikely Catholic Conversion](#) by Abigail Rine Favale [Cascade Books, 9781532605017]

[Into the Deep](#) traces one woman's spiritual odyssey from birthright evangelicalism through postmodern feminism and, ultimately, into the Roman Catholic Church. As a college student, Abigail Favale experienced a feminist awakening that reshaped her life and faith. A decade later, on the verge of atheism, she found herself entering the oldest male-headed institution on the planet--the last place she expected to be.

With humor and insight, the author describes her gradual exodus from Christian orthodoxy and surprising swerve into Catholicism. She writes candidly about grappling with wounds from her past, Catholic sexual morality, the male priesthood, and an interfaith marriage. Her vivid prose brings to life the wrenching tumult of conversion--a conversion that began after she entered the Church and began to pry open its mysteries. There, she discovered the startling beauty of a sacramental cosmos, a vision of reality that upended her notions of gender, sexuality, identity, and authority. *Into the Deep* is a thoroughly twenty-first-century conversion, a compelling account of recovering an ancient faith after a decade of doubt.

Editorial Appraisal

Favale passion and struggles toward finding a spiritual center, a home, a husband and a religion where the sacramental life provides a life of simple adoration in the divine, witnesses a religious search thoroughly this worldly. It provides a challenge in its humble confession of inspired seeking in prayer.

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 Notes

Excerpt: This disunity in my marriage became something of a quiet but constant grief, a stone I carried around in my pocket and kept accidentally touching. I was still going to Mass by myself, with the rare exception, and I began to feel a bitter bile well up inside me when I saw Catholic couples worshipping together.

One Sunday in particular, I was sitting right behind a young couple who were apparently—judging by the flashing rock on her finger—engaged to be married. It quickly became clear that he was Catholic, and she was not. His voice and body moved with the flow of the Mass. He genuflected toward the tabernacle before finding his seat, moving his right arm in a seamless cruciform gesture. He knew when to sit and kneel, and spoke the words of the Creed from memory. She, on the other hand, seemed absolutely terrified. Her body was curved in on itself, her arms folded in a defensive posture. She glanced around like a startled bird whenever the congregation moved or spoke in unison, clutching onto her fiancé's arm with both hands. When I caught sight of her face once or twice, I saw a strained grimace, as if she was afraid of being contaminated by the people around her.

Instead of focusing on the Mass, I fixated on this couple, on the humble, devout piety of the man and the open disdain of the woman. And I began to hate her. I sent invisible beams of fury into the back of her blond head and fantasized about catching her arm after Mass, like a crazed, grizzled crone: Do you have any idea how lucky you are, young lady, to have such a devout Catholic husband? Do you know how PRECIOUS that is? Do you?! And then I would combust into a wailing, sizzling mess, my words drifting up from the sludge to latch onto her as a curse. Do you have ANY IDEA ...?

Thankfully, I did nothing to her, aside from squeezing a bit hard when we exchanged the sign of peace.

After Mass ended, and my emotions settled down, I had the pres-ence of mind to realize that this envy was getting out of hand. So I went to confession, and that became a turning point for me—not only because the marital envy dissipated thereafter, never to return, but also because I left the confessional armed with some sound advice, courtesy of Father Marcos: "If you want your husband to become Catholic, don't focus on his conversion. Focus on your own."

Around this time, I stumbled upon another person who would become a spiritual mentor and guide for me, a woman who knew firsthand what it was like to experience this unique paradox of love and sorrow, intimacy and separation. I first came across her early in my conversion, when I was googling around, trying to find saints who had been married to unbelievers. I was familiar with the story of St. Monica, who for decades prayed diligently for the conversion of her son, St. Augustine. Their story was inspiring to me, but I wanted to find something even closer to my situation, a story of a believing wife praying for her unbelieving husband.

After plumbing the depths of the Internet, I read about Elisabeth Leseur, a French woman who died about a hundred years ago. She is a fairly obscure figure, not well known even in Catholic circles. She has not yet been declared a saint, although the process of her canonization was opened in 1990. I read her story, which I found fascinating, then promptly forgot about her—until months later, when I was in a moment of deep grief over the separation in my marriage. I was praying quietly, in the darkness of my room, more in groans than words, and her name flashed to my mind. That night, I downloaded a collection of her writings and began to read it by the glow of my phone, my infant daughter sleeping beside me.

Within the first few pages, I was in awe—her words gave voice to my longings, my struggles, my pain. Immediately, I felt less alone, a bridge formed between our two souls, a conduit of sympathy, something for which I'd been starved. I

knew so few Catholics at the time; my social milieu was thoroughly Protestant and progressive. The isolation I often felt within my home was even more pronounced outside of it. And here was a woman whose earthly situation in many ways echoed mine; here was my own inner life, drawn out into language and handed back to me as a gift. We were separated by time, and the veil between this world and the next, but connected through a shared membership in Christ's body, that mystical communion. Here was a saint who could pray for me, who could understand the hidden desires of my heart.

In several key ways, our lives paralleled. We were both married at the young age of twenty-two, to men whom we loved deeply. Elisabeth's husband, Felix, was raised Catholic, but soon abandoned the faith when he began his medical studies, embracing a worldview of scientific materialism. Unlike Michael, Felix was an avid anti-Catholic, disdainful of religion in general, especially his native Catholicism. He actively tried to undermine his wife's faith, giving her books to read in liberal Protestant theology, which he figured would provide a nice gateway to agnosticism, and hopefully to a respectable atheism. (This strategy, based on my own history, is pretty sound.) For about a year, he seemed to have succeeded. Elisabeth fell away from her faith and was on the verge of abandoning religion, when, as her husband later describes, "she felt herself approach the abyss, and sprang backward" Ultimately, she was not convinced by the impoverished arguments supplied by her husband; in fact, they had the opposite effect of driving her into an immersive study of the Catholic tradition, through which she acquired a knowledgeable, substantive faith. Her reversion to Catholicism happened in her early thirties, the same era as my own conversion.

The journal Elisabeth began during this time opens with a description of an intense inner transformation, a period of "perpetual labor." which matured her mind, sharpened her convictions, and increased her love for souls. "I want to be Christian, Christian to the marrow," she writes, giving word to my newfound desire: "I want to live an entirely new life." I read, with great delight, her discovery of philosophy, which she asserts should

be "the crown of all feminine education," as it "throws light on many things and puts the mind in order:' Here was a kindred sister, to be sure.

Elisabeth had very few confidants in her life; her social circle was decidedly secular, even hostile to religion at times, which gave her a profound sense of isolation. This did not, however, cause her to feel self-pity or resentment, or fuel aggressive attempts at evangelism. Instead, she felt love toward those who thought differently than she, and entrusted them to God:

Spoke and discussed a great deal with some dear friends who do not believe. More than others I love these beings whom divine light does not illuminate, or rather whom it illuminates in a manner unknown to us with our restricted minds. There is a veil between such souls and God, a veil through which only a few rays of love and beauty may pass. Only God, with a divine gesture, may throw aside this veil; then the true life shall begin for these souls.

And I, who am of so little worth, yet believe in the power of the prayers that I never cease to say for these dear souls. I believe in them because God exists, and because He is our Father. I believe in them because I believe in this divine and mysterious law that we call the Communion of Saints. I know that no cry, no desire, no appeal proceeding from the depths of our soul is lost, but all go to God and through Him to those who moved us to pray. I know that only God performs the intimate transformation of the human soul and that we can but point out to Him those we love, saying, "Lord, make them live"

She expresses a "longing for deep sympathy," a longing she feels most intensely toward her husband, Felix. She writes continually of the pain she feels at their disunity; her journal is punctuated with sudden outcries to God on his behalf—"My God, wilt Thou give me one day the joy of this solitude for two, united in the same prayer, the same faith, and the same love?"

What I immediately recognized within these cries was the paradox I described earlier, the intertwining of grief and love. Felix and Elisabeth, in one sense, do not have a strained marriage, but a singularly devoted one; the love, affection, and respect they share for each other is palpable in her

writing. Elisabeth calls Felix's affection "the greatest happiness" of her life. Most often, when she writes about Felix in her journal, she doesn't use his name, instead referring to "him whom I love more than all." The depth of this love is precisely what creates the apex of her sorrow.

Despite the compelling echoes between Elisabeth's life and my own, there are also stark differences. Elisabeth suffered from continual physical ailments, and she and Felix were unable to have children. Her health declined over the years, even as her spiritual vitality intensified. Eventually, she succumbed to breast cancer in middle age, dying in Felix's arms at the age of forty-seven. As her death drew near, she offered up her suffering and ultimately her life to God on behalf of her husband, for his conversion. Felix writes that she told him, "with absolute assurance," that after her death, he would become a Catholic priest.

And this is what happened. Elisabeth died, and Felix discovered her secret diary, where she had disclosed her rich faith, her longing for his conversion, her continual prayers and offerings on his behalf. Not all at once, but slowly, Felix describes how he began to apprehend the splendor of his wife's faith: "The eyes of my soul were opening little by little." Within a year, Felix did return to the Catholic Church. He joined a Dominican order, and was eventually ordained as a priest.

In the pages of her journal, I could see a lived example of the advice Father Marcos gave me. Elisabeth sought to bring about her husband's conversion not by preaching, cajoling, debating—but by retreating. She resolved "to be extremely reserved concerning matters of faith," to keep her spiritual life hidden:

Let him see the fruit, but not the sap, my life but not the faith that transforms it, the light that is in me but not a word of Him who brings it to my soul; let him see God without hearing His name. Only on those lines, I think, must I hope for the conversion and sanctity of the dear companion of my life.

This was something of a revelation to me. I had not—ahem—been particularly reserved about my revitalized faith. In the strongest throes of my conversion, when my worldview was being

wrenched inside out, and my staunchest convictions upended, I had turned to Michael for support, afraid to share what was happening to me with anyone else. Night after night, sometimes for hours, I would lay on the couch, talking through my disorientation, while Michael listened patiently on the other end, tugging the ends of his beard and nodding. I joked that he was my liberal confessor, the one to whom I could expose my secret sins against progressive creeds.

Now, however, the earth had resettled; I found myself on steady ground again, and I decided to try and follow Elisabeth's lead, as best I could, to focus on my own inner transformation and express my desire for Michael's conversion through secret prayers and unseen penance.

But I couldn't completely hide. Michael and I had agreed, together, that our children would be raised Catholic. I couldn't totally sequester my Catholicism in some interior sanctum, because of my vocation as a mother, my duty to raise my children in the faith. This is where my state of life differed starkly from Elisabeth's, requiring me to live out my religion in a visible way, for their benefit. They were still quite little, far from the age of reason (to put it mildly), so we fumbled our way along, sometimes going to Mass as a family, but often I would still go alone. Nonetheless, I made a resolution, which I kept consistently but imperfectly, never to ask Michael to participate in any religious activity and only to speak of my faith if Michael raised the topic himself.

About a year after Margot's birth, I began praying the night prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours. I put together a simple altar in the bedroom—basically a wooden side table with a crucifix above, flanked by two icons, one of the Annunciation, the other of Christ. Most nights, I prayed there alone, by the wavering light of a single candle. But Margot, who still slept in my room, was entering a restless toddler phase, and even that small flame would interrupt her sleep. We have a small house, with no extra rooms and few spare corners, so I had to relocate the prayer altar to the living room.

I felt somewhat sheepish about this. The interior of our house was undergoing a gradual Catholic makeover. Icons, statues, crucifixes—these all

provided windows into divine reality, a reality that is ever-present, imbuing and ordering all things, but all too easy to disregard. I needed those windows, prone to wandering as I am. They called me to prayer; they gathered my attention toward God. And Michael, for his part, didn't seem to mind, thanks to his medievalist sensibilities.

Still, I was a bit worried that a prayer altar in the living room was a little ostentatious—hardly fulfilling the Leseur principle of restraint. I waited to pray there until Michael was busy in the kitchen, doing the dishes after dinner. This meant praying a little earlier than I was used to, before the kids had gone to bed. I figured they'd be too busy playing to notice.

But as soon as I lit the candles they flitted over like moths, dazzled by the light and the way it flickered over the icons. I opened the prayer book and began singing the psalms for that day. I didn't know how to do actual plainchant, so I made up my own simple melody, while my toddlers danced around, running away, then zooming back over again; resting on my knee, then springing back up.

Just like that, a nightly tradition was formed. Over the weeks, I shortened and adapted the compline liturgy to accommodate the fact that I was no longer praying alone, but with two raucous attendants. At the end of night prayer, I sang the *Salve Regina*, a Marian hymn I'd been learning. This song, more than anything else, seemed to harness my children's attention. They settled into my lap and I reflexively began to sway back and forth, rocking them gently. The hymn is entirely in Latin, yet it transfixed them nonetheless. Before long—so quick it shocked me—Julian was able to sing along, and even Margot joined in on the syllables that she could discern, belting them out with gusto.

After awhile, Michael began to wander into the living room while we prayed. He'd sit on the couch and watch the antics of the children. I didn't know what was happening in his mind and heart; all I knew was that his presence brought a sense of comfort and completion to our prayer. Gradually, to my surprise, he began to participate here and there, singing the parts he knew. In early December, Michael brought home an advent

calendar, one with tiny books for the days of advent, each containing a fragment of the nativity story, which we read together as a family. For Christmas, he gave me a small book of the Catholic night prayer liturgy. It included Latin translations of the prayers, and musical scores for singing plainchant. The English translations of the prayers were older, from the nineteenth century, and the beautiful, archaic language, the intimate *Thee* and *Thou*, breathed new life into the now familiar refrains. We began to use this book, praying together each night.

A few weeks later, I came home after a long workday to find the kids already scurrying to bed. Julian, on his way upstairs, announced perfunctorily that Daddy had already prayed with them, and they had prayed the whole thing. The next night, without a word or a discussion between us, as if we'd reached a secret understanding, Michael opened the compline book and began to sing: *O God, come to my assistance*. And I answered: *O Lord make haste to help me*. Then, together: *Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, amen*. From that moment on, Michael led our nightly prayers as a family.

This wordless, organic transition from praying alone to praying with my children to praying as a family with Michael at the helm—this was a quiet miracle, a startling gift. When I was younger, still infatuated with feminism, I had chafed against the idea of male spiritual leadership in the home.

I'd found the idea sexist and offensive, a tradition to be purged. Words like authority and submission had seemed oppressive—but this reading misunderstands, entirely, the context of self-giving love that should be at the heart of married life.

When I experienced firsthand what it was like to try and shape the spirituality of my children on my own, I craved what I had once despised. Passages from the New Testament about marriage, like 1 Peter 3, now became my comfort, even though I had once wanted them excised from the Bible altogether: *Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over*

without a word by their wives' conduct, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

When Michael eased into leading our night prayer, it was like gears snapping into place and finally beginning to turn. There was nothing oppressive about that leadership, that initiating call to which I found myself delighted to respond. His presence brought a sense of harmony and order, a foretaste of the unity for which my soul longed. How removed and naïve my prior feminist angst seemed now. I had been preoccupied with the wrong question entirely, honing in on a speck and missing the fresco. The particular note I am singing doesn't matter; what matters is the song itself.

* * *

On our tenth anniversary, we are in Idaho, in that small lake town where I was born. My parents live here now, and we've left the wee ones in their care to get lost in the forest and be luxuriously alone. As we drive, I point at various sights that conjure dim childhood memories—so distant they barely exist, just hazy shades. This is the place where my memory begins. And I'm circling back now, all grown up, but still like a child in many ways, curious and prone to awe, only vaguely aware of how little I actually know.

We end up in a forest, but not at all lost, remaining in the civilized confines of a campground, in a rustic, one-room cabin. We crack open a bottle of wine and toast to each other, already drunk on the dizzying prospect of shared solitude, the promise of uninterrupted conversation.

There is a small hitch in the program. Fluent as I am in bodily lingo, I know that we're in that window of fertility, a time when any one-flesh union has a good chance of becoming incarnate in the body of a squirming, hungry new human. I don't know if I'm ready, if we're ready. We share the wine in comfortable silence, each of us mulling the same question, and decide to go for a walk.

Our forest is on a peninsula that juts into Payette Lake. We start off on a paved trail, the lake a visible backdrop behind the trees, and the water pulls us toward it, off the beaten path, until we find ourselves on the shore, in the hollow of a tiny beach sized for two that has been sculpted by the water,

layer by layer, over time. We climb down and sit in the sand, facing out toward the far shore.

I begin first, launching into an unromantic practical analysis, ticking off the months on my fingers, weighing the pros and cons against the academic calendar and the possibility of an upcoming sabbatical. Underneath this relentless pragmatism, my resolve to remain rational and respectable, I conceal a longing that I fear to speak, a desire to open my arms to the unknown.

Then he responds. I don't want to be driven by a need for control, he says. I don't want our marriage to be motivated by fear of new life. Human life, he says, is fragile, unpredictable, but beautiful and innately valuable. I want to live in a way that welcomes life's chaos, with all its joy and suffering.

He takes my hand, and my heart surges yes, answering his, which I realize has become more open than my own. I'm aware now, of a mystery between and around us, the sacramental synergy of marriage that is changing, remaking us both. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine.

Night is blooming; the light has almost drained from the sky, aside

from a lingering rim of blue. The ridge of trees across the lake is now a jagged silhouette. We sit side by side, looking together toward that rugged horizon and the expanse that stretches in between. The water before us is dark but alive, dotted with circles rippling outward, as if a thousand tiny fish are swimming up to taste the strange and peaceful air. <>

[Confronting Religious Violence: A Counternarrative](#)
edited by Richard A. Burrige, Jonathan Sacks with Megan Warner [Baylor University Press, 9781481308953]

Sunni and Shia in Iran, Iraq, or Syria. Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. Afrikaners and black churches in South Africa. The rising tide of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia across Europe. Israelis and Palestinians in the Holy Land. The fear of immigrants and those who are different. The surge of nationalism. Violence, religious violence, violence done in the name of religion.

Religious violence must be understood—its history, its relationship to sacred texts and communities, and

its consequences. Religious violence must also be confronted. Another story must be told, a different story, a counternarrative other than the one that grips the world today.

In [Confronting Religious Violence](#), twelve international experts from a variety of theological, philosophical, and scientific fields address the issue of religious violence in today's world. The first part of the book focuses on the historical rise of religious conflict, beginning with the question of whether the New Testament leads to supersessionism, and looks at the growth of anti-Semitism in the later Roman Empire. The second part comprises field-report studies of xenophobia, radicalism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia surrounding the conflicts in the Middle East. The third part reflects on moral, philosophical, legal, and evolutionary influences on religious freedom and how they harm or help the advancement of peace. The final part of the volume turns to theological reflections, discussing monotheism, nationalism, the perpetuation of violence, the role of mercy laws and freedom in combating hate, and practical approaches to dealing with pluralism in theological education.

Edited by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks and Richard Burridge, [Confronting Religious Violence](#) contains insights from international experts that form essential reading for politicians, diplomats, business leaders, academics, theologians, church and faith leaders, commentators, and military strategists—anyone concerned with a harmonious future for human life together on this planet.

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Excerpt: ...I was extremely pleased when the John Templeton Foundation approached us at King's to inquire about holding a symposium as part of their Humble Approach Initiative, which seeks to bring together scientists, philosophers, and theologians to debate and learn from one another in humility. We had worked together with the Templeton Foundation on a similar symposium when Rabbi Sacks' fellow King's alumnus, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was himself awarded the Templeton Prize a few years earlier in 2013—and it was a delight to do so again. I continue to be particularly grateful to Mary Ann Meyers, the John Templeton Foundation's senior fellow who directs the Humble Approach Initiative, for all her hard work in organizing and directing the symposium, which was held at King's College London in January 2017.

In addition to Rabbi Sacks and myself, ten other scholars from a wide variety of theological, philosophical, and scientific fields were invited to

participate in a couple of days of discussion under strictly confidential guidelines to enable and facilitate frank and honest debate and even disagreement. Each of us was asked to prepare a paper arising out of our own area of research and scholarship, and these papers were circulated in advance to enable us to have the maximum time for discussion. Rabbi Sacks presided over the whole symposium, assisted by the ever-watchful eye of Dr. Meyers, as the various papers were briefly introduced leading to questions and debate. After each section, there was a roundtable discussion, chaired by different participants, and the robust conversations continued through our various meals and coffee breaks. In addition, we were honored to have several nonparticipating observers from Clarence House, Lambeth Palace, and 10 Downing Street, as well as from King's Department of Theology and Religious Studies—an indication that these conversations were intended to have a wider impact than just our own discussion.

The Questions and Topics under Debate

All the participants had received the same guidance in the invitation, setting out the main concern to consider how a rereading of the hallowed texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam might mitigate the militancy whereby group identity can lead to deadly conflict. Particular questions were posed, including: Can a reexamination of biblical stories about sibling rivalry that appear to be at the heart of the problem of "them vs. us" enmity point to a solution? Is it possible to apply scriptural reasoning (in which members of different religious traditions discuss their sacred literatures in ways that engender trust) to social issues on a large scale? Can shared acknowledgments of and connections to God as creator, sustainer, and judge of the universe, discovered through such a process, be used to resist religious persecution and foster tolerance, justice, and peace? How do such deeply theoretical issues as changing views of supersessionism and differing approaches to hermeneutics impact our search for answers? Are there practical imperatives related to theological education and public policy stemming from a commitment to using theology to combat religiously motivated violence?

From a psychological perspective, we also considered whether empathy can inspire altruism. If so, how can it best be fostered? Or is "fellow feeling," as Adam Smith argued in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, a limited emotion? If so, can reason succeed in overriding selfish instinct? Specifically, as we face collapsed states in parts of the Middle East and the rise of violent extremist non-state actors that have led to vast migrations of people fleeing war and seeking sanctuary, how can we facilitate the extension of care beyond the boundaries of family, tribe, ethnicity, and nation? What research questions do we need most urgently to pursue in understanding cultural adaptation for prosociality and cooperation amongst groups?

The Structure of This Volume

It quickly became apparent that while our papers and conversations were extremely stimulating to those of us privileged to participate, the questions and our considerations of them deserved a much wider audience than even that of our observers. Therefore we were all invited to edit and rewrite our papers at slightly greater length with the intention of publishing a collected volume—and we are extremely grateful to Carey Newman and Baylor University Press for their willingness to publish this book and for all their assistance in its production. It is a mark of how important the conversation at the symposium was that all the participants quickly agreed to undertake this extra work. I am grateful to them for all their cooperation in producing these essays over a tight timescale.

The volume begins with an expanded version of Rabbi Sacks' opening paper, which set the scene for the symposium. The rest of the book consists of four sets of reflections from the different backgrounds and perspectives represented among the scholars participating. We begin with the biblical and classical background to consider the New Testament and the rise of supersessionism and anti-Semitism in the later Roman Empire. Then we move to reflections from the front line today, examining the impact of climate change and conflict in the poorer parts of the world of the Global South below the tenth parallel, attempting to deal with xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia in Britain and Pakistan, and

analyzing the conflicts in the Middle East, especially around Syria and ISIS. This leads into moral, philosophical, and scientific reflections, including religious freedom, neuroscience, and the implications of evolutionary theory for considering human groups as a superorganism. Finally, we turn to theological reflections about monotheism, nationalism, and violence, as well as the role of mercy laws and freedom in combating hate, before concluding with a consideration of some practical approaches to dealing with all of this in theological education.

Setting the Scene

In his introductory essay, Rabbi Sacks explains the story behind his book *Not in God's Name* and draws attention to the intellectual and spiritual crisis we are facing today. His basic proposition is that "we are the story we tell ourselves," that how we tell our stories explains who we are and why we do the things we do—this storytelling approach became central to the whole symposium. He then outlines four master narratives which have dominated Western civilization from the seventeenth century: the secularization thesis, the accommodation thesis, the end-of-history thesis, and the Westernization thesis. After a consideration of the problems in our understanding of time as linear—which automatically assumes human progress—he argues that Europe since the Enlightenment has been engaged in an attempt to escape from identity in order to avoid the violence that arises from our groups, "us" and "them." He discusses three substitutes for religion as a basis for identity—the nation-state, class, and race—and the rise of Western individualism, before coming back to the renewed prominence of religion in the world today, together with the much less welcome development of religiously motivated violence. There follows a brief summary of the arguments in *Not in God's Name* about the roles played by dualism, displacement, and sibling rivalry in producing violence arising out of our identity in groups. Finally, Rabbi Sacks returns to his basic point about storytelling to challenge us to find new ways of telling our stories, especially about identity and the relationships of the three Abrahamic faiths that will provide an antidote to dualism, sibling rivalry, and violence as we discover that "even one

who is not in my image—whose color, culture, or creed is not mine—is still in God's image."

Biblical and Classical Background

Rabbi Sacks' book *Not in God's Name* provides a masterful rereading of various foundational stories of sibling rivalry in the Hebrew scriptures.

Therefore, it is right that our first section takes the story on from the Old Testament into the New Testament and beyond into the first few centuries as the Roman Empire became Christianized.

Richard Burridge's essay is an attempt to apply Rabbi Sacks' rereading of the Hebrew scriptures to the New Testament to consider whether an assessment of sibling rivalry might help with the thorny issue of supersessionism and whether the New Testament sets out to replace Judaism in an anti-Semitic manner. It begins with a brief survey of how Christianity is sometimes seen as a "descendant" of Judaism that turns on its parents and replaces them. This is sometimes considered to begin with the so-called conversion of the rabbinically educated Jew, Saul of Tarsus, into Saint Paul, the founder of the new Christian—and Gentile—church. Instead, Burridge proposes a rereading in which careful attention to Paul's own writings suggest that he would not have recognized this description of his experience on the Damascus road, suggesting instead that it was more like a call, reminiscent of that of the Hebrew prophets, to take the good news of God's love to the Gentiles. Paul continues to speak very positively of his Jewish heritage and identity and his concern for his fellow Jews, particularly in later, more reflective letters like *Romans* and *Philippians*. The complex and variegated nature of all the different parties in Second Temple Judaism suggests that Judaism and Christianity do not fall into a "mother-child" matrix but are rather more like siblings, particularly after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 CE, from which emerged the two related groups of rabbinic Judaism (centered on the synagogue) and messianic Judaism (centered on the church). While Luke's two-volume work—his gospel and *Acts*—does concentrate on the growing Gentile mission, both Matthew's and John's gospels are essentially very Jewish in their character and assumptions, written in the dialectic style that characterized the internal debates between Jewish groups in the first

century. In fact, compared to other contemporary literature, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the gospels' invective can be argued to be less harsh. However, the problem comes in the following centuries when these two gospels emerge from their original setting within internal Jewish debate and become the sacred scriptures of a separate religion, the early Christian church. Read in the context of the later external conflict between Jews and Christians, they can be read as anti-Semitic and have been used to justify discrimination and persecution from the early centuries through to the Nazi Holocaust. Therefore, we need to follow Rabbi Sacks' example of a rereading in which God's choice of one sibling does not necessitate the rejection of the other.

Drawing on his work in Paris, Jerusalem, and Oxford, Guy Stroumsa develops this argument beyond the New Testament into the first centuries, tracing in his essay the growth of the early church leading to Constantine and the proclamation of the Edict of Thessalonica in 380 making Christian Nicene orthodoxy the Roman state religion, together with the rise of anti-Semitism and persecution of the Jewish minority. He considers Assman's comparison of the monotheistic intolerance of ancient Israel with Graeco-Roman polytheistic tolerance, and he traces the apocalyptic roots in Judaism that led to both the Essenes and the early Christians. However, unlike those at Qumran, early Christians did not remain within Jewish sectarianism for long; rather, they soon evolved a distinct identity, rejecting the Mosaic law, ethnicity, and various boundary markers of Judaism. As rabbinic Judaism also developed its talmudic culture, it preserved Jewish habits of polemical debate between opposing views, while Christianity became increasingly concerned for orthodoxy, leading to intolerance of other views. With the success of Christianity under Constantine and the waning of pagan opposition, the stage was set for the demonization of Judaism. Furthermore, social identity now came to be seen in religious terms, rather than ethnic or cultural-linguistic ones, reinforcing growing intolerance. Stroumsa then contrasts eristic and irenic approaches to love, which, together with Christian activism and conviction, led to increasing violence in the name of

God. To avoid this today, modern societies need to practice open religion, embracing pluralism.

Reflections from the Front Line

From these considerations of the ancient world, we turn to reflections arising from experiences in the places of conflict and religious violence in today's world. Poet and journalist Eliza Griswold draws on her work in the Global South to demonstrate how, contrary to Western secularist assumptions, religion has become a more important form of identity than any other, including ethnicity and nation. She illustrates this both from the case of sub-Saharan Africa, especially Nigeria, and from that of the Arab Spring in the Middle East. Attention to history reveals that for most of the last fourteen centuries Christians and Muslims have lived side by side peacefully. However, recently the growing religious revivals in both Christianity and Islam have led to increasing conflict, especially over dwindling resources, such as water, grasslands, electricity, and other aspects of basic survival. This is especially the case in the fraught band between the equator and the tenth parallel some seven hundred miles to the north—the area where the dry north of Africa, traditionally Muslim, meets the more fertile south, historically Christian, as Griswold demonstrates from both Nigeria and the Central African Republic. Furthermore, this is all exacerbated by the shifting weather patterns of global warming, with the consequent effects on things like migration. Increasingly, this means that religious identity becomes key to basic survival, giving rise to what appears to be religious violence—even though the main driver in our postcolonial world is the manmade environmental crisis. To address all of this will require dialogue within, as well as between, our faith traditions.

Next, Amineh Hoti, from Islamabad, directs our attention to the Muslim world, especially Pakistan, and the rise of Islamophobia alongside anti-Semitism in the growing refugee crisis. In contrast to those who argue that we have entered the "Age of Empathy," Hoti argues that it is more like the "Age of Hatred" with the rise of terrorism, anti-Semitism, and increasing Islamophobia, especially within America and Europe. She therefore considers recent initiatives to develop dialogue and empathy—as distinct from sympathy—in which she

has participated. Particularly significant is the 2009 UNESCO report *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*. She illustrates such educational initiatives with the interdisciplinary courses at the Centre for Dialogue and Action, which she helped to set up in Cambridge, and later in Pakistan itself. If such initiatives are going to succeed, they must focus on religious leaders, the media, and the youth to develop courses on coexistence to combat increasing anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

Thirdly, Scott Atran reports from the front line of the so-called war on terror, especially the conflict with ISIS. He begins with a comparison of today's situation and the wave of transnational terror at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which led to the unravelling of the European order and the start of World War I. Common elements such as globalization and displacements have led to increasing nationalism, challenging the liberal consensus. When connected to morality and virtue, violence against other groups becomes a requirement. The specter of transnational terrorism has led the U.S. government and others to expend vast sums of money, yet the fear of relatively small terrorist groups dominates Europe and the United States, not least through our own media coverage. In contrast to our assumption of rational actors, the devotion to sacred values gives these groups a much greater will to fight. Atran demonstrates this from the results of interviews and psychological experiments conducted with pro- and anti-ISIS fighters, which reveal that these values and commitments arise from a fusion of self-identity with the group. The fierce devotion of such fighters is also examined in interviews from anti-ISIS groups such as the Peshmerga, Kurds, and Sunni Arab militias. Although such fighters and groups may recognize their physical weakness relative to the might of the United States, they make up for it with "spiritual formidability." This is reinforced by the importance of social networks, as is illustrated from the pattern of the Paris-Brussels attacks in 2015-2016. From this, Atran concludes that the idea of the "Clash of Civilizations" is a woefully inadequate explanation of the current situation, while the counternarratives developed by Western governments are ineffective. In contrast, recruiters for groups like

ISIS turn young people's passion and empathy into moral outrage, for which any sacrifice will be made. Only a resurgence of the social vitality of our transcendental values and cultural ideals—not material assets alone—can resist this strategy, and this is the key existential issue for our future.

Moral, Philosophical, and Scientific Reflections

From these considerations of the ancient and modern worlds, we turn to reflections from moral philosophy and science. First, the distinguished lawyer Robert George discusses religious freedom and human flourishing. He begins by considering whether religious freedom is best understood as a social contract—that is, "I respect and tolerate your beliefs in the hope you will similarly accept mine." However, this approach does not do justice to the human search for meaning and value. This suggests that these ultimate questions are constitutive of our humanity and therefore must be protected as a human right, free from compulsion, including the right to change one's religion or, indeed, to hold none at all. Abuses of religious freedom not only violate the core of our humanity but also cause political, economic, moral, and social harm, so we must all protect and promote religious freedom within the human family. This requires mutual understanding between different faiths, which is not the same as theological agreement. That which is fundamental to human fulfillment is termed basic human goods—which means that laws that honor these rights are viewed as just, while those that violate them are unjust. This is true both at the individual, personal level and at the institutional and political level. George argues that basic human goods are prior to rights, so that human life is never a mere instrumental means to an end but an intrinsic good; the right to religious freedom is similarly an irreducible human good. However, religion is more than a merely human thing—it includes a right relationship with God or the divine, since humans are intrinsically religious beings. Paradoxically, religious authorities have sometimes denied religious freedom on the grounds that "only the truth has rights"; however, it is actually people who have rights, even when these people are in error. One must recognize the possibility of the religious good being advanced outside one's own context of faith. Therefore, George draws attention

to *Nostra Aetate*, the declaration of the Second Vatican Council on non-Christian religions, in which much that is good and worthy in other faiths is explicitly commended, as he illustrates with an extensive quotation. Of course, there must be limits, so that gross evil or unspeakable wrongs cannot be committed in the name of religion; however, to restrict religious freedom is so serious that it can only be contemplated through weighty considerations that are themselves grounded in central dimensions of the integral flourishing of human beings.

This is followed by Marc Gopin, who draws on decades of diplomatic work and conflict resolution in the Middle East to argue for compassionate reason as the most important cultural and religious capacity for a peaceful future in which human beings are competing for increasingly scarce resources. Compassionate reason is not just a state of mind but also a mode of ethical practice, drawing upon both contemporary science and various schools of philosophical ethics. Studies have shown that deep compassion (empathy plus intense identification with the other) is the most significant factor in reducing levels of violence. Its roots have been sought in scientific studies of neurons and within social psychology. He also examines how the main schools of philosophical ethics since the Enlightenment (Kantian deontology, consequentialist utilitarianism, and moral sense theory) enabled human beings to put compassion into universal declarations and laws of human rights. Thus compassion and reason need each other. However, what the Enlightenment and the great philosophers missed was the immense contribution of spiritual commitments and religious habits to the ethically based nonviolent life. Compassion needs to be trained through cultural habits to apply to all human beings, not just one's own group or society—a belief often presented in the Golden Rule. Therefore, today's task is to formulate shared education and habits that will move people toward the internalization of universal laws of compassionate reason. Gopin then sets out eight steps that he has used across many groups and societies, especially in the Middle East, over the last thirty years: be (meditate on peace), feel (explore emotions), understand (learn and study), hear (listen to others), see (observe what is unspoken), imagine

(cultivate positive hopes and dreams), do (practice ethical deeds), and speak (find healing words). These eight steps can help people move their mental maps through religious catechisms and habits toward an enlightened practice of nonviolence. Like Hoti, Gopin argues that empathy has to develop the mental habits of compassionate reasons, which will then lead finally to peaceful practices. He concludes by relating a personal story of a visit to a mass grave in Bosnia before a final summary of the need to align the insights of science, morality, and reason with religious wisdom in order to develop the habits of compassionate reason to build a better and more peaceful world.

Concluding this section is David Sloan Wilson, the president of the Evolution Institute, who brings his vast experience of evolutionary theory to bear on our topic. While he recognizes that human communities were often compared to a single corporate organism, like a body, in the past, such conceptions were eclipsed by individualist approaches during the twentieth century. This corporate approach has been revived over recent decades, however, so he begins with a brief history of the idea of the superorganism in evolutionary thought. In order to explain group-level adaptations—such as individuals working together for a common good—Darwin suggested that natural selection functioned not just at an individual but also at a group level. However, this merely

elevates destructive violence to the group level, so evolutionary scientists have been working with multilevel selection (MLS) theory over recent decades, leading to the concept of major evolutionary transitions. Human evolution is best explained in these terms, as our ancestors learned to cooperate in a group for survival and reproduction. Cultural multilevel selection also allowed mental activity, including memory and writing, to be transmitted across generations, providing a strong foundation for the concept of society as an organism. Wilson then applies this concept to understanding selfishness, altruism, and violence within and between groups. In order for evolution to develop, genes have to be expressed by being turned on or off—and this can be represented by a heat map. Wilson undertakes a metaphorical transfer in order to apply these

theories to human beings and groups as superorganisms. One particular experiment considered the use of all the biblical books within six church congregations, three designated as conservative and three as progressive based on their stance on same-sex marriage. Treating the biblical books like genes, Wilson and his colleague drew up a heat map for the cultural genome of these churches, revealing that the progressive and conservative pastors preached more or less regularly from certain books of the Bible. Regrettably, this study also revealed how violence is built into the DNA of the sacred texts of all religions, meaning that a religious counternarrative to violence is not possible. Instead, Wilson concludes with a brief account of interspirituality as his proposed counternarrative, drawing in multilevel selection to recognize the whole earth as a superorganism which needs to come into being.

Theological Reflections

Our final section moves through theological reflections toward practical suggestions for educational practices today. First, Miroslav Volf, a Croatian now teaching and researching at Yale, provides twenty-five interlocking theses on the connections between monotheism and nationalism in producing or legitimizing violence. He begins with a study of the resurgence of nationalism in many countries across the globe today, distinguishing between inclusive nationalism, which is rooted within universal moral commitments, and exclusive nationalism, which argues for the superiority of a particular tribe or race and which is most dangerous. Religion has motivated and legitimized nationalism in the past and can still play a part in different nationalisms today. Monotheism has often been thought to be responsible for nationalist violence because its exclusivist claims can lead to negation and rejection; when allied to political religion, it can become aggressive toward both internal enemies and external competitors. However, monotheism can also be against exclusive nationalism because of its universal application to all human beings without distinction, giving primacy of devotion to God above the claims of family, tribe, ethnicity, or nation. Monotheism also affirms the freedom of religion and its distinction from the cultural domain of politics. A major distortion of monotheism seeks to use God to satisfy human

purposes, as illustrated by the stories of Jesus, Abraham, and Job. Instrumentalizing God can take place through prosperity religion or political religion, and in some cases these two forms can merge. Hobbes argued that religion can be employed as a tool of government, while Kant saw it as a marker of communal identity—both of which can tie religion to violence, especially when it is identified with a political project and those striving to realize it. Volf, however, argues that monotheism is not intrinsically violent, but he recognizes that most forms of monotheism have been violent, usually through becoming articulated as political religions. Monotheism is more likely to become violent when it denies the freedom of religion, or refuses to keep religion and politics separate, or becomes itself political. All these possibilities are in tension with the universal core of true monotheism's stress on God's care and love for all people. Accordingly, Volf concludes by noting that while inclusive nationalism can be a possible friend, authentic monotheism is incompatible with exclusive nationalism, which will claim its soul and turn God from "the creator and lover of all people and all creatures into a selfish and violent idol of a particular nation."

Next, theologian Michael Welker, from Heidelberg, reflects on the task modern Germany faced in rebuilding itself, after two devastating world wars, through a stress on justice, mercy, and freedom. These are, of course, some of the oldest human concerns, dating back to at least 2400 BCE in Sumer, when the Sumerian king had to set an example and provide mercy, compassion, and care for his people. This contributes to the development of a climate of freedom, solidarity, and harmony in Western cultures. The special protection of orphans, widows, and the poor goes back to the oldest existing law code from Ur in 2100 BCE and was codified by Hammurabi in the eighteenth century BCE. The concern to protect the weak, especially widows and orphans, also finds expression in the early scriptures of Judaism in the Mosaic and Deuteronomistic laws and in the first Christian writings of the New Testament. Although it is a mistake to assume that mercy is a natural tendency of life, since all life survives only at the cost and expense of other life, mercy is particularly essential

for human family life, especially for infants and the elderly, leading to the experience of receiving and giving mercy and love at different times. This is also expressed in the biblical motivation of showing mercy because "you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exod 22:20 NJPS; see also Deut 23:7). It is codified in the mercy laws affecting widows, orphans, and slaves—laws that connect moral and legal striving for justice with religious orientation. The interconnection of the educational, moral, legal, political, and religious aspects becomes essential for the development of society and culture. It works against the evil spirit of hate and unfreedom that is not just animosity, bitterness, or aggression but also the neglect of others, as is made clear in the Heidelberg Catechism. Therefore, in order to be truly free we have to let go of hate and also we need to become motivated by examples of merciful caring and forgiveness in order to break the cycles of blame, hate, and violence. This requires constant moral communication and especially serious educational enterprises, not just at school but throughout society to root out expressions of hatred and neglect of the other, replacing them with habits of justice, mercy, love, and freedom.

Finally, William Storrar picks up Welker's concern and directs our attention to the important task of practical imperatives in theological education, drawing on his experience as the director of the Center of Theological Inquiry at Princeton. This work has led him to integrate a series of practical imperatives—hospitality, honesty, humility, and hope—within a dialogical approach to interreligious theological inquiry. He warns of an inherent tension between the moral urgency of this task and the sheer time and work needed for patient scholarly understanding of the issues and questions across different religions, especially that of violence in the name of God. Storrar then explores these imperatives in more detail, beginning with an account of a three-year project undertaken by sixteen Muslim, Jewish, and Christian scholars on whether their respective scriptures united or divided them. The scholars needed interpretative hospitality—the first practical imperative—to grapple with each other's scriptures through friendship across the three Abrahamic traditions. Interestingly, this led not to a diminution to a lowest common denominator but to an

accentuation of the distinctiveness of each tradition. The second practical imperative, honesty, facilitated the ground clearing necessary before common ground could be established through fellowship. The third and fourth practical imperatives in this enterprise required both humility (to acknowledge the limits of one's own understanding) and hope for greater understanding through interdisciplinary and interreligious scholarship. Finally, these four imperatives must come together in a fifth, a dialogue based on dignity, integrity, and generous respect for the other. This can only happen if we imagine constantly how those others who are listening might hear and interpret what we say and consider how it will make them feel—included or excluded, threatened or welcomed. Only such a dialogue can fulfil the call of Rabbi Sacks' magisterial book and the hospitality of the John Templeton Foundation to lead us further into interdisciplinary and interreligious theological inquiry that seeks to build a counternarrative to violence in the name of God.

Concluding Reflections

The volume concludes with some reflections from Rabbi Sacks that develop his original comments made in the final session of the symposium, summing up our conversations. After the rich diversity of the papers, he considers the sheer complexity around violence and terror which arises from so many contrasting factors, including, sadly, religion itself, which can be both a force for peace and also part of the problem at the same time. Reflecting on the interplay of the various disciplines represented around the table and through these papers, Rabbi Sacks draws out three threads: hope, which is different from optimism, as seen particularly in the story of the Exodus; the compelling idea of wisdom across all the great faiths; and finally the importance of education, which links us all together as we seek to go forward into the next chapter of the human story, honoring the Divine Other and allowing God's presence to guide us toward a world at peace. Revd Canon Professor Richard A. Burridge

Essay: Open Religion and its Enemies by Guy G. Stroumsa

Religious violence seems to be winning the day—not only by murdering, maiming, and terrorizing, all around the globe, but also, at the same time, by telling a powerful narrative. We—all the rest of us—are on the defensive and are asked to provide a counternarrative, as if our fight was a rear-guard one. This is the core of our predicament.

One may, of course, disclaim the alarmist whistle: men (and sometimes women) have always been violent, and religion has nothing, or not much, to do with nature and instincts. At worst, one may describe religious beliefs or practices as "fuel" thrown on natural behavior. But the issue of religious violence is one of deep existential urgency—and not only of serious intellectual interest. I may perhaps be able to formulate, at least vaguely, some of the questions. But I also hope to hear some answers, at least tentative.

What is, then, the narrative for which we are seeking a counternarrative? In a nutshell, it is fair, I think, to refer to the universal and perennial battle cry: "Gott mit uns!" It is with it that gods (and sometimes goddesses) have always and everywhere empowered their believers to kill in good conscience, the name of the Supreme Good. One way to disassemble this grenade would be to argue, following Epicurus, that the gods have better to do than getting involved in the pettiness of human affairs. Since Plato, the church fathers, and the rabbis of the Talmud, however, the Epicurean belief has been deemed anathema. If God, then, insists on being involved with humans, can he manage not to take sides?

As a historian, I can only reflect on a number of striking points relating to early Christianity and, more broadly, to late antique religious history. Since the Christianization of the Roman Empire, with the conversion of Constantine in 312, one can observe a fast, unambiguous rise in religious intolerance and violence. This rise did not end with Theodosius I's proclamation, in 380, of the Edict of Thessalonica (*Cunctos populos*), which made Christian Nicene orthodoxy the state religion of the empire, imposed on all but the Jews. The fifth and sixth centuries, both in the Greek East and in the Latin West, showed the continued limitation of

religious freedom and disenfranchisement of the Jews, accompanied with more and more frequent outbursts of religious violence. Could the religion of universal love be responsible for such violence? Such slander (amounting to a crime of *lèse divinité*!) has of course been countered, rather glibly, by a long list of apologetic writers since the church fathers. A contemporary observer may notice some similarity between this apologetic line and that arguing that "true Islam" (or, for that matter, "true Judaism") is a religion of peace and can in no way be held responsible for violent actions of thugs claiming to be true believers.

My title refers, first, to Bergson's famous analysis of open versus closed religion in his seminal work—alas, almost forgotten today—*The Two Sources of Morals and Religion*. For Bergson, the prophets of Israel represented open religion, while the priestly rituals reflected closed religion. At the same time, the title alludes to Karl Popper's classical *Open Society and Its Enemies*,¹ a work written during the dark years of World War II. In a nutshell, "Open Religion and Its Enemies" reflects my belief that, like cholesterol, religion can be either good or bad, and that the enemies of open religion can be identified. They are, essentially, all beliefs and patterns of behavior according to which religious truth belongs to me, to my group, and is denied from the other. Unsurprisingly, it is in religious intolerance that religious violence finds its roots. Let me reflect first on radical religion in the Christianized Roman Empire. I shall then insist on some psychological and social transformations of identity in late antiquity, highlighting their consequences for our present question.

Radical Religion and the Shrinking of Tolerance in Late Antiquity

Searching for the origins of religious intolerance, the Egyptologist Jan Assmann singles out what he calls the Mosaic distinction as the major element responsible in the ancient world for the introduction of a *Weltanschauung* intolerant of alternate conceptions. The Mosaic distinction refers to the Israelite conception of religion as identical with truth. Such a conception entails the view of other religions—in particular, polytheistic systems—as reflecting error. According to Assmann, the Mosaic

distinction is the most important source of religious intolerance, as we know it in the Western world.

In a sense, Assmann reaches conclusions rather similar to those who contrast the monotheistic intolerance of ancient Israel with Greek and Roman polytheistic tolerance.' According to this view, traditional since the Enlightenment, Christian intolerance is but a by-product of Israelite and Jewish particularism. To some extent, as shown, for instance, by Voltaire's case, such a view can lead to intellectual attitudes rather dangerously close to anti-Semitic conceptions, in which contemporary Jews, as the heirs of the ancient Israelites, are perceived as ultimately responsible for religious (i.e., Christian) violence and intolerance. Whatever conclusion we may reach about the degree to which Judaism informed the early Christian perception of other religious views, there can be no doubt about the importance of the Jewish heritage in early Christianity, and one must therefore start with some remarks on the possible Jewish roots of early Christian intolerance.

Jewish Roots

The God of Israel is a jealous God. He hates the false gods, the idols, and those who render cult to them. More generally, he also hates any false religious attitude and any wrongdoing; ethical behavior, in the Hebrew Bible more clearly than in most other religious systems of the ancient world, is considered to play a central role in religious life. Thus the priest Phinehas follows religious duty when he kills the Israelite man and the Midianite woman with whom he was sleeping (Num 25:7-8). Throughout both the Jewish and the Christian exegetical tradition, Phinehas' behavior would be praised as showing "zeal" for the Lord (the Greek word *zēlos* translates the Hebrew *kin'a*, "jealousy," in the Septuagint), thus imitating a divine quality. Religious zeal, later to become enthusiasm, and then fanaticism, was indeed for a long time a leading religious value in the biblical tradition.

In the Hebrew Bible, such zeal is found in particular in the behavior of the prophets. Even when they strike against official and traditional religion, it is in the name of the Lord that they do it, passionately arguing for a return to God's original ethical and cultic demands from his people. For the prophets, the history of Israel reflects constant betrayal of its

calling (Beruf), followed, time and again, by repentance. At the public level, the demand for the restoration of the true cult against all usurpations may become a call for combat or for a "holy war" (note that the concept itself does not appear in the Bible). In any case, the Maccabean revolt against both the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes IV and the Jewish elites in Palestine, who supported his cultural and religious policy, clearly reflects the demand of a collective zeal for God and the absolute intolerance of idolatry. During the Second Commonwealth, the call for holy war was echoed mainly in the transformation of prophecy into apocalypticism. At the end of times, the eschatological war would end in the final victory of the forces of good and the defeat of the forces of evil. In the language of the Qumran scrolls, this war would be fought between the sons of light and the sons of darkness.

Early Christianity

The religious trends reflected in apocalyptic literature are, as is well known, very close to the original milieu in which Christianity was born and first developed, as a Jewish sect in the first century. Traces of the eschatological war and of apocalyptic patterns of thought are still visible in both the Synoptic Gospels and in John's Apocalypse. As with all sectarian milieus, which thrive on a combination of violent internal strife and radical rejection of the other, it was a milieu in which there was, manifestly, little room for religious tolerance. In many ways, then, the Jewish heritage of early Christianity was one of rejection and intolerance. Like all outlawed and persecuted sects, and in particular as it thought the end of days was near, earliest Christianity was expressing radical views with great intensity. Such an atmosphere left little room for the development of any notion of religious tolerance.

Yet, unlike the Essenes, the Christians did not remain Jewish sectarians for a long time. Christianity emerged as a type of religion that one may call secondary—that is, a religion born out of another religion, in contrast with it and in opposition to it. (Judaism, in this sense, would be called a primary religion.) It is usually assumed that the monotheistic roots of Christianity are responsible for its intolerance of other religious ideas and the later

persecution of their proponents. There is no doubt that early Christian patterns of behavior toward outsiders and patterns of thought about outsiders are deeply imbedded in earlier Israelite and Jewish attitudes and ideas. Christianity owed to its biblical background the establishment of identity on religion and the centrality of the concept of a single religious truth as opposed to error (which is polyvalent by nature—Irenaeus can speak about the "hydra" of heresy), and hence the development of both religious thought and ethics as central to religion.

Yet the differences between the two religions under the empire are as significant as the similarities between them. In its rejection of the Law and of the centrality of Jewish ethnicity, mainstream Christianity believed it had suppressed religious exclusivism. The religious structures of Christianity were significantly different from those of Judaism; for the clearly defined collective boundaries was substituted the ambiguity of a dogma meant for all—meant for all, but which of course excluded the many who did not know or accept it.

The fact that Christianity shared with Judaism a deep denial of religious tolerance for false religions, offering a cult to false gods—that is, idols (or demons)—does not explain the fact that Christians, more than Jews, developed strong patterns of religious intolerance in late antiquity. In a study of early Christianity as a radical religion, I employed the Weberian concept of *Entpolitisierung*, which refers to those literati who, pushed aside from political activity or responsibility, could play freely with conceptions artificially detached from their natural social applicability. So, I argued, radical ideas, often presented as hermeneutics of the sacred texts, were developed, without the need to show their concrete applicability. When, all of a sudden, the conditions changed radically, and the literati found themselves "politicized" (*politisiert*), the simplest, easiest, and laziest option was to apply literally the corpus of hermeneutical texts to the new reality. Visions of the end, for instance, stemming from apocalyptic literature, could now be presented as concrete political programs, with their dreams of a cosmic war between sons of light and sons of darkness.

Early Christianity, then, remained for some time a radical religion, harboring intense expectations for the Second Coming of Christ, the Parousia, and redemption of humankind. The first generations of Christians saw themselves as soldiers in the cosmic war between God and his Son and the ruler of this world, Satan, and his acolytes. They were few, engaged in a world war against the powerful forces of evil.

In that sense, the earliest Christian communities, despite the profound theological, cultural, and sociological differences between them, and despite the new identity that they were in the process of developing, retained some significant similarities with the worldview of the Jewish sectarians of first-century Palestine, in particular their utopianism and millenarianism.

Like the Qumran covenanters, the earliest Christian communities developed their theological conceptions in radical isolation from, and opposition to, almost anyone else, both Jews and pagans. The Christians considered themselves to be the true Israel, *verus Israel*—that is, their borrowed identity linked them directly to the history of ancient Israel. They interpreted correctly the message of the biblical prophets, whom the contemporary Jews misunderstood, and identified with the ancient history of Israel. Their cultural memory, however, never really became rooted in ancient Israelite society.

In their successful attempt to break the circle of sectarianism and establish themselves as followers of a religion in its own right, the early Christians soon drew their own identity in terms profoundly different from any kind of Jewish identity. The Christians had given up on all the known ingredients of Jewish identity: legal prescriptions of the Torah and the oral law, including kinship rules, language, and territory. They were, indeed, in the words of the second-century Epistle to Diognetus, a *tertium genus* (*tritongenos*, a new, "third" kind of people), "from all the peoples," as the Persian sage Afrahat would say in the fourth century. Early Christian cultural memory, then, despite affirmations of being the "true Israel," was deeply different from Jewish cultural memory: it lacked the latter's sense of concrete roots in past Israelite society.

The Christians had voluntarily given up the traditional characteristics of Jewish identity boundaries and had, hence, to build anew identity markers of their own. As they could not use any of the usual identity markers provided by language, territory, or polity, they had to focus on theological ideas. The definition of orthodoxy as the narrow track meandering between the various dangers provided by heresies of all sorts was the backbone of this new identity. Until the fourth century, this would provide the major battlefield of Christianity in the making. More than the blood of the martyrs, the fight for the correct interpretation of the scriptures—the ongoing argument with the Gnostics, dualists, and docetists of all kinds, toward the constantly sharper definition of Christian orthodoxy—would provide the leading story of early Christianity. Clearly, the constant and rigorous watch for unacceptable understandings of Jesus Christ and his message would offer ample space for polemics and rejection of competing views.

Jews and Christians in the Early Empire

The same first centuries also saw the making of rabbinic Judaism and the crystallization of talmudic culture. It is this fact, precisely, that highlights the deep difference between the two orthodoxies: while the rule of faith (*kanōn tēs pisteōs*) is central to Christian identity, the rabbis thrive on polemical discussions about all legal and extralegal matters. The fact that consensus is rarely reached does not usually engender a split: "both are the words of the living God" (*elu ve-elū divrei Elohim hayyim*, i.e., opposing opinions are equally legitimate) is the traditional talmudic way of summarizing legal arguments between two rabbis.

While the church fathers, 'partakers of an ecumenical faith, are in the business of excluding all dissenters, it is precisely Jewish exclusivism which permits a rather liberal acceptance of dissenting views within the community, together with a deep (and nonpolemical) lack of interest for whatever and whoever lies outside the community. Oddly enough, this paradox does not seem to have been clearly noticed and reflected on. What should be emphasized here is that the systematic fight against heretics takes place together with the dramatic proselytizing movement in Christianity that

established it as a world religion, within and without the borders of the Roman Empire. One retains the impression that these two phenomena are not quite disconnected: together with the fast spreading of Christian faith, the need for clear boundaries is intensely felt, and this need cannot be filled with the traditional characteristics of collective identity. Hence the need is felt for more and more stringent arguments against all kinds of deviance from the (single) right belief on any major point of theology. It goes without saying that such arguments repeatedly limit the boundaries of legitimate religious thought, concomitantly enlarging those of rejected heterodox views. It is in that sense that we should first understand the paradox of a Christian universalism reflecting intolerant character more clearly than Jewish exclusivism, which had given up, at least to some extent (and due to the presence and success of Christianity) on the Jewish proselytism of old.

A surprising and rather paradoxical consequence of theological universalism and dynamic proselytism, then, is its strengthening of intolerant trends in early Christianity. But this is not all. As we shall see below, it is also on other, psychological grounds that universal pretenses foster intolerance: when salvation is offered to all and sundry, those daring enough to reject it soon become objects of anger, even hatred, on the part of the Christians who feel that their generous love of humankind is not returned in kind. Such psychological grounds are clearly visible in the development of Christian attitudes toward Jews. The topic of the growth of Christian anti-Judaism, and of its possible transformation into attitudes that one must call anti-Semitic, is obviously much too big to be treated here.¹ What I want to call attention to in the present context is the intolerant side of this attitude. Christian intolerance toward Jews, however, usually remained limited by a modicum of toleration. As mentioned above, the Jews remained tolerated more than other enemies of Christian order, such as heretics and pagans.

Tolerated, perhaps, though not really accepted, and retaining an uncomfortable place on the margins of Christian society: it was impossible for the Christians to completely erase the presence of the Jews, as the memory of Israel loomed large in

their own identity. The Jews were a testimony of the divine promise, "living letters of the Law." But they were also the offspring of Christ's murderers, who in their continuous stubbornness refused to recognize the Messiah whom God had sent them, when all around the world people had converted to the new faith. Hence, it proved very difficult not to develop a strong anger, even hatred, against the Jews. This aversion had begun early. John's Gospel had called them "Satan's first born," while Melito, in second-century Sardis, was the first to speak of them as "God killers."

The major transformation of Christian anti-Jewish discourse, however, was effected during the fourth century. Constantine, who only asked for toleration of Christianity, could refer to the Jews as "that deadly sect." Throughout the century, as the progress of Christianity was more and more sensible, the violence of Christian anti-Jewish discourse became clearer. The seeds had been there for a long time, but they could now bloom, as it were, under the new political conditions that were revolutionizing the status of Christianity. The bishops, leaders of the formerly *religio illicita*, were now filling the corridors of power from Constantinople to Milan, and their voice was heard loud and clear. The long-standing accusations against the Jews and their religion, which had over Christianity the advantage of a legal status, had long remained dormant—or in any case devoid of any real power—as long as the Christians had been disenfranchised (or *entpolitisiert*, to use Max Weber's term). They were now activated and, in the course of the fourth century, we can observe a strange phenomenon: the transfer to the Jews of some qualities (or rather vices) until then identified only with pagans. As soon as the pagan threat to Christianity was perceived as less virulent, the perception of paganism as a cult (or rather a variety of cults) offered to idols or demons was transferred to Judaism. In other words, we can observe then a "paganization" of the Christian perception of Judaism, as it were, which directly entails a demonization of the Jews: those who practice a cult of demons in their synagogues, for the first time identified as pagan temples or theaters, are themselves in the process of becoming demons, supporters of Satan, indeed, his "first born." With John Chrysostom's eight sermons *Kata*

tōn loudaiōn, written in the 380s, this process reaches a new stage, and the passage from theological anti-Judaism to a much deeper hatred of Jews—what we call anti-Semitism—seems to be fully accomplished, even with Robert Wilken's proviso about the rules of late ancient rhetoric, which explain some of Chrysostom's verbal violence, and the recognition that he was fighting a still very active Jewish competition for the minds and hearts of Christian communities.

Personal and Social Identity: Transformations and Impact Individual and Collective Identity

From Paul to Constantine and Augustine, as we have seen, two radical changes occurred in the perception of identity. The new parameters of personal identity emphasized the integration of soul and body into the definition of the human person as a composite. It has been noted above, however, that in the emerging conception, the person was not quite a harmonious one. Instead of the divide between soul and body typical of Platonism, the idea of an original sin brought with it a new break, this time within the soul itself. This break was due to a sense of guilt, inescapable because sin was inherited and ever present. This state of affairs strengthened the need for a salvation that went far beyond the individual and his or her behavior. Repentance for one's sins, indeed, expressed this need of salvation only in part. Christian salvation entailed total removal of sin. Such an attitude was bound to enhance a tension within the soul unknown among Greek philosophers. In this framework, faith became not only the *sine qua non* of salvation but also almost equivalent to it. Faith in Jesus Christ and his redemptive sacrifice, in itself, saved.

Social identity, on its side, was also submitted in early Christianity to a radical reinterpretation. For the first time in the ancient world, identity became defined in religious terms, not in ethnic or culturallinguistic ones (as was the case in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds). This new approach to social identity is perhaps best reflected in the new corpus of laws being developed from the time of Constantine up to Theodosius II in the first decades of the fifth century and collected in the *Codex Theodosianus*.

These laws show the importance of defining the church and the centers of authority within it. This implied a constant effort at defining the boundaries of the Christian community. Since the traditional Jewish criteria, such as ethnicity, language, and halakah, were not available any more, only dogma could provide the definition of the new social identity. Dogma—that is, the proper way to understand Jesus Christ, his nature, and his mission. Hence, for the first time, collective identity was defined in terms directly rooted in interiorization, in belief. True belief—or orthodoxy—was itself defined by its negation and reflected the many faces of error: heterodoxy or heresy from within and Judaism and paganism from without.

The social definition of church boundaries, however, reflected not only opposition to error but also the desire, inherent to Christianity from its very beginnings, to broaden its appeal; in other words, the church boundaries reflect Christianity's very catholicity, its strong and successful urge to convert. Conversion is the other side of the essentially dogmatic definition of the new religion: it implies a choice between truth and error.

The consequences of this state of affairs for our present purpose are as follows:

Both individual and collective identity are redefined in early Christianity in direct relation to the interiorization process. As pointed out above, both also reflect the limitations of this process. The fight between faith and sin within the individual and the fight between truth and error at the collective level seem to follow parallel patterns. Since truth comes from Jesus Christ, error comes from the Antichrist, from Satan. A choice of belief stands at the basis of the formation of both individual and collective identity and establishes an element of intolerance in the very definition of Christian identity. To be sure, intolerance has many faces, not all of them religious, and religious intolerance itself did not start with Christianity. But what seems to happen very clearly in early Christianity, and what will remain an ominous legacy in the Western world, is the following: the two sides of intolerance related to identity formation seem to strengthen each other. A strong sense of

the unavoidable presence of sin does not prevent self-righteousness (paradoxically, the contrary seems sometimes to be true), while an interiorized strong feeling of certainty directly leads to religious persecution. These processes, which deserve serious study, are very complex and can be studied only in the *longue durée*. I have been able here only to allude to them.

Therefore, I should like to come back to the revolutionary character of early Christian beliefs with which I began. If the direction followed here is basically correct, it is less these beliefs in themselves than the overall structure and status of interiorization in the new religion that is responsible for the growing religious intolerance that is one of the hallmarks of late antiquity. Like other revolutions, the Christian revolution succeeded to a remarkable extent in suppressing freedom in the name of liberation.

Eristic versus Irenic: Love and Intolerance

I have elsewhere called attention to the influence exerted by what can be called eristic tendencies in New Testament texts." One must now go further and insist also on the following paradox. The absolute and unconditional command of love cannot be considered irenic. Indeed, the hiatus between the attitude dictated by the command of love and social and psychological reality entails a deep and irreducible tension, usually referred to as cognitive dissonance. As John Gager has shown, the cognitive dissonance between messianic expectations and the disappointment caused by Jesus' crucifixion is fundamental for understanding the development of first- and second-century Christianity.

Anthropologists make use of the term rituals of reversal in order to describe the peculiar phenomena observed in some societies in times of particularly intense tensions due to chiliastic expectations. The term might be useful in reference to the command of love for the enemies. The new attitude is perceived as radical and paradoxical by its proponents. It is opposed to any legitimate expectation; in other words, it is utopian. We have seen how this command is linked to the idea of secret hatred in Essene theology. Hence, some links between this command and the esoteric trends in early Christian doctrine (trends ignored by most scholars) cannot be excluded.

Gert Theissen, who speaks of an "introjective aggressiveness turned into self-acceptance," offers a first attempt at a psychoanalytical interpretation of the command of love. Freud himself, however, had already pointed out with great clarity the tragic paradox of this command. In a striking, yet generally unnoticed, passage of *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud emphasized the direct relationship between the idea of love of mankind and that of intolerance.

After the apostle Paul made general love of mankind (*die allgemeine Menschenliebe*) the foundation of his Christian community, the greatest intolerance towards those who remained outside this community (*die äusserte Intoleranz gegen die draussen Verbliebenen*) became the unavoidable consequence. The Romans, who had not established their political collectivity upon love, did not know religious intolerance, although religion was a state matter for them, and the state imbibed with religion.

To be sure, the lack of historical precision of this passage, as well as its rather sweeping generalization, do weaken the statement made by Freud. Indeed, we cannot ignore the limits of Roman religious toleration. Even before their ferocious fight against Christianity, the Romans reacted violently to the second century BCE development of the Bacchic cult in *Magna Graecia* and to the first century CE rise of the Druidic cult in Gaul." One must also insist upon the deep ambiguity and the limits of any conception of tolerance—be it religious or political—in antiquity. We might perhaps refer here to the idea developed by Paul Veyne concerning belief in the gods in ancient Greece." In order to explain the double attitude of belief and skepticism among Greek intellectuals up to Plutarch, Veyne appeals to what he calls "truth programs" (*programmes de vérité*). The same person can show signs of faith and disbelief at different levels. In this way, it seems to me, one can refer without oversimplification to the complex relationships between tolerance and intolerance in the first Christian centuries. There are no *Idealtypen* in historical reality. It is, in each case, the specific equilibrium between tolerance and rejection of the

other that distinguishes between the different attitudes.

These remarks however should not overshadow the original intuition of Freud (who seems here to extrapolate on 1 Cor 13). He does not say what would be only partly true—that Christian monotheism, confronted with Roman polytheism, shows clear signs of intolerance. The roots of Christian intolerance, according to Freud, should be found not in the idea of a single God but in the totalitarian character of a universal command of love. In other words, it is the very universalism of Christianity that is shown here to be threatening. By right, the Christian community must include all mankind. A refusal to join the community of believers reflects a perverse and shocking vice. While ethnic or religious particularism tends to turn rather quickly into exclusivism that ignores or despises outsiders, ecumenical inclusivism entails the delegitimization of the other's existence and hence generates tensions and violent intolerance. For Arnaldo Momigliano, the roots of religious intolerance in the Western world are to be found to a large extent in Christian universalism. Momigliano comes close to the conclusions of Paul Hacker in his analysis of what he called Indian inclusivism, an attitude to be strongly distinguished, Hacker argues, from true religious tolerance.

One should also note that the duty of perfection central to Jesus' teaching ("Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," according to Matt 5:48) entails the highest ethical and spiritual standards, and hence harsh disappointment upon the inevitable failure in meeting these standards. In other words, it is the combination of the idea of love—and the duty of love—and the universalist nature of Christianity that Freud finds to be so threatening, almost totalitarian in its unattainable expectations.

Last but not least, Freud's intuition about the deep-seated ambiguity of the Christian idea of total love refutes a central thesis of René Girard, according to which only Christianity, through the love sacrifice of Jesus, avoids the violence intrinsic to any other form of expression of the sacred.

Activism and Conviction

"The letter kills, but the spirit gives life." Paul's lapidary dictum (2 Cor 3:6) soon became a cornerstone of Christian thought and sensitivity.

Prima facie, it would seem to preempt the danger of "fundamentalism" (in the broader sense of a literal reading of the scriptures) within Christianity. Paul's words, indeed, have always been understood as referring to the Old Testament, while the New Testament, reflecting the teaching and actions of Jesus, means for Christian consciousness, above all, an exemplum, to follow in the imitatio Christi. But the imitation of Christ entails an activist attitude. When the reading of the gospels became politicized, as was the case in the fourth century, the ambiguities, the tensions, and the contradictions in the figure of Jesus would soon be reflected in Christian life. Side by side with the ascetical and mystical imitatio Christi, one would find the zēlos of religious activists in late antiquity, these monks whom Gibbon, although he avoided the term, considered to be fanatics.

The tragedy of ancient Christianity is not directly dependent on the cognitive dissonance created by the delay sine die of the Second Coming. Rather, this tragedy reflects the Christians' lack of sensitivity to the dissonance caused by the reading of utopian texts in a new political context and their new power to activate them. I wish to insist here on the importance of actualization, a concept opposite to neutralization, in order to understand various phenomena in the history of religions.

Christian utopia lies at the very heart of New Testament kerygma. The French ancient historian Fustel de Coulanges could say how, together with Christianity, "the spirit of propaganda replaced the law of exclusion." The problem here stems from the very fact that Christianity is a religion of conviction, based on the spirit rather than on the letter, in contradistinction with the religions of the ancient world and even to some extent with Judaism. Conviction, indeed, entails the duty to convince, but also, too often, the urge to conquer. The strength of the Christian message is an inherently ambiguous force, which is also at the root of an ineluctable, though spiritual, will to power.

Paradoxically, then, the universal drive in religion (traditionally, unreflectively considered in a positive light) has often led to religious intolerance and violence, more so than has religious exclusivism, which has traditionally retained room for other religious identities beyond the community boundaries.

Conclusion

The preceding pages are far from having offered a full-fledged analysis of the rise of religious violence in late antiquity. As a historical case study, early Christianity might offer us some perspective on our present predicament. In conclusion, I can only call attention to a number of points relevant to our present discussion.

(1) Since 1957, social scientists have spoken—following Leon Festinger and his associates—of cognitive dissonance, referring to deep shocks in the belief systems of people after events dispelled those beliefs (for instance, the coming of the Messiah). I propose to introduce the corollary concept of cognitive consonance. What happens to the belief systems of people when events suddenly, or surprisingly, confirm their beliefs? The first Christian communities, like the Qumran covenanters, could retain radical, violent eschatological beliefs in check as long as they were entpolitisiert. Although they read radical texts (such as the War Scroll or John's Apocalypse) through a literal hermeneutic, this reading did not endanger anyone, as they were totally powerless. The real problem started with the Christianization of the Roman Empire, when they retained the same simplistic hermeneutics, while political and military power was now on their side. Hence, the direct responsibility for holy violence should not be attributed to religious texts (even when they are indeed violent) but rather to unsophisticated hermeneutics.

Religion belongs at once to the private and to the public sphere. In other words, there are both individual and collective aspects to religious identity. While the spectrum of the impact of religion on both the private and the public domain varies greatly between internalized religion and universalized religion—according to the nature of the religion involved and to each historical and cultural context—no religious life can ignore either

private or public life. A lack of balance between the private and the public expression of religion is bound to create tensions leading to violence. Similarly, the dialectical interplay between religious (and ethnic) and cultural identities may lead to religious violence when

the chasm between the two is too great, creating dissociation between religious and cultural identity. Open and closed modes of religiosity are found in all religious traditions. To some extent, those can be seen as reflecting centrifugal and centripetal forces. The present struggle is set, essentially, not between "religions," but between modes of religiosity, within each religious tradition.

In modern societies (and the same is true in the postmodern "global village"), open religion entails embracing religious pluralism in the public sphere. Hence traditional religious identities must undergo deep hermeneutical transformations in order to become full and active participants in their societies (rather than passive onlookers, tolerated by and tolerating the other *faute de mieux*). The core of these transformations is represented by the passage from religious to cultural memory. While the first is centered on the experience of the group, the second integrates the religious memories of other groups within a given society. The transformation of religious memory into cultural memory will be the counternarrative to that breeding religious violence. In this transformation, the main enemy of open religion is its closest neighbor: closed religion. Whether open religion will be successful in its fight against closed religion is not a prediction which historians can make.

But we must try. <>

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edited by Nathan Jun [Brill's Companions of
Philosophy, Contemporary Philosophy, Brill,
9789004356887]

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Excerpt: Over the course of the past 150 years, “writers from all sides of the political spectrum” have consistently “ignored, maligned, ridiculed, abused, misunderstood, and misrepresented” anarchism, characterizing it by turns as “destructive, violent, and nihilistic”; “pathetic and ineffectual”; “puerile and absurd”; and “irresponsible, immature, and unrealistic.” Anarchists themselves, meanwhile, have been variously portrayed as “wild-eyed” fanatics and terrorists who “reject[t] everything but lac[k] any idea of how to replace it”; hopelessly romantic idealists who abjure the “present, evil world” and pine for a “mythical golden age”; proponents of “mindless action” who dismiss “all intellectual activity [as] distracting or even reactionary”; and harmless apolitical poseurs who “do nothing but contemplate their navels.” Under the best of circumstances they have been dismissed as hacks; under the worst they have been persecuted, beaten, jailed, and even murdered, their writings censored, their organizations violently repressed, their movements crushed.

Academics in particular have proven exceptionally antagonistic to anarchism, habitually treating it “with prejudicial incredulity, condescension, and even hostility ... beyond the normal ignorance of the over-specialized.” Until recently, scholarly researchers have had precious little interest in, or regard for, anarchism under any description, while the few exceptions have almost invariably dismissed it as “irrational,” “ideologically incoherent,” and “theoretically nugatory”—a “shallow creed” that lacks “philosophical rigour” or “anything like an adequate theoretical formulation.”

All of this being said, there is widespread agreement at the time of this writing that anarchism’s fortunes have improved dramatically—not just in intellectual circles, but also, and more importantly, in the wider context of global politics. This agreement is often articulated in terms of three general claims.

The first is that the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries witnessed a “remarkable resurgence” of anarchist or anarchist-inspired politics that

began—or, at the very least, was first recognized—in the context of the anti-globalization movement of the late 1990s. Far from being an isolated and anomalous by-product of this movement, moreover, the “full-blown anarchist revival [that] reached critical mass around the turn of the Millenium” has been widely identified as a major factor of its emergence as a distinctive and powerful political force. Both at the time and subsequently, the basic political commitments of this “new anarchism” were widely characterized as the movement’s principal “basis for organizing” and the source of its “common philosophy.”

The second claim is that this resurgence, contrary to the expectations of many, has continued to grow in strength and influence over the past two decades and, in so doing, has had far-reaching and transformative effects on political movements throughout the world. As early as 2001 Barbara Epstein proposed that the anarchist-inspired movements of the time were poised to deal a coup de grace to “the traditional socialist left.” Three years later, David Graeber noted that anarchism was “veritably exploding,” that “anarchist or anarchist-inspired movements [were] growing everywhere,” and that the “traditional anarchist principles—autonomy, voluntary, association, self-organization, mutual aid, direct democracy” that motivated and inspired the anti-globalization movement were “playing the same role in radical movements of all kinds everywhere.” Since then the same kind of analysis has been applied to a diverse array of global political phenomena including the Arab Spring (2010–2012), the global Occupy movement (2011–2012), the Indignados movement in Spain (2011–present), the Quebec student protests (2012),²⁹ and the Nuit Debout movement (2016). It is in this context that anarchism has been described as “the most vibrant and exciting political movement of our time” and even as “the global revolutionary movement [of] the twenty-first century.”

The third claim is that anarchism has witnessed a corresponding “resurgence in the academy as a topic of cutting-edge scholarship and dynamic pedagogy.” As Jeff Shantz notes by way of summary:

A glance across the academic landscape shows that in less than a decade ... there has been substantial growth in the number of people in academic positions who identify as anarchists. Indeed, it is probably safe to say that unlike any other time in history, the last ten years have seen anarchists carve out spaces in the halls of academia. This is especially true in terms of people pursuing graduate studies and those who have become members of faculty. Several anarchists have taken up positions in prominent, even so-called elite, universities.... The flourishing of anarchism in the academy is also reflected in other key markers of academic activity [including] academic articles focusing on various aspects of anarchist theory and practice; the publications of numerous books on anarchism by most of the major academic presses; and growing numbers of courses dealing in some way with anarchism or including anarchism within the course content. There have also emerged ... professionally recognized networks and associations of anarchist researchers, such as the Anarchist Studies Network of the Political Studies Association in Britain.

In view of the foregoing, some have concluded that anarchism “has become a respected field of study within academia” or, in Shantz’s somewhat cheekier formulation, that it is “suddenly ... almost hip to be an anarchist academic.”

Whether these claims provide an accurate reflection of the present and the recent past is a complicated question that far exceeds the remit of this preface. It is not my intention here to subject them to detailed critique, nor even to challenge the broad consensus they express, as others have already done so at considerable length. That said, the third claim does raise certain issues that must be briefly addressed in order to establish the context of this book. Although there is no question that “the volume of [scholarly] work in anarchist studies has grown substantially” over the last twenty years and “interest in anarchist research has grown in parallel,” the notion that anarchist studies has altogether transcended its marginal status—let alone that it has ignited an “anarchist turn” in one or several disciplines or come to be recognized as a “respected field” in its own right—is patently

absurd. It would be far more accurate to say that anarchism is tolerated to a greater degree than in the past—a not insignificant development in its own right, but scarcely an indication that anarchism has supplanted deeply entrenched liberal and Marxist orthodoxies in the academy. (Even if it were, this would not necessarily be a positive development, as has been made clear by Shantz, Gelderloos, and others who have reflected on anarchism’s problematic relationship with formal academia.)

More germane to our purposes is the fact that this toleration has not been practiced equally across the disciplines. Of particular note in this regard is philosophy, which, by all reasonable appearances, is no more receptive to anarchism now than it was twenty years ago. While it is true that “the range of disciplinary territories over which anarchists now roam has expanded,” only a smattering of recent scholarship on anarchism deals explicitly with philosophy, and the number of academic philosophers who claim anarchism as a principal research focus is negligible. As a result, philosophy has played a comparatively minor role in contemporary anarchist studies and has been underrepresented in general overviews of the discipline. This state of affairs is problematic not only because it involves the omission of a canonical intellectual practice from a discipline that prides itself on multidisciplinaryity, but also, and more importantly, because anarchism itself is frequently described as a “philosophy” and, to this extent at least, warrants far more explicitly philosophical investigation than it has received to date.

The resurgent interest in a form of politics that has been described as “new anarchism”—or, at the very least, as “anarchist-inspired”—has quite understandably provoked a desire to more fully understand the broader anarchist tradition that serves as its inspiration. In the absence of rigorous philosophical analysis, however, the basic theoretical and political commitments of this tradition have tended to be misunderstood. This, in turn, has generated a great deal of confusion regarding the nature of contemporary anarchism as well as its relationship to other forms of political thought, including earlier iterations of anarchism itself. While the present volume is in some respects intended to remedy this situation, the paucity of

scholarly literature explicitly focusing on the relationship between anarchism and philosophy necessitates a somewhat different strategy.

Unlike other companion-style texts, which more often than not provide general outlines of established discussions within single disciplines (or across multiple disciplines), the present volume is seeking to fill a void; for this reason, it adopts a self-consciously inventive approach to its subject matter. Many of the chapters included herein consider anarchism's pertinence to other philosophical theories and systems within the Western intellectual tradition (e.g., Marxism, libertarianism, liberalism, existentialism, phenomenology, nationalism, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, pacifism). Others examine it in relation to specific philosophical subdisciplines (e.g., ethics, environmental philosophy, feminist philosophy), topics (e.g., sexuality, aesthetics), methodological or stylistic tendencies (e.g., Continental philosophy, analytic philosophy), or eras in the history of philosophy (e.g., nineteenth-century American and European philosophy).

Some explore their subject matter through highly specified lenses; others employ more conventionally synoptic approaches. Whatever their particular angle, all of them seek to shed light on the various ways that anarchism has been influenced and, in some cases, transformed by its engagement with non-anarchist philosophical discourses, as well as the distinctive contributions that anarchism itself has made, and continues to make, to the discipline of philosophy. It is the collective hope of editor and contributors alike that doing so will prompt further exploration of anarchism and philosophy and that this will lead to a fuller integration of the subject into the diverse fold of anarchist studies

[Anarchism and Philosophy: A Critical Introduction](#) by Nathan Jun

The Problem of Definitions

What is the relationship between anarchism and philosophy, and in what sense, if any, can anarchism be understood as a "philosophy" in its own right? How we answer these questions depends crucially, of course, on how we define the operative terms, both of which have been ascribed a bewildering range of conflicting meanings. Just as

philosophy "has been understood in so many ways that it is practically useless to come up with a definition which embraces all that philosophers have sought to accomplish," anarchism, too, has long been regarded as "disparate and incoherent" and has frequently been accused of being "too diverse" to qualify as a single, uniform entity. (It is no wonder, as James Joll once remarked, that "anyone who has tried to write about anarchism sometimes comes to a point at which he wonders just what it is he is writing about.")

In an initial effort to clarify matters somewhat, we might distinguish between two sorts of definitions. Those of the first sort, which we can call "generic," identify a given definiendum as a particular instance of a general kind (as in "Bowser is a dog"). Those of the second sort, which we can call "specific," indicate how a given definiendum differs from other instances of the same kind (as in "Bowser is a brown dog.") In generic definitions like "Bowser is a dog," whatever is true of the general kind ("dog") is true of all its particular instances (including "Bowser"). The same is not true of specific definitions like "Bowser is a brown dog" insofar as they involve a particular predicate ("brown") that is exclusively applied to a particular instance ("Bowser") of a general kind ("dog"). As such, the question of how best to define a given term is reducible to two primary concerns, the first of which pertains to the general kind(s) of which the definiendum is a particular instance, the second of which pertains to what distinguishes the definiendum from all other instances of the same kind(s).

Disputes over the meaning of "anarchism" are sometimes reducible to disputes over specific definitions—as when Jones defines anarchism as a philosophy that rejects all authority as such, whereas Smith defines it more narrowly as a philosophy that regards all states as illegitimate. In this case, Jones and Smith agree on the general kind of which anarchism is a particular instance but disagree about how it differs from all other instances of that kind. This is in marked contrast with disputes over whether anarchism should be considered an ideology, a political philosophy, a social system, a theory of organization, a sensibility, a temperament, an attitude, an ideal, a

faith, a culture, a tradition, an orientation, a tendency, a movement, a recurring historical phenomenon, or something else entirely. Such disputes concern the generic definition of anarchism and, as such, are obviously deeper and more profound than those of the former sort. Furthermore, because the definitions of general kinds themselves are often contested, even those who ostensibly share a given generic definition may nonetheless disagree over what this definition entails.

The fact that all of this applies equally to the term “philosophy” adds an additional level of complexity to the questions posed at the outset. In order to ascertain the relationship between anarchism and philosophy (or A and P as a shorthand), one must first determine the general kinds of which each is a particular instance—that is, one must define them generically. One possibility is that A and P are particular instances of altogether different kinds. In this case, any relationship between them is purely contingent insofar as the instantiation of A is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the instantiation of P (and vice versa).

Another possibility is that A and P are particular instances of the same general kind (call it “Z”). In this case, both A and P are necessarily related to Z (since the instantiation of Z is a necessary but not sufficient condition for both the instantiation of A as well as the instantiation of P), Z is contingently related to A and P (since the instantiation of A and the instantiation of P are sufficient but not necessary conditions for the instantiation of Z), and the relationship between A and P is contingent (since the instantiation of A is neither necessary nor sufficient for the instantiation of P, and vice versa).

Still another possibility is that A itself is a particular instance of the general kind P. In this case, A is necessarily related to P insofar as the instantiation of the latter is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the instantiation of the former. This, in turn, raises the question of how A is specifically defined—that is, how it is distinguished from all other instances of the general kind P. Now, if a generic definition of P—for example, “P is a particular instance of the general kind Z”—is simply stipulated, ascertaining the definition of A

amounts to determining whether A itself is a particular instance of P, a particular instance of Z, or a particular instance of some altogether different general kind. The problem with the case at hand, however, is that the definition of P itself is deeply disputed and not simply stipulated. In order to answer the aforementioned questions, therefore, we must begin by independently considering the various ways “anarchism” and “philosophy” have been defined, as this will presumably reveal several possibilities with regard to how the two are related.

Definitions of Philosophy

As Alexis Papazoglou notes, “[W]hen philosophers give definitions of philosophy they are not usually offering descriptive definitions ... of a cultural practice that a sociologist or anthropologist might have given” but “normative definitions” that prescribe “what philosophy should be, what it should be aiming at, how it should be aiming at it, and so on....”¹⁹ The goal of this section, it must be emphasized, is not to make prescriptions of the latter sort but merely to understand in what relevant sense(s) anarchism can be conceived as a philosophy or, at the very least, as relating to philosophy in some way. As such, the definitions we consider will be purely descriptive in nature.

In ordinary language the word “philosophy” generally indicates a particular approach to, or perspective on, something (as in “philosophy of parenting” or “philosophy of management”). Although this constitutes a generic definition in the sense of specifying what kind of thing philosophy is, it is unhelpful for our purposes since it is trivially true that anarchism entails a particular approach or perspective. (As Peter Marshall says, “All anarchists are philosophical in a general sense.”) For us the relevant question is not only what kind of approach or perspective anarchism is, but also, and more importantly, what it is a perspective on or approach to. Answering these questions obviously requires a greater degree of specificity than the trivial definition provides. To this end, there are six general definitions of philosophy that are worth our while to consider.

- The first (hereafter “P1”) refers to a basic view of reality—that is, to a more or less comprehensive and internally coherent

worldview or system of thought (as in “Marxist philosophy” or “Christian philosophy”).

- The second (hereafter “P2”) refers to a more or less uniform way of understanding some particular dimension of reality (as in particular political philosophies, moral philosophies, metaphysical philosophies, epistemological philosophies, and so on).
- The third (hereafter “P3”) refers to mode of inquiry or form of intellectual practice that uses rational methods to investigate “the most general or fundamental questions about the nature of reality and human life insofar as those problems are beyond the competence of the special sciences to raise or resolve.”
- The fourth (hereafter “P4”) refers to a particular tradition of intellectual practice or inquiry (in the sense of P3) defined by a more or less uniform subject matter and range of approaches (as in “Western philosophy” or “Eastern philosophy”).
- The fifth (hereafter “P5”) refers to the philosophical study (in the sense of P3) of the theoretical basis of a particular mode of knowledge (as in “philosophy of science” or “philosophy of religion”) or the explicitly philosophical exploration (again, in the sense of P3) of issues arising within a particular domain of human experience (as in “political philosophy” or “moral philosophy”).
- The sixth (hereafter “P6”) refers to a professional academic discipline that provides instruction and conducts scholarly research pertaining to philosophy in one or more of the senses described above.

These definitions highlight a basic distinction in conventional understandings of philosophy. As in the trivial case above, P1 and P2 characterize philosophy as a kind of “view” or “perspective,” whereas P3, P4, P5, and P6 characterize it as a kind of intellectual “practice” or “activity.” (In other words, P1 and P2 presuppose a different generic definition of philosophy from P3, P4, P5, and P6.) Although the kind of activity or practice described in P3 may in some cases generate perspectives or views of the sort described in P1, there may be

ways of generating such perspectives or views that do not involve “philosophizing” in the sense described in P3. The same is true of the kinds of perspectives or views described in P2 in relation to the modes of study and investigation described in P5 insofar as a view or perspective of this sort may or not be the product of explicitly philosophical inquiry.

Definitions of Anarchism

As in the case of “philosophy,” it is not our intention here to prescribe how the term “anarchism” ought to be defined but rather to describe “its various uses, and ... the varying intentions with which it was used.” Definitions of anarchism have emerged in a wide and diverse range of historical, political, social, and cultural contexts. Some have been formulated by self-identified anarchists, others by sympathetic writers and fellow travelers, still others by hostile critics. Some date from the mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, others from the mid to late twentieth centuries, still others from the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Some have been articulated explicitly in texts of various kinds, while others are implicit in the political activities of individuals and groups. In seeking to understand such definitions, our chief interest lies in determining what particular actors, “writing at the time [they] did write for the audience [they] intended to address, could in practice have been intending to communicate” by means of them. It remains an open question whether there is someone “determinate idea to which various writers contributed” or whether there is “only a variety of statements made by a variety of different agents with a variety of different intentions.”

Generic definitions of anarchism, including those alluded to above, may be divided into two broad categories. The first, which I call “intellectual” definitions, understand anarchism first and foremost in terms of its theoretical content—i.e., a set of distinctive beliefs, judgments, values, principles, ideals, and so on—and/or the intellectual activities and practices that give rise to this content—i.e., the methods and approaches it employs in critiquing existing political, social, and economic institutions; describing and justifying alternative forms of organization; critically engaging with other

perspectives; and so on. The second, which I call “practico-political” definitions, understand anarchism chiefly in terms of particular (non-intellectual) activities, practices, and practical objectives. Whereas definitions of the former sort pertain to how and what anarchists qua anarchists think, definitions of the latter sort are principally concerned with how they act and what they do.

Because intellectual definitions generally regard anarchism as a kind of ideology, philosophy, or theory (or as a group of related ideologies, theories, or philosophies, or as a broad ideological, philosophical, or theoretical tendency, orientation, or tradition), they are often favored by political philosophers and others who analyze political thought “in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions” and “concentrate on argument analysis of largely canonical texts.” Practico-political definitions, in contrast, tend to regard anarchism first and foremost as a social and/or political movement (or as a group of interrelated political movements, or as a practical tendency or orientation within or across various political movements). As such, they are often favored by sociologists and others who analyze political movements by studying “institutions, organizations and social practices.”

The difference between the two, it should be noted, is largely a matter of emphasis rather than substance. In the first place, no one denies that “anarchism” refers, at least in part, to a revolutionary political movement that emerged in Europe in the nineteenth century and which still exists in various forms in the present. There is some disagreement as to when and how this movement developed; what it sought to achieve; whether it espoused a distinctive ideological or political-theoretical perspective (and, if so, what that perspective was); and how it relates historically and ideologically to various contemporary political movements that have been described, or described themselves, as “anarchist.” That said, the fact that there is, or at least has been, such a thing as an anarchist political movement (or a group of anarchist political movements, or an anarchist tendency or orientation within or across various political movements) is scarcely in dispute.

So, too, few would claim that there is or could be an anarchist political movement that is not founded in some way on a particular perspective or range of perspectives—more specifically, on a particular set of underlying beliefs, ideas, values, principles, and/or commitments. Robert Graham warns against the tendency to define anarchism solely in terms of “a historically-embodied movement or movements,” as this approach conflates “anarchism as a body of ideas with anarchism as a movement.” Even if anarchism is chiefly regarded as a political movement that is distinguished from other movements on the basis of its practices or practical tendencies, one may still ask what ends anarchists hope to achieve through these practices, why they choose these particular practices and ends over others, and so on. One obvious answer to these sorts of questions is, again, that what anarchists do is at least a partial function of what anarchists believe—in other words, that anarchist practice is related in non-trivial ways to anarchist thought. (Since we are mainly concerned with the relationship between anarchism and philosophy, and since all six definitions enumerated in the previous section define philosophy in terms of intellectual content or activity, we will not consider practico-practical definitions of anarchism in any significant detail here—although we will briefly revisit the relationship of anarchist thought and anarchist political activity in the conclusion.)

All of this being said, even those who define anarchism in intellectual terms disagree amongst themselves as to how anarchist thought as such should be characterized. This disagreement bespeaks a more basic tension concerning the role that reason and intellectual analysis plays (or ought to play) in anarchist politics. Though anarchists of all stripes have generally agreed that “anarchism owes little to the writings of the ‘intellectual,’ ” many have considered it important to defend anarchism against the sorts of charges and accusations enumerated in the preface by attempting to demonstrate that it is “coherent” (i.e., that its substantive claims are mutually consistent) and “rational” (i.e., that its substantive claims may be justified on purely rational grounds). However, some have gone a step further by portraying anarchism as an explicitly “scientific” worldview “anchor[ed] firmly and irretrievably in

Enlightenment rationalism.” This is particularly true of Kropotkin and other “classical” anarchists for whom anarchism employs the methods “of the exact natural sciences” to construct “a mechanical explanation of all phenomena ... including ... the life of human societies and their economic, political, and moral problems” or “to construct a synthetic philosophy comprehending in one generalization all ... of Nature.” In associating anarchism with notions of “self-regulating natural mechanisms, relations and processes that are rational and that, if left alone, allow a more harmonious social order to emerge,” Kropotkin and his ilk were not content to demonstrate that it is intellectually credible (insofar as it is supported by or, at the very least, compatible with reason); rather, they were explicitly intent upon characterizing anarchism as a rationalist ideology that places foremost emphasis on reason and scientific analysis in the formulation and justification of its beliefs, ideas, principles, and commitments.

Others have claimed that anarchism rejects “rationalist discourses of Enlightenment humanism” including “essentialist notions of the rational human subject and ... positivistic faith in science and objective historical laws.” For those who defend “non-rationalist” perspectives of this sort, anarchism is neither solely nor even chiefly a matter of rational deliberation, theoretical analysis, or “intellectual awareness” more generally, but of non-rational sensibilities, convictions, aspirations, and ideals. According to this view, anarchist beliefs, ideas, principles, and commitments reflect underlying “psychological and temperamental attitudes” or “mood[s],” which means that anarchist political movements are not so much applications of a “doctrine” or “a body of theory” as they are expressions of “an attitude, or perhaps one might even say a faith: the rejection of certain types of social relations, the confidence that certain others would be much better ones on which to build a livable society, the belief that such a society could actually exist.” In this way, anarchism is closer to being “a species of Romanticism” than a “wayward child of the Enlightenment” or the “odd man out” in a broader set of Enlightenment ideologies.

We must avoid the temptation to overstate the difference between rationalist and non-rationalist

interpretations. An emphasis on ideas, or on the role that intellectual analysis plays in the formulation and justification of these ideas, does not necessarily entail a commitment to a particular theoretical perspective, let alone a de-emphasis on practices or on the role that psychological or emotional factors play in motivating and inspiring these practices. Nor does calling attention to the limitations of intellectual analysis necessarily entail a blanket opposition to science, philosophy, and related discourses. As Graeber remarks:

Anarchism is ... a project, which sets out to begin creating the institutions of a new society “within the shell of the old,” to expose, subvert, and undermine structures of domination but always, while doing so, proceeding in a democratic fashion, a manner which itself demonstrates those structures are unnecessary. Clearly any such project has need of the tools of intellectual analysis and understanding.

At the same time, he continues, anarchist intellectuals must “reject self-consciously any trace of vanguardism” and avoid taking on the role of “an elite that can arrive at the correct strategic analyses and then lead the masses to follow.”

Although neither perspective categorically denies that rational deliberation and reflection are important to anarchist thought, and although both emphasize the centrality of practice, non-rationalist perspectives understand anarchism in terms of sensibilities, convictions, aspirations, or ideals that emerge organically from concrete, lived experience rather than considered rational deliberation or judgment. It is only after such sensibilities, convictions, aspirations, or ideals come into being at the level of practice that they are subjected to intellectual analysis, and even then the analysis in question is largely concerned with strategy or tactics (as Graeber puts it, a “discourse about revolutionary practice”) rather than “high theory.” In other words, it is not anarchist thought itself that is the product of intellectual analysis, but rather the strategic and tactical discourses that are formulated in response to that thought. This explains, in turn, why non-rationalist accounts have generally been uninterested in arguing for anarchism or providing rational justification for it more generally.

For rationalists like Kropotkin, there is no reason in principle why the ideas that emerge organically from the concrete, lived experience of political struggle should be regarded as “non-rational” in nature. Such ideas are “rational” just in case they are justified by sufficient reasons (and so can be explicated and justified in terms of those reasons), and this is true regardless of how those ideas come about. Although some who defend non-rationalist perspectives may agree that anarchist ideas are “rational” in this sense, they do not necessarily consider this to be an important consideration. After all, perspectives of this sort are not just claiming that anarchist ideas emerge from non-rational sources, but that it is a matter of indifference whether anarchist ideas qualify as rational in the first place.

In short, while intellectual definitions of anarchism uniformly emphasize anarchist thought, this does not entail a uniform understanding of the mechanisms by which this thought is generated. The same is generally true with regard to characterizing the general kind of which anarchist thought is a particular instance. Although some definitions use terms like “ideology,” “theory,” and “philosophy” interchangeably, many more hold them as distinct. We must therefore differentiate those that describe anarchism as a “philosophy” from those that describe it as a “theory,” an “ideology,” or something else entirely. We must also draw a distinction between those that understand anarchism as a single ideology, theory, or philosophy and those that see it as as a broad philosophical, ideological, or theoretical tendency, orientation, or tradition comprised of otherwise diverse elements.

Anarchism as Political Ideology

In most cases, “ideology” is defined as a “consistent set of ideas [or] central assumptions”⁵⁵ (or as a “sheaf of overlapping [ideas or assumptions] assembled around a core characterization”) that pertain to the particular dimension of human reality known as “politics” or “the political.” Although the meaning of the term “political” is itself disputed, it is generally understood to refer to the social dimension of human existence or, more specifically, to the various ways that human beings constitute (or are capable of constituting) themselves as social creatures. According to Ponton and Gill, for

example, politics may be defined as “the way in which we understand and order our social affairs, especially in relation to the allocation of scarce resources, the principles underlying this, and the means by which some people or groups acquire and maintain greater control over the situation than others.”

Whereas “political” activity or practice refers to actual or hypothetical constitutions of the social domain itself, “political” discourse and thought refer to various ways of speaking and thinking about this domain as well as the fundamental issues to which it gives rise—e.g., “the exercise of power ... the public allocation of things that are valued ... the resolution of conflict ... the competition among groups and individuals pursuing their interests ... [and] the determination of who gets what, when, and how.” Understood in this way, political thought is a broad category that “refers to thinking about politics at any level of conceptualization and articulation.” As such, it encompasses “the political speculations of a whole community, over a certain period” including its “leaders, statesmen, commentators, writers, poets, publicists, social reformers, litterateurs, and the like” as expressed in “policies, programs, plans, activities, organizations, constitutions, etc.”

Although anarchism is often defined as an “ideology” in the generic sense described above, there is considerable disagreement regarding the particular “ideas” or “assumptions” that distinguish it from other ideologies. As David Miller writes:

Of course an ideology is never a fully coherent doctrine; every ideology is open-ended, capable of being developed in different directions, and therefore of generating contradictory propositions. But generally speaking we can at least find a coherent core, a consistent set of ideas which is shared by all those who embrace the ideology in question ... It is by no means clear that we can find such a set of core assumptions in the case of anarchism. We must [therefore] face the possibility that anarchism is not really an ideology, but rather the point of intersection of several ideologies.

Here Miller seems to be suggesting that the “ideas” and “assumptions” that constitute ideologies are

first-order claims, assertions, or propositions. As Paul McLaughlin notes, many scholars have taken it for granted that such “ideas” and “assumptions,” if they exist, are to be found in the writings of individuals who have been identified, or identified themselves, as “anarchists.” Although McLaughlin seems to agree with Miller in defining ideologies as “collections of particular beliefs articulated in particular texts and expressed in particular activities,” he nonetheless rejects the notion that ideologies can be reduced to “collections of individuals.” When anarchism is approached in this way, he writes:

[I]t is not the least bit surprising that scholars [who employ it] conclude that it is an inconsistent, contradictory, or incoherent ideology. Individuals themselves change and also change their minds. We can hardly expect them to be consistent—say “consistently anarchist”—throughout a lifetime and a body of work ... [E]vading [the] basic challenge of ideological inquiry by simply identifying an ideology with a collection of individuals—and, once again, with every aspect of their lives and thought—is indolent and uninformative.

As McLaughlin himself admits, however, “anarchism has been defined in numerous ways” (for example, as “the rejection of rule, of government, of the state, of authority, or of domination,” as “a theory of voluntary association, of decentralization, or federalism, of freedom...” and so on), and “locating or specifying the [ideas and assumptions] that characterize [it] is a challenge” even when we focus on the extent to which [they] “have gained expression in ... activities” rather than the writings of individuals.

A much more useful approach is provided by Michael Freeden, who defines ideologies in general as complex “clusters” or “composites” of decontested political concepts “with a variety of internal combinations” (we will refer to this as Freeden’s “weak” definition of ideology). For Freeden—unlike for Miller and McLaughlin—ideologies are not constituted by particular claims, assertions, or propositions but by particular political concepts “characterized by a morphology,” i.e., an inner structure that organizes and arranges those concepts in particular ways and, in so doing, removes them “from contest by

attempting to assign them a clear meaning.” The structure of an ideology is determined by the particular ways it decontests the concepts it contains; the decontested meanings assigned to these concepts are determined in turn by how they are organized and arranged within the ideology, as well as the historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts within which the ideology itself is situated.

Ideologies assign fixed meanings and degrees of relative significance to concepts by means of two basic operations. The first involves identifying, defining, and organizing their “micro-components”—i.e., the particular referents that specify what they are concepts of. Every concept has several possible micro-components, each of which, in turn, has many possible meanings and degrees of relative significance within the overall concept. This allows for “diverse conceptions of any concept” and an “infinite variety” of “conceptual permutations” within “the ideational boundaries ... that anchor [them] and secure [their] components.” The second, in contrast involves arranging concepts within a hierarchy of “core,” “adjacent,” and “peripheral” elements as well as determining their relative significance among other concepts of the same type.

The core concepts of a particular ideology are distinguished by their “long-term durability” and are “present in all known cases of the ideology in question.” As such, “they are indispensable to holding the ideology together, and are consequently accorded preponderance in shaping that ideology’s ideational content.” Adjacent concepts, in contrast, “are second-ranking in the pervasiveness and breadth of meanings they impart to the ideology in which they are located. They do not appear in all its instances, but are crucial to finessing the core and anchoring it ... into a more determinate and decontested semantic field.” Lastly there are peripheral concepts, which are “more marginal and generally more ephemeral concepts that change at a faster pace diachronically and culturally.” Each of these categories, moreover, has an internal hierarchy that accords different degrees of “proportional weight” to the concepts they comprise.

Both operations can be applied in a variety of different ways. In some cases these differences are

a function of the identification, definition, and organization of micro-components within the concepts themselves. In others, they are a function of the presence or absence of other concepts; of the relative position of concepts within the morphology; or of the different levels of proportional weight accorded to concepts that occupy the same relative position in the morphology. Although Freeden's approach recognizes that ideologies have core elements that are "indispensable to holding [them] together, and are consequently accorded preponderance in shaping [their] ideational content," it avoids defining ideologies strictly in terms of these (or any other) concepts. Its goal as such is not only to identify the core concepts of ideological morphologies but also, and more importantly, to investigate the various "conceptual permutations" they contain. Because these are virtually unlimited, ideologies have "the potential for infinite variety and alteration" and, for this reason, are capable of expressing themselves in a wide and diverse range of manifestations. This is true even of core concepts, the meanings of which can vary enormously from one particular "manifestation" of a given ideology to the next. Ideologies that recognize the same core concepts can be and often are quite different from one another; even a single ideological tradition can include a variety of distinct tendencies.

As such, the question of whether anarchism is characterized by a set of core propositions is largely irrelevant to its identification as an ideology. What matters, on the contrary, is that it involves a stable "cluster" of concepts as well as a particular morphology—that is, a particular way of organizing and arranging concepts so as to accord them specific meanings and degrees of significance. Although there is no question that anarchist ideas are "fluid and constantly evolving" and that their "central content ... changes from one generation to another ... against the background of the movements and culture in and by which they are expressed," different tendencies within anarchism nonetheless "have largely similar morphologies," meaning that they tend to affirm the same basic set of core concepts even though "[these] are expressed in different ways, depending on context." Were this not the case, it

would be difficult to account for the ubiquitous tendency to regard anarchism as a distinctive political perspective, let alone the fact that conventional treatments of anarchism consistently highlight particular concepts (e.g., freedom, anti-statism, anti-capitalism, prefiguration, etc.) rather than others. This suggests that anarchism qualifies as an ideology at least according to Freeden's "weak" definition.

According to (what we will call) Freeden's "strong" definition, ideologies are not simply conceptual assemblages but "clusters of ideas, beliefs, opinions, values, and attitudes usually held by identifiable groups that provide directives, even plans, of action for public policy-making in an endeavour to uphold, justify, change or criticize the social and political arrangements of a state or other political community." Unlike the "weak" definition, the "strong" definition encompasses ideas as well as the concrete forms of political activity they animate, and this (along with additional characteristics to be discussed below) serves to distinguish ideologies from less explicitly practice-oriented forms of political thought such as political philosophy or political theory. As we have already noted, anarchism may be understood as a "movement composed of dense networks of individuals, affinity groups and collectives which communicate and coordinate intensively, sometimes across the globe, and generate innumerable direct actions and sustained projects." It may also be understood as an "intricate political culture"—that is, "a family of shared orientations for doing and talking about politics, and to living everyday life"—that animates these networks and infuses them with content." Insofar as the "major features" of this culture (e.g., "a shared repertoire of political action based on direct action, building grassroots alternatives, community outreach and confrontation; shared forms of organizing ...; broader cultural expression in areas as diverse as art, music, dress and diet ...; [and] shared political language that emphasises resistance to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and more generally to hierarchy and domination") follow straightforwardly from the conceptual morphology described above, it is clear that anarchism qualifies as an ideology in this stronger sense as well.

All of this being said, it remains an open question whether anarchism is only a political ideology. Although it is certainly possible that ideology constitutes an altogether distinct category of political thought, it may just as well be a general kind of which political theories or political philosophies are particular instances—in which case anarchism might qualify as a political theory, a political philosophy, or some other species of political thought as well as an ideology. Indeed, even if political theory or political philosophy are entirely distinct from ideology, it is possible that anarchism is related to them in non-trivial ways. We will consider each of these possibilities below.

Anarchism as Political Theory

The term “political theory” is typically used in two senses. The first refers to a form of political thought that explores fundamental political questions, problems, and issues. As Terence Ball writes:

So long as people live together in communities, fundamental questions—“theoretical” ones, if you like—will inevitably arise. No community can long exist without addressing and answering, at least provisionally, questions of [this] sort. [These include] questions about justice and fairness in the distribution of duties and resources.... about offices and authority ... about grounds and justification ... about punishment ... about the limits and extent of obligation ... [in short] questions ... that any civilized community, or at any rate its most reflective members, must address and attempt to answer.

Whereas other forms of political thought are concerned with questions that emerge in specific political contexts (e.g., about public policy), political theory deals with questions that are taken to be universally applicable in any and all “civilized communities.” For this reason, it tends to be more speculative and abstract than the former.

As Anthony Quinton notes, the distinction between this first sense of political theory and similarly abstract or speculative modes of political thought like political philosophy “is fine, to the point, indeed, of being barely discernible.” Insofar as the former is identified as a subfield of political science, it “is more closely allied with empirical methodologies and less inclined toward the

normative claims of humanities scholars (although political theorists are more normative and ‘philosophical’ than other scholars in the social sciences).” In practice, this is generally taken to mean that political theory is both explanatory and predictive as well as normative in character—in other words, that it is concerned with describing or explaining fundamental political phenomena as well as prescribing what ought to be the case ideally. This implies that political philosophy is coextensive with normative political theory, whereas political theory more broadly encompasses non-normative questions and non-philosophical methods. Such a distinction is largely tendentious, however, since canonical works of political philosophy frequently involve descriptive or explanatory analyses rooted in the use of empirical methodologies. For our purposes, it is just as well to regard political theory in this first sense as equivalent to political philosophy (about which more below).

The second sense refers to a “subdiscipline of political science” which studies significant “texts, arguments, and discourses” in the history of political theorizing. Understood in this way, political theory involves a “historical narrative [or] a sequenced story that examine[s] the ways in which a number of outstanding individuals such as Aristotle, Hobbes or Rousseau applied their wisdom” to particular political issues, problems, and questions. Its foremost objective, in other words, is to interpret and/or critically evaluate the political thought of particular thinkers and writers in terms of the particular issues with which they are concerned; the particular methods they employ in investigating these issues (whether “philosophical, historical, economic, psychological, sociological, theological, or anthropological”; and the particular conclusions at which they arrive. Although students of this sort of political theory do not deny the existence of significant commonalities among otherwise distinct political perspectives—indeed, the notion of political-theoretical “schools,” “movements,” “tendencies,” and the like is articulated precisely on the basis of such commonalities—they are keen to emphasize the distinctiveness of individual thinkers and, by extension, the various ways in which their political ideas differ.

The same critique that McLaughlin leveled against the “individualistic approach” to ideology would seem to apply here as well. Although conventional accounts of anarchism tend to characterize it as “the brainchild of certain nineteenth-century thinkers—Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, etc.” these “‘founding figures’ did not think of themselves as having invented anything particularly new.” Like other anarchists, on the contrary, they tended to understand anarchism as a product of the combined efforts of countless “anonymous individuals who played active roles in the workers’ movement of the nineteenth century” as well as the “common people [who practiced] anarchism without being aware of it or with no previous knowledge of the word anarchism.” Even the rationalist Kropotkin insisted that anarchism was “born among the people.” This suggests that anarchist ideas evolved from the real-world political struggles of “activists” rather than the deliberations of a small group of intellectuals or theoreticians—in which case anarchism does not qualify as a “political theory” in the second sense described above. This is not to say that individual figures like Proudhon and Bakunin were not political theorists or that their work cannot be studied as political theory, but only that anarchism itself is not reducible to the political theory of any one individual.

Anarchism as Philosophy (Political and Otherwise)

As we noted at the outset, many notable anarchists (as well as commentators on anarchism) have described anarchism as a “philosophy.” To cite just a few examples:

- [Anarchism] is the philosophy of the sovereignty of the individual.
- Anarchism—The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.
- Anarchism is the only philosophy which brings to man the consciousness of himself.
- The liberation of man from economic exploitation and from intellectual and political oppression ... finds its finest expression in the philosophy of anarchism...
- Anarchism is that political philosophy which advocates the maximization of individual responsibility and the reduction of concentrated power.
- Anarchism is a philosophy based on the premise that men need freedom in order to solve urgent social problems, and begin to realize their potentialities for happiness and creativity.
- Anarchism is a philosophy of freedom. It is a body of revolutionary ideas which reconciles, as no other revolutionary concept does, the necessity for individual freedom with the demands of society. It is a commune-ist philosophy which starts from the individual and works upwards, instead of starting from the State and working downwards.
- Anarchism is a philosophy in its own right. Although as a social movement it has developed a wide variety of strands from extreme individualism to communism, all anarchists share certain common concerns.
- Anarchism is a political philosophy in the authentic sense: it poses the fundamental ethical question of political legitimacy. It is not content with disinterested description of the political order but seeks, from the standpoint of “justice,” to assess the legitimacy of this order and its alternatives.
- Anarchism is a political philosophy concerning any form of non-authoritarian political organization dealing with local and daily life.
- Anarchism is a political philosophy ... favoring social order based on voluntary association and rejecting the legitimacy of the state.

These examples make clear that those who describe anarchism as a “philosophy” typically mean “political philosophy.” Generally speaking, this refers either to a more or less uniform way of understanding the particular dimension of reality known as “politics” or “the political” (as in P2), or else to an intellectual practice or mode of inquiry that philosophically explores this dimension of reality (as in P5)—that is, by means of “rational methods” such as argumentation (the justification of

propositions by means of deductive and/or inductive reasoning) and analysis (the critical evaluation of propositions by means of the same). Before considering the extent to which anarchism qualifies as a political philosophy in either or both of these senses, let us briefly examine its relation to the other definitions of philosophy outlined previously.

The notion that anarchism qualifies as an instance of P1 is dubious. Anarchists past and present have refused to characterize anarchism as a fixed, comprehensive, and self-contained system of thought; on the contrary, they have insisted that it “recognizes only the relative significance of ideas, institutions, and social forms.” and have explicitly denied that it is “necessarily linked to any [one] philosophical system,” as when Emma Goldman argues that anarchism “leaves posterity free to develop its own particular systems, in harmony with its needs. Identifying anarchism with P3 is problematic for two related but distinct reasons. In the first place, anarchism has never understood itself as an attempt to answer “the most general or fundamental questions about the nature of reality and human life”; it is not “a metaphysics, cosmology, ecology, or spirituality ... an ontology, philosophy of history, ethics, economics, or positive political program.” In the second place, anarchism as such is not committed to any particular mode of inquiry or form of intellectual practice, rational or otherwise; as Goldman says, it does not seek to “impose an iron-clad program or method.”

As we have already seen, the role that such modes of inquiry play in anarchist thought is a matter of dispute. Feral Faun writes, for example, that anarchism emerges not from rational analysis but from “the energy of insurgent desire,” seeking after “the revitalization of desire as a creative impulse” and “the refusal to let utility and effectiveness dominate over enjoyment, playfulness, experimentation and poetic living.” Giovanni Baldelli makes a similar point:

Anarchism is not a philosophy ... Anarchism must rely on fundamental principles that are the result of an act of choice and are operative as an act of faith, regardless of whether they may be fitted into one philosophical system or another and

whether they may have received rational and even scientific support.

So, too, Alfredo Bonanno: “Anarchism is not a political theory. It is a way of conceiving life, and life ... is not something definitive.” For defenders of these sorts of perspectives, “there is no difference between what we do and what we think, but there is a continual reversal of theory into action and action into theory.” As Graeber puts it, “Anarchists like to distinguish themselves by what they do, and how they organize themselves to go about doing it ... [They] have never been much interested in broad philosophical or strategic questions.” None of this is to say, again, that anarchism explicitly disclaims rational inquiry or analysis—only that anarchist thought as such is not uniformly committed to any particular method, rational or otherwise.

It will be recalled that P4 refers to a particular tradition of intellectual practice or inquiry (in the sense of P3) defined by a more or less uniform subject matter and range of approaches (as in “Western philosophy” or “Eastern philosophy”). Although anarchism does not qualify as an instance of P4 in the strict sense, it is certainly possible to situate anarchist thought in relation to various philosophical traditions of this sort—indeed, this is precisely what many of the chapters in this volume aim to do. Even if Schmidt and van der Walt are right to argue that anarchism is “a product of the capitalist world and the working class it created”—or, more controversially, that it has no existence prior to Bakunin and the First International—no one can deny that anarchists have critically engaged with other thinkers, perspectives, and traditions and that anarchism itself has been influenced by a wide range of political, intellectual, and cultural movements (e.g., the Renaissance and the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, Left Hegelianism, Comtean positivism, and Darwinism, inter alia.) While none of this establishes that anarchist thought belongs to a particular philosophical tradition, it at least provides evidence of a longstanding discursive relationship between anarchism and philosophy.

As was noted in the preface, even a cursory examination of the scholarly literature of the past fifty years reveals that academic philosophers have had precious little interest in, or regard for, anarchism under any description, while the few who

have bothered to discuss it have almost invariably belittled or misrepresented it. One notable exception to this general rule is “postanarchism”—also known as “poststructuralist anarchism” or “postmodern anarchism”—a recent current in anarchist political theory associated most prominently with Todd May, Lewis Call, and Saul Newman. At the highest level of generality, postanarchism urges “the adoption into anarchism of poststructural theory to enrich and enliven existing practices.” Although it is extremely critical of certain aspects of classical anarchist thought—and although it has been subject to its fair share of criticism in turn—postanarchism nonetheless sees itself as “self-consciously engaged with and responding to” the broader anarchist tradition.

The same is not true of other philosophical currents that have been described, or have described themselves, as “anarchist”—most notably the “philosophical anarchism ... associated with the work of Robert Paul Wolff and others from the 1970s to the present.” In this context, the term “anarchism” refers to “principled skepticism toward the legitimacy and authority of states”; as such, it functions as little more than “an abstract descriptor used by academic philosophers to position themselves within philosophical debates.” Beyond this, philosophical anarchism has proven altogether oblivious to and uninterested in the broader anarchist tradition and has consistently failed to engage with the social, political, and cultural history of the anarchist movement.

It is an open question whether and to what extent postanarchism has impacted actually-existing anarchist political movements. What is beyond dispute is that postanarchist thought is largely (though by no means exclusively) a creature of academic philosophy—that is to say, of P6—and this fact alone renders it suspicious in the eyes of those contemporary anarchists who regard institutional academia as “hierarchical and elitist” and “separate from the everyday conditions of the working class(es).” This suspicion is of a piece with the broader anarchist tradition, which has long been skeptical of and even hostile toward institutionalized scientific and theoretical discourses and the “bourgeois intellectuals” who employ them. Bakunin, who is particularly representative on this

score, vigorously rejects the precedence of “abstract theory” over “social practice” and rails against those who defend “the predominance of science over life”—the “abstract thinkers” who, by “lifting [themselves] in thought above [themselves],” achieve nothing but “the representation of perfect abstraction.” The worst of these are professional academics, whom Bakunin describes as “modern priests of licensed political and social quackery.” Inclined “by their very nature ... to all sorts of intellectual and moral corruption,” academics “poison the university youth” and produce “doctrinaire[s] full of conceit and contempt for the rabble, whom [they are] ready to exploit in the name of [their] intellectual and moral superiority.” Just as the Roman Catholic Church “once sanctioned the violence perpetrated by the nobility upon the people,” so does academia, “this church of bourgeois science, explain and condone the exploitation of the same people by bourgeois capital.”

Malatesta—to cite another classic example—also denies the “infallibility of Science,” rejects any and all attempts “to give ‘a scientific basis’ to anarchism,” argues that deterministic and mechanistic conceptions of the universe are incompatible with notions of “will, freedom, [and] responsibility,” and claims that philosophy is often little more than “a play on words and an illusionist’s trick.” He contends that “most of the so-called intellectuals are, by reason of their education, their family background, [and] their class prejudices tied to the Establishment” and that their “natural tendency” is “to keep apart from the people and form themselves into coteries; to give themselves airs and end up believing themselves protectors and saviors whom the masses should worship.” For Malatesta, anarchism is not a matter of intellectual hair-splitting but of action: “what is important is not what we achieve, but how we achieve it.” This clearly echoes Bakunin’s pronouncement that “... the time of grand theoretical discourse, written or spoken, is past ... [and] ... it is no longer time for ideas but deeds and acts.”

If I am right in suggesting that anarchist thought lacks any significant relationship to P6, this leaves only one option—viz., that anarchism is a political philosophy (or a group of related political

philosophies, or a broad political-philosophical tendency or orientation). As noted previously, “political philosophy” can refer either to a more or less uniform way of understanding “politics” (as in P2), or else to an intellectual practice or mode of inquiry that philosophically explores politics” (as in P5)—that is, by means of “rational methods” such as argumentation and analysis. Although there is no reason in principle why all instances of the former must be products of the latter, conventional accounts tend to take for granted that “political philosophies” (in the sense of P2) differ from political ideologies, political theories, and other forms of political thought insofar as they are formulated by means of “political philosophizing” (in the sense of P5). It behooves us, accordingly, to examine P5 in closer detail.

Political philosophy in the Western intellectual tradition has been characterized by two distinct but related ends that it has pursued by means of the “philosophical” practices and modes of inquiry described in P3. The first end, which may be termed “constructive,” involves the formulation of rigorous definitions of fundamental political concepts; the systematic organization of these concepts into clearly-defined “perspectives” or “positions” (i.e., “political philosophies” in the sense of P2); and the defense of these “perspectives” or “positions” vis-à-vis the provision of arguments. The second end, which may be termed “critical,” involves evaluating already-existing definitions of fundamental political concepts as well as the various “political philosophies” they constitute. In its constructive dimension, therefore, Western political philosophy has been principally concerned with assigning particular meanings to “political concepts” (i.e., concepts in terms of which the basic subject matter of the political is described and evaluated); marshaling these concepts in the formulation of descriptive or normative propositions; and organizing these propositions into a more or less coherent theoretical framework within which political questions may be scrutinized and answered. In its critical dimension, by contrast, political philosophy has sought to critically evaluate and compare political philosophies in terms of one or more of their basic elements.

As Michael Freeden notes, “formal” political philosophy of this sort—as well as the “political philosophies” that issue from it—displays “strong similarities” with political ideology, particularly as concerns its “normative and recommendatory features ...” For example, both seek to decontest political concepts, formulate distinctive political “ideas, beliefs, opinions, values, and attitudes,” and—in many cases, at least—to “provide directives, even plans, of action for public policy-making in an endeavour to uphold, justify, change or criticize the social and political arrangements of a state or other political community ...” At the same time, there are also important differences between them. In the first place, whereas political philosophy has tended to be a restricted discourse that is “accessible only to specialists and thus bereft of wider public impact,” political ideologies typically emerge out of, or coextensively with, popular political, social, and cultural movements. In the second place, whereas political philosophy has generally been a solitary enterprise carried out by “exceptionally talented, or expertly trained, individuals,” political ideologies tend to develop out of the combined efforts of countless “activists”—many of them anonymous. In the third place, whereas political philosophy self-consciously avoids emotionally-charged rhetoric in favor of dispassionate logical analysis and argumentation (the “rational methods” described previously), political ideologies are chiefly interested in persuading the public and, for this reason, have tended to follow the exact opposite strategy.

All of this would seem to imply that political philosophy (in the sense of both P2 as well as P5) does not differ from political ideology in terms of what it does so much as how, why, and in what context it does it. Indeed, this is at least partly what Freeden has in mind when he concludes that political philosophy—no less than political theory—is “an ideological phenomenon” There are at least three important conclusions that may be drawn from this claim: first, that “political philosophies” (in the sense of P2) are particular instances of ideology rather than altogether distinct forms of political thought; second, that P5 is but one form of ideological thinking; and third, that formal political philosophy of the sort described above is but one form of P5. The last point is especially key, as it

decouples the use of rational methods as such from the particular ways they have been used in the history of Western political thought. This challenges the notion that political philosophizing does not or cannot exist outside of the restricted, individualistic milieu of formal political philosophy. It also broadens the scope of political philosophy beyond the narrowly descriptive and normative concerns of the latter and incorporates forms of political thinking that focus on strategic and tactical questions (e.g., questions of how to transform existing political realities to bring them in line with ideal conceptions of justice or the good life) as well as the critical philosophy associated with thinkers in the “Continental” tradition.

In previous sections, we not only established that anarchism qualifies as a political ideology in Freeden’s sense but also that it embodies many of the features that are commonly associated with ideologies—for example, the fact that it was born out of popular movements rather than the speculations of solitary thinkers operating in elite intellectual contexts. We also noted that many anarchists have employed philosophical methods to articulate and justify anarchist ideas (thereby echoing the distinctive means and ends of formal political philosophy) as well as to explore strategic and tactical questions. This fact by itself illustrates an obvious but important sense in which anarchism and philosophy are related. At the same time, earlier observations regarding the relationship of anarchist ideas to anarchist practices make it clear that anarchism is not a wholly rationalistic mode of political thought, as this would imply that its practices proceed from its ideas, at least some of which are themselves products of rationalistic deliberation or analysis. As we have seen, on the contrary, anarchists have long insisted that their ideas are products and not (or not just) producers of their practices and practical tendencies.

Note that the latter claim (viz., that anarchist practices proceed from anarchist ideas) does not necessarily negate the former claim (viz., that at least some anarchist ideas are products of rationalistic deliberation or analysis). It is possible, for example, that at least some anarchist ideas were generated through *ex post facto* attempts by anarchist intellectuals to explain or justify

preexistent anarchist practices and practical tendencies. Although such attempts proceed from anarchist practices and not the other way around, they are nonetheless rationalistic in nature, if only in a minimal sense. This suggests that the intellectual content of anarchist ideology contains both rationalistic as well as non-rationalist elements—in other words, that anarchist thought is a matter of the heart as well as the mind.

While anarchism does not appear to qualify as an instance of P1, P3, Pa, or P6, it is nonetheless non-trivially related to instances of each. Furthermore, although P2 and P5 appear to qualify as particular instances of political ideology, and although some instances of anarchist thought are non-trivially related to P5, anarchism as such does not qualify as a particular instance of P2. This suggests that anarchism is not a political philosophy even though anarchist thinkers have occasionally drawn upon the methods of formal political philosophy. On the contrary, anarchism is an ideology or ideological tradition the intellectual content of which has been shaped in part by the distinctive practices and associated concerns of P5.

Conclusion

Whether it is understood as a kind of “view” or “perspective” (as in P1 and P2) or as an “activity” or “practice” (as in P3, Pa, P5, and P6), philosophy is thoroughly intellectual in character, concerned first and foremost with ideas rather than actions. As Freeden notes, even its more explicitly political iterations tend to be “private discourses” that are out of touch “with the real-world arena of policy-making” and “removed ... from the practice and language of politics.” While there is no question that formal political philosophy sees itself as a “guide, a corrective, and a justification for enlightened and civilized forms of organized social life and political institutions ... the disciplinary constraints that apply to producing good philosophy have all too often distanced its practitioners from the actual stuff of politics and have contributed to a general sense of the estrangement of philosophy from political life.” Interestingly, the fact that political ideologies tend to place a much heavier emphasis on engaged political activity is one reason among many why they have been considered inferior modes of

political thinking—the underlying assumption being that this emphasis is at odds with the intellectual values of “rationality, clarity of argument, logical coherence, and consistency.”

All of this is moot, of course, if political philosophy is itself a species of ideology that “involves selective decontestations of political concepts like any other” and “displays features common to other ideological forms ... such as an appeal to unexamined value assumptions, and the investment of emotional attachment to particular points of view.” In this case, what distinguishes political philosophy from other ideologies is precisely its tendency toward political disengagement, where this, in turn, is either a basic commitment of its practitioners or else a contingent consequence of its methodology and subject matter. Such disengagement, moreover, would appear to make political philosophy a rather bloodless and ineffectual member of the ideological family even if, on some level, it has intellectual merits that other more practice-oriented ideologies lack.

Although anarchism is clearly an ideology in the weak sense of displaying a conceptual morphology, it is also an ideology in the strong sense insofar as it has consistently emphasized practice even in its more explicitly philosophical iterations. This comes as no surprise since, as we have seen, anarchism was born from and shaped by active political engagement and has always scorned abstract theory divorced from action. If anarchist thought appears “less sophisticated” than formal political philosophies, it is precisely for this reason.

Understanding the world in various ways is important, but anarchism’s foremost imperative has always been to change it. More than anything else, perhaps, this explains its general aversion to the abstract content and esoteric methodologies associated with P5, to say nothing of the other forms of “philosophy” that we discussed.

At the same time, the fact that anarchism isn’t a “philosophy” (or a species of philosophy) in its own right does not mean that it is altogether unrelated to philosophy. As we have seen, on the contrary, there are deep connections between anarchist thought and philosophy under various descriptions.

The intellectual content of anarchism has been shaped in significant ways by its en-gagement with other philosophical currents, and several of its most exemplary thinkers were artful practitioners of P5 (and, in some cases, of P3 as well). There is no question that anarchists have done and continue to do philosophy even if this enterprise has played a comparatively minor role in the historical development of anarchist thought. Understanding these connections is necessary in order to fully comprehend anarchism as a historical phenomenon no less than as a body of thought and practice; this is one reason why anarchist studies would benefit from more explicitly philosophical or intellectual-historical research.

On the other hand, even if we agree that anarchist thought is not a “political philosophy” in the sense of P2 and is not chiefly a product of P5, it remains an open question whether this is an altogether neutral fact. One can certainly argue—as many anarchists have—that rationalistic approaches like P5 are objectively superior to (or, at the very least, have certain decisive advantages over) non-rationalistic approaches, in which case the failure of anarchist thought to engage more explicitly with the former is a lamentable historical shortcoming that anarchist thinkers should proactively seek to overcome. It has been claimed, for example, that political ideas founded on irrational (or at least non-rational) “faith,” “confidence,” or “belief” rather than considered rational judgments are arbitrary and foundationless, which implies that there are no clear ways to promote, advance, or advocate for them within the marketplace of ideas (and ideals), and thus no non-arbitrary reasons to organize movements that pursue political goals in their name. If true, this would mean that ideologies that can rationally articulate and justify their ideas would appear to be better off than ideologies that are unwilling or unable to do so, in which case anarchism would benefit by more robustly embracing P5.

In short, the question of how philosophy and anarchism are related, no less than the question of how they ought to be related, are relevant not only to the study of anarchism as such, but also, and more importantly, to the ongoing development of anarchist thought and practice in the present. <>

[Ethics in Psychological Research: A Practical Guide for the Student Scientist](#) by Daniel P. Corts, Holly E. Tatum [SAGE Publications, 9781506350004]

[Ethics in Psychological Research](#) is a brief, practical guide for student researchers and their mentors to answer ethical questions and navigate issues of institutional policies and academic freedom. Authors Daniel P. Corts and Holly E. Tatum guide readers in identifying, preventing, mitigating, and resolving ethical issues in research using a unique ethical framework. Each of the standalone chapters provide real-life examples of ethical questions, a description of scholarly work on the matter, and suggestions for how to address similar problems should they arise in the researcher's own work. The book makes for a succinct and easy-to-use reference for any student conducting research in the behavioral sciences.

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Excerpt: [Ethics in Psychological Research: A Practical Guide for the Student Scientist](#)

The idea for this book came from our personal experiences as mentors of undergraduate researchers as well as from situations our colleagues have encountered. We felt that there was no single source to help students and faculty navigate the difficulties they sometimes faced. We also realized that, in retrospect, had we discussed the pitfalls with student researchers before they began the research process, we might have

avoided many of the problems. In searching for information to address ethical concerns that came up, for example on data ownership, it took many hours to track down the necessary information. Peer-reviewed articles often focus on one single topic in depth rather than on various issues related to ethical principles. There are websites, such as the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Research Integrity website, that present basic information on the topic, but they are geared toward professional scientists. As it turns out, the best information we could find came from conversations with our peers at other colleges and universities. Their experiences had been the same, and they had worked through problems with their students in the same ways we had. Eventually, we realized that someone needed to gather the information in one place. We decided to take on that challenge and adopted the dual goals of (1) summarizing and teaching established ethical principles and (2) framing this in a way that would help student researchers think and behave ethically.

Ethics in Psychological Research is intended to be a practical guide for instructional purposes. Each chapter begins with a vignette describing an ethical dilemma. It would be easy for a reader to think of these as fiction, but we assure you that the scenarios and examples in the chapter openers (and throughout the chapters as well) come from our own experiences and from colleagues who generously shared their own stories with us. The chapters are structured much like the experience of a student and mentor working through the issues. Each opens with a student or professor facing an ethical issue. The chapter then provides a historical or philosophical background and followed by advice about how to approach or avoid the problem. Hopefully, you see the parallels. In life and in the book, we need context for more practical issues. This information is particularly important for students because an understanding of the basic ethical principles will allow them to tackle entirely new problems later on.

There are two sources that provide the majority of ethical principles for practically the entire book: the American Psychological Association and the U.S. federal government. In addition, each chapter focuses on a different set of ethical topics, and so

the remaining source materials vary somewhat, including relevant scholarly work on the matter and organizations such as the American Statistical Association. In order to get the most out of the book, we ask that students and mentors go beyond the basic principles and think about how they apply to research situations both real and hypothetical. Real examples, such as the vignettes, are a good place to practice applying principles because you can get a sense for how researchers' motivations, aspirations, and beliefs can lead even the most ethical of researchers to lapse into questionable research practices (a term we introduce in Chapter 7). In addition to the vignettes, the discussion questions at the end of each chapter are structured to get you to think hypothetically: What if this situation occurred differently? What are other solutions? Why does this happen?

Ethical issues can be challenging, uncomfortable, and a drain on resources and emotions. Fortunately, most of them can be prevented by anticipating and preparing for them. We suggest having conversations at the level of the individual course or lab, the department, as well as across your campus. Policies can help solve problems if they do arise, and they certainly make it easier than doing what we did—usually that was coming up with a solution in the middle of a project. So, that is our advice: Educate yourself and plan ahead. And as a final word of encouragement, practicing sound ethics is every bit as important as sound methodology. When you get to the end of a project, you can be proud that you preserved integrity throughout the research process. <>

[Social Work Values and Ethics, Fifth Edition](#) by Frederic G. Reamer [Foundations of Social Work Knowledge, Columbia University Press, 9780231188289]

For decades, teachers and practitioners have turned to Frederic G. Reamer's [Social Work Values and Ethics](#) as the leading introduction to ethical decision making, dilemmas, and professional conduct in practice. A case-driven, concise, and comprehensive textbook for undergraduate and graduate social work programs, this book surveys the most critical issues for social work practitioners.

The [fifth edition](#) incorporates significant updates to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and new practice and model regulatory standards used by social service and licensing agencies around the world. Reamer also focuses on how social workers should navigate the digital world through discussion of the ethical issues that arise from practitioner use of online services and social networking sites to deliver services, communicate with clients, and provide information to the public, and what standards will protect confidential information transmitted electronically. He highlights potential conflicts between professional ethics and legal guidelines and expands discussions of informed consent, confidentiality and privileged communication, boundaries and dual relationships, documentation, conflicts of interest, and risk management. Conceptually rich and attuned to the complexities of ethical decision making, [Social Work Values and Ethics](#) is unique in striking the right balance among history, theory, and practical application.

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Excerpt: Social workers' understanding of professional values and ethics has matured considerably in recent years. During the earliest years of the profession's history, social workers' attention was focused primarily on cultivating a set of values on which social work's mission could be based. Over time, the profession has nurtured and refined values that have given tremendous meaning and purpose to the careers of generations of social workers. Social work's enduring commitment to vulnerable and oppressed populations, and its simultaneous focus on individual well-being and

social justice, are rooted in the profession's rich value base.

The lens through which social workers view values and ethics has changed dramatically over time, however. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that social workers now look at these issues through several lenses, not just one, and that the angles of these lenses periodically shift in response to cultural developments and trends. Today's social workers face issues involving values and ethics that their predecessors in the profession could not possibly have imagined. What social worker, in the early twentieth century, could have anticipated the magnitude of the debates about the ethical issues for social workers that have emerged from the AIDS crisis or the complex privacy and confidentiality issues facing social workers who use e-mail, text messaging, remote video counseling, online social networking sites, and other Internet tools to serve and communicate with clients? What social worker in the 1930s could have forecast the ethics debate about social workers' role in the use of animal or artificial organs to save a dying client's life, or ethical problems created by cutting-edge psychopharmacology and electronic monitoring of certain clients?

Especially since the late 1970s, a growing number of social work scholars and practitioners have been studying, exploring, and debating values and ethical issues in the profession. Literature on social work values and ethics, presentations at professional conferences, agency-based training, and instruction on the subject in undergraduate and graduate social work programs have increased dramatically. Today's students and practitioners have access to vastly more knowledge and education related to social work values and ethics than did their predecessors. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that social work's exploration of these issues has increased exponentially.

The same is true in other professions. In professions as diverse as journalism, medicine, engineering, accounting, business, law, psychology, and nursing, practitioners and scholars have devoted increasing amounts of attention to values and ethics. For a variety of reasons, which I shall explore shortly, members of these professions have come to recognize the critical importance of these issues

and their immediate relevance to practitioners' work.

The wide variety of complicated issues associated with values and ethics in social work and other professions has emerged along with the invention of an entire field of study whose purpose is to help identify, explore, and address the sorts of problems professionals encounter in these areas. Applied and professional ethics (also known as practical ethics) began to take shape in the early 1970s, primarily as a result of the explosion of ethical issues in medicine and health care (commonly known as bioethics). Since that time, scores of scholars and practitioners have studied the relevance of values and ethics to the professions, debated ethical problems in the professions, explored the relevance of ethical concepts and theories to the sorts of ethical dilemmas that arise in professional practice, and improved education and training in these areas.

Such has been the case in social work as well. The vast majority of literature on social work values and ethics has been written since the mid-1970s. Although many significant publications appeared earlier, most of the in-depth scholarly exploration of these subjects has occurred since then. In addition, most presentations at professional conferences, training sessions in social service agencies, and undergraduate and graduate education on the subject have occurred since that time, too.

Thus, today's social workers have access to a far wider range of information and knowledge related to values and ethics than did earlier generations of practitioners, and the profession's literature must keep pace. Contemporary social workers must be acquainted with advancing knowledge related to the profession's values and the sorts of ethical issues and challenges that practitioners encounter.

[Social Work Values and Ethics](#) has been written with this purpose in mind. This book is designed to provide social workers with a succinct and comprehensive overview of the most critical and vital issues related to professional values and ethics: the nature of social work values, ethical dilemmas and decision making, and ethics risk management. *Social Work Values and Ethics* puts

between two covers a summary of compelling knowledge, topics, and debates that have emerged throughout the profession's history, emphasizing the issues that are most pressing in contemporary practice. The book aims to acquaint readers with the core concepts they need to identify and investigate the wide range of complex issues associated with values and ethics that today's social workers face.

Chapter 1 provides a broad overview of values and ethical issues in social work and a brief history of the profession's attempts to address them. This is followed by an in-depth examination in chapter 2 of the nature of social work's core values and the relevance of the profession's value base to clinical practice (i.e., the delivery of services to individuals, couples, families, and small groups) and macropractice (i.e., agency administration and management, social advocacy, community organizing, and policy practice).

A significant portion of this book is devoted to complex ethical dilemmas in social work. These are situations in which social workers are challenged by conflicting ethical duties and obligations, that is, circumstances that generate considerable disagreement and debate. Chapter 3 provides a conceptual framework for thinking about and exploring ethical dilemmas, and ultimately making difficult ethical decisions. This chapter includes a practical outline and concepts to help social workers approach ethical decisions. It also includes a detailed summary and overview of the current version of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide an overview of a wide range of specific ethical dilemmas in social work. Chapter 4 focuses on ethical dilemmas in clinical practice with individuals, couples, families, and small groups of clients. In contrast, chapter 5 focuses on ethical dilemmas in macropractice, that is, dilemmas encountered in the realms of social work administration, social advocacy, community work, and in social welfare policy.

Among the issues involving social work's values and ethics are the problems of malpractice, unethical behavior, and professional misconduct. Social workers sometimes are named in ethics complaints

or lawsuits that allege some kind of ethics-related negligence or misconduct (e.g., unethical management of professional boundaries or inappropriate disclosure of confidential information). In a few instances, social workers have been charged with and convicted of criminal conduct (e.g., sexual involvement with a client, billing for services that were not provided). The good news is that many such problems are preventable. Thus, chapter 6 provides readers with an overview of professional misconduct and the ways social workers can become entangled in ethics complaints and lawsuits, a summary of the most common problems in the profession, and various prevention strategies.

Social work values and ethics have come of age. It is a privilege to be able to provide readers with an introduction to what constitutes the heart of social work's noble mission.

Social Work Values and Ethics: An Overview

Imagine that you are a social worker at a local community mental health center. You spend most of your time providing supportive and casework services to individuals and families experiencing difficulty. You have worked at the agency for about three years.

During the past two months, you have provided counseling to Sarah Koufax and her two children: Brooks, seven, and Frank, four. Sarah originally sought help at the agency because of difficulty she was having managing Brooks's behavior. According to Sarah, Brooks "frequently throws temper tantrums when he's upset—he can really kick and scream." Sarah Koufax also reported that Brooks's teacher said she was having a great deal of difficulty controlling the boy and wanted to discuss whether he should be transferred to a classroom for students with behavioral challenges.

You have spent considerable time teaching Sarah various ways to handle Brooks's behavior, particularly the use of positive reinforcers. During the past few weeks, Sarah has reported that his tantrums have been less frequent and that he has responded well to the positive reinforcers. Brooks's teacher has also reported that the child's behavior has "improved somewhat."

Throughout your relationship with Sarah, she has talked at length about some of her own difficulties—single parenthood, financial problems, and her struggle with alcoholism. In recent weeks, she has been especially eager to discuss these problems. In your judgment, you and she have developed a constructive, trust-filled relationship.

Yesterday morning, you received a telephone call from Sarah. She was clearly distraught and said she needed to see you as soon as possible; she could not wait for her regularly scheduled appointment later in the week. She reported over the telephone: "Something awful has happened and it's really bothering me. I need to talk to you fast. I know you'll understand."

You were able to see Sarah that day because another client had canceled his appointment. Sarah came in alone and immediately started to cry. She said that two days earlier Brooks was throwing a terrible tantrum, one of his worst: "I had just had it. I was feeling sick, and Frank was screaming for me to feed him. Brooks just wouldn't let up. I got so frustrated I grabbed him and pushed him. He tripped and fell into the radiator in the kitchen, breaking a tooth. I got him to a dentist right away. I told the dentist that Brooks was horsing around with his brother and bumped into the radiator. I just couldn't tell her the truth. I'm so ashamed. Things were getting so much better. I don't know what happened. I just lost it."

During this session, you spent most of the time encouraging Sarah to express her feelings. You also talked with her about how most children who are receiving help for behavior-management problems regress sometimes, even though they are making considerable progress overall. The two of you talked about how Sarah might respond to any future tantrums.

Toward the end of the session, you told Sarah: "I'm in a real pickle. I know that what happened with Brooks was an accident, that you didn't mean to hurt him. But here's the problem. The law requires me to report what happened. I know you don't think you deliberately abused Brooks, but according to state law, I have to report to the child welfare agency the fact that Brooks was injured. I'd like you to help me report this, so we can show the

state social worker how hard you've been working on your problems. Frankly, I don't think they'll do much. This is just something I'm supposed to do." Sarah immediately started to cry and became agitated. "I can't believe you would do this to me," she said. "I thought I could trust you. If you call the state, I'm never coming back here. I can't believe this."

In fact, you do not really want to report the case to state child welfare authorities. You firmly believe that Sarah Koufax did not mean to harm Brooks and that this was an isolated instance in which she lost control. You have been impressed with Sarah Koufax's earnest attempt to address her problems and with her progress in recent months. You sense that reporting the incident to the child welfare authorities will do more harm than good; reporting is likely to alienate Sarah from you and undermine your therapeutic relationship with her. Moreover, Sarah is already receiving competent help from you; in your judgment, services from a state worker are not needed and would be counterproductive.

The bottom line, however, is that you feel compelled to obey the state law. You did your best to explain to Sarah why you felt the need to report the case. You told her you understood why she was so angry. But despite your best effort, Sarah walked out quite distressed and agitated, saying: "Do what you have to do. Just let me know what you end up doing so I can figure out what I need to do."

Seasoned social workers are certainly familiar with this sort of predicament. Helping the client deal with her anger and working to sustain the therapeutic relationship requires sophisticated clinical skills. Sometimes the

clinical intervention is effective, and sometimes it is not. And, as in this case, sometimes social workers' clinical and other professional judgments raise difficult ethical issues.

Core Issues in Social Work Values and Ethics

At the center of the example that opens this chapter is a complex set of values and ethical issues. In fact, the values and ethical issues in this case represent the four core issues in social work on which I shall focus throughout this book:

- the value base of the social work profession
- ethical dilemmas in social work
- ethical decision making in social work
- ethics risk management

At the heart of this case is a difficult decision about core social work values. Social work is among the most value based of all professions. As I shall explore more fully, social work is deeply rooted in fundamental values that ultimately shape the profession's mission and its practitioners' priorities. Several key values of concern in this example include Sarah Koufax's right to self-determination, confidentiality, and privacy (i.e., her wish for you to continue working with her without notifying state child welfare officials about the incident involving Brooks); the social worker's obligation to protect clients from harm (e.g., Brooks from harm in the form of parental abuse, his mother from being deprived of meaningful help from the social worker, and both from harm that might result from investigation by state child welfare officials); the social worker's obligation to obey the law (i.e., the law that requires social workers to report all instances of suspected child abuse and neglect); and the right to self-protection (i.e., social workers' right to avoid sanctions and penalties that might result from their failure to comply with the law).

Ideally, of course, the social worker would act in accord with all these values simultaneously. What social worker would not want to respect clients' right to self-determination, confidentiality, and privacy; protect clients from harm; obey the law; and protect him- or herself? The problem is that situations sometimes arise in social work in which core values in the profession conflict, and this leads to ethical dilemmas. An ethical dilemma is a situation in which professional duties and obligations, rooted in core values, clash. This is when social workers must decide which values—as expressed in various duties and obligations—take precedence.

To make these difficult choices, social workers need to be familiar with contemporary thinking about ethical decision making. In the Sarah Koufax case, the social worker must decide whether to comply with the state's mandatory reporting law—and risk

jeopardizing the therapeutic alliance that has been formed with Sarah Koufax—or deliberately violate state law in an effort to sustain the meaningful, and apparently helpful, therapeutic relationship.

As I shall explore shortly, the phenomenon of ethical decision making in the professions has matured considerably since the discipline of applied ethics emerged in the 1970s. Professionals trained today have far more access to helpful literature and concepts related to ethical decision making than did their predecessors. This is particularly true in social work, which has experienced a noticeable burgeoning of interest in ethical decision making.

Finally, social workers must be concerned about the risk-management ramifications of their ethical decisions and actions, particularly the possibility of professional malpractice and misconduct. Is it acceptable for a social worker to knowingly and willingly violate a law, even if she has only noble motives in providing service to clients? What consequences should there be for a social worker who does not act in a client's best interests? What legal risks—in the form of ethics complaints, formal adjudication by ethics disciplinary committees or state licensing boards, lawsuits, and criminal charges—do social workers face as a result of their actions?

The Evolution of Social Work Values and Ethics

To explore fully contemporary values and ethics in social work, it is important to understand the historical evolution of thinking in the field with respect to its value base, ethical dilemmas in practice, ethical decision making in social work, and ethics-related risk management. The social work profession's grasp of key values and ethical issues has matured considerably in recent years.

The general topics of values and ethics have been central to social work since its formal inception. Historical accounts of the profession's development routinely focus on the compelling importance of social work's value base and ethical principles. Over the years, social workers' beliefs about the profession's values and ethics have served as the foundation for its mission. Social work is, after all, a normative profession, perhaps the most normative

of the so-called helping professions. In contrast to such professions as psychiatry, psychology, and counseling, social work's historical roots are firmly grounded in such concepts as social justice and fairness. Throughout the history of social work, its mission has been anchored primarily, although not exclusively, by conceptions of what is just and unjust, and by a collective belief about what individuals in a society have a right to and owe one another.

Although the theme of values and ethics has endured in the profession, social workers' conceptions of what these terms mean and of their influence on practice have changed over time. There have been several key stages in the evolution of social work values and ethics: the morality period, the values period, the ethical theory and decision-making period, the ethical standards and risk-management period, and the digital period. <>

[Victimology and Victim Assistance: Advocacy, Intervention, and Restoration](#) by Yoshiko Takahashi, Chadley James [SAGE Publications, 9781506359557]

[Victimology and Victim Assistance](#) offers insights into the criminal justice system from the perspective of often overlooked participants—victims. Delving into victim involvement in the criminal justice system, the impact of crime on victims, and new directions in victimology and victim assistance, authors Yoshiko Takahashi and Chadley James provide crucial insights and practical applications into the field of victim assistance. With an emphasis on advocacy, intervention, and restoration, this book examines real issues and barriers in the criminal justice system for victims and offers a way forward for future criminal justice or other human service professionals.

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Excerpt: This book is designed as a primary resource for victimology, victim services, and victim advocacy courses. There is growing interest in studying victim assistance by criminal justice and criminology students who intend to pursue careers as service providers in the criminal justice system or community-based agencies. Also, students in other disciplines such as social work and child development would benefit from this text to build on their knowledge of the criminal justice system and victim assistance.

The value and distinctiveness of the text is that it will discuss the criminal justice system and how victims' rights have been recognized in the system. To achieve this, the authors have divided the material into four sections, starting with a general discussion and overview of victimology and victim assistance and moving to more specific areas. The four sections are: Foundations, Understanding the Criminal Justice System and Victim Assistance, Impact of Crime on Victims, and New Directions in Victim Assistance.

The Foundations section is designed to provide students with an overview of victim assistance and assessing the impact on victimization through victimological theories, available data, and the trauma and recovery process. The second section addresses how victim services have been integrated into the main areas of the criminal justice system—law enforcement, the courts, corrections, and the juvenile justice system. Restorative justice is also discussed. The third section discusses effective responses to specific crime victims, including victims of family violence, sexual assault, and cyber-crime. The fourth section discusses challenges for victim assistance, which includes discussions on professionalism in victim services, compassion fatigue, and barriers to services. The final section also covers multicultural competency issues using some examples of the LGBTQ, Asian Pacific Islander, and Native American communities.

The authors build on the growing interest in victimology and victim assistance and provide a context within which to understand the major challenges and possible ethical dilemmas that victim advocates could face, along with discussing the future direction of victim assistance.

Key Features

- Victim assistance programs are highlighted in boxes within the chapters to orient students toward programs that are actively working to support victims.
- Case studies are used throughout the book to provide realistic and factual depictions of victims, humanizing the topics covered and facilitating discussion.
- Coverage of crucial topics like human trafficking, cyber-crime, and traumainformed care offer students contemporary insights into the field of victim assistance. <>

[The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice: Concise Student Edition](#) edited by Fiona Kate Barlow [Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology, Cambridge University Press, 9781108426008]

[The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice: Concise Student Edition](#) aims to answer

the questions: why is prejudice so persistent? How does it affect people exposed to it? And what can we do about it? With cutting-edge research from top scholars in the field, the chapters present an overview of psychological models of prejudice and investigate key domains such as racism, sexism, and the criminal justice system. This student edition of the award-winning Handbook includes new pedagogical features such as learning objectives, core terms and definitions, summary points, discussion questions, recommended readings, and instructor's test bank. It also features a new conclusion chapter that analyzes eight hard problems currently faced by researchers and activists, thus engaging students in deep, forward-thinking discussion. Developed specifically for use in Psychology of Prejudice courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, the Concise Student Edition is an essential teaching and learning resource.

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Why We Edited This Handbook

Prejudice is a difficult topic to talk about, let alone teach; we all have a vested interest in prejudice, whether through experiencing it personally, perpetrating it, or defending dearly held positions as non-prejudiced. A commitment to researching, understanding, and talking about prejudice, however, was what brought us (the editors) together 10 years ago. In 2007 we both attended a conference, and after hearing each other speak about applying psychological techniques to the study of intergroup antipathy and warmth, we knew we had to meet. Over a coffee in the morning break of the conference we began chatting, and over a decade later we have not

stopped. Although living in separate countries, we typically make the time to talk weekly, and email even more frequently. We both have a borderline obsession with data analysis, and a perpetual desire to apply the scientific lens to social issues. In particular, while a lot has changed over the last 10 years, our commitment to studying prejudice has not. We have conducted research on how personality, intergroup contact, ideology, and group membership contribute to the genesis and experience of prejudice. Consequently, when the opportunity arose for us to edit [The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice](#), we could not pass it up.

We have both taught widely, from early undergraduate through to postgraduate courses. One thing that we have noticed separately, and discussed at length, is how difficult it is to communicate about prejudice to students. The reasons for this are manifold, and we only touch on a few here. First, and perhaps most importantly, the topic of prejudice is not one divorced from emotions; it is inherently tied to lived experiences, to debates, and to ideological positions. Second, prejudice is hard to understand; there is no one explanation for the development of prejudice, and no one target. Third, there is often a large gap between the scientific study of prejudice, and on-the-ground experiences and activism. Finally, many students resist the idea of "the psychology of prejudice" forming a legitimate and important topic of study and teaching, while others simultaneously perceive a need for an enhanced focus on the psychology of social life and social problems.

When we came together to work on this handbook, we wanted to create a resource that would walk students through multiple aspects of understanding prejudice. We wanted to engage with different (and often competing) perspectives about how prejudice develops. Is it evolution? Basic group processes? A struggle for wealth and resources? The answer to any complex question is typically complex itself. In bringing together diverse perspectives on prejudice, we aimed to encourage students to think both holistically and critically about the problem of prejudice.

We were also mindful of embedding our book within a wide historical context. To this end, we

invited Jane Elliott to contribute a chapter to our handbook. In the days following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, primary school teacher Elliott decided to give her class a lesson none would forget. Her mainly White class, she felt, had very little practical understanding of the experience or effects of racism, and consequently little empathy for those subjected to it daily. She developed an exercise where students would discriminate against each other on the basis of a random phenotypic feature — eye color. What resulted is one of the world's best known (and controversial) classroom exercises on prejudice and discrimination: the blue-eyes/brown-eyes exercise. When we invited Elliott to write a chapter for our handbook we hardly dared hope for a response, let alone one in the affirmative. In this student edition, Elliott's chapter serves as an intermission breaking up our first block of chapters on general theoretical perspectives on prejudice, and our second block of chapters on prejudice in specific domains. In this latter part we ask students to engage with the research on prejudice against women, racial minorities, immigrants, and sexual minorities. We also focus in on the issue of prejudice as it manifests in the criminal justice system.

Our conclusion chapter serves as a call to arms — we both spent many hours brainstorming and writing, trying to articulate eight big challenges (or "hard problems") that we see facing those who currently investigate, and communicate about, prejudice. The impact of prejudice in shaping our day-to-day experiences, and the rabbit-warren complexity of trying to understand, explain, and challenge prejudice, cannot be understated. We hope that this book serves as a useful tool for those aiming to understand, teach, research, or challenge prejudice.

Audience

The student edition of [The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice](#) has a wide intended audience. Perhaps most intuitively it can be used in universities by those wanting to teach a focused course on prejudice (this could be in general psychology, social psychology, politics, social science, arts, and the list goes on). The handbook read from beginning to end would serve as an

ideal structure for a course; students could cover one chapter a week, perhaps with individual students giving talks on the different topics. Multiple-choice questions are included in the student edition, and discussion points are already developed for each week.

That said, the handbook does not rely heavily on assumed knowledge — an enthusiastic high school teacher may introduce single or multiple chapters to their class, and likewise, university professors who simply wish to teach a week on the psychology of prejudice may pick one or two chapters for the class to focus on.

In addition, we hope that the handbook will be useful to lay readers who are looking for an introduction to the science of prejudice. It is clearly and accessibly written, and contains a wide overview of prejudice from differing theoretical perspectives of generalized prejudice, to prejudice directed toward specific groups (e.g., women, lesbian and gay people, people of color, immigrants). A student or lay reader asking questions about how prejudice develops and is maintained will find clear answers within this handbook.

Finally, we have designed the handbook so that it will also be of use to those formally researching or teaching the psychology of prejudice. For example, in our final chapter we outline eight big problems yet to be sufficiently dealt with in the psychological understanding of prejudice, and hope to set a clear direction for future research.

Features

Pedagogy. We aim to create a student edition of [The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice](#) that is accessible and above all useful for both students and teachers. Specific features include:

- Clear and brief abstracts for every chapter, providing a chapter overview, so that students and teachers can quickly review the content of each
- A summary of learning objectives for each chapter; these can be used to guide students as they read and engage with the chapters, or by teachers as they set course or class learning objectives

- Core terms and definitions that provide students with critical information as they read and engage with each chapter's material
- At the conclusion of each chapter, concise summary points are provided; these act as "take-home" messages about the content of each chapter/theoretical perspective/area of study, and can also be used as a study guide
- Discussion questions for each chapter that can prompt classroom conversation and debate, or be used as essay questions
- Each chapter contains a list of core recommended readings for students and teachers wishing to go further with the content of any one chapter; these provide the cornerstones for the scientific study of prejudice, at both a theoretical and an applied level
- 20 multiple-choice questions per chapter, with answer key, that can be used on examinations or as a study guide; the questions vary in levels of difficulty of knowledge, and test both recall and fluid application of the theories and findings of each chapter
- A brand-new conclusion chapter that lays out eight hard problems facing prejudice researchers and activists, that aims to set an agenda for future prejudice research, and prompt deep engagement in students

Style.

The handbook aims to be accessible to students from high school onwards, while containing sufficient theoretical depth and complexity to be useful to researchers currently working in the area of prejudice and prejudice reduction. Each chapter is written in a clear and coherent style, replete with examples, descriptions of current events that illustrate prejudice, and pithy summaries of theories and research on the psychology of prejudice.

Content. The handbook walks students and teachers through multiple perspectives on how racism develops and manifests. Broadly, the handbook is broken into the following sections.

1. General theoretical perspectives: In the eight chapters contained within this part,

we approach prejudice from multiple different directions. Where does prejudice come from? Why and how is it maintained? How is it ameliorated? To answer these questions, chapter authors look to basic group processes (Chapter 2), evolution (Chapter 3), the unconscious (Chapter 4), exploitation and social hierarchies (Chapter 5), threat and competition (Chapter 6), and genes (Chapter 7). The vital role that positive and friendly contact plays in reducing intergroup prejudice is covered in Chapter 8, and then a challenge is issued in Chapter 9: is prejudice really the problem, and instead could intergroup antipathy leading to collective action actually be what is needed to redress injustice?

2. Intermission: Historical perspective: Jane Elliott's chapter reflects on her development of the blue-eyed/brown-eyed exercise, community responses to it, and how her understanding of prejudice has grown and changed over the years. Elliott's chapter is full of heart (and fire!). She contends that prejudice is not the problem; we should stop trying to increase warmth and assume justice will follow. Instead, she urges us to pursue justice, and see attitudes change (potentially very slowly) in its wake.
3. Prejudice in specific domains: Following the intermission, we turn our attention toward specific forms of prejudice. Specifically, we focus on racism (Chapter 11), prejudice in the criminal justice system (Chapter 12), anti-immigrant sentiment (Chapter 13), sexism (Chapter 14), and sexual prejudice (Chapter 15).
4. Conclusion: Our conclusion chapter, a new addition to this student edition of The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice, aims to lay out the eight big problems facing the psychological study of prejudice. In particular, we address the debate about whether prejudice still exists, whether stereotypes can reflect information accurately, whether calling people prejudiced makes them more prejudiced, the phenomena by which

engaging with personal privilege is painful and potentially polarizing, the difficulty of understanding multiple intersectional identities, the rise of populism, the inherently political nature of prejudice, and the amazing stability and resilience of prejudice. We also include practical evidence-based suggestions for how prejudice can be challenged personally, and politically, and conclude by calling for new research, methods, and innovations in the fight to understand prejudice and increase social equity.

How the Book Should Be Read and Taught

We aimed to make this handbook as flexible as your teaching methods and requirements are. We iterate that the handbook serves as an ideal course outline in and of itself, and can be read from beginning to end, with students gaining more knowledge about the theory and reality of prejudice with each subsequent chapter. Taught this way, the teacher ideally has an easy task, and the student a clear direction — learning objectives, definitions, and summary points are already generated. Further, discussion questions can be used in class, or set as essays, and multiple-choice questions can be randomized into exams, or used as study aids.

This said, we also recognize that many lecturers or teachers do not have the time to spend an entire semester or course focusing on the psychology of prejudice. Consequently, selections from the handbook can be used in isolation to serve as companion readings for particular lectures, tutorials, or learning modules. For example, a lecturer may be teaching evolutionary psychology, and want to focus in on how evolutionary theories help us to understand modern-day intergroup conflict. This lecturer may choose several chapters (e.g., Chapter 3: Evolutionary Approaches to Stereotyping and Prejudice, Chapter 7: Is Prejudice Heritable? Evidence from Twin Studies, and Chapter 6: The Dual Process Motivational Model of Ideology and Prejudice). Another lecturer may simply want to spend a week educating students about how prejudice manifests in modern societies. They will benefit from assigning Chapter 11:

Aversive Racism and Contemporary Bias, to students. Whether a teacher is focusing on how inequality and competition spark prejudice, how gender relations are similar to and different from other intergroup conflicts, or how collective action develops, this handbook can be utilized. In every case, the pedagogical features aim to make this handbook an important resource for those teaching students about prejudice. <>

[The Law of Failure: A Tour Through the Wilds of American Business Insolvency Law](#) by Stephen J. Lubben [Cambridge University Press, 9781316640418]

If a broker-dealer liquidates in federal bankruptcy court, why does an insurance company liquidate in state court, and a bank outside of court altogether? Why do some businesses re-organize under state law 'assignments', rather than the more well-known Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code? Why do some laws use the language of bankruptcy but without advancing policy goals of the Bankruptcy Code? In this illuminating work, Stephen J. Lubben tackles these questions and many others related to the collective law of business insolvency in the United States. In the first book of its kind, Lubben notes the broad similarities between the many insolvency systems in the United States while describing the fundamental differences lurking therein. By considering the whole sweep of these laws - running the gamut from Chapter 11 to obscure receivership provisions of the National Bank Act - readers will acquire a fundamental understanding of the 'law of failure'.

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Excerpt: This book is something of a travel story. It recounts my journey through the whole of American business insolvency law. From Nevada's special provisions for insolvent campgrounds to the grand, and perhaps now endangered, provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act, signed into federal law by

President Barack Obama on July 21, 2010, that created an Orderly Liquidation Authority (OLA) to address future Lehman Brothers. It has been an eventful trip.

In the United States, most people equate insolvency with bankruptcy and the Bankruptcy Code. Business insolvency thus brings to mind comparatively familiar terms like "chapter 7" and "chapter 11," even if most nonbankruptcy lawyers only have the vaguest of notion of what those laws entail. The same lawyers will usually mumble something about the Bankruptcy Act, even though it has been the Bankruptcy Code since the days of a single Star Wars film and the Sex Pistols performing live in concert.

A commercial lawyer, especially if she does not practise at a place where billing rates exceed \$1,000 per hour, might have some general familiarity with things like "assignments for the benefit of creditors," and even state court receiverships. Lawyers at law firms where the billing rates do reach such stratospheric levels might view these devices as unseemly relics of an earlier age.

Another group of lawyers will have experience with specialized insolvency regimes for specific types of businesses. The most obvious are those that proliferate among what we might broadly term the financial industry. Insurance companies, banks, credit unions, broker-dealers, and the like all have their own special rules for going bust. There could be more — the creation of specialized insolvency regimes for other businesses is only limited by the interests of legislators and the persistence of lobbyists. In the United States, there is also a theoretical limit on state insolvency laws that arises from the United States Constitution, but as we will see, that does not always hinder the creation of state insolvency laws, even if it renders them of dubious utility.

Before writing this book, I attempted to read the whole of American insolvency law. I believe I have largely succeeded. What follows is my attempt to make sense of all of it. It's not easy. Campground receiverships?

Of course, my ability to comprehend this great mass of law is limited by the abilities of an

academic, sitting in a library in Manhattan, to understand the need for a special insolvency regime for grain silos, to again take but one example. But when such questions arose, I attempted to ask people who might know the answers, even if they did not necessarily know me. In many cases these people did respond, and I am grateful for their help.

This project has three principal goals. My first goal is to identify the points of commonality between the various insolvency statutes. Examining this common core is unheard of in a world where bankruptcy attorneys are regarded as quite distinct from banking or securities attorneys, despite the reality that each of them may be involved in an insolvency proceeding of a major American firm.

Second, I want to inspect the differences between these insolvency systems and to address any justification for the separation. If a broker-dealer liquidates in a proceeding before a federal bankruptcy judge, why does an insurance company liquidate in a state court, and a bank outside of court altogether? If we accept that banks are different, for example, and fail in different ways than "real economy" firms, does that justify keeping banks out of the traditional bankruptcy system? My ultimate goal, as I discuss in the last chapter, is to begin a conversation about what our business insolvency law should look like. I view the insolvency system as a crucial, and often overlooked, part of the larger American entrepreneurial structure and consider that future laws might be better designed if we had a complete understanding of our law of failure. For example, Dodd-Frank might have provided for a clean break between OLA2 and the Bankruptcy Code, instead of leaving large financial institutions sometimes subject to OLA, and sometimes subject to the Code. Lengthy, costly exercises like having financial institutions prepare "living wills" under the Bankruptcy Code are largely pointless if the big banks never liquidate under the Code.¹ Such a feature might have been omitted had Congress had access to a considered body of research on the goals and structure of our insolvency laws.

I end up concluding that there are two broad types of laws lurking within the general heading of "business insolvency law." First is the kind familiar to

bankruptcy attorneys: laws that promote equal treatment of creditors, after sorting the creditors among classes. Exactly what that treatment will be is left to either a trustee applying a set of rules (in chapter 7 type mechanisms) or creditor bargaining (in chapter 11 like mechanisms). Most receiverships, assignments, and other general insolvency laws fit within this category, along with the Bankruptcy Code.

The other broad type of law gives one or more groups priority treatment over all others. We often see these laws in the financial institution context, but they exist elsewhere and they could, in theory, spread much further. Essentially, the legislature — federal or state — has decided that some groups of creditors should be spared the effects of a business's failure. These sorts of laws invoke the same basic language as the first type of insolvency laws, but their aims are different, as I note in the final two chapters.

Before we begin, I should also note that there are two clear approaches to a project such as this. One is to provide an encyclopedic account of all of American insolvency law. This would require dozens of volumes — the third and final edition of Ralph Clark's treatise on receiverships alone had four volumes, and he often neglected much of the fine detail. In case you had any doubt — perhaps, like the TARDIS, this little tome is bigger on the inside? — this is not the approach I have taken. Nobody would read such an endeavor, and no modern publisher would support it.

Instead, I try to distill the key points of the insolvency regimes I examine and present a broad overview of the terrain in an easily readable form. The goal is to explain the key differences and why each of the insolvency systems currently in place in American law does or does not make sense. This book will not make you an expert in any of the specific examples I discuss, because my aim is to alert readers to the variety of approaches that exist, rather than dwell on the minutiae.

While courts are natural features of an insolvency system under the First Rule, where a neutral party is often required to settle disputes about rank and entitlement, a Policy Exception case represents a

pure exercise of legislative authority to provide priority to a protected group. It is not clear that it makes sense to put such cases before a judge, yet that is routinely the case in insurance receiverships, and is the preferred model for large global financial institutions under Dodd-Frank. Doing so may simply obscure what is actually going on in a Policy Exception case.

The American law of failure is the natural complement to our law of business creation. It has been relatively easy to form a business for nearly a century and a half, and the ability to straighten things out when that business goes awry is an equally important part of the entrepreneurial process.

That is, there is a great deal of value in maintaining the American law of failure's flexibility and even "optionality." At the same time, and without engaging in too much of the law professor's fantasy of some sort of perfect legal system, it does seem that the law of failure is in need of some attention.

Some of this is a legacy of Congress' historical reluctance to use its powers under the Bankruptcy Clause. Even in the first half of the twentieth century, state lawmakers could not be entirely sure that the federal law was here to stay. Only with the benefit of hindsight can we say that it was probably a fool's errand to update state "bankruptcy" procedures that are likely pre-empted by the Bankruptcy Code, and its predecessor the Bankruptcy Act.

But note the slight hesitancy even in that statement. We cannot be sure which state insolvency laws have been pre-empted, because the Supreme Court's case law in this area is notable mostly for its timidity. Such is the price of placing constitutional law experts in charge of insolvency law.

Part of my goal in writing this book is to get insolvency lawyers — both practitioners and academics — to think about business insolvency law as involving more than the Bankruptcy Code. What do we want the entire system to look like?

At present, discussions on this question focus almost exclusively on the Code. In the academic setting, we teach the Code because that's what most students will use, but as a question of policy, where

do the state laws fit in? Financial institution insolvency is not the province of the bankruptcy professor, but rather the banking law professor. As a result, it becomes one of many regulatory questions in a course that is overstuffed following the financial crisis.

But just as it makes sense to consider business or financial law in general as a whole, insolvency law — the back end of the entrepreneurial equation — should be considered as a whole too. This book has attempted to start that conversation. <>

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