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SCRIPTABLE

A Bispectral Review of Recent Books

Robert Tenor, editor
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EDITORIAL

Scriptable is an irregular review of what was once called the belles-lettres, where we essay upon a wide assortment of current books and articles with an eye open for "the beautiful jumble of discordant congruencies" derived from the authors and titles under discussion. We cast a wide academic net through the social sciences and humanities, with a strong orientation toward current events, social theory, religious and cultural studies.

With this number we move away from simple reportage of current scholarship to something more ambitious. The body of each issue includes editorial essays examining themes inspired by the works under consideration. Our Annotated Bibliography will review, list and link the titles under discussion, providing a faithful summary of its content and audience.
Our purpose is to inform and entertain. Through the review essays we hope to visit new and timeworn places through unsettled ideas in currency newly minted. Perhaps to see the outlandish as intimate and to show up the familiar as stranger than before thought.
Each issue should surprise.

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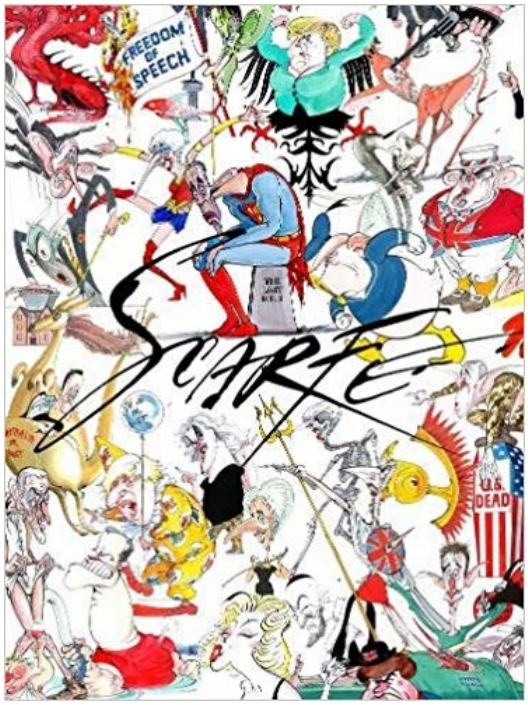
SCARFE by Gerald Scarfe [Little, Brown, 9781408711712, Artist's Edition: 9781404712631]



This is a truly exceptional collection of drawings from one of our most revered cultural commentators. Gerald Scarfe began his career in the 60s working for PUNCH and PRIVATE EYE before taking a job as a political cartoonist for the DAILY MAIL. He then worked for TIME Magazine in New York before starting his long association with the SUNDAY TIMES that still exists today in the form of his weekly drawings. His varied career has seen him work with Pink Floyd (The Wall, Wish You Were Here), Roger Waters and Eric Clapton (The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking), Disney (Hercules), English National Ballet (The Nutcracker), Los Angeles Opera (Fantastic Mr Fox) as well as produce such iconic images as those for the titles of Yes Minister and Yes Prime Minister. His work has featured in the New Yorker and various BBC TV films such as Scarfe on Sex and Scarfe on Class. Exhibitions of his paintings and drawings have appeared in the Tate Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. He is viewed by many as both a national treasure and a genius.

In the stunning retrospective Scarfe, which expands on 2005's **DRAWING BLOOD** in every way, his work is presented as no book has presented it before. This fully illustrated, 576-page coffee-table volume reveals the truth of sixty years of politics and culture, packed with images that have defined not only one artist's career, but also twentieth and twenty-first century British life. A showcase of Scarfe's glittering career in design, reportage and showbusiness, Scarfe presents drawings, sculptures and photographs alongside witty and poignant captions and stories. Scarfe's muses: Thatcher, Clinton, Blair, May and Trump, as well as many other titanic figures of our times are all here, revealed as they really are by Scarfe's cutting pen. Carefully curated by the artist himself, this monumental book is the definitive guide to the career of a national treasure.

Excerpt: In 2005 I published a retrospective of my work called Drawing Blood. Fourteen years on, I find myself preparing another such volume, now looking back over six decades, alongside an

autobiography, Long Drawn Out Trip — my first. Readers of Drawing Blood will find some pages, and certainly some drawings, familiar; this is the nature of a retrospective. But now having five hundred and seventy six pages to play with I have expanded significantly on that early book and alongside more recent work I have selected many favourite pieces that there simply wasn't room for last time — and of course added another fourteen years of work to bring it up to date.

IGERALD SCARFE AT THE HOUSE OF ILLUSTRATION (PAUL GROVER)

Some years ago, crossing the Pacific while lecturing on a cruise ship, I visited Easter Island, or Rapa Nui. I'd always been fascinated by the solemn statues that dominate this small island and in the heat of the day, sketchbook in hand, I climbed to the quarry where these famous, mysterious Moai figures were carved. Many were lying unfinished on the hillside; others stood silently alone, gazing out to sea, as if searching the horizon. At first they all looked stylised and alike, but as I sketched I could see real characters emerging from beneath the stylisation, each one a distinctly different personality.

It struck me how caricatured they were and how, since the earliest cave paintings, elements of caricature have been evident in many areas of art Caricature is the art of disassembling the face and other physical aspects of a person and rebuilding those elements, often in stylised, exaggerated form, in an attempt to reveal their true character. This technique is used not only in the world of cartoons but also in that of 'fine art'.

Think how Picasso and Bacon brutally tore the face and figure apart and, pushing and pulling, reassembled them. Think also of Goya's 'black paintings', with the caricatured faces in the Witches' Sabbath or of the telling but gentle caricatures of Lautrec's dancers at the Moulin Rouge and, more recently, of Philip Guston's drawings of Richard Nixon and Banksy's political street cartoons. Most paintings are interpretations of their subjects and artists generally deviate from a straightforward, photographic representation.

It's the role of an artist to reinterpret the world and to freshen our stale vision, to make us see what we hadn't realised was there and change the way we look at things. It's impossible to say where caricature ends and 'fine art' begins: the borders are blurred. Both Daumier and Hogarth straddled these borders, and the work of Lichtenstein and Robert Crumb, among others, has successfully transferred comic art to the gallery wall.

Young people often ask me how they can become cartoonists: there doesn't seem to be any clear route. There are no schools teaching the art of caricature; there are no apprenticeships. In my case, it just happened — or evolved. They also ask why I draw the way I do: why I have such a black view of the world, why the drawings are 'grotesque' and my vision so distorted. Of course, I don't know the answers for sure, but in an effort to explain I must look back to my childhood.

I was born in St John's Wood, London, in 1936. My mother was a schoolteacher and my father was in banking. I was an only child until my brother was born nearly nine years later. At the age of one I developed chronic asthma, and for long periods of my childhood was bedridden, either at home or in hospital. I had few friends, and those I had did not want to visit a sick child. I therefore spent much of my childhood reading making plasticine models and toy theatres; listening to the radio and, above all, drawing. I think that drawing became my way of communicating; it certainly became my way of exorcising my fears, and from an early age I had many fears and anxieties.

In 1939, when I was three, war broke out, and my father was enlisted in the RAF. He was posted to various towns around Britain and wherever possible my mother and I followed. We travelled pilot baiting out and eventually landing in some allotments where he was captured by a band of locals and handed over to the police.

During bombing raids in London. we would go down into the cellar beneath our house to shelter. I was petrified of the vicious wolf that I was convinced lived down there. Hitler laying waste to London above my head didn't worry me. but the wolf did. I was also scared of having to wear my Mickey Mouse gas mask, so-called because. although otherwise identical to the adult version. two large round ears had been attached to the top in an effort to make it less daunting. It still seemed daunting to me: as an asthmatic, anything restricting my breathing was a nightmare. My memories of this horror resurfaced later in my design for the Frightened Ones in Pink Floyd The Wall, and later still in the costumes for the Mice in The Nutcracker.

At school in Cardiff I was renowned for being a 'good drawer' and was especially good at drawing the Welsh dragon. My schooling was spasmodic. because it was frequently interrupted by asthma attacks and I spent many weeks in hospital.

After the war we returned to London and although my asthma began to improve. I still missed a great deal of school. but I never gave up drawing. As for art training: when I was fifteen my headmaster suggested that I join an art school there and then although it was a year before the normal enrolment age. He arranged an interview at a London art school and the principal asked to see my drawings. I hadn't brought any with me. 'Remember, he said. 'you are an artist. Wherever you go from now on. never go without your portfolio. Maybe you're a bit young anyway.' So the opportunity was lost: by the following year I was already working and thus missed the chance of getting orthodox art-school training.

At the age of sixteen I sent a drawing to the Eagle comic and had it printed.

I liked the feel of this, so I entered a competition in which I had to draw an advertisement for Ingersoll watches. To my astonishment I won first prize. Incidentally, if you look carefully you'll see a well-known consolation prizewinner. David Hockney front Bradford.

Around that time. I was sent to a spa at La Bourboule. in France, for more asthma treatment. I bathed in the water, douched with the water. drank the water - none of which did me a blind bit of good. The watercolour of the house that I stayed in is an example of the way I drew and painted at that age - I suppose it's perfectly competent as a representative image. but I was frustrated with the way that I drew. I seemed to be unable to break away from the conventional. I wanted to be more expressive and to say something more than the obvious.

To my astonishment I won first prize. Incidentally, if you look carefully you'll see a well-known consolation prize-winner. David Hockney from Bradford.

My parents felt that I would be reliant on them for the rest of my life, so I had to get a job. My father arranged for me to have interviews at various banks, but with my record of absences through asthma and my lack of academic training, I failed them all. I ended up as a graphic designer in a small advertising studio owned by an uncle at the Elephant and Castle in London, and spent five or six years there drawing domestic goods for press advertisements and catalogues to Shaftesbury, Kidderminster. Penarth and Cardiff. In Cardiff, I started primary school and have memories of my father. in the early morning. taking me on the crossbar of his bicycle down the hills to school. I also have memories of a German plane being shot down and the furniture. bedding. kitchen appliances. On the positive side it taught me to draw absolutely anything and everything front a bicycle to a banana. My uncle rent me for weekly life-drawing classes at St Martin's School of Art. but this was to perfect my knowledge of the human figure so that I could become an illustrator for fashion catalogues - one of the highest paid branches of commercial art.

I was depressed because I felt I was prostituting my art. drawing things in an idealised way in order to sell them. I knew that I was lucky to be an artist and that the least I could do was to tell the truth. I needed to get away front boring commercial an but didn't know how to go about it. I'd always drawn cartoons. and this seemed as though it could be a bridge. I had long admired the drawings of the caricaturist Ronald Searle, who gave us the brilliant illustrations for St Trinian's and Molesworth in the 1950s, and I thought he might be able to help me. I knew where he lived in Bayswater, and many times, I plucked up courage and cycled there from Hampstead with the intention of asking hint how one became a cartoonist. As I cycled. I composed what I would say, but by the time I reached his door my resolve had evaporated and I stood before the doorbell unable to ring it. I would then despondently cycle round in circles in the road and eventually go home. few days I decided not to continue. By that time, I had experienced the outside world and found it difficult to mum to schooling - I think also it was just being accepted that I had needed.

I decided to take a chance, leave the graphic studio and go freelance. My uncle fed nie small commissions until I found my feet. I took my portfolio round the studios and gradually built up commercial clients of my own and began to earn good money - but I was still dissatisfied and felt that I was in the wrong place. I started to send cartoons to newspapers and magazines. and they began to accept thelm. I remember the day when I rushed out to see my first cartoon in Punch. I was soon being published in many magazines and papers, and each one earned me seven guineas, so if I sold five in a week I could live very well. Punch accepted my drawings and I was soon working for them full tinte. But I gradually tired of drawing little men on desert islands putting messages into bottles I still felt Many years later my wife. Jane wrote to Ronald Searle and told him the story.

He suggested that we should meet, and Jane arranged a surprise birthday lunch for me with Ronald and his wife Monica at a restaurant in the small village where he lived in the South of France. As we sat down thereon my place setting was a beautifully wrapped and beribboned parcel. When I opened it. I found a small block of marble and, carefully mounted on it, a doorbell. A little note stuck to it read: 'Please Ring Any Time. It now sits on my drawing table in my studio.

In my twenties I still felt the need for academic training. I went for weekly drawing lessons at the Victoria and Albert Museum with a brilliant art teacher. Leslie Richardson. He had a great effect on my work and suggested I apply to the Royal College of Art. I did so and was given a place. but after Private Eyed brought me into contact with people of my own age who were burring the magazine together as though they were still at university, and it was an outrageous publication that was constantly in the news and adored by many. I felt included and involved. They accepted and applauded everything I did. pushing me on to new excesses I loved every moment of it.

The general reaction to any work at that time was that it was cruel and grotesque. I began to receive angry and outraged letters. I was genuinely surprised by this response. I had become well known not for inventing a cartoon character. like Disney had for Mickey Mouse or Schulz for Charlie Brawn. but fora view of life and attitude of mind. I was lucky to have hit apublic nerve at the right time.

I had already reported from Berlin for Esquire magazine and from Vietnam for the Daily Mail and when I joined the Sunday Times, the editor. Harold Evans sent me off to make drawings from various news spots around the world. I took my place alongside the photographers, and like the artists of a hundred years ago reported the news in pen and ink I wen down a coal mine in Lancashire. marched with the poor and the oppressed in Nashville. walked alongside the protestors against the Mafia in Sicily. sketched President I fimdon Johrmon in Ohio. Robert Kennedy in Los Angeles. Charles de Gaulle in Paris the boxer, Sonny Liston at Buzzards Bav and Muhammad Ali in Boston - 'lush up! Hush up! There's an artist here drawing me.' Then, when he saw my effort, a d is grumbled: 'Ah'm premier than that'.

I realised my strength lay in matting comment and offering an opinion in my work not just in reporting. Drawing from life helped me to realise a lot more about the art of caricature. Before, I had drawn cartoons from imagination or front photographs, now I began to visit the party-political conferences at Brighton and Blackpool and sketch my subjects from life. I would make a series of drawings on the spot. Often just a few simple lines which later could bring back the whole scene. Just as a few words in a diary can help recall a whole day. It was important to capture the way they moved, sat, talked - everything about them. A caricature is not just a big head, nose or ears it is the whole persona boiled down until reduced and concentrated in a mammary.

And caricature can be used in different media of course. As in acting as well as drawing. I'd always made things in three dimensions - glove puppets. marionettes. models and Icy theatres. and as an adult I felt an equal urge to escape from the Imitations of black-and-white pen-and-ink drawing and to find other media for expressing my ideas and this became possible when I moved into making sculptures.

This presented a new challenge; unlike my drawings. which are organized and presented to confine the viewer to one point of view. sculptures can be seen from every angle. The artist must retain a likeness and still convince the viewer from all points of the compass. I was no longer restrained by the edges of the paper and my contorted cramped figures began to grow, bulge and spill from their paper boxes. unfurl their crooked limbs and spew and sprawl across the gallery floor.

I began to use soil materials. using wood and wire armatures dad in doth and I had more to offer. I bought medical boots and taught myself anatomy. And the anatomical detail began to feed into my drawings. giving them a grotesque quality. My efforts to draw anatomically led to caricatures that showed the workings of the body-the bones. sinews. muscles. skin. bulging flesh and veins - and sometimes the innards -the intestines. the heart, the lungs.

It all came in use because about this time I began to work for the satirical magazine Private Eye. which was the biggest turning point of my young career. I was launched into a totally new and

exciting world. I can't emphasise enough how my life was changed Punch was a big step but to be working for

papier-mâché and so forth but, like the mythical Greek sculptor Pygmalion. who fell in love with the beautiful stone woman he had carved. I longed to bring my creations to life, and I briefly tried adding electric motors to make some parts move. But the more obvious ways of creating characters that move are by animating them on film or by dressing up actors in specially created costumes. All this became possible when I moved into animation work and designing for theatre and live-action movies

They loved all the designing and animation work I've done. but the magic of film. in particular. has always fascinated me. Orson Welles famously described making a movie as having 'the best train set in the world'. He was absolutely right. And in my case the ability to put words in actors' mouths and tell them how and where to move has always felt like the ultimate way of giving life to my characters.

it and yet keep a likeness. Sometimes there comes a point in that stretching process where. like a piece of stretched chewing gum, it breaks and the likeness is lost. I feel I am tearing the image apart and throwing the tons pieces of flesh randomly into the air and letting them land where they will. The advantage of working on a daily or weekly newspaper is that the readers can be slowly led over a period of time to accept the extremes of caricature. The subject will suggest the way he or she should be depicted. I could always draw Mrs Thatcher as something sharp and cutting - an axe ora knife - whereas John Major could never be a knife - his character wouldn't allow it. Mrs T could bite his head off:

Thereafter I was considered a more legitimate film producer and director and for ten years or more I made film after film for the BBC and ITV: a large chunk of my life to spend on a sideline. My films took a long tinte to gestate - six months or more of writing and research – and although I loved every minute of it, I felt guilty to be spending so much time with my enjoyable 'mistress', as I came to see filmmaking. while my 'wife' – my drawing and art - was not getting the attention she should have. So, sadly and reluctantly, I gave up making films and concentrated more on my drawing When I start to caricature someone. I exaggerate their features or II may imagine them as something else entirely: a wombat or a vacuum cleaner. What I'm trying to do is simply to bring out their essential characteristics I find a particular delight in taking the caricature as far as I can. It satisfies me to stretch the human frame about and recreate.

The whole process of drawing can be wonderful - ideas flowing, an urgency and necessity to get them down before they evaporate. When they nah onto the paper there is nothing better. But beware those days when nothing nothing nothing will happen. No wonder artists believe in the muse - but she is a bitch.

In general, the people I draw don't react to ray drawings. Most of them are figures in public office and perhaps feel it's beneath their dignity to respond. But I think many of them enjoy it it's probably better to be portrayed as a dung beetle than not to be mentioned at all. It means they've arrived and are people of 'note'.

My drawings ate made in the solitude of my stud io. but when they leave my bands they escape into hundreds of thousands of copies and may be seen by millions of people. I don't think about that when I make the drawing -it's just between my imagination and the piece of paper- but if a drawing is particularly ferocious or overly sexual and someone looks at it in my presence I have to admit to sometimes feeling shy; it's almost like undressing in public. This collection is an effort to show all aspects of my work. from ballet to rock and roll. from politics to opera. I have tried to balance these through the following pages, but. inevitably. featuring one means that others have had to take a back

seat. As I draw most days, there was a tremendous amount of material - drawings paintings and sculpture- to choose from, and enough to fill the book many times over, but I feel what I have picked is a representative cross-section. The book is kid out chronologically, with as many dates included as possible; a few have been impossible to track down. and I apologize in advance for any inaccuracies that may have slipped in.

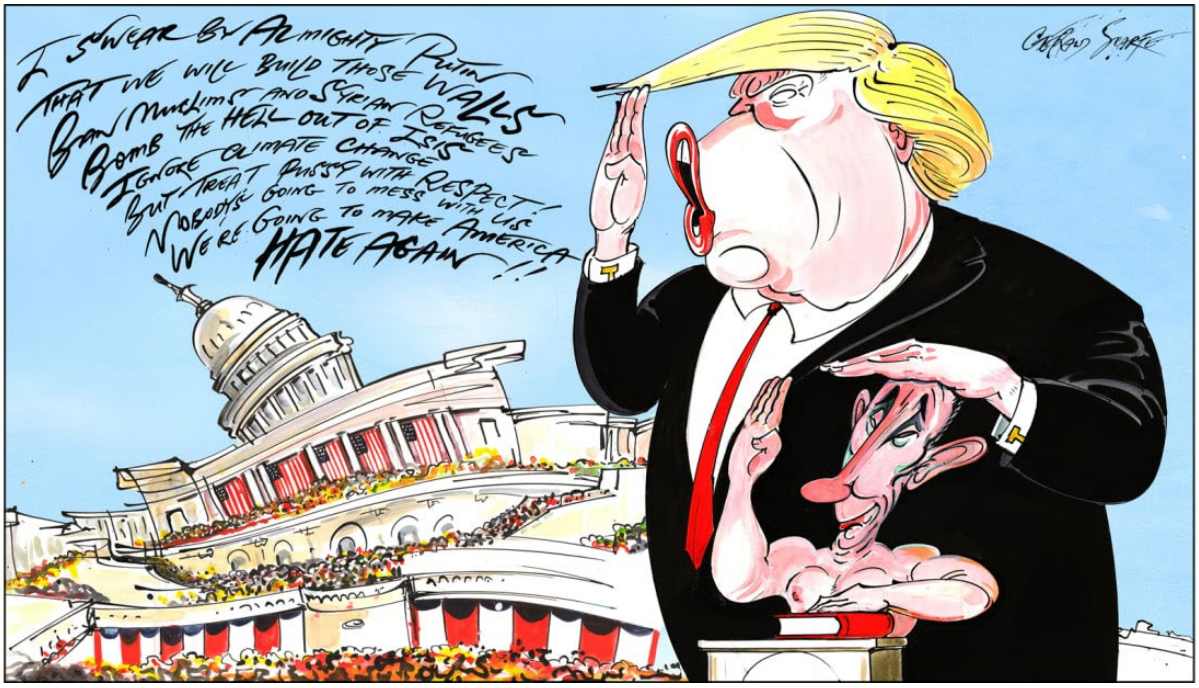
Sometimes I have kept drawings together by subject when it seemed more logical than grouping them chronologically. There are also drawings printed here in their original form for the first time. with the words or rude bits included that previous publishers had censored.

I am often asked if I think my drawing; change anything. I don't believe they do. but on occasion I hope they may crystallise a mood or sum up an attitude. If I have succeeded in demonstrating this - or, even better, in making you laugh - then I can ask for no more.

Considering where I begin - a sickly. bedridden, chronic asthmatic -I feel lucky the way my life has turned out. Thanks to my abiity to draw I've travelled widely, had fun, lived extremely high on the hog and had tremendous satisfaction in mocking the high and mighty, exploring caricature, sketching and pulling faces to screaming point.

Of course, wonder what would have happened if here and there. I had taken a different fork in the road, but that applies to us all. I am proud to have been known, correct N, as a cartoonist. but have endeavoured to expand and explore, push my form into other areas of film. theatre and opera.

I feel fortunate to have been able to exhibit in many galleries from the Tate to the National Portrait Gallery



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I recently came across an old cutting from The Times, dated 9 October 1998. in which the art critic Rachel Campbell-Johnston writes, on the occasion of my second NPG exhibition 'Gerald Scarfe has received a new respectability. Well, I'm not sure that's true even now, twenty years later.

But I do hope that someone will take my huge private archive of drawings. paintings and sculptures for a permanent collection. At one timed I didn't care what happened to my work but at my now

advanced age, I would like my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to know what I did.
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ERANOS: AN ALTERNATIVE INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY by Hans Thomas Hakl, translated by Christopher McIntosh with the collaboration of Hereward Tilton [McGill-Queen's University Press, 978-0773540873]

From 1933 and for a period of almost seventy years, Italy's Lake Maggiore region was the gathering place for some of the world's foremost philosophers. Once a year, illustrious thinkers such as Carl Jung, Erich Neumann, Mircea Eliade, D.T. Suzuki, and Adolph Pormann gathered there for Eranos - a meeting of the minds for elite intellectuals. Hans Hakl presents the only complete study of what is arguably the single most important gathering of scholars in the twentieth century. Eranos chronicles the golden years of Jung, Corbin, Eliade, and Scholem, tracing the roots of the Ascona movement in Theosophy, its later branches, and many lesser-known but no less fascinating figures. Distilling decades of archival research and interviews with Eranos participants, Hakl illuminates the trialogue of religion, esotericism, and scholarship that began with Eranos and continues to the present day. This finely crafted history shows how Eranos played an important counterpart to the dominant spiritual and intellectual history of the twentieth century by encouraging freedom of thought and radicality. Detailing the development and influence of a movement that set the course of contemporary philosophical thought, Eranos is a landmark volume that will draw readers interested in the history of ideas, psychology, religious and cultural studies, Jewish and Islamic studies, the history of science, mysticism, and the development of new age religions.

Excerpt: Equally gradually I began—at first only dimly—to perceive connecting threads. Had the genius loci, the daemon of Eranos, which had touched so many of the protagonists of these meetings, also possessed me? I cannot and will not deny that something stirred in me as I stood alone one day in the summer of 1998 in front of the famous stele in the garden of Eranos in Moscia-Ascona—that same stele which had been erected in honour of the "daemon of the place" by the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, the religion scholar and clergyman Gerardus van der Leeuw, and the founder of Eranos Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. How many important people had already stood there like me, carrying their dreams, hopes, and disappointments with them?

But let us go on with the story of this book. Forty pages, or so I thought, would be enough for what I wanted to write. Naturally they were not nearly enough. Could it still truthfully be called an "introductory essay"? And the publisher was still waiting patiently. Other tasks, other duties distracted me. The work on Eranos lay fallow for a long time. Then I took it up again, as I had been looking forward to doing. Meanwhile the extensive correspondence with authors and professors who had already written about Eranos, as well as with libraries and booksellers all over the world, had continued unabated. The books had gone on piling up, and heaps of newspapers and above all copies of manuscript material from archives and legacies lay unread in my study. As I wrote on and on, and the pile grew only fractionally smaller, while at the same time new sources of material opened up, it became increasingly clear that, instead of a mere introduction, I would have to write a complete book.

There came another discussion with the publisher, and of course once again the deadline—already postponed three times—could not be met. As I immersed myself ever more deeply in the minds and lives of the leading Eranos figures, I found that the story's connecting threads, of which I had already become dimly aware, took on the quality of a firm, albeit finely woven web that went far beyond the individual dramatis personae and reached out into some far wider realm of collective thought and consciousness.

Olga Fröbe's introductions to the conference yearbooks made it quite clear that the dance was meant to continue, even if individual dancers went away. What was being striven towards was a "new humanism", which tried, within the world of classical antiquity as well as in foreign religions and cultures, to find certain familiar tones constituting the "primal melody" that is common to all humanity. This quest also went far beyond the individual research endeavors for which the Eranos protagonists were already famous.

The search for our spiritual roots, the intuitive knowledge of a common transcendent origin of humankind, and the corresponding longing for a "return" to what in religious language is called the "divine"—all of this seemed to me to constitute the deeper connecting motivation that sustained the Eranos project for so many decades. This longing is expressed in images and thus supra-rationally in the famous Hymn of the Pearl, in which a "king's son" falls, as it were, from "heaven" into matter, forgets at first who he is and then, after various wanderings and false turnings, is able to return to the splendid realm from which he came. Arguably (according to the theory of Victor Magnien) the same meaning can be found in the Eleusinian mysteries, based on the myth of Persephone's descent into the underworld and her mother's search for her and struggle to bring her back to the upper world. In this connection, the "psycho-anthropologist" Giuseppe Lampis, in the first volume of his work Maschere e démoni (Masks and Demons), develops the scenario of a conflict in ancient times between humans and gods. The defeat of the humans in this struggle means that they now have to make an immense effort in order to return to the gods and therefore to themselves. This longing for a (spiritual) "home" that characterizes so many of the "Eranians" is not just my projection but is also backed up by the official writings cited in this book as well as by the personal observations of Eranos participants.

This book did not therefore arise out of a long-prepared and well thought out "master plan:' On the contrary, a series of small fragments of information and insight gradually came together, until finally an increasingly clear picture began to emerge, as in a mosaic where the pattern emerges slowly out of a mass of tesserae laid out on the ground.'

Despite the ample size that this study finally reached, it still cannot be described as an even moderately comprehensive history of Eranos. For that it would be necessary to include many more biographical sketches of the participants, and furthermore it would be essential to deal at least with the salient lectures given at the meetings. However, considering the sheer bulk of important material contained in the Eranos yearbooks, this would have necessitated a work of several volumes. Consequently, although the lectures are the most important aspect of Eranos, I decided from the start to leave them almost entirely aside. Only individual, in-depth studies by specialists in different fields can really throw a clear light on the great influence of Eranos in intellectual history. My study therefore is intended primarily to offer an initial historical overview, encompassing numerous original documents and dealing especially thoroughly with the prehistory and early years of the Eranos meetings.

Although occasionally the flow of this narrative is interrupted by digressions on matters of intellectual history or philosophy, I do not feel called to embark on a real analysis of Eranos in its entirety because of the great complexity of the material involved. Hence my analyses do not go beyond certain obvious elements such as anti-historicism, antipositivism, interdisciplinarity, and the emphasis on spiritual perspectives. However, I have intentionally emphasized the "esoteric" and "political" dimensions of Eranos (and also of the speakers, especially those of the first, "critical" years). Some people will probably, and with some justification, say that I have been too one-sided and that certain countervailing aspects should have been emphasized. But, taking into account how difficult it is to give a balanced portrait of even one single prominent person (and there were enough of those at Eranos), I hope readers will tolerate my leaning more to one side in the balancing act. It is for this reason that the role of artists, philosophers, and scientists—with the exception of Adolf Portmann—appears in the framework of this study to be less significant than it probably was. At the same time, it must be said that certain famous people, such as the physicist Erwin Schrödinger, the philosopher Karl Löwith, the sociologist Helmuth Plessner and others, attended only once. The reason for this probably lay in the particular spiritual climate of Eranos, by which one felt either attracted or put off, even excluded.

Undoubtedly it was this particular mental climate that gave rise to the frequent critical comments about Eranos. What were and what are these criticisms? First of all there is the accusation of irrationalism (because of too pronounced a sympathy for esotericism of whatever hue), and second there are the alleged links to authoritarian and fascist currents of thought. This might, incidentally, be one of the reasons why Eranos has been given such an unfairly small amount of space in academic literature. In giving at least a provisional answer to these accusations, and in trying to elucidate the true facts of the matter, it was necessary to carry out as exact a stocktaking as possible, neither ignoring unwelcome facts nor taking these as indicative of a whole way of life or thought. Hence the many quotations from documents of the time that are not always easily accessible.

In the perspective of that period and on the basis of more precise information, it will become easier to understand certain facts, such as the participation of National Socialists like Jakob Wilhelm Hauer and Gustav Heyer at the Eranos meetings. Nevertheless, some readers will feel impelled to deliver a verdict of more or less gross carelessness in dealing with tyranny. Such a verdict, of course, cannot be applied to Eranos as a whole but only to certain speakers. However, a thorough treatment of this question would demand an entire book on its own and therefore, in my expositions on this theme, I have concentrated on the less well-known participants. On the well-known entanglements of C.G.

Jung and Mircea Eliade there is already enough informative literature that is relatively easily accessible. In this whole debate one should, however, never forget the following passage from Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals:

> My opinion is that it's certainly best to separate an artist far enough from his work, so that one does not take him with the same seriousness as one does his work. In the final analysis, he is only the precondition for his work, its maternal womb, the soil or, in some cases, the dung and manure, on and out of which it grows—and thus, in most cases, something that we must forget about, if we want to enjoy the work itself.

And when one looks more closely at the "esoteric" aspect of Eranos one must ask oneself the question what is in fact meant by the word "esoteric" and whether the accusation is an accusation at all.' To anticipate this question right away: the term "esoteric"' is defined here— in contrast to the scholarly definition of Antoine Faivre—as simply the conscious pursuit of a religiously motivated path "inwards", a path towards a Know-thyself (that is, one's "divine" self). In other words the "esotericism" of Eranos is concerned with "individuation" with a "descensus ad inferos = ascensus ad superos", which takes place in the spiritual and symbolic realm and not in the world of the rational intellect, but can nevertheless be recognized by the intellect. Hence the skepticism that one finds again and again at Eranos towards a purely and exclusively rational attitude, and hence the deliberate incorporation of analogical, "mythical" thinking. Only those who make themselves open to the "inner" world are capable of bridging the boundaries between cultures, epochs, and disciplines, as Eranos aims to do. For in the "inner" dimension we find something which deeply connects all human beings and which, although manifesting itself in countless different outward forms, is always one and the same—the "archetypal", to use Jung's term. The way to that place requires myths, symbols, that is to say "pictures" that work on the psyche. Esoteric disciplines such as astrology, tarot or the Chinese I Ching offer particularly suitable images for this purpose. In this sense Eranos is a place where one "experiments in touching the boundaries of one's own being" and also where one "puts one's ear to the secret stream of time"' and does not become lost in the fleeting fashions of the moment. This is what is "anachronistic" or, more accurately, "timeless" about Eranos. Only thus is it possible to span the boundaries between cultures and epochs with their different conceptions of time.

Another reason why the "esoteric" component of Eranos has moved into the foreground is that I did not want an undue emphasis on the "masculine" academic approach to push aside the "feminine" perspective, so sensitively represented by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (and which she herself characterized as "irrational"), since both elements were important for the continuing vitality of Eranos. Rather, I wanted to place the central role of Olga Fröbe—with all her anguished efforts on behalf of Eranos and her own personal struggles—clearly in the foreground. Apart from the unquestionable legitimacy of Olga Fröbe's "esoteric" viewpoint, which will be described in due course, there was certainly also enough support from the male side for her course. For one reason or another, the "feminine" side of Eranos has up to now stood too much in the shadow. Without the personal efforts of Fröbe and the financial support of Mary Mellon, perhaps also the services of Cary Baynes as an intermediary, all those participants—however distinguished—would never have been able to come together to even engage in discussion. In this sense, one can undoubtedly see Eranos as a modern continuation of the "salon" tradition, which was so widespread in the two preceding centuries and in which women also played the central role. It seems that the female sex simply has more social skills than the male.

At any rate, my wish was to gather as much basic material as possible, so as to stimulate further sound research—perhaps focusing on other aspects of the topic. This may arouse in the reader the regrettable—but hopefully not permanent—impression of a heap of papers spilt from an overturned filing cabinet. And this touches on the biggest problem that I faced when writing this book. According to which criteria was I to decide what information to include and what to leave out, when

I had such an abundance of useable material? Further difficulties becomes apparent when, for example, I use long notes to deal with questions that may not directly concern the history of Eranos but are of great importance for understanding the intellectual background of the meetings and the lecturers.

Such questions are, for instance, how precisely to assess the phenomenon that is designated here as "esoteric" or "gnostic": how to address its transmission as a current of thought from the Renaissance, through the Romantic era to the present day; its interaction with (as well as opposition to) the scientific tradition; the fascination exerted by myths as well as the links between mythology and politics; the equally politically relevant debate about the nature of "modernity"; the great abundance in the first half of the twentieth century (in comparison to the present day) of widely varied—indeed contrasting—publications in the field of intellectual history and works addressing the fundamental ethical questions of humankind; the way in which writers and teachers are embedded in their age and the responsibilities which result from that situation; and so forth. I would like in advance to apologize for any questionable conclusions or factual errors that specialist readers find in this work as a result of the volume of material that I drew upon. Despite the help of good friends I was not able to check the accuracy of every printed source and every piece of orally transmitted information.

A further point requires clarification. The fact that I deal only summarily with speakers from the late 1970s, in contrast to those of earlier years, has nothing to do with the magnitude of their achievement and does not reflect any lack of interest on my part or fear that I might bore the reader. The reason lies rather in my reticence in expressing judgments about people who are still in the midst of their work. My concern was that they would inevitably have been given short shrift. Some of the present-day Eranos speakers are people that I know and value personally. I simply do not want to touch living matter unnecessarily. It winces and gets tense. It was difficult enough to attempt to do justice to the various Eranos meetings since 1988 and those responsible for them. I am naïve enough to hold to my belief in the Socratic doctrine that the human will is, by its very nature, geared to strive for moral goodness (who has the right to define it?), and that consequently evil can only come about through ignorance." Therefore I have ventured to follow Socrates and believe in the "goodwill" of the protagonists. It is only regrettable that people—despite their striving for the "good"—have so little ability to forget their own "I." When this is placed in the foreground it all too easily obscures the "good."

All in all I did not want to conceal my sympathy for Eranos and its goals. Certainly I feel such sympathy to be justified, as Eranos is undoubtedly one of the most significant intellectual adventures of the twentieth century. At any rate, the "cast list" of this adventure is unique. I accept that such sympathy is not consistent with the standards of pure scholarship, but this I did not aim for. I sometimes, for example, also quote (albeit rarely) from letters that are not publicly accessible and therefore cannot be checked as sources. And one other thing kept my ambitions within bounds, namely the realization of my own limitations, which became increasingly clear to me, the deeper I went into this material.

For more than seven decades the Eranos meetings have played a unique role in the cultural and intellectual history of our age, taking place each year with amazing regularity (with the single exception of 1989). The deaths of the founder and the key early participants have altered nothing except for the outer form. On 30 March 1957, C.G. Jung wrote, "May the light of the European spirit, which has radiated out from Eranos for so many years during this time of darkness, enjoy a further lease of life so that it can fulfill its role as a beacon lighting the way towards the unification of Europe."' As he had already remarked in 1951, Eranos was "the only place in Europe where scholars

and interested lay participants could come together and exchange ideas, unrestricted by academic boundaries."

Jung's follower, the well-known psychologist Erich Neumann, went even further when he described Eranos as "inconspicuous and off the beaten track, and yet a navel of the world, a small link in the Golden Chain," by which he meant the Golden Chain of wisdom teachers, beginning with Hermes Trismegistus. And Mircea Eliade, probably the best-known religious scholar of the twentieth century, wrote in his autobiography: "Ascona and the Eranos group fascinated me from the start." No wonder, for there he met intellectual giants like Jung, Gershom Scholem—the most influential Kabbalistic scholar of our age—and Karl Kerényi, the mythologist and expert on ancient Greece. In the foreword to the second volume of his diaries he described the "spirit of Eranos," the theme that we shall examine in detail in this volume, as "one of the most creative cultural experiences in the modern Western world."' In an issue of the Swiss journal Du, dedicated to the Eranos meetings, he even compared these to "certain `circles' during the Italian Renaissance or the German Romantic period, that is to say [with] groups that, at a certain moment in history, represent the most fruitful and advanced intellectual tendencies." The significance of this remark will be apparent to anyone who knows the central role that these Renaissance groups played in the history of ideas and the importance that Eliade attached to them.

Art historian, writer, publisher, and critic Sir Herbert Read for his part saw in Eranos the upsurge of a "new humanism," and the biologist Adolf Portmann went so far as to say that his "encounter with the circle that met during the Eranos meetings at Moscia-Ascona was like a stroke of destiny" and that Eranos came to be a center of his "innermost life." Another commentator, Michel Cazenave, responsible for the French translation of Jung's works and himself a much-respected author, called Eranos "one of the richest centres of intellectual and spiritual interchange known to our century" and a place of central importance in the life of Jung.

This provisional selection of quotations should for the time being suffice to make clear that Eranos was no commonplace phenomenon. The list of contributors contains one prominent name after another. Besides those already mentioned, the participants included the physicist and Nobel prize-winner Erwin Schrödinger; the theologians Paul Tillich, Ernst Benz, and Hugo Rahner; the Japanese scholar Daisetz Taitaro Suzuki, who brought Zen Buddhism to the West; the ethnologist Paul Radin; the expert on Gnosticism Gilles Quispel; the philosopher and sociologist Helmuth Plessner, who described Eranos as the "Bayreuth of depth psychology"; the classical scholar Walter F. Otto; the philosophers Karl Löwith and Hans Leisegang; the scholars of religion R.C. Zaehner and Robert Eisler; the philosopher and humanist Martin Buber; the prominent rabbi Leo Baeck; and the orientalists Giuseppe Tucci, Hellmut Wilhelm, Henry Corbin, and Heinrich Zimmer. Later the names include the "archetypal" psychologist James Hillman, the mythologist Joseph Campbell, the expert on Western esotericism Antoine Faivre, and the "alternative" physicist Herbert Pietschmann. In addition, the cultural philosopher Jean Gebser took part in the sessions between 1942 and 1948 and established fruitful contacts with Jung, Kerényi, and Portmann, although he did not actually give any lectures."

From the most recent times one could mention, inter alia: Annemarie Schimmel, Moshe Idel, Reinhold Merkelbach, Ilya Prigogine, Erik Hornung, Zwi Werblowsky, Jan Assmann, Moshe Barash, David Carrasco, Remo Bodei, and Elémire Zolla. The smaller-scale Eranos meetings, which have taken place in Moscia since 1990 with an emphasis on the I Ching, have included such names as Stephen Karcher, Michiyoshi Hayashi, Bruno Rhyner, Claudio Risé, and Claudio Bonvecchio. And we shall encounter other important participants as we explore the history of these meetings. The Swiss psychological journal Zeitschrift für Psychologie has commented, "Eranos is among the most

important manifestations of the present age." Perhaps I will succeed, within the scope of the present investigation, to show that this description is not merely rhetorical exaggeration.

Consequently, I could not understand why there was hardly any information to be found about such an important and long-standing intellectual forum. There is no reference to Eranos in any of the relevant reference books on the history of religion (including the sixteen-volume Encyclopedia of Religions, edited by Mircea Eliade, nor in the second edition edited by Lindsay Jones), nor in standard works on anthropology, psychology, and philosophy (not even in the index to the truly comprehensive Encyclopédie Philosophique Universelle, published by the Presses Universitaires Françaises, with its 11,000 large-format pages and its countless cross-references), nor in numerous diction-aries of esotericism, symbolism, and mythology. I was able to find only two entries on the subject. The first one, in the third volume of the Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche (Dictionary of theology and the Church), although very brief, does at least mention Rudolf Otto's description of Eranos as "a place of encounter between East and West." The second, somewhat longer, entry was written by Magda Kerényi and appears in the six-volume Schweizer Lexikon (Swiss lexicon). One might argue that the thematic range of Eranos is too wide for a specialized dictionary, but even the twenty-five-volume Meyers Enzyklopädisches Wörterbuch (Meyer's encyclopedic dictionary) and the twenty-four-volume Brockhaus mention only the ancient Greek word eranos, meaning a banquet, without saying a single word about the meetings.

The world-famous Encyclopedia Britannica—at least in the Internet version, which one would assume to be complete—also contains not a single entry. However, under the entry "religion, study of" one finds a passage referring to Eranos in the context of an article about C.G. Jung, stating that the Eranos circle has made a considerable contribution to the history of religion and that this movement was one of the main factors in the modern resurgence of interest in the analysis of myths. Giovanni Filoramo, a religious historian at the University of Turin, in a chapter on Eranos in his interesting work Il risveglio della gnosi ovvero diventare dio (The revival of gnosis or how to become God), which I shall return to later, also laments the lack of a proper history of these meetings. It is true that Olga Fröbe had in 1958 conceived a plan to collect contributions from the Eranos speakers themselves and work these into a history of the project, but this plan was never realized.

Nevertheless, after some searching, I did find a book that, although primarily not a history of the Eranos meetings, nevertheless yields the largest amount of information that has hitherto been available on the subject. Its author, William McGuire, was for many years the editor of the valuable Bollingen book series that also included Jung's collected works translated into English. Through his work with and for Jung, McGuire went to Switzerland regularly from 1951 for almost twenty years and visited Ascona, where he got to know many of the key participants at Eranos. This series was financed by the American Bollingen Foundation, created by Paul and Mary Mellon, who undertook, at enormous expense, to have works (largely European ones) in the history of ideas and similar fields translated into English and made available in the United States. A large number of authors and researchers were by this means enabled, free of economic worries, to occupy themselves with specialized themes that would never have interested a purely commercial publisher. As the founder of Eranos as well as many of the speakers were also supported by the Bollingen Foundation, there were close connections between the two institutions. Thus, in his history of Bollingen, William McGuire also provides much interesting information about Eranos.

Looking further, we find that the Austrian "intellectual" radio network ORF 1 broadcast on 18 September 1998, as part of the series TAO, an informative forty-minute program on the Eranos meetings, which I have made use of in this work. There was also a report on Eranos broadcast by

the Swiss radio network DRS in its first program on 22 April 1999 as part of the series Az.B. ("For Example").

At the end of 1999 Princeton University Press published a book by the religious scholar Steven Wasserstrom that partly deals with a particular but very important episode in the history of Eranos. The book is entitled **RELIGION AFTER RELIGION: GERSHOM SCHOLEM, MIRCEA ELIADE AND HENRY CORBIN AT ERANOS**. However, it contains no historical overview of the conferences or their participants. Instead the focus is on the "mystical" approach of the three scholars of religion, which Wasserstrom attributes to the "esoteric" atmosphere of Eranos and which he in part sharply criticizes. The fact that this atmosphere existed is not to be denied, but the question is whether one should judge it as negatively as Wasserstrom does. One of the main reasons for Wasserstrom's critical attitude lay in the real or imagined political implications of these esoterically tinged attitudes, which he associated with fascist or fascistoid worldviews.

Thus, up to the appearance of the German first edition of this book in 2001 there was no historical treatment of the conferences and their emergence—a fact that still surprises me. Even essays on the subject of Eranos in specialized journals were rare. Besides the articles already mentioned and the journal Du, which I shall come to later, it was only the Spanish periodical Anthropos that covered Eranos to any extent. Anthropos contained several substantial essays and even a complete list of the speakers and lectures up to 1988. In addition, the journal published a review, averaging two pages, of each Eranos yearbook up to the 1988 volume. Furthermore, in that year there appeared a comprehensive supplement, containing a whole series of mainly philosophical essays about Eranos. This added up to a large amount of material but no historical facts. <>

Mammon's Lure

This Desert soil
Wants not her hidden
lustre, Gems and Gold;
Nor want we skill or art,
from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can
Heav'n show more?
Our torments also may in
length of time
Become our Elements, those
piercing Fires
As soft as now severe, our
temper chang'd
Into their temper; which
must needs remove
The sensible of pain.

—MAMMON, speaking to his fellow fallen angels, in Milton, **PARADISE LOST**, Book II, 270-278

THE ENCHANTMENTS OF MAMMON: HOW CAPITALISM BECAME THE RELIGION OF MODERNITY

by Eugene McCarraher [Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 9780674984615]

Far from displacing religions, as has been supposed, capitalism became one, with money as its deity. Eugene McCarraher reveals how mammon ensnared us and how we can find a more humane, sacramental way of being in the world.

If socialists and Wall Street bankers can agree on anything, it is the extreme rationalism of capital. At least since Max Weber, capitalism has been understood as part of the "disenchantment" of the world, stripping material objects and social relations of their mystery and sacredness. Ignoring the motive force of the spirit, capitalism rejects the awe-inspiring divine for the economics of supply and demand.

Eugene McCarraher challenges this conventional view. Capitalism, he argues, is full of sacrament, whether or not it is acknowledged. Capitalist enchantment first flowered in the fields and factories of England and was brought to America by Puritans and evangelicals whose doctrine made ample room for industry and profit. Later, the corporation was mystically animated with human personhood, to preside over the Fordist endeavor to build a heavenly city of mechanized production and communion. By the twenty-first century, capitalism has become thoroughly enchanted by the neoliberal deification of "the market."

Informed by cultural history and theology as well as economics, management theory, and marketing, **THE ENCHANTMENTS OF MAMMON** looks not to Marx and progressivism but to nineteenth-century Romantics for salvation. The Romantic imagination favors craft, the commons, and sensitivity to natural wonder. It promotes labor that, for the sake of the person, combines reason, creativity, and mutual aid. In this impassioned challenge, McCarraher makes the case that capitalism has hijacked and redirected our intrinsic longing for divinity—and urges us to break its hold on our souls.

Contents

Excerpt: Once upon a time, the world was enchanted. Rocks, trees, rivers, and rain pulsated with invisible forces, powers that enlivened and determined the affairs of tribes and empires as well. Though beholden to the caprice or providential design of a variety of spirits and deities, the world of enchantment could be commanded by magic or humbly beseeched through prayer. But with the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and industrial capitalism in Europe, the company of spirits was evicted from the cosmos. If the medieval Church had preserved the pagan phantoms in its sacraments and saintly relics, its sober and industrious Protestant antagonists began the demolition of enchantment. Gradually, the sciences dispelled the realm of mystery; the prose of reason hushed the poetry of superstition; greed and calculation fostered callous disregard for the earth and the bonds of community. Dispossessed from their ancestral homes, the remnants of enchantment fled into our private chambers of fantasy or faith. And as science, technology, and capitalism come to embrace the entire globe, the enchanted specters of other peoples will be duly banished or sequestered as well.

Entitled "the disenchantment of the world" by the German sociologist and historian Max Weber, this story is the predominant account of modernity in the West and increasingly beyond, and capitalism plays a pivotal role. In the course of releasing the making and exchange of goods from traditional restraints, capitalism evacuated sacredness from material objects and social relationships. Once capable of linking us to divinity or of binding us to one another, things lost their souls when they became commodities made and exchanged for profit. Avarice—once one of the seven deadly sins—morphed into the "self-interest" or "initiative" indispensable to wealth and innovation, while the inscrutable ways of Providence yielded to the laws of supply and history. Breaking the shackles of immemorial customs, capitalism offered the sale of commodities, not the dutiful worship of relics;

the fulfillment of the self, not subordination to the past; the romance of the present and the promise of the future, not a vale of tears and a hope beyond the grave. In the words of journalist Michael Lewis, capitalists are "practitioners of liberty" who "do not suffer constraints on their private ambition" and who "work hard, if unintentionally, to free others from constraint." Firmly committed to the real world of disenchanted, manipulable forces, they represent the "spiritual antithesis of religious fundamentalists" who thwart this labor of liberty "in the name of some putatively higher power." Karl Marx wrote much the same thing a century and a half earlier, with greater flourish and prophetic grandeur. "All that is solid melts into air; all that is holy is profaned." Capitalism's most unlikely celebrant, Marx observed how the market, far from being a bastion of conservatism, dissolves "all fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices." History's assassin of enchantment, capitalism "drowns the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor ... in the icy water of egotistical calculation."

Yet despite the secular veneer of capitalist life, it's not at all clear that enchantment lies lifeless in the arctic mercenary deep. To journalist Naomi Klein, the neoliberal economics of the past forty years amounts to a veritable creed, "the contemporary religion of unfettered free markets." Indeed, "corporate business has always had a deep New Age streak," she observes, with branding as the most advanced form of "corporate transcendence." The Nike swoosh, the Starbucks siren, and other trademarks are neoliberal totems of enchantment. Journalist Barbara Ehrenreich discovers that, despite its reputation for a ruthless focus on the bottom line, corporate business is "shot through with magical thinking," inspired and mesmerized by a burgeoning portfolio of New Age quackery and bunkum. Evangelicals refer to Jesus Christ as their "CEO" or personal investment advisor, while management writers cull from Lao-tzu, Buddha, Confucius, and Carl Jung. Counting out "seven habits" or "four competencies" or "sixty-seven principles of success," business advice books can be as comically arcane as end-times prophecy, the oracles of Nostradamus, or another Dan Brown novel. Some writers see a sacramental significance in contemporary consumer culture. "Material things are shot through with enchantment," New York Times columnist David Brooks informs us. Suburban acquisitiveness stems from a "sacramental longing,"

Brooks believes, a desire to enter "a magical realm in which all is harmony, happiness, and contentment." Historian Steve Fraser believes that even in the stampede for consumer goods slumbers "a sacramental quest for transcendence, reveries of what might be." In search of some material grace, more Americans than ever seem willing to be impaled on William Jennings Bryan's cross of gold.

Contemporary writers are not the first to note the persistence of enchantment in capitalist societies. Reflecting on the misery of industrial England in the 1840s, Thomas Carlyle detected the presence of "invisible Enchantments" that bewitched the "plethoric wealth" that had "yet made nobody rich." Owners and workers walked "spell-bound" in the clutches of a "horrid enchantment," beguiled by some power that lurked in the factories and inhabited the things they produced. Carlyle traced this sorcery to "the Gospel of Mammonism," the good news that money possessed and bestowed a trove of "miraculous facilities." While this could be dismissed as rhetorical flourish, even Marx and Weber used the language of enchantment to explain the power of capitalism. The capitalist, Marx and Engels wrote in The Communist Manifesto, "is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world he has called up by his spells." Later, in the first volume of Capital, Marx included a seminal passage on "the fetishism of commodities," the attribution of human or supernatural qualities to manufactured objects. Four decades later, after marking the epoch of disenchantment, Weber mused that "many old gods ascend from their graves," resurrected as the "laws" of the market—spirits of "the Gospel of Mammonism."' Far from being an agent of "disenchantment," capitalism, I contend, has been a regime of enchantment, a repression, displacement, and renaming of our intrinsic and inveterate longing for divinity. There is more than

mere metaphor in the way we refer to the "worship" or "idolatry" of money and possessions. Even if many (if not most) of us believe in a disenchanted, desacralized cosmos—a universe devoid of spirits and other immaterial but animate beings—capitalism has assumed, in its way, the status of an enchanted world. Like the blood-sacrificial rites of nationalism that sanctify the modern state, capitalism represents what the theologian William Cavanaugh has called a "migration of the holy," a forced march of sanctity and devotion toward new, putatively secular objects of reverence.

To be sure, enchantment can take a variety of forms: magic; animism; the myriad shapes of the occult; or at its most elaborate, religion. Although Weber showed that capitalism, while an agent of disenchantment, had nonetheless received the sanction of Calvinist Protestantism, Walter Benjamin suggested almost a century ago that capitalism is a religion as well, a "cult" with its own ontology, morals, and ritual practices whose "spirit ... speaks from the ornamentation of banknotes." I take this as a point of departure and argue that capitalism is a form of enchantment—perhaps better, a misenchantment, a parody or perversion of our longing for a sacramental way of being in the world. Its animating spirit is money. Its theology, philosophy, and cosmology have been otherwise known as "economics." Its sacramentals consist of fetishized commodities and technologies—the material culture of production and consumption. Its moral and liturgical codes are contained in management theory and business journalism. Its clerisy is a corporate intelligentsia of economists, executives, managers, and business writers, a stratum akin to Aztec priests, medieval scholastics, and Chinese mandarins. Its iconography consists of advertising, public relations, marketing, and product design. Its beatific vision of eschatological destiny is the global imperium of capital, a heavenly city of business with incessantly expanding production, trade, and consumption. And its gospel has been that of "Mammonism," the attribution of ontological power to money and of existential sublimity to its possessors.

The Gospel of Mammonism sanctions the printing of counterfeit promissory notes, for the love of money misdirects our sacramental desire to know the presence of divinity in our midst. "The world is charged with the grandeur of God," as Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote. "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things"—a freshness spoiled, he ruefully added, "seared with trade, bleared, smeared with toil." The Enchantments of Mammon is an extended assay of the moral and metaphysical imagination: our ideals of self and the common good that emerge from the way we understand the nature of the cosmos—what philosophers and theologians would call our metaphysics, ontology, or cosmology.' What Carlyle dubbed "the Gospel of Mammonism" is the meretricious ontology of capital, in which everything receives its value—and even its very existence—through the empty animism of money. It proclaims that capital is the mana or pneuma or soul or elan vital of the world, replacing the older enlivening spirits with one that is more real, energetic, and productive.

Yet as Hopkins recognized, the dearest freshness "is never spent"; the sorcery of capital can ravage and deface but can never defeat the grandeur of God. The history of capitalism in America has been a tale of predation on that dearest freshness, an ambitious but inexorably grotesque and destructive endeavor in the manufacture of beatitude, and that story is arguably winding down to its conclusion. What better time to trace the outlines of that history and inquire into the possibilities that lie dormant in the present? I've written The Enchantments of Mammon out of the conviction that, rather than bewail or curse the twilight of American economic and geopolitical imperium, we should welcome the demise of our misenchanted way of life as an opportunity for repentance and renewal. But redemption can only come if we tell a different story about our country and its unexceptional sins.

How has the story of "disenchantment" been told, and why is now an opportune moment to revise it? The most cogent account is Weber's, contained in several scattered essays and in **THE**

PROTESTANT ETHIC AND THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM (1905). According to Weber, the enchanted universe was inhabited by "mysterious incalculable forces" who animated or controlled the natural world. The enchanted world fused ontology and ethics—an account of what "is" was united with an imperative of what one "ought"—and so "the most ultimate and sublime values" formed part of the world's metaphysical composition. This infusion of the everyday world with sublimity undergirded enchanted communities; divinities of varying power and character provided the `pneuma" that "swept through the great communities like a firebrand." Embedded in the ontology of enchantment, the production and exchange of material goods were believed to partake of these forces. So they could never be left to the unregulated activity of "free" or "impersonal" markets; there was no "economy" unto itself, separate from other sacralized social relationships. As the historian Karl Polanyi explained in **THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION** (1944), "man's economy, as a rule" was considered by premodern peoples to be indivisible from "custom and law, magic and religion."'

Protestant theology and capitalism played crucial roles in Weber's tale of disenchantment. Rejecting the "foolish and doctrinaire" idea of a direct causal link between the two, Weber argued that the connection inhered both in the "elective affinities" of Protestant theology and capitalist enterprise and in the "psychological drives" for accumulation sanctioned by the new religious doctrines. The "elective affinities" of Protestantism and capitalism originated in the repudiation of Catholic sacramentalism—a Christianized form, he implied, of the earlier enchanted universe, a cultic ensemble of rituals and relics in which matter and human relationships were believed capable of mediating the supernatural. In Weber's view, the marrow of Protestant divinity was a mistrust of such "sensual and emotional elements" in religion—specifically, the sacraments, which Calvinists in particular rejected as magic. Lacking the assurance of salvation provided by Catholic sacramental rituals, the Calvinist allayed the inevitable anxiety through "tireless labor in a calling." So the "spirit of capitalism" was not, Weber argued, just another term for greed; it was the rationalized accumulation of wealth, undertaken, Calvinists convinced themselves, for the sake of God's glory and majesty. In the process, Calvinist capitalists achieved a "sanctification of worldly activity" and cultivated an "innerworldly asceticism," which, once loosened from its theological moorings, became the classic trinity of bourgeois virtues: diligence, thrift, and self-restraint. Thus, the nexus of Protestantism and capitalism lay in a "disenchantment of the world," which by denying matter any sacramental character, unleashed upon it—and upon human beings—both the capitalist's energies of mastery and acquisition and the scientist's desire for knowledge.

While popular notions of disenchantment usually trace its origins to science, Weber insisted that capitalism was the primary culprit in the eclipse of the sacred. As "the most abstract and impersonal element that exists in human life," money displaced mana and dissolved the enchanted bond between ontology and "ultimate values." By demolishing this enchanted ontology, capitalist markets rendered the exchange of goods "ever less accessible ... to any imaginable relationship with a religious ethic of brotherliness"

Enchanted assumptions of abundance, fluidity, and generosity—articulated, in the Jewish and Christian traditions, by the opening verses of Genesis—gave way to the disenchanted verities of scarcity and competition, while shamans, magicians, and priests yielded to businessmen, bureaucrats, and technicians. Life in modernity's iron cage embodied Hobbes's infernal vision: "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in solely in our heads, where the irrefragable and irksome reminders of disenchantment would still lurk, repressed in the shadows. Whether as art, or poetry, or play, or spirituality, re-enchantment would amount to little more than a tenuous and self-defeating therapy of consolation. Thus Taylor's hope for a "re-enchantment of the world" depends on telling a different story about disenchantment, one that does not rest on the ontological and historical foundations of the reigning account. To be genuine and enduring, a "reenchantment of

the world" must begin in a dissent from the prevailing wisdom about disenchantment. Just as Bruno Latour has argued that "we have never been modern"—that we have never differentiated nature and society as cleanly and rigidly as we suppose—might it be better to claim that we have never been disenchanted? Perhaps the story we've told about the evacuation of the sacred from everyday life has been a fable; perhaps the "immanent frame" has always been permeable, while the "buffered selves" that ward off transcendence have been more porous than we ever imagined.

Weber himself left clues for a rather different account of our condition. In this story, we abide between two eras; "we live as did the ancients when their world was not yet disenchanted of its gods and demons," as Weber speculated in "**Science as a Vocation**" (1915)—"only we," he wrote, "live in a different sense." Antiquity witnessed a long twilight of the gods, only to be followed by the dawn of a new one, whose own demise appeared to be the final senescence and annihilation of all enchantment from the world. Indeed, Weber observed, while "many old gods ascend from their graves" they are quickly "disenchanted," taking "the form of impersonal forces." But is that the only way to understand the "different sense" to which Weber alluded so nebulously—that modernity marks the crossing of the final Rubicon of disenchantment? Perhaps the sociologist who considered himself "religiously unmusical" heard faint notes of enchantment in modernity; perhaps, despite their wounds, the old divinities had not risen to give consent to their euthanization. Were they really "disenchanted" when they assumed their "secular" form? Or do they still roam among us in the guise of "secularization"? Capitalism has long been presumed to be a powerful solvent of enchantment—all that is holy is profaned, ecstasy is murdered in the waters of calculation. But what if those waters of pecuniary reason constituted a baptismal font, a consecration of capitalism as a covert form of enchantment, all the more beguiling on account of its apparent profanity?

Simon Critchley and Terry Eagleton might lend support to this conception of secularization as a disguise for enchantment. In **The Faith of the Faithless** (2012), Critchley rejects the axial assumption of most modern political thought: that the modernity of modern politics resides in its utter secularity, its lack of foundation in the will of divinity. Political order depends, he maintains, on allegiance to a "fiction," "an act of creation that brings a subject into existence"—like something performed by a writer, or a deity. This fiction, or "original covenant," as Critchley puts it, is a sacred, unquestionable tale whereby a people is brought—or rather, brings itself—into existence. If premodern polities traced their origins to the creative act of some divinity, modern "secular" political forms are, in effect, no different in their fictional character; whether fascism, communism, or liberal democracy, they represent "a series of metamorphoses of sacralization."

Likewise, Eagleton has argued, in **Culture and the Death of God** (2014), that the Supreme Being "has proved remarkably difficult to dispose of"; ever since the Enlightenment, "surrogate forms of transcendence" have scrambled for the crown of the King of Kings: reason, science, literature, art, nationalism, but especially "culture." Providing cold, imperious Reason with the wardrobe of mythology, poetry, literature, and art, Culture, its devotees fervently hoped, would successfully impersonate religion. Displacing the clergy, philosophers and poets aspired to establish a new, post-Christian clerisy who would educate the masses with new myths, icons, and epiphanies, "the sacred discourse of a post-religious age." But the modern project of surrogate transcendence failed; even Nietzsche's Übermensch represented, Eagleton writes, a "counterfeit theology." In our incorrigibly ironic era of postmodernism, the venerable questions of meaning and destiny are sloughed off as unreal and coercive "metanarrative"; even revolutionary hope—another grasp at transcendence—yields to the conquest of cool, the imperium of a hip plutocracy. "The only aura to linger on," Eagleton sadly concludes, "is that of the commodity or celebrity."

Although Eagleton insists that capitalism is "fundamentally irreligious ... and totally alien to the category of the sacred," his perception of an "aura" around the commodity suggests that capitalism is

a "surrogate form of transcendence," another "metamorphosis of sacralization," a modern vessel of primordial enchantment decked out in the apparel of secularity. As Marx himself hinted, despite the ostensible profanity of its pecuniary ethos, capitalism is hardly post-metaphysical: its metaphysics is money, the criterion of reality, meaning, and identity in a competitive commodity culture. In Grundrisse (1857), Marx referred to "the divine power of money" and its status as "the god among commodities." As the realm of the commodity widens, money not only purchases everything; it also seems to bring things into being from nothing, performing all manner of astonishing feats of moral and metaphysical alchemy. Money can buy you love: as the young Marx mused in an early reflection on "the power of money in bourgeois society," money enables its possessor to say "I am ugly, but I can buy for myself the most beautiful of women. Therefore I am not ugly, for the effect of ugliness—its deterrent power—is nullified by money." Under capitalism, money occupies the ontological throne from which God has been evicted.

THE WORLD IS CHARGED WITH THE GRANDEUR OF GOD.

IT WILL FLAME OUT, LIKE SHINING FROM SHOOK FOIL;

IT GATHERS TO A GREATNESS, LIKE THE OOZE OF OIL

CRUSHED. WHY DO MEN THEN NOW NOT RECK HIS ROD?

GENERATIONS HAVE TROD, HAVE TROD, HAVE TROD;

AND ALL IS SEARED WITH TRADE; BLEARED, SMEARED WITH TOIL;

AND WEARS MAN'S SMUDGE AND SHARE'S MAN'S SMELL; THE SOIL

IS BARE NOW, NOR CAN FOOT FEEL, BEING SHOD.

AND, FOR ALL THIS, NATURE IS NEVER SPENT;

THERE LIVES THE DEAREST FRESHNESS DEEP DOWN THINGS;

AND THOUGH THE LAST LIGHTS OFF THE BLACK WEST WENT

OH, MORNING, AT THE BROWN BRINK EASTWARDS, SPRINGS—BECAUSE THE HOLY GHOST OVER THE BENT

WORLD BROODS WITH WARM BREAST AND WITH AH! BRIGHT WINGS.

—GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, "God's

I want to go one step further than Eagleton and Critchley: The world does not need to be re-enchanted, because it was never disenchanted in the first place. Attending primarily to the history of the United States, I hope to demonstrate that capitalism has been, as Benjamin perceived, a religion of modernity, one that addresses the same hopes and anxieties formerly entrusted to traditional religion. But this does not mean only that capitalism has been and continues to be "beguiling" or "fetishized," and that rigorous analysis will expose the phantoms as the projections they really are. These enchantments draw their power, not simply from our capacity for delusion, but from our deepest and truest desires—desires that are consonant and

tragically out of touch with the dearest freshness of the universe. The world can never be disenchanted, not because our emotional or political or cultural needs compel us to find enchantments—though they do—but because the world itself, as Hopkins realized, is charged with the grandeur of God.

Hence the importance of theology for this book, as I root my affirmation of the persistence of enchantment in a theological claim about the world: that the earth is a sacramental place, mediating the presence and power of God, revelatory of the superabundant love of divinity. In Christian theology, another way to say that the world is "enchanted" is to say that it is sacramental; in Graham Ward's words, the material world "bears the watermark of its creator." Of course, Christians are not alone in perceiving a sacramental quality in ordinary things; as anthropologist Marcel Mauss documented in The Gift (1922), tribal and ancient societies believed in various forms of what the Maori of New Zealand dubbed mana, an unseen presence that resided in things and knit together those who exchanged them. To be sure, unlike notions of mana, Christian theology (like its Jewish and Islamic relatives) asserts that things in themselves have no power apart from God. Still, material life has sacral significance, and how we make and use material goods has a sacramental and a moral dimension; there are sacramental—as well as perversely sacramental—ways of being in the world. Moreover, Christian ontology entails the conviction that abundance and peace are the true nature of things, not the scarcity and violence that leaven the cosmology of capitalist economics. As Pope Francis reiterated the sacramental imagination in his 2015 encyclical **LAUDA TO SI,** while the Judeo-Christian religious heritage certainly "demythologized nature"—stripped it of divinity in itself—it nonetheless insists that divine love is "the fundamental moving force in all created things," and that the world is "illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion."

That longing for "universal communion" is corrupted by a lack of trust in God, and our love spoils into a lust for power that mars the development of civilization. Without faith in the sacramental nature of the world, we anchor ourselves in the illusory and inevitably malevolent apparatus of domination: patriarchal lineages, property lines, police departments, surveillance networks, military-industrial complexes. This is what Augustine called the "earthly city," our inexorably unstable and unsuccessful attempt to construct a "celestial city" on the fissured foundation of our aberrant loves. Whether true or errant, our loves make us what we are; so if we are what we desire, history is the convoluted record of our loves in all their magnificent and ignoble forms. As the theologian Eric Gregory asserts, "love is the key to understanding world history." (Norman O. Brown once expressed much the same insight in psychoanalytic terms: "the riddle of history is not in Reason, but in Desire; not in labor, but in love.") Capitalism is one such desire for communion, a predatory and misshapen love of the world. (Capitalism is a love story.)

However significant theology is for this book, I have relied on a sizable body of historical literature on the symbolic universe of capitalism. Much of this work suggests that capitalist cultural authority cannot be fully understood without regard to the psychic, moral, and spiritual longings inscribed in the imagery of business culture. As Jackson Lears puts it, the corporation may well be "a triumph of bureaucratic rationality," but its advertising speaks lissomely to desires for release from Weber's iron cage of disenchantment. Attuned to popular anxieties about an increasingly rationalized and impersonal world dominated by large institutions, Lears demonstrates that advertisers used a variety of aesthetic strategies to generate a "reanimation of the world under the aegis of major corporations." Likewise, Roland Marchand observed how corporate image professionals attempted to "reanimate" the corporation itself. Since the late nineteenth century—when it was first defined as a legal person—the corporation has often figured in popular culture as a soulless leviathan, destructive of the creativity and moral virtue once located (so it was thought) among proprietors and local communities. Responding to this crisis of moral legitimacy, public relations departments conjured, Marchand argued, a "corporate soul," an image of the corporation as a friendly

neighborhood behemoth solely interested in community service. It would seem that the iron in the cage of secularity has been leavened with enchanted materials.

Because I emphasize this enchanting carceral quality, some readers may complain that I overlook the real advances in human flourishing made possible by capitalism. Although I consider this objection a red herring, I want to make clear that I am not one of those churlish reactionary radicals who see nothing in capitalist modernity but one long, unrelieved nightmare of greed, brutality, and desiccating rationalization. The technological achievements of capitalism have surely improved the social and material conditions of billions of people; as none other than Marx asked in the **COMMUNIST MANIFESTO**, what earlier time "had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor?" Still—and this needs to be reiterated at a time of wavering but nonetheless ascendant capitalist triumphalism—these improvements would also not have been possible without labor unions, radical movements, welfare states, and political parties that mobilized unremitting popular struggle against the imperatives and institutions of capital. Moreover, it is essential to remember that, as Benjamin observed, every document of civilization is also a document of barbarism; during the tragically dialectical epoch of class struggle, all human achievement is tainted by oppression. It's a ruefully ironic observation with which Augustine would, I suspect, have concurred. Marveling in the City of God at "all the arts discovered and developed by human genius," Augustine still insisted that the aims and means of these creatures"—and "illth"—that which causes "devastation and trouble in all directions."

The arc of my narrative traces the enchantment of capitalism since the seventeenth century. Emerging from the fields and factories of industrializing England, capitalist enchantment migrated to the American continent and became the marrow of a proprietary dispensation, represented enthusiastically by Puritans, evangelicals, Mormons. In the late nineteenth century, the proprietary order gave way to the corporate dispensation with a soulful corporation at its center. Through much of the twentieth century, the corporation presided over the Fordist endeavor to build a heavenly city of business, a celestial metropolis of capital achieved through the mechanization of production and communion. By the early twenty-first century, capitalism has reached its highest meridian of enchantment in the neoliberal deification of "the Market." The enchantments of Mammon have had their critics, to be sure, but pride of place in this volume will go to intellectuals, poets, novelists, and artists with profoundly religious sensibilities. From Gerard Winstanley and Ruskin to Herman Melville, James Agee, and Kenneth Rexroth; from John Muir, William James, Vida Dutton Scudder, and Dorothy Day to Lewis Mumford, Mark Rothko, Theodore Roszak, and Thomas Merton—a pedigree of prophets saw capitalist enchantment as a desecration of some invisible grandeur. As Henry Miller realized, "the earth is a Paradise. We don't have to make it a Paradise—it is one. We have only to make ourselves fit to inhabit it."

Words such as "paradise" or "love" or "communion" are certainly absent from our political vernacular, excluded on account of their "utopian" connotations or their lack of steely-eyed "realism." Although this is a book about the past, I have always kept before me its larger contemporary religious, philosophical, and political implications. The book should make these clear enough; I will only say here that one of my broader intentions is to challenge the canons of "realism," especially as defined in the "science" of economics.

As the master science of desire in advanced capitalist nations, economics and its acolytes define the parameters of our moral and political imaginations, patrolling the boundaries of possibility and censoring any more generous conception of human affairs. Under the regime of neoliberalism, it has been ever faster to barbarism and ecological calamity. I wrote this book in part out of a belief that many on the "left" continue to share far too much with their antagonists: an ideology of "progress" defined as unlimited economic growth and technological development, as well as an acceptance of

the myth of disenchantment that underwrites the pursuit of such expansion. The Romantic antipathy to capitalism, mechanization, and disenchantment stemmed not from a facile and nostalgic desire to return to the past, but from a view that much of what passed for "progress" was in fact inimical to human flourishing: a specious productivity that required the acceptance of venality, injustice, and despoliation; a technological and organizational efficiency that entailed the industrialization of human beings; and the primacy of the production of goods over the cultivation and nurturance of men and women. This train of iniquities followed inevitably from the chauvinism of what William Blake called "single vision," a blindness to the enormity of reality that led to a "Babylon builded in the waste."

Romantics redefined rather than rejected "realism" and "progress," drawing on the premodern customs and traditions of peasants, artisans, and artists: craftsmanship, mutual aid, and a conception of property that harkened back to the medieval practices of "the commons." Whether they believed in some traditional form of religion or translated it into secular idioms of enchantment, such as "art" or "beauty" or "organism," Romantic anticapitalists tended to favor direct workers' control of production; the restoration of a human scale in technics and social relations; a sensitivity to the natural world that precluded its reduction to mere instrumental value; and an apotheosis of pleasure in making sometimes referred to as poesis, a union of reason, imagination, and creativity, an ideal of labor as a poetry of everyday life, and a form of human divinity. In work free of alienation and toil, we receive "the reward of creation," as William Morris described it through a character in News from Nowhere (1890), "the wages that God gets, as people might have said time a gone."

Rendered gaudy and impoverished by the tyranny of economics and the enchantment of neoliberal capitalism, our sensibilities need replenishment from the sacramental imagination. As Americans begin to experience the initial stages of imperial sclerosis and decline, and as the advanced capitalist world in general discovers the reality of ecological limits, we may find in what Marx called the "prehistory" of our species a perennial and redemptive wisdom. We will not be saved by our money, our weapons, or our technological virtuosity; we might be rescued by the joyful and unprofitable pursuits of love, beauty, and contemplation. No doubt this will all seem foolish to the shamans and magicians of pecuniary enchantment. But there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of on Wall Street or in Silicon Valley.

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Despite the populist umbrage that has surged through American political culture since the presidential campaign of 2016, most Americans remain far from serious about a new way of life not indentured to capital. Hillary Clinton won the Democratic nomination for president while espousing the techno-meritocratic creed that flatters the professional-managerial classes and the elites of finance and digital capital. Defining "merit" almost solely in terms of its utility to capital accumulation, Clinton and her minions in the cultural apparatus were blithely and disastrously indifferent to the human wreckage wrought by neoliberal capitalism. With a moral imagination so gilded and tutored by Wall Street and Silicon Valley, a Clinton presidency would have remained as beguiled as former president Barack Obama's by the enchantments of money and cybernetic technology. Her opponent Donald Trump's populist bluster turned out, of course, to provide a cynical and successful prologue to the most unabashedly plutocratic government since the 1920s. Yet despite Trump's execrable racism and misogyny, his appeal stemmed, in large measure, from the dogged persistence of the capitalist idyll. Trump's boorish defiance of political politesse might be seen as a form of the creative destruction embellished in our cult of the Entrepreneur. His actual incompetence as a businessman (demonstrated in a dreary record of failures, bankruptcies, and flimflammed partners) is of no account; having flourished so gaudily in the turbulence of the market, Trump clearly believes that his prowess in business is an infinitely convertible wisdom—a conceit sustained by the American inclination to attribute all manner of ingenuity and virtue to the scrappy victors of capitalist

competition. For all its grandiose banality, Trump's campaign slogan—"Make America Great Again"—evoked the waning but still mesmeric hope for a revival of the promise of capitalism, as well as for a time when the purchasing power of the wages of whiteness and masculinity were high. It would seem that most of "the 99 percent" want to "take back" the American Dream, not awaken from and definitively repudiate it; no depth or magnitude of failure seems capable of occasioning a fundamental reckoning with the futility of the original covenant.

Thus it would appear that the future of American capitalism will be irreversibly bleak and degenerative: "a consumerist Sparta," in Chalmers Johnson's words, a Huxwellian empire of consumption and militarism, or "rentism," as Peter Frase has dubbed it, a condition of plenty marred by wage stagnation, technological unemployment, and entrenched inequality. Perhaps the most dreary and terrifying scenario is that sketched by Wolfgang Streeck, who contends that capitalism has entered a protracted state of social and political senescence. Always "a fragile and improbable order," capitalism has always been in need of "ongoing repair work" to offset its tendency toward stasis and breakdown. But now—with economic inertia, ecological crises, and political impasse throughout the North Atlantic world—"too many frailties have become simultaneously acute while too many remedies have been exhausted or destroyed." And where reform or revolutionary movements once held out promises of a better future, capitalist society now disintegrates "but not under the impact of an organized opposition fighting it in the name of a better social order." Thus, Streeck envisions a revenant future, in which "before capitalism will go to hell" it will "hang in limbo, dead or about to die ... nobody will have the power to move its decaying body out of the way." Capitalism, he concludes, "is facing its Gotterdammerung"—with no new divinities ascending in the dawn.

Given the ghastly resilience of neoliberal capitalism, some of its most penetrating and articulate critics express a disheartenment that borders on despair. Surveying our "age of acquiescence," Fraser chronicles with a melancholy thoroughness the styles of resignation to the despotism of money: a "freedom" defined as reinvention of the self in accord with the vicissitudes of the Market, encouraging pathetic "delusions of self-reliance" and "hallucinations of self-empowerment"; a tranquilizing repertoire of digital devices and myriad forms of entertainment; and the analgesic pleasures of consumerism that allay a metastasizing boredom, solitude, and demoralization. But as long as Americans remain convinced that, in Fraser's words, "the evergreen hope that the road to self-enrichment remains open," their submissiveness will remain intractable; the reign of our "populist plutocracy" will remain thoroughly anchored in a plutocratic populism. If there really is no alternative, not even in the imagination, then conformity seems the sanest response to a world thoroughly structured by the metaphysics of capital. As Fraser reports the melancholy wisdom spreading among the despondent and politically hopeless, if nothing better beckons over the horizon, "to acquiesce may be less dispiriting."

What if we find acquiescence dispiriting? To mitigate, let alone prevent, our impending ecological and economic disasters, we desperately need, to borrow Naomi Klein's words, "a new civilizational paradigm." And yet, as Klein also realizes, "post-Enlightenment Western culture does not offer a road map for how to live that is not based on an extractivist, nonreciprocal relationship with nature." Both the advanced and the advancing capitalist worlds must not only forsake the promethean passion for domination and the mammonesque lust to accumulate; they must develop those alternatives whose existence their leaders have spent the past two generations denying. On what imaginative resources can the overdeveloped nations in particular rely to conceive these alternatives? Can we envision a different civilization and challenge the criteria of realism and practicality canonized by capital and the state?

Over the past decade, a desire for some new civilizational paradigm has surfaced, in however inchoate a form. The support for Senator Bernie Sanders and his "political revolution" in the Democratic primary race of 2016 demonstrated a profound and widespread longing for a break with the existing order. To be sure, Sanders's "democratic socialism" was, on close inspection, a mélange of the best of New Deal liberalism and European social democracy. As Jedidiah Purdy observed, it represented an updated version of "Eisenhower and FDR's world if Reagan had never happened." But it also named both a visceral and expansive disenchantment with the charms of neoliberalism and the persistence of a longing for solidarity and justice that was not shy about the language of "revolution."

Sanders's campaign was one efflorescence of the Occupy movement that had arisen in the fall of 2011. Not only in New York but also around the world, Occupy revived a languishing hope that capitalism was not the gilded End of History. The Occupiers rebuked the callous and insouciant rapacity that had marked the previous three decades, uttering heresies against the meretricious doxology of neoliberal economics. With their general assemblies, "peoples' mics," and free provision of food and medical care, Occupy appeared to represent an exotic uprising of apostates and infidels, as—however briefly—a gift economy supplanted the mercenary order of accumulation. It seemed like a joyous, pentecostal return of Mammon's forgotten but lingering victims, escaping the beast on a reconnaissance mission to the frontiers of paradise. Alas, it seemed that humankind cannot bear too much of heaven: Occupy and its tongues of fire were quickly extinguished or exhausted. The Occupiers dwindled as the weather grew cold and the times remained unmoved, and the police closed down and threw away what remained of the ragged outposts of utopia.

If it remains to be seen whether Occupy was, in Graeber's words, "the opening salvo in a wave of negotiations over the dissolution of the American Empire," its more immediate importance may lie in the realm of the spirit rather than the barricades. As Rebecca Solnit observed of Occupy San Francisco, "Occupy has some of the resonance of a spiritual, as well as a political, movement." Citing one declaration that "compassion is our new currency," Solnit marveled at the beloved community that transpired among the carnivalesque participants in utopia. However reformist their demands, the experiments in direct democracy were, in her words, "messy, exasperating, and miraculous"; leaderless meetings did not proceed or conclude in confusion, listlessness, or violence. The "people's mics" enabled and even required men and women to "become the keeper of [their] brother's or sister's voice." Talking with Occupiers after the closure of their experiment in stateless, moneyless ways of being, Solnit remarked on "the extraordinary richness of their experience," noting without any irony or condescension that the sojourners "call it love."

The Occupiers exhibited the same existential joy that Solnit had chronicled among survivors of natural disasters in **A Paradise Built in Hell.** Describing the aftermath of the San Francisco earthquake a little over a century before, Solnit marveled not only at the improvisational ingenuity of people whose city had been reduced to rubble but also at the spontaneous generosity they displayed in the midst of the most horrendous circumstances:

Imagine a society where money plays little or no role, where people rescue each other and then care for each other, where food is given away, where life is mostly out of doors in public, where the old divides between people seem to have fallen away, and the fate that faces them, no matter how grim, is far less so for being shared, where much once considered impossible, both good and bad, is now possible or present.

Disaster kicks open "a door back into paradise, the paradise at least in which we are who we hope to be, do the work we desire, and are each our sister's and brother's keeper." This is hardly the sort of thing that can be readily translated into a technocratic or pecuniary idiom, the lingua franca of the digital and financial oligarchies who claim to monopolize the power to draw the boundaries of political possibility in our time.

The paradise that emerges from catastrophe embodies what William James called "another kingdom of being," that realm of "ontological wonder" that appears in the relinquishment of all desire for possession and supremacy. If nothing less than a new civilizational paradigm will enable us to weather and perhaps avert this century's maelstrom of impending disasters, it must be rooted in a deep and even rapturous ontological imagination of wonder. "We want larger selves and a larger world," Solnit writes, and people caught in disasters soon discover how multitudinous they and the world truly are. And yet, she muses, "we lack the language for that aspect of our existence... the language we need to describe what happens during disaster." What Solnit discerns in the history of calamities, Fraser sees in the broader story of modern America. Propelled by "ineffable yearnings to redefine what it meant to be human together," all the great crusades for justice began "in a realm before money" and looked to the fruition of "a realm beyond money." Even in the stampede for consumer goods slumbers "a sacramental quest for transcendence, reveries of what might be." For both Fraser and Solnit, one enormous obstacle to a breakthrough into paradise is the moral and ontological edifice of capitalism.

We do have a language for the human magnificence we witness in the wake of devastation; we do have a language that expresses our longings both for a sense of the world's magnitude and for fleshly access to transcendence. Our best hope for an imaginative and political antithesis to capitalist enchantment resides in the lineage of Romantic, sacramental radicalism. It understands calamity, injustice, and degradation as predicaments of human divinity, hardships that can reveal our suppressed or perverted but nonetheless godlike nature. It views the material universe as a cosmic theater of divine vitality, charged with the grandeur of God. Beginning with the squatters on St. George's Hill, the pedigree of Romantic modernity maintained that we already live in paradise, and that our blindness to the heaven all around us is the source of our descent into the hell of property, rank, and dominion.

The capacity to apprehend paradise had several names—"imagination," "wonder," "passionate vision," "sacramental consciousness"—but it has always been a way of seeing, a perception of some truth and goodness and beauty intrinsic to the material world, a view that embraces without nullifying the knowledge obtainable through the sciences.

So if we ask, along with T. J. Clark, "how deep does [the] reconstruction of the project of Enlightenment have to go?," all the way down is the answer, right down to the ontological roots. At its boldest, the sacramental vision has beheld a superabundant love as the ontological architecture of creation, harmoniously blending unfathomable power and gracious, immeasurable munificence. The sacramental way of seeing has behooved a sacramental way of being, one described by James as "saintliness": not a blissed-out, puritanical sanctimony, but rather a fearless, vibrant, and open-handed life, sustained by a confidence in the bounty of the world, available to every person on condition that she become "worthless as a practical being"—"worthless," that is, by the pecuniary criteria of capitalist metaphysics and rationality.

By repudiating the standards of worth and practicality that discipline the capitalist way of being, the Romantic sacramental imagination has always borne revolutionary implications. Romanticism has represented an alternative modernity, a substantive critique of the Enlightenment's collusion with bourgeois sensibility and moralism that nonetheless never ended in utter repudiation. It has always rejected capitalism's ontology of pecuniary transubstantiation, its epistemology of technological dominion, and its morality of profit and productivity. Because Romanticism's passionate vision sees the presence of divinity throughout the material universe—especially in human beings—Romanticism has entailed an understanding of nature, work, and technics very different from that of capitalist societies, whose misconception of the world is encapsulated in the secular superstition of "economics." In the combative technological world constructed by capitalism, "human beings and material objects no longer extend a friendly hand to one another," as Pope Francis has echoed Walt

Whitman; "the relationship has become confrontational"—characterized by the violence of the extractive paradigm, poisoned by the "bitterness and malice" that John Ruskin descried in the English heavens. Nature as revealed by the sacramental consciousness is both abundant and holy. Impressed with the trademark of its creator, it is not a stingy and punitive antagonist, but rather a fruitful, ever-evolving habitat, open to the rational and creative participation of humanity in its manifold generosity.

In this sacramental view, our laboring and technical collaboration with nature should take the form of self-development as well as production. Performed in conditions worthy of our human divinity, work would not constitute money-grubbing toil in pursuit of a rapacious enlargement of "productivity" but rather the care and cultivation of people—as Ruskin put it, "full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures." Along with artists and poets, artisans have also been archetypes of convivial, unalienated labor: the union of reason, imagination, and creativity amounting to poetry in labor—an inspiring alternative to the slavery of wages and to the ennui that beckons with total automation. Fusing conceptual and physical labor, the Romantic ideal of the artisan contravened the industrial paradigm of efficiency and productivity defined in capitalist terms. The recent renewal of interest in craftsmanship testifies to the persistence of this Romantic paradigm. Contrary to claims by many on the left that "craftsmanship" is merely a fantasy of reactionary nostalgia, a recovery of artisanal values would entail neither a revival of the Protestant work ethic—the slave morality of capitalism—nor a rejection of the possibilities for greater free time afforded by technological advance. The Romantic figure of the artisan both beckons to the goal of workers' control of production and reminds us to ask more fundamental questions about the nature and purposes of work. If homo faber is also imago Dei—the quintessential sacramental image of divinity—then the first question about labor is not how much can be produced in the shortest period of time, but what kinds of labor and what kinds of goods best contribute to human flourishing. Against the neoliberal inferno of 24/7 labor and consumption, "better work and less of it" should be the rallying cry of a revitalized workers' movement.

Romantic sacramentalism has evoked communist, anarchist, and artisanal visions, so pioneers of a postcapitalist future can draw on a rich imaginative trove of property forms and beloved communities. "Communism," of course, triggers nightmares of authoritarianism, misery, and incompetence; images of jackboots, prison camps, and queues would appear to dispel any resurrection of the hope for a communist paradise. Yet when even a Pope can write—and be tagged with the predictable epithet of "Marxist"—that "the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits should benefit everyone," then "Communists of the old school," as Ruskin called himself—communists who appeal to the spirit of the medieval commons, not, like Marx, to the spirit of the industrial factory—have an opportunity to educate our contemporaries in the longer and broader tradition of communitas. Long after its dispossession from the fields and towns, the spirit of the commons persisted most heartily among the anarchist and Arts and Crafts movement, Romantics who envisioned some modern revival of the self-direction and solidarity practiced among artisanal guilds and peasant communities. Workers' control of technology and production, the eradication of class and the industrial division of labor, the removal of the commons from private ownership and its restoration to federated communities—consolidated in the word "socialism," these remain the compelling answers to the "social question" posed by capitalism.

A Romantic left would also help their fellow citizens to awaken from the spell of the American Dream, the trance that animates the feverish somnambulism known as the American Way of Life. We may already be waking up—the acquiescence may be dissipating to reveal a miasma of betrayal, anger, and resentment, all of which will intensify as more Americans realize that their way of life is neither blessed nor imperishable. If the events of the past few years have demonstrated anything beyond dispute, it's that our ruling class is not only venal and corrupt but rotten and putrefying as

well. Certainly, judged by Ruskin's criterion, the American Empire is neither happy nor noble: our country, so deluded as to think itself rich, may well be among the poorest in powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. Indeed, the decline of the American Empire will be one of the pivotal episodes of the twenty-first century. What will Americans make of their future—not to mention their past and present—when they begin to doubt their divine anointment and eschatological mission? What will they do when they conclude that they never enjoyed the mandate of heaven? They may redouble their efforts in denial, unwilling to relinquish or even temper their faith in the enchanting verities of the Market. If they harken to the delusions of nativist populism, they will intensify racial animosity while entrenching the power of their mercenary overlords. If they affirm a renovated neoliberalism, they may attempt to prolong their economic and geopolitical imperium. Yet even if they succeed, their victory will be brief and pyrrhic, for they will have purchased their temporary reprieve in the currency of fear, recrimination, and death. Other peoples—perhaps even many Americans themselves—will not tolerate the expenditure in money, blood, and repression required to sustain the American Way of Life.

Or Americans could welcome the demise of the Empire as a liberating moment of possibility. Those who sense the impending twilight of empire as a way of life could greet the erosion of our hegemony, not with lamentation about the best days behind us, but with gratitude and even jubilation at the prospect of a better and lovelier country. Once relieved of the burdens of empire, and dispelled of the illusion that the world cannot survive without the escutcheon of American superintendence, we would surely be weaker. But we would also be wiser, freer to assess and rearrange our affairs by truer, saner, and more generous standards than productivity and technological innovation. Such a deliberate renunciation of capitalist enchantment will be arduous and sharply vilified, condemned as lethal and improvident heresy by the patricians and curates of the plutocracy. But the only alternative to apostasy from Mammonism will be a perdition of corporate thralldom perpetuated with unending and unavailing war.

The disassembly of the American Empire will require the acolytes of sacramental consciousness to imbue our politics with a hopeful, even joyful spirit. The barbarism of our current political culture has led some to call for a kind of inner, Benedictine expatriation: "a new—doubtless very different—St. Benedict," in Alasdair MacIntyre's words, or a "Benedict option" of cloistered, like-minded exiles from the toxins and failures of modernity. I reject this Benedictine disengagement as both impossible and undesirable. Rather, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have hinted, we need a new—doubtless very different—St. Francis as a model of revolutionary militancy. Amid the injustice and corruption of his own day, Francis discovered, they assert, "the ontological power of a new society"—"love, simplicity, and also innocence," an ontological wonder that entails anger at the profanation of human divinity. For those eager, in Charles Taylor's words, to "break beyond the limits of the regnant versions of immanent order"—for those "restless at the barriers of the human sphere"—any new radicalism must begin from a faith in this fundamental joy of being. A realized eschatology: if you will, the future in the present tense. Living the new world in the wreckage of the old.

That new world has always been present; history has not deprived us of an abiding and infinitely generous divinity. We can reenter paradise—even if only incompletely—for paradise has always been around and in us, eagerly awaiting our coming to our senses, ready to embrace and nourish when we renounce our unbelief in the goodness of things. And we can do this in the midst of imperial decay and in the face of seemingly impossible odds. Knowing that the world has been and will always be charged with the grandeur of God, we can practice, in the twilight of a senescent empire, love's radiant, unarmed, and penniless dominion. <>

RETHINKING IBN 'ARABI by Gregory A. Lipton [Oxford University Press 9780190684501]

The thirteenth century mystic Ibn `Arabi was the foremost Sufi theorist of the premodern era. For more than a century, Western scholars and esotericists have heralded his universalism, arguing that he saw all contemporaneous religions as equally valid. In **RETHINKING IBN `ARABI,** Gregory Lipton calls this image into question and throws into relief how Ibn `Arabi's discourse is inseparably intertwined with the absolutist vision of his own religious milieu--that is, the triumphant claim that Islam fulfilled, superseded, and therefore abrogated all previous revealed religions.

Lipton juxtaposes Ibn `Arabi's absolutist conception with the later reception of his ideas, exploring how they have been read, appropriated, and universalized within the reigning interpretive field of Perennial Philosophy in the study of Sufism. The contours that surface through this comparative analysis trace the discursive practices that inform Ibn `Arabi's Western reception back to the eighteenth and nineteenth century study of "authentic" religion, where European ethno-racial superiority was wielded against the Semitic Other-both Jewish and Muslim. Lipton argues that supersessionist models of exclusivism are buried under contemporary Western constructions of religious authenticity in ways that ironically mirror Ibn `Arabi's medieval absolutism.

For over a century, Euro-American scholars and esotericists alike have heralded the thirteenth-century Spanish mystic Ibn ‘Arabi (d. 1240) as the premodern Sufi theorist of inclusive religious universalism who claimed all contemporaneous religions as equally valid beyond the religio-political divide of medieval exclusivism. Rethinking Ibn ‘Arabi calls into question this Western image of Ibn ‘Arabi and throws into relief how his discourse is inseparably intertwined with the absolutist vision of his own religious milieu—that is, the triumphant claim that Islam fulfilled, superseded, and therefore abrogated all previously revealed religions. By exploring how Ibn ‘Arabi’s ideas have been read, appropriated, and universalized within the regnant interpretative field of Perennial Philosophy in the study of Sufism, Rethinking Ibn ‘Arabi theorizes Ibn ‘Arabi’s own absolutist conception of universalism in juxtaposition to his contemporary universalist reception. The contours that surface through this comparative analysis trace the discursive practices that inform Ibn ‘Arabi’s Western reception back to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conceptions of “authentic” religion where European ethnoracial superiority is wielded against a Semitic Other—both Jewish and Muslim. Rethinking Ibn ‘Arabi thus argues that in ironically similar ways to Ibn ‘Arabi’s medieval absolutism, contemporary Western universalist constructions of religious authenticity contain buried orders of politics concealing supersessionist models of exclusivism.

Excerpt: *In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point*

> *with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map.*

—Jorge Luis Borges, "On Exactitude in Science," in **COLLECTED FICTIONS**, trans. Andrew Hurley (London: Penguin, 1999), 325.)

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While my ostensive concern in this book is to analyze how particular ideas of the medieval Muslim mystic Ibn 'Arabi have been translated within a contemporary field of interpretation, the meta-subject that frames this analysis is the larger issue of religious universalism. And while my approach is necessarily critical, I am not overly concerned to weigh in on the ongoing debate regarding the ontology of religion itself—that is, whether or not religion *is* "of its own kind" (*sui generis*). Yet, it seems fairly clear to me that the related, and likewise ongoing, scholarly struggle to find a universal definition of religion is well-nigh impossible. This is so, as Talal Asad has persuasively argued, "not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes." For the methodological purposes of this study, I thus profess a type of philosophical quietism where my general aim, in Wittgensteinian fashion, is to take account of "language-games, describe them, *and sometimes wonder at them*." In the following chapters, I therefore attempt to remain at the level of discourse by asking *how* those ideas and ideals we privilege *as* religious are conceived, received, and ultimately naturalized. More specifically, I seek to show how the speculative metaphysical ideas of Ibn 'Arabi have been read, appropriated, and universalized within the discursive context of Traditionalism or the Perennial Philosophy (*philosophia perennis*) with a primary focus on the interpretive field of Perennialism associated with the *sui generis*, or "nonreductive," tradition of religious universalism connected to Frithjof Schuon.

Thus, even though this book takes seriously claims of religious *terra firma*—that is, religion "as such"—its analytical concern revolves around the discursive "maps" that chart such claims. Of course, the metaphor of mapmaking in the field of religious studies is well worn, made famous many years ago by J. Z. Smith's seminal essay "Map Is Not Territory." Smith's essay ends with his oft-quoted rejoinder to the mathematician Alfred Korzybski's famous dictum, " 'Map is not territory'—*but maps are all we possess*." Yet, Smith's cartographic metaphor is equally applicable to the religious practitioner in the so-called real world as it is for the scholar of religion in the academy. In performing what he calls a "deep"—and indeed "transgressive"—reading of Smith's essay, Peter Wright has recently emphasized this essential point:

> The student of religions . . . is not all that different from the practitioner of a religion. The practices of reading and writing, interpretation and criticism—i.e., the practices that . . . constitute for Smith the study of religions as a humanistic adventure among texts—belong to the same family of activities that constitute ordinary religious practice. The scholar of religions and the adherent of a particular religious tradition are both engaged in a quest romance that produces a species of "cartography."

Thus, while there may be what scholars like to think of as a "critical distance" between the academic discipline of religious studies and the object of their study—the religious themselves—it nevertheless appears to be a difference of degree rather than of kind.

One of the ways that the differences among such maps have been categorized is by orders of abstraction away from the original "insider map of believers." Yet, when dealing with contemporary scholars of religion who consider their own scholarship a vehicle for spiritual gnosis, as was famously the case with the comparativist Mircea Eliade, then any supposed distance between the academic

study of religion and asserting religious truth rapidly vanishes into the thin air of theory itself. As Steven Wasserstrom observes, "Eliade's Historian of Religions himself somehow recapitulated the paradigmatic experience of the traditional believer; only thus could he *see* the real forms, and therefore only in this way could then *show* them to the reader." Similarly, in his introduction to *The Essential Writings of Frithjof Schuon*, religious studies scholar and Perennialist Seyyed Hossein Nasr claims that "ideally speaking, *only saintly men and women* possessing wisdom should and can engage in a serious manner in that enterprise which has come to be known as comparative religion."

To be sure, the art of mapmaking is an elitist enterprise. As cosmographical projections, maps assert particular correspondences to reality, able to be read and followed by anyone with skill enough to do so. As such, all maps inevitably claim, to one degree or another, *the universal* through their ability to offer privileged access to truth. In its most unassuming form, such universalism is based on the assertion that territory can be abstracted outside of time and culture—a particular locality can be reified and placed within a less complicated dimension, represented by semiotic simplifications. The usefulness of cartography in the history of humanity is of course beyond question. The notion, however, that maps are reliable representations of reality is more complicated. Indeed, the full quote of Korzybski's popular maxim referred to above reads: "A map *is not* the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a *similar structure* to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness." One of the best ways of articulating the problematics underlying Korzybski's deceptively simple insight has been dubbed Bonini's paradox by William Starbuck: "As a model grows more realistic it also becomes just as difficult to understand as the real-world processes it represents." This paradox has numerous ramifications in many fields, but for my purposes here it is useful to consider what it brings to bear on the concept of the universal. The closer we approach any notion of "reality," the more complex such ideas are, and increasingly less useful. The idea of the universal, like a map, is only of use when it simplifies reality; yet, when reality is simplified, there is always a choice involved—something *must always* be left out. Thus, the paradox of religious universalism is that all such discourse simultaneously reveals and conceals: the more it shines light upon a claimed universal perspective, the more it occludes others. As Milton Sernett observes:

> Perhaps psychohistorians will someday explain for us why the archives of the past overflow with examples of how religion has, on the one hand, served as a cross-cultural unifying principle while, on the other hand, it has been a means by which insiders define themselves over against outsiders.

Even though universal perspectives are useful as models of unification, they are also necessarily divisive as discourses through which specific communities operating within particular times and places stake out their claims. In this sense, as Ernesto Laclau put it, "the universal is no more than a particular that has become dominant." Yet, from a metaphysical perspective, the fact that universals are derived from so-called particulars does not necessarily diminish their universal status. In the case of universalizing religions such as Christianity or Islam, historical particulars constitute much of revelation itself. But to argue that such particulars can become universally applicable *is not necessarily* to argue that they transcend their particularity. Rather, part of the paradox of universalism is an inherent confusion between the universal and the particular, as Laclau observes: "Is it universal or particular? If the latter, universality can only be a particularity that defines itself in terms of a limitless exclusion; if the former, the particular itself becomes part of the universal, and the dividing line is again blurred."

The concern that fuels the theoretical impetus behind this book thus focuses on universalist mapping practices that tend to lose sight of—or simply disregard—the inherent, dialectical tension between the universal and the particular as conceived within all religious discourse. As a pertinent example of this, and one that I revisit in chapter 4, the Perennialist scholar James Cutsinger recently asserted that to be objective, scholars of religious studies "must entertain the possibility" that Frithjof Schuon

was able to directly access "the Truth—with that capital 'T' " in ways that are not explicable through "*sheerly natural causes or purely human phenomena*." Cutsinger goes on to make the even bolder claim (coming as it does from a professor in a religious studies department at a public research university) that such a gnostic "power of immediate or intuitive discernment [is] unobstructed by the boundaries of physical objects and *unaffected by the limitations of historical circumstance*." Taking Cutsinger's definition of gnostic power at face value, it stands to reason that if "limitations of historical circumstance" could indeed be shown as constitutive for any given transcendent claim to universal knowledge, then such a claim would necessarily be called into question. Thus, setting aside the thorny question of ontology, and in response to Cutsinger, the contention that threads together the various arguments throughout this book is simply this: all universal claims *inevitably* carry the burden of their own socio-historical genealogies. That is to say, every map bears the situated perspective of its cartographer.

In regards to my personal cartographic perspective, one final note is in order. In terms of the field of Ibn 'Arabi studies, the insights contained in this book are critically indebted to two of the most formidable, contemporary scholars who write on Ibn 'Arabi in European languages: Michel Chodkiewicz and William Chittick. In the last several decades, their immeasurable contribution has enriched and transformed how Ibn 'Arabi is read and understood. Both scholars are at pains to articulate the importance of sacred law for Ibn 'Arabi—a point I revisit from different perspectives throughout this work. No doubt, they would also agree that Ibn 'Arabi's discourse would qualify as universalist in some fashion. Yet in terms of critically inspiring my particular theoretical interposition, Chodkiewicz has importantly, *albeit discretely*, brought to light the absolutist and exclusivist nature of Ibn 'Arabi's particular brand of universalism in opposition to Chittick's more inclusivist interpretive framework. In the first half of this book, I spend significant time fleshing out this particular aspect of Chodkiewicz's wide-ranging insight, while critiquing the aspect of Chittick's work that has seemingly attempted to attenuate what I refer to as Ibn 'Arabi's political metaphysics and its embedded supersessionism. Yet, any critique of Chittick I proffer here must be understood as situated within a larger indebtedness owed to his prolific and careful expositions of the Andalusian Sufi's corpus. Without having encountered and benefited from Chittick's extraordinary erudition, I could never have begun my ongoing journey of understanding and appreciation of Ibn 'Arabi's work and thought. I thus offer the interventions of this book not in the spirit of opposition, but as additional vantage points to a necessary and ongoing conversation.

I should note here that part of my aim in this book is to problematize such definitions of "gnosis"—a definition that seemingly echoes a post-Kantian obsession with autonomy, be it of Platonic intellect or Kantian reason. Rather than transcending heteronomy, I argue that such knowledge is always constituted *through* it.

In 'Arabi and the Cartography of Universalism

The introductory chapter broadly charts the theoretical and discursive problematics that the book addresses. Through the metaphor of cartography (a controlling motif throughout the work), this chapter begins with an overview of the book's analytical trajectory by problematizing the notion of the universal in both the discourse of Ibn 'Arabi and the interpretive field of contemporary Perennialism. In addition to a brief biography and establishing a framework for how Ibn 'Arabi's socio-political lifeworld can be read within an absolutist cosmology of a so-called perennial religion or *religio perennis*, this chapter introduces the racio-spiritual grammar of Schuonian Perennialism and the orders of exclusion it harbors. It concludes with a chapter overview.

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What we normally call universalism is a particularism thinking itself as universalism, and it is worthwhile doubting whether universalism could ever exist otherwise.—Naoki Sakai, "Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism."

Revered by countless followers and admirers spanning over seven centuries and nearly as many continents, the Andalusian Sufi Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240), or more popularly Ibn 'Arabi, is commonly referred to as "the Greatest Master" (*al-shaykh al-akbar*)—or as Bulent Rauf, one of his most seminal New Age commentators, once called him: "the universal Doctor Maximus." In the chapters that follow, I will show how Ibn 'Arabi imperially mapped the religious Other, while simultaneously exploring the ways in which his ideas have been mapped and universalized within the interpretative field of the prolific Swiss-German esotericist Frithjof Schuon (d. 1998). This book is thus an attempt to theorize Ibn 'Arabi's own conception of universalist metaphysics in juxtaposition to his contemporary universalist reception—a reception that I argue projects European concepts of religion upon the Andalusian Sufi's discourse in the guise of transhistorical and transcultural continuity. I hold such a theoretical lens essential in the study of Ibn 'Arabi, and Sufism more broadly, for without it scholars run the risk of unwittingly perpetuating and further naturalizing long-standing European orders of religious authenticity. As such, I approach my subject first and foremost from the framework of religious studies, in the sense that I am preoccupied with how various discursive communities employ the protean and situated category of "religion."

In this introduction, I broadly chart the theoretical and discursive waters through which this book attempts to navigate. Beginning with an overview of my analytical trajectory, I problematize the notion of the universal in both the discourse of Ibn 'Arabi and the interpretive field of contemporary Perennialism. In addition to establishing a framework for how Ibn 'Arabi's socio-political lifeworld can be read within an absolutist cosmology of a so-called perennial religion or *religio perennis*, I introduce the racio-spiritual grammar of Schuonian Perennialism and the orders of exclusion it harbors. I conclude with a chapter overview.

Mapping the Double Bind of Universality

In his groundbreaking work on European imperialism, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, Walter Mignolo asserts that "maps *are* and *are not* territory." Here, Mignolo alludes to Alfred Korzybski's famous claim, which I have already referred to in the prologue—that is, "a map *is not* the territory it represents." Yet, Mignolo goes on to argue that nevertheless, maps *are* territory "because, once they are accepted, they become a powerful tool for controlling territories, colonizing the mind and imposing themselves on the members of the community using the map as the real territory." Here, Mignolo echoes Jean Baudrillard's assertion that today it is the map "that engenders the territory." It is through careful attention to this dual sense of cartography, and the controlling power of its universal pretensions, that I approach the subject matter of this book.

Within the contemporary study of religion, the term "universalism" presents a double bind, since it is used to represent both exclusivist and inclusivist perspectives. Premodern proselytizing religious traditions—what the nineteenth-century French scholar of religion Léon Marillier aptly dubbed "universalizing religions"—were framed within supersessionist doctrines of *universal* validity. Based on the original Latin *universus*, "all together, all taken collectively, whole, entire," the term "universalism" as applied to such religions refers to how their truth claims are interpreted from within as valid for all people and all times. Yet the term "universalism" is also commonly employed to articulate a meaning that focuses on the essential unity of various religions as a *plurality* rather than on the universal nature of one particular tradition. This usage denotes various types of inclusivist and pluralist perspectives that recognize broader sets of valid doctrines or religious formations, typically understood as united within an underlying or transcendent universal truth or *ur-religion*—what Schuon has defined as "the underlying universality in every great spiritual patrimony of

humanity, or what may be called the *religio perennis*; this is the religion to which the sages adhere, one which is always and necessarily founded upon formal elements of divine institution."

Yet, a closer look at such apparently tolerant, pluralistic modalities of universalism in comparison with the seemingly coercive triumphalism of their proselytizing cousins reveals a disturbing paradox. Because maps purport intelligibility no matter who reads them or from what perspective, every map inherently claims an inclusive, universal validity. But like all ontological truth claims, maps can only offer a simplified perspective—a perspective that is, in keeping with the traditional metaphor, only two-dimensional. This two-dimensionality is thus an imposition upon the reader that reduces him or her to its flattened horizon. Such a coercive flattening can be likened to the anxiety articulated by the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas in the face of the horrors of the Shoah as "the tyranny of the universal and of the impersonal," where the "irreducible singularity" of the individual is threatened by theorizations of ontic totality. Here, Levinas pushes back against the political ramifications of Western metaphysics as traditionally plotted at the cost of the Other subsumed within an egoistic whole—what Levinas similarly refers to as the "imperialism of the same." In such an endeavor, ontology can be likened to an enchanted looking glass of great power within which situated ideals of the self are perceived at the level of a transcendence that claims to encompass the Other. In other words, every recourse to universalism, whether inclusive or exclusive, is an imposition of a particular homogenous perspective—a sameness ultimately based on exclusion. As the sociologist Ulrich Beck observes:

> In any form of universalism, all forms of human life are located within a single order of civilization, with the result that cultural differences are either transcended or excluded. In this sense, the project is hegemonic: the other's voice is permitted entry only as the voice of sameness, as a confirmation of oneself, contemplation of oneself, dialogue with oneself.

While premodern forms of universal religious discourse—such as the medieval supersessionism of Christianity and Islam—are seemingly self-aware of their own hegemonic exclusivism, it is only in modernity where discourses of religious universalism claim to variously include all worldviews equally. Yet, just below the surface of modern universalist schemes of religious inclusivism lie orders of exclusivism that are seldom acknowledged, since any such acknowledgment would throw into question their entire raison d'être. From this perspective, cosmological maps should be understood as hegemonic projections of absolute knowledge. Indeed, the core argument of this book is that all modalities of universalism—both premodern, overtly imperial forms and modern, ostensibly tolerant forms—are particular instantiations of power. Thus, "the moment you embrace universality and the idea of truth *you are entangled in a struggle* with the partisans of particularity and of alternative versions of universal truth."

While I read the cosmological maps of Ibn 'Arabi as naturally inscribed by medieval Islamic imperialism, I locate Schuonian Perennialism as similarly inscribed by European imperialism and its attendant colonization of knowledge under the auspices of a civilizing mission. In the conceptual spaces constructed within both of these mapping strategies, in the words of Mignolo, "a universal knowing subject is presupposed." Moreover, there is a correspondence between universal knowledge and an assumed (in Ibn 'Arabi's case) or unspoken (in Schuon's) cache of power. How cosmic space is mapped in each of these two discursive regimes has a direct bearing on how religion itself is imagined. Yet with all of their obvious differences, their maps yield surprisingly similar enunciations of universal validity founded on premises of specific localities.

Charting the Discursive Trajectory

Echoing self-critical discussions in the field of religious studies that began over fifty years ago, Tomoko Masuzawa observes that "the idea of the fundamental unity of religions—or what may be reasonably termed liberal universalism—has been in evidence in much of the comparative

enterprise since the nineteenth century." Yet, Masuzawa submits that "many of today's scholars would likely contest, rather than accept, this presumption that the unity of 'religious experience' should be the basis of religion as an academic discipline." While such a position may be less common in religious studies today, it still plays a critical role in the academic study of Islamic mysticism, or Sufism, with scholars who are sympathetic to the particular philosophical and theological orientation of Perennialism. Indeed, Seyyed Hossein Nasr has described Schuon as a "master of the discipline of comparative religion," asserting that "from the point of view of sheer scholarly knowledge combined with metaphysical penetrations, *it is hardly possible to find a contemporary corpus of writings with the same all-embracing and comprehensive nature combined with incredible depth*." Although Schuon's large corpus of over thirty works remains relatively obscure, his philosophical framework commands one of the most dominant knowledge regimes in the contemporary "Western" reception of Ibn 'Arabi. Indeed, James Morris, a leading expert on Ibn 'Arabi, has acknowledged Schuon's ubiquitous influence in interpreting and transmitting Ibn 'Arabi's thought to "academic specialists in the spiritual dimensions of religious studies."

Ibn 'Arabi's monistic-leaning mysticism has a long-standing and popular correlation with the Islamic metaphysical axiom known as "the Unity of Being" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). Although this particular terminology was never explicitly used by Ibn 'Arabi himself, it has indeed come to emblematically represent his unitive metaphysics that professes God as the ontological reality of all things. Through his correlation with the doctrine of the Unity of Being, Ibn 'Arabi is often associated in the West with Schuon's thought and his ostensibly similar concept of "the Transcendent Unity of Religions"—the title of his first major work. In the second half of the twentieth century, Schuon not only served as the leader of the first organized traditionalist European Sufi order (*ṭarīqa*) but also, upon the death of the French Traditionalist René Guénon in 1951, became the foremost proponent of the Perennial Philosophy. *The Transcendent Unity of Religions* (*De l'Unité transcendante des Religions*, 1948) argues that a transhistorical religious essence unifies all religious traditions beyond the limits of exoteric absolutism, thus embracing all normative religious traditions as universally valid means to the divine. According to Perennialist thought, such religious universalism forms the basis of the most ancient wisdom and is the sacred inheritance of all great mystics from every religious tradition.

Indeed, Ibn 'Arabi himself is often alleged to have been a proto-Perennialist. For example, the Perennialist author and Schuonian William Stoddart has remarked that Ibn 'Arabi should be acknowledged as one of the main "forerunners of the perennial philosophy in the East" since he "explained with particular cogency how an 'essence' of necessity had many 'forms.' " Stoddart's statement appears to be an allusion to Ibn 'Arabi's famous verses from his collection of poems, *The Interpreter of Desires* (*Tarjumān al-ashwāq*)—that claim a heart "capable of every form" and profess "the religion of Love." Indeed, Schuon himself repeatedly mentions in his own writings these same lines of Ibn 'Arabi to help exposit the *religio perennis* as the underlying truth of all religions. In one such passage, he states:

> The *religio perennis* is fundamentally this: the Real entered into the illusory so that the illusory might be able to return into the Real. It is this mystery, together with the metaphysical discernment and contemplative concentration that are its complement, which alone is important in an absolute sense from the point of view of *gnosis*; for the gnostic—in the etymological and rightful sense of that word—there is in the last analysis no other "religion." It is what Ibn Arabi called the "religion of Love."

As I will discuss momentarily, although Ibn 'Arabi's *ultimate* soteriological vision is famously informed by a radical hermeneutic of mercy acknowledging that even those in eternal damnation will eventually find contentment and bliss, throughout this book I demonstrate how close readings of his positions on the religious Other reveal a traditionally derived supersessionism based on the exclusive superiority of Islam and its abrogation of all previous religious dispensations. In direct

opposition to prominent universalist and Perennialist readings, I throw into relief how Ibn 'Arabi's understanding of the religious Other is founded on a political metaphysics in which the Prophet Muhammad, and thus the religion of Islam, not only triumphs over but also *ultimately subsumes* all previous religions and their laws. While it is certainly true that Ibn 'Arabi's "theomonism" is submersed within a unitive mysticism of love—a mysticism often taken in the West to be opposed to religious exclusivism—I argue that intertwined with this unitive love is a universal political metaphysics that discursively absorbs all religio- political competition.

Perennialism, Ibn 'Arabi, and the Universal

The idea of the universal has been directly associated with Perennialism since its early formation. While Guénon never used the term "perennial philosophy" (*philosophia perennis*) itself, preferring instead "the primordial tradition,"[33] the eminent historian and seminal Perennialist author Ananda K. Coomaraswamy did use it but with the additional term "universal"—that is, "*Philosophia Perennis et Universalis*"—noting that along with the idea of a perennial philosophy, "*Universalis* must be understood, for this 'philosophy' has been the common inheritance of all mankind without exception." Moreover, in its direct connection with Perennialism, the idea of the universal is often imbricated with the thought of Ibn 'Arabi. For example, in his 1972 essay, "Islam and the Encounter of Religions," Nasr connects Ibn 'Arabi's aforementioned verses from *The Interpreter of Desires* with Schuonian Perennialism and the notion of the transcendent unity of religions. Not only is the Sufi "one who seeks to transcend the world of forms, to journey from multiplicity to Unity, from the particular *to the Universal*," but also Sufism itself "is *the most universal affirmation of that perennial wisdom* which stands at the heart of Islam and in fact of all religion as such." Nasr goes on to state that "it is this supreme doctrine of Unity . . . to which Ibn 'Arabî refers in his well-known verses in the *Tarjumân al-ashwâq*. . . . It is a transcendent knowledge that reveals the inner unity of religions." In his work *The Other in the Light of the One: The Universality of the Qur'ān and Interfaith Dialogue*, the Perennialist scholar Reza Shah-Kazemi similarly identifies his approach as both Schuonian and "universalist," directly connecting it with Ibn 'Arabi and his doctrine of the "universal capacity of the heart," thus also referring to Ibn 'Arabi's famous lines from *The Interpreter*.

Yet, here it is important to contextualize the often confusing, and confused, idea of the universal in relation to Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysics. In *Islam and the Fate of Others*, Mohammad Khalil categorizes Islamic universalism in a soteriological sense in relation to its supposed binary opposite of "damnationism." Here, these terms are used in the specific context of discourses having to do with the duration of Hell: universalists hold that all people will be granted eternal Paradise, while damnationists maintain that some will have to endure the Fire eternally. To complicate things even more, the category of universalism, for Khalil, includes the subgroups quasi- and ultimate universalism. Somewhat ironically, Khalil is forced to classify Ibn 'Arabi as only a "quasi-universalist" since, according to Ibn 'Arabi's rather unique mixture of literalism and a hermeneutics of mercy, there will be people who will remain in Hell forever even though their punishment will cease and it will become blissful for them. As Khalil notes, the entire concept of "chastisement" for Ibn 'Arabi is "therapeutic"—that is, "it rectifies" because it is issued from God through the ruling property of divine mercy. Thus, in one of his more well-known hermeneutical inversions, Ibn 'Arabi takes the rectification of divine chastisement to its logical conclusion where he claims that the punishment (*ʿadhāb*) of Hell ultimately transforms into a blissful "sweetness" (*ʿudhūba*) for its denizens.

In addition to his binary universalism/damnationism, Khalil still further divides Muslim theological discourses into the now-standard threefold typology of inclusivism, exclusivism, and pluralism. However, in Khalil's treatment he includes the additional subgroups of limited and liberal inclusivism. Indeed, Khalil's proliferation of categories and final classification of Ibn 'Arabi as a "liberal

inclusivist" over that of a pluralist—in addition to a quasi-universalist—quickly reaches a point of diminishing returns where such categories grouped together seem too complex to be overly useful.

Yet, more important for the present discussion, Khalil jettisons the usual inclusion of truth claims within the standard threefold model mentioned above and situates his classifications from within a strictly soteriological basis. As such, Khalil asserts that Ibn 'Arabi

affirms the salvation of "sincere" non-Muslims, because of his belief that every single path we take is not only created by but leads to God—a God of mercy (*raḥma*) and nobility (*karam)*—he maintains that *all* of humanity, including even the most wicked, will ultimately arrive at bliss.

Because his ultimate soteriology is informed by such a radical hermeneutic of mercy, Ibn 'Arabi holds that even those in eternal damnation will eventually experience eternal bliss. Yet, because Khalil does not address Ibn 'Arabi's views on the epistemological validity of other scriptural truth claims, the implications regarding a severe punishment for those in Hell during the interim period remain unarticulated.

Indeed, it is a popular contention, commonly encountered in Perennialist discourse, that Ibn 'Arabi's oft-mentioned notion of "the divinity of beliefs" (*al-ilāh fī al-iʿtiqādāt*) is simply a doctrine on the universal divinity of religions or Schuon's transcendent unity of religions. Yet, as I set forth in chapter 1, such assertions evince a reading of Ibn 'Arabi at once colored by contemporary universalist axioms and anachronistically embedded within the ubiquitous modern understanding of religions as "systems of belief." Even though Ibn 'Arabi held that every human being is engaged in worship—since the very essence of creation is precisely that—he asserted that "the one who associates partners with God" (*al-mushrik*) is "wretched" (*shaqī*) since he or she has discourteously gone against revelation. And as I point out throughout the coming chapters of this book, there are multiple places where Ibn 'Arabi castigates the Jews and the Christians for their supposed blasphemy and unbelief.

Khalil himself concedes that for Ibn 'Arabi, "although all will eventually attain felicity as they proceed toward God, the righteous will be spared the 'deserts, perils, vicious predators, and harmful serpents' found along the way." Here Khalil quotes a larger discussion from Chittick (who also writes within the Schuonian interpretative field) recounting Ibn 'Arabi's concept that all paths lead back to God. Chittick relates that for Ibn 'Arabi, perfect saints understand with the "eye of the heart" that all things, good and evil, exist through God's will and His "creative command" (*al-amr al-takwīnī*). However, Chittick immediately qualifies this statement by asserting the dialectical necessity of God's "prescriptive command" (*al-amr al-taklīfī*) in Ibn 'Arabi's thought, which is the origin of revealed law. Here, Chittick notes:

> In no way does their acceptance of all beliefs negate their acknowledgement that everyone is called to follow the prescriptive command, which sets down the immediate path to felicity. This is why Ibn al-'Arabī writes, "It is incumbent upon you to practice the worship of God brought by the Shariah and tradition [*al-samʿ*]." He explains that the person who sees things as they truly are "travels on the path of felicity that is not preceded by any wretchedness, for this path is easy, bright, exemplary, pure, unstained, and without any crookedness or deviation. As for the other path, its final outcome is felicity, but along the way are found deserts, perils, vicious predators, and harmful serpents. *Hence no created thing reaches the end of this second path without suffering those terrors.*"

Because Ibn 'Arabi holds "wrath" as an eternal divine attribute, its consequence of "chastisement" is *also* considered by him to be an eternal attribute. It is therefore important to note that while Ibn 'Arabi held that "every single path we take is not only created by but leads to God," as Khalil does above, he *also* believed that the interim between any path and its destination of felicity is filled with

either divine reward or chastisement. And as Chittick himself stresses in the passage above, the criteria that Ibn 'Arabi used for distinguishing between them was based on revealed law—that is, the sharia.

All of this is to say that even careful treatments of Ibn 'Arabi's thought can fail to distinguish between his clear notion of ultimate, universal salvation and the interim implications of his supersessionism. Against the majority of Perennialist interpretations, including that of Chittick, Ibn 'Arabi is a staunch supersessionist, claiming that "the abrogation (*naskh*) of all of the (previously) revealed laws (*jamīʿ al-sharāʾiʿ*) by Muhammad's revealed law (*sharīʿa*)" is divinely decreed. Although the sharia of Muhammad does permit the People of the Book to continue to follow their revealed laws, according to Ibn 'Arabi, it does so only if their adherents submit to the Qur'anic injunction of verse 9:29 and pay the "indemnity tax" (*jizya*) "*in a state of humiliation.*" Ibn 'Arabi clearly holds that the People of the Book are also guilty of "corruption of the text" (*taḥrīf al-naṣṣ*), having changed the actual words of their once-pure revelation. Thus, in sharp contrast to the Perennialist notion of the "universal validity" of religions, here the spiritual efficacy of Judaism and Christianity appears to be determined by *obedience* to the revelation of Muhammad rather than any particular validity that Ibn 'Arabi grants to the Torah or Gospel. While it may be initially comforting to hear that according to Ibn 'Arabi all Christians or Jews will ultimately be "saved," the implied potential for an untold number to suffer a prolonged period of "therapeutic" purification in Hell for following corrupted scriptures or abrogated dispensations without the salvific remuneration of an indemnity tax would seem to warrant pause for those who claim, like Sayafaatun Almirzanah, that Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysical approach "is very essential in enhancing interfaith dialogue and acceptance of different religious perspectives."

Although exclusivist notions of religious supersessionism and socio-political authority in Ibn 'Arabi's thought remain largely unacknowledged or regularly relegated as accidental to his core metaphysics, his metaphysical cosmography was clearly formed within the medieval crucible of religious rivalry and absolutism. Thus, following Hugh Nicholson's recent disavowal of "*a nonrelational and nonpolitical core of religious experience*," I argue that the wider religio-political absolutism of Ibn 'Arabi's socio-historical location cannot be dissociated from his own metaphysical anthropology, cosmology, and cosmography. Ibn 'Arabi's monistic discourse purposefully blurs the dialectical boundaries between the human and the divine, thus marking modern attempts to decisively separate his mystical truth from his socio-political context as more reflective of longstanding Euro-American discourses on religious authenticity than Ibn 'Arabi's own historically situated political metaphysics.

Mapping Ibn 'Arabi and the Political

Details of Ibn 'Arabi's life are strewn throughout the core texts of his vast corpus (currently estimated to comprise over 300 works of greatly differing lengths). Gathered together, these details can be read as adumbrating something of an autohagiography. Rather than rehash all of its contours, here I will briefly rehearse some of its more essential features and then discuss how they have been variously configured in contemporary universalist retellings.

Born in Murcia, Spain, in 1165 CE, Ibn 'Arabi's father most likely served its independent emir, Ibn Mardanīsh (r. 1147–1172), in some soldierly capacity. When Murcia fell in 1172 to the Almohads, Ibn 'Arabi's father moved his family to Seville, the provincial capital of the Almohad caliphate, where he pledged his allegiance and military service to the caliph Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf (r. 1163–1184). Coming from a military family, Ibn 'Arabi was himself trained as a soldier and was a member of the caliphal army. When he was around fourteen or fifteen years old, he apparently experienced a formative spiritual awakening that would set the stage for a life filled with recurrent visions and claims of attaining the highest station of sainthood. Soon after, he took up learning the traditional religious disciplines and devoted himself especially to the study of the Qur'an and hadith.[64]When he was

nineteen years old, he definitively left the army, his wealth, and his intimate friends, dedicating his life to the mystical path. It was during this time that he sat with and befriended mystics throughout Andalusia and Northwest Africa, whose stories he recorded in various places, but most famously in his hagiographical work *The Spirit of Holiness in the Counseling of the Soul* (*Rūḥ al-quds fī munāsaḥat al-nafs*).

In the face of the steady progress made by Christian armies in the Iberian Peninsula and believing he had learned all he could from his teachers in the Islamic West, Ibn ʻArabi left Andalusia for good around the year 1200. This began a period of not only extensive traveling but also a prolific outpouring of writing, including his multivolume opus *The Meccan Openings* (*al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*), which he began in 1202—after encountering a theophanic youth (*fatā*) on the Hajj—and did not complete until 1238. Besides Mecca, his eastward travels led him to Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and Anatolia, where he spent various amounts of time and established several important relationships with powerful rulers. The most famous of these relationships was his friendship with the Seljuk Sultan of Anatolia, ʿIzz al-Dīn Kaykāʾus I (r. 1211–1220), whom he advised to impose discriminatory regulations upon his "protected" (*dhimmī*) Christian subjects. In 1223, Ibn ʻArabi permanently settled in Damascus with the support and protection of the Banū Zakī, a prominent Damascene family of ulama. There he spent the remaining seventeen years of his life transmitting his teachings to a small circle of intimate disciples and finishing his by now immense written corpus, including *The Ring Stones of Wisdom* (*Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*), his *summa metaphysica*.

Although the ostensible purpose for historical narratives, and especially biographies, is to accurately reproduce events they report, they too are maps. Such narratives offer, as Hayden White observes, "*a complex of symbols* which gives us directions for finding an *icon* of the structure of those events in our literary tradition." Indeed, in Euro-American accounts, Ibn ʻArabi's life story has taken on the classical and Romantic mythos of an epic quest for illumination, more specifically, the journey "from the Occident to the Orient." In his discussion of Ibn Sīnā's (d. 1037) famous "visionary recitals," Nasr notes that the Orient, being the place of the rising Sun, symbolizes the domain of pure forms, which is the domain of light, while the Occident, where the Sun sets, corresponds to the darkness of matter. . . . The gnostic's journey takes him from matter to pure form, from the Occident of darkness to the Orient of light.

In a parallel construction, the distinguished Sorbonne Orientalist and esotericist Henry Corbin (d. 1978) imagined Ibn ʻArabi as a "pilgrim to the Orient," claiming that his turn eastward was an enlightened departure from a moribund Western legalism to an Oriental realm of spiritual enchantment. In Corbin's mapping of Ibn ʻArabi's heroic journey, the Andalusian Sufi leaves behind his "earthly homeland" in the Arab Occident and emerges in the Persian Orient as the spiritual equal of the celebrated Persian poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273). In so doing, according to Corbin, Ibn ʻArabi "attained to the esoteric Truth" and passed "*through and beyond the darkness of the Law and of the exoteric religion*." Like Orientalist conceits about Rumi, Corbin held that Ibn ʻArabi eventually liberated himself from the restrictive and dogmatic shackles of exoteric Islam. Such assertions, similar to Schuon's own discursive practices, echo nineteenth-century European ideals of religious authenticity marked by a long-standing anti-Judaic tradition deprecating "legalism."

While framing Ibn ʻArabi's life story as an epic quest for illumination in the Orient is perhaps the most common topos in his contemporary Euro-American reception, it is not the only one. For example, in **THE OTHER ISLAM: SUFISM AND THE ROAD TO GLOBAL HARMONY**, Stephen Schwartz takes an analogously Eurocentric, yet almost opposite approach. Here, Schwartz claims that it was Ibn ʻArabi's so-called Spanish Sufism itself that "inaugurated a truly European Islam, providing a model for moderate Muslims living in Christian Europe in the twenty-first century." As such, Schwartz uncritically adopts a position that understands Sufism as an Islamic appropriation of

Christian mystical and monastic traditions of a supposed European West. Indeed, he refers to this "view of the historical relations between Islam and the West" as "a secret history of the interreligious linkage of Europe and Asia in the past thousand years." The fruits of such a hidden past, according to Schwartz, have given rise to Sufism as an "alternative" to "the stagnation imposed in Islam today by radical ideology"—an alternative that reveals "tendencies toward an exalted spirituality, love of Jesus, and resistance to *Shariah*-centered literalism."

Even though more nuanced than the two extremes of Corbin and Schwartz, Claude Addas—Ibn 'Arabi's most erudite contemporary biographer—also configures the topos of a journey to the Orient in a narrative that attempts to dissociate Ibn 'Arabi's original metaphysical purity from his own locality and later political engagement. Here, Addas claims that Ibn 'Arabi's Western abode afforded him a sanctified space "*resolutely aloof from political life*," while his Meccan investiture as "the Seal of the Saints" (*khātam al-awliyā'*), which I discuss more below, required that he enter the political sphere in "the role of 'advisor to princes' . . . among the Ayyūbids and the Seljuks." Even so, Addas insists that Ibn 'Arabi still managed to ultimately distance himself from the politics of his day since such "circumstantial issues" had really nothing to do with his spiritual mission.

Although all of the above narrative configurations are marked by different ways of interpreting Ibn 'Arabi's midlife sojourn eastward, they are at base universalist maps that attempt to show, in one way or another, the purity of Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysics as distinct from the corruptive particularism of time and place. In this book, I argue that such maps form part of a larger metaphysical tradition of cartography transmitted through a specific European intellectual and religious history. Indeed, since the theoretical intervention of the controversial German philosopher Carl Schmitt, the "depoliticization" of religious discourse in the modern West has become increasingly acknowledged and thus theorized in the field of religious studies. In his 1927 work, *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt situates the modern privatization of religion as originating in the European reaction to the religious disputes of the sixteenth century when "theology, the former central domain, was abandoned because it was controversial, in favor of another—neutral—domain." Schmitt therefore laments that "concepts elaborated over many centuries of theological reflection now became uninteresting and merely private matters." Thus, as Grace Jantzen more recently observes, the Enlightenment impetus to quarantine religion (and its attendant threat of violence) to individual belief has played a central role in the modern Western concept of authentic religious experience as essentially a private, inner state, having nothing to do with outer, public realities. It was, instead, a strictly personal matter. It could, however, be cultivated; and could produce states of calm and tranquility which would enable return to those public realities with less anxiety and inner turmoil. Understood in these terms, *mysticism becomes domesticated, is rendered unthreatening to the public political realm*.

Thus, the metaphysical category of mysticism as the universal core of exoteric religion emerges in secular modernity as a discursive site carrying with it an aura of authentic religiosity that is often called upon as a refuge from politics and the discord of religious rivalry and absolutism. Indeed, it is precisely the anachronistic imposition of the modern notion of "universality" upon Ibn 'Arabi that *depoliticizes* his discourse, thereby subtly associating his inward mystical quest with the transcendence of outward religious difference. For example, in a 1963 essay, the distinguished Islamicist and comparativist Wilfred Cantwell Smith situates Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysics (i.e., *waḥdat al-wujūd*) within a "universalist Ṣūfi interpretation of the Islamic order" in decided opposition to the "closed-system" of communal and "formalist" Islam. Here, Smith depoliticizes Ibn 'Arabi's "metaphysical monism" by universalizing it, stating that "to believe in the ultimate unity of the world and the universe is to believe also in the unity of humankind." Thus, according to Smith, any type of metaphysics that acknowledges a divine unity must also acknowledge the unity of all religions. In this book, I wish to unsettle such attempts to dissociate Ibn 'Arabi's unitive mysticism from what might

be called his "political theology"—a theology, I argue, that is constituted more by religious difference than by unity and forms an essential part of his own universalist tradition of metaphysical mapping.

The Perennial Religion in the Hierarchical Universe of Ibn 'Arabi

In the thirteenth-century Muslim world of cartography, the geographic system of Ptolemy was used to help place the Arabs within a universal context. In such maps, "the center of space and memory is the Arabic world." Like their Christian counterparts in Europe who did not even acknowledge the Islamic world in their ethnocentric maps, Muslim cartographers like Muḥammad al-Idrīsī (d. 1166) similarly ignored the existence of Europe. Just as medieval Muslim geography "took as its basic unit the Islamic Empire, the *Dar al-Islam*," so too did Muslim theo-cosmology. "The original Muslim universalizing impulse," as Amira Bennison notes, "rested on the idea, shared with Christianity, that the faith would ideally become the sole religion of mankind."

Muslim universalism thus went hand in hand with the classical idea of the caliph, who "presided over a religion which was presented as the consummation of all previous divine revelation." Indeed, as Peter Fibiger Bang observes, "At the heart of the notion of universal empire is a hierarchical conception of rulers and statehood." And while Sufism is often imagined in the contemporary West as based on a type of inward "spirituality" that transcends all social and political divisions, medieval Sufism was in fact suffused with this type of imperial hierarchy. As Margaret Malamud notes:

> The [Sufi] model of dominance and submission that structured relations between masters and disciples replicated the way in which power was constructed and dispersed in medieval Islamic societies: namely, through multiple dyadic and hierarchical relationships of authority and dependence that were continuously dissolved and reformed. This pervasive pattern was operative in the spiritual, the political, and the familial realms.

Malamud thus asserts that medieval Sufi discourse and practice affirmed and consecrated "hierarchy and inequality in the mundane world by connecting them to the divine will and order." Yet, such hierarchical models within Sufism also played a critical role in the social cohesion of medieval Muslim societies, which "came to rely on authoritarian relationships grounded in esoteric doctrines to discipline and control the desires of its subjects."

Though Ibn 'Arabi's thought was thoroughly inscribed by an Islamic imperial cosmology, his metaphysical vision did not simply promote the restoration of the original caliphal hierarchy. More radically, he envisioned himself as standing in for it altogether. As Marshall Hodgson perspicaciously observed, Ibn 'Arabi's own conception of spiritual hierarchy and the idea of a cosmic axial saint filled the political gap left by the disintegration of caliphal power beginning in the tenth century: "There might no longer be a caliph with power in the ordinary political sense. But there remained a true spiritual caliph, the immediate representative of God, who bore a far more basic sway than any outward caliph."

Indeed, after claiming to attain to the Muhammadan Station and thereby inheriting "the comprehensiveness of Muhammad (*jamʿīat muḥammad*)," Ibn 'Arabi located his cosmic function at the very apex of the earthly hierarchy of saints: the Seal of the Saints, or more specifically, the Seal of Muhammadan Sainthood (*khātam al-walāya al-muḥammadiyya*)—the historical manifestation of the Muhammadan Reality (*ḥaqīqa muḥammadiyya*) and thus the source of sainthood itself. As I point out throughout the following chapters, although Ibn 'Arabi makes such extraordinary assertions regarding his own spiritual rank, his entire cartographic cosmology is nevertheless based on the hierarchical superiority of Muhammad as both "spiritual" exemplar *and* "prophetic" lawgiver. In a famous passage in *The Ring Stones of Wisdom*, Ibn 'Arabi compares himself as the Seal of the Saints to Muhammad as the Seal of the Prophets (*khātam al-nabiyyīn*), but qualifies this rather audacious correlation by asserting that his "inherited" perfection is only a single dimension of the

comprehensive perfection of Muhammad. In other words, Ibn 'Arabi continuously situates his own claims to spiritual perfection within the larger cosmology of the Prophet, who, regardless of anyone else's spiritual rank, remains God's ultimate caliph or "vicegerent" (*khalīfa*). Thus, Ibn 'Arabi never tires of asserting in various ways the primordial nature of Muhammad, who was given the station of "lordship (*siyāda*) . . . when Adam was between water and clay." Indeed, according to Ibn 'Arabi, Muhammad was the very source of "spiritual support (*al-mumidd*) for every Perfect Human Being (*insān kāmil*)," beginning with Adam through "a continuous succession of vicegerents" until Muhammad's physical birth.

If, then, we permit ourselves to speak of a so-called perennial religion or *religio perennis* according to Ibn 'Arabi, we can only do so within the hierarchical confines of his all-encompassing Muhammadan prophetology, where Muhammad—and the attendant idea of the *primordial* Muhammadan Reality—is projected as the alpha and omega of all historical prophets and their revealed laws. For example, in *The Meccan Openings*, Ibn 'Arabi discusses "the Religion" (*al-dīn*) in terms of the Qur'anic idea of the primordial "religion (*milla*) of Abraham":

Consider God's statement "*follow the religion of Abraham*" [Qur'an 4:125],[103] which is the Religion (*al-dīn*). Here, Muhammad was commanded to follow the Religion, because the Religion is from God and no one else. Consider further Muhammad's statement, peace be upon him: "If Moses were alive it would be impossible for him not to follow me." Here, following is attributed to Muhammad. Thus he, may God bless him and grant him peace, was commanded to follow the Religion and the guidance of the prophets, but not to follow them. For if the supreme leader (*al-imām al-aʿẓam*) is present, then no judicial authority (*ḥukm*) remains for any of his deputies except his authority. Only when he is absent do his deputies rule by his injunctions (*bi marāsimihi*). So, Muhammad is the ruler (*al-ḥākim*), both unseen (*ghayb*) and visible (*shahāda*).

In this passage, Ibn 'Arabi begins by drawing on the robust Qur'anic notion of Abraham as a primordial monotheist (*ḥanīf*) who has come to the realization of God through contemplation of nature. Yet, the very Qur'anic idea of "the religion of Abraham" is in itself adversarial, since the Qur'an stresses that Abraham was neither Jew, Christian, nor polytheist (*mushrik*). As Uri Rubin notes, implicit in such Qur'anic usage "is the notion that polytheists as well as Jews and Christians have distorted the natural religion of God, which only Islam preserves." As such, the Qur'anic notion of Abraham's primordial monotheism "retains this polemical context and is used to bring out the particularistic aspect of Islam as a religion set apart from Judaism and Christianity."

In a sense that evokes the polemical Qur'anic notion of Abraham's pure monotheism—and in opposition to Perennialist convention—Michel Chodkiewicz has used the term *religio perennis* to describe Ibn 'Arabi's hierarchical notion of the successive manifestation of the Muhammadan Reality "from Adam to Muhammad." According to Chodkiewicz, in Ibn 'Arabi's teleological map of cosmic history, "the *religio perennis* is periodically both restored and confirmed," and its "perfect and definitive expression" is the sharia of Muhammad, which "when it finally appears, *abrogates all earlier laws*." As Chodkiewicz continues to note, and the abrogation of the previous revelations by the Qur'an is qualified in Ibn 'Arabi's discourse by the aforementioned fact that the People of the Book who pay the indemnity tax (*jizya*)—and thus submit to the injunction of Qur'an 9:29—are subsumed within the prophetic hierarchy of Muhammad.

Rather than the Perennialist universalist vision that all so-called orthodox religions are equally capable of guiding humanity because of an underlying perennial religion, Ibn 'Arabi's medieval universalism and its attendant traditional understanding of a so-called *religio perennis*, or primordial religion, appears to be much more exclusivist. As Jacques Waardenburg observes, the historical framework of medieval Islamic theology "is not one in which different religions succeed each other

in a continuous history. It is, rather, the history of *the one religion* which has been revealed intermittently and which perpetuates itself through multiple histories." Yet, such intermittent revelations were thought to be inherently true but to have been tainted by people in the course of history, resulting in a betrayal of the divine, revelatory, primordial religion (*Urreligion*) common to all. In order to restore and further this primordial, monotheistic religion, Muhammad was sent to bring a conclusive revelation. Once memorized and written down, the Quranic revelation channeled by Muhammed, unlike earlier prophecies, was held to have remained authentic and pure.

Throughout the following chapters, I offer a reading of Ibn 'Arabi that—while acknowledging his particular mode of medieval universalism—refuses to transcendentalize his thought beyond his own historical locality. As a Muslim mystic living and writing at the height of the Islamic Middle Period, Ibn 'Arabi's cosmological maps are deeply inscribed by the normative and hierarchical categories of his day. In the idiom of Mignolo, Ibn 'Arabi *was where he thought*.

Universalist Regimes of Particularism

Mystical texts that express authoritarian or exclusionary attitudes often challenge common presuppositions about what is thought to reside at the so-called core of religion—a "spirituality" that is private, psychological, experiential, noncoercive, nonpolitical, noninstitutional, and universally applicable. Yet, such presuppositions have more to do with the conceptual categories of religion produced within the socio-historical matrix of Western Christianity and the European Enlightenment than they do with the views and practice of premodern mystics themselves.

As Sherman Jackson notes, the "tradition of classical Islam" is often romanticized as being "pluralistic, egalitarian, [and] aesthetically vibrant" in opposition to modern discourses of religious absolutism. Yet, this romantic idea "that 'extreme' or substantively repugnant views are the exclusive preserve of modern 'fundamentalist' interlopers who are insufficiently trained in or committed to the classical tradition *cannot sustain scrutiny*." Of course, the Islamic tradition was not unique in producing discourses of so-called *unio mystica* that were also exclusivist. In the early and medieval Christian tradition, for example, Augustine (d. 430) believed that wars waged against heretics were charitable acts, and Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) and Catherine of Siena (d. 1380) strongly supported the Crusades. Bernard himself is often considered to be the first inquisitor, and Teresa of Ávila (d. 1582) was an advocate of the Inquisition.

Not only is the construction of *what* counts as mysticism reflective of "the institutions of power in which it occurs," as Jantzen has observed within the context of medieval Christianity, but also the conceptual history that informs *how* mysticism is interpreted and received is embedded within the regimes of knowledge through which it is (re)mapped. This constructivist insight is critical to any contemporary study of mysticism; moreover, it is an insight that appears to cut two ways. Indeed, both Ibn 'Arabi's own mysticism and his Euro-American reception are products of particular knowledge regimes involved in the projection, universalization, and regulation of "truth."

While Ibn 'Arabi consistently enunciates Islamic absolutist frameworks, the Perennialist discourse that I analyze in this book variously denies or disregards them. As a result, a universalist ideal is imaginatively cast and historiographically instantiated, thus creating an iconic image of Ibn 'Arabi. Such anachronistic instantiation is what Wendy Brown has called a "buried order of politics"—a mode of "identity production and identity management in the context of orders of stratification or marginalization in which the production, the management, and the context themselves are disavowed." In other words, constructions of Ibn 'Arabi's image as a universalist who accepted all religions as contemporaneously valid impose a religious ideal beyond the purview of their original intellectual context. This type of ideological imposition on a historical figure has parallels with what

has been called a "politics of nostalgia," where an imagined truth is projected back onto a romanticized past to instantiate, *and thus authorize*, a particular ideology or worldview.

As I bring to light in the latter part of this book and specifically argue in my conclusion, a corollary to this anachronistic portrayal is that such Perennialist discursive practices are inevitably traceable to historically situated, Eurocentric categories of religious authenticity made through a post-Kantian dichotomy between an imagined autonomous subject and its heteronomous Other. This dichotomy is readily apparent in a statement made by the Perennialist author Titus Burckhardt—a longtime friend and student of Schuon—in his now-classic work *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*:

> For the most part Sufi masters have limited themselves to general indications of *the universality of the traditions*. *In this they respected the faith of simple folk*, for, if religious faith is a virtuality of knowledge (otherwise it would be merely opinion), *its light is none the less enclosed in an emotional realm attached to one particular translation of transcendent Truth*.

Burckhardt's rehearsal of the Schuonian transcendent unity of religions (here, "*the universality of the traditions*") evinces a thinly veiled universalist elitism that presupposes a unified tradition underlying all religions. And yet, the faith of the "*simple folk . . . is none the less enclosed in an emotional realm*" that causes them to be attached, or limited, to only one "translation" or religion. As I discuss in the conclusion to this book, such Perennialist discourse strikingly echoes Kantian notions of *heteronomy*, which categorize particular religious forms as *accidental* and based on "sensible nature" in opposition to the universal essence of religion itself as philosophically realized.

Thus, while Burckhardt's Schuonian position may at first appear to acknowledge and celebrate diversity, on closer inspection it imposes what Mignolo has called a "monotopic hermeneutics" upon its objects of discourse. From within the myopia of such an interpretive framework, there is only one unified intellectual tradition through which all meanings must conform. In the history of modern Europe, this hermeneutic has "served to maintain the universality of European culture at the same time that it justified the tendency of its members to perceive themselves as the reference point to evaluate all other cultures." Similarly, for the monotopic hermeneutics of Perennialism, of which the Schuonian interpretive field is the most prominent, religious people without the esoteric capacity for metaphysics are *devoid* of the true knowledge of religious unity. At the end of the same passage from which I quote above, Burckhardt goes on to precisely enunciate the "esoteric" axiom found within all modalities of Schuonian Perennialism: "those whose outlook is esoteric recognize the essential unity of all religions." In his own work on Sufism, as I discuss at the close of chapter 4, Schuon asserts that "*esoterism alone* is absolutely monotheistic, *it alone* recognizing only one religion under diverse forms." As the Perennialist scholar Patrick Laude notes (without irony), "Schuon went so far as to suggest that . . . religions are like 'heresies' in relation to *Religio Perennis*."

Indeed, close readings of Schuon's writings reveal that the spiritual traditions facilitated by the various religions of the world are essentialized within a hierarchical spectrum according to their supposed capacity to enlighten—a capacity directly connected to a racial hierarchy. For Schuon, this hierarchy ranges from the lowest mode of a passive Semitic theology that simply receives outward revelation to the highest mode of Aryan gnosis, which actively and directly *perceives* truth through esoteric realization. As such, Schuon criticizes Ibn 'Arabi himself for his mystical ambiguities, which he claims are due to "his at least partial solidarity with *ordinary theology*." Schuon is similarly critical of Sufism for being "fundamentally more moral than intellectual"—a trait he attributes to "Arab or Muslim, *or Semitic*, sensibility." Tthe issue for Schuon is clearly racio-spiritual: the majority of Muslim mystics, including Ibn 'Arabi, succumbed to the so-called Semitic tendency for "inspirationism" that lacked the enlightened, Aryan "intellection" necessary to reliably discern the *religio perennis* from religious particularism.

Thus, while I argue that Ibn 'Arabi's universalism is built upon and permeated by a politics of absolutism, I also contend that the Perennialist interpretive field is burdened with the pernicious prejudices of a Eurohegemonic intellectual tradition. By making religious universalism the apex of transcendent truth, Perennialist interpretive communities paradoxically repudiate religious particularism and its attendant discourses of situated morality as theologically or historically immature. As Olav Hammer remarks, "The price to be paid for such a universalising approach is of course that any true divergence between traditions must be silenced, and those faiths that are too different from the imagined 'perennial philosophy' are excluded." In other words, the discursive practices of Perennialism promulgate a type of ideological exclusivism through a *universalization of sameness*. Mark Taylor has summarized a parallel poststructuralist insight: "When reason is *obsessed with unity . . . it tends to become as hegemonic* as political and economic orders constructed to regulate whatever does not fit into or agree with governing structures."

In the chapters that follow, I aim to bring into perspective the paradoxical double bind that gives life to the idea of the universal—an intertwining double helix of exclusivity and inclusivity. In his provocative essay "Racism as Universalism," Etienne Balibar remarks on this double bind, noting that racism is particularism; the foundational notions of racism are always based on "divisions and hierarchies" that claim to be "natural." Yet, according to Balibar, the idea of racism is also, paradoxically, based on the production of "ideals of humanity, types of ideal humanity if you like, *which one cannot but call universal*." While the need for religious tolerance in global modernity is a truism, the use of universalism to sanction Eurocentric and racialist categories of religious authenticity has become so naturalized within Euro-American history that it is often overlooked. It is precisely the aporia created by attempts to universalize religious truth, and the discursive politics attached to its cartography, that keeps the analysis throughout this book in play. Indeed, "the double-edged character of the 'universal,' " as Elizabeth Castelli warns, "needs to remain both fully in view and under continued interrogation."

Chapter Overview

I have set out my subject in two overlapping parts of five chapters (including the conclusion). In the first part, I analyze Ibn 'Arabi's universalism by comparing his original textual discourse with regnant claims made by interpreters who work within (or on the margins of) the interpretive field of Schuonian Perennialism. Such claims may be said to form a tradition of "strong misreadings" of Ibn 'Arabi's original texts in the Bloomian sense, where innovative interpretations have been seminal in establishing a foundational universalist scaffolding for understanding Ibn 'Arabi and his perspective on the religious Other. By thus offering revised readings that challenge this Perennialist canon of interpretation, I set out a new backdrop against which the practices of Ibn 'Arabi's contemporary interpreters are made to stand in sharp relief. In the second part, I flesh out the emergent contours and then track them to earlier discursive practices of European knowledge regimes and their attendant rules of subject formation.

Chapter 1, "Tracking the Camels of Love," is based on a revised reading of Ibn 'Arabi's most famous verses from *The Interpreter of Desires* (*Tarjumān al-ashwāq*), which begin by laying claim to a heart "capable of every form" and conclude by asserting to follow "the religion of Love." Here, I contend that modern Euro-American presuppositions regarding the nature of "religion" as a "system of beliefs" inform how the celebrated verses are commonly received and interpreted. While Ibn 'Arabi's claim to a heart "capable of every form" is synonymous with a claim to be capable of every belief (*iʿtiqād*), it is not—as is often supposed—tantamount to accepting the validity of every religion. Rather, I argue that the celebrated verses of *The Interpreter* profess to inherit the comprehensive perfection of the Prophet Muhammad as God's beloved and, in so doing, reflect a discourse of

religious absolutism and a subsumptive cosmology of power. It is precisely this cosmology of power that has been almost completely occluded by readings equating religion with belief.

In chapter 2, "Return of the Solar King," I challenge the widely held Perennialist view that Ibn 'Arabi rejected the supersessionist doctrine of abrogation (*naskh*), by demonstrating that his positions on the religious Other should be understood within a larger religio-political cosmology that envisions all religions and their laws as subject to the cosmic rule of Muhammad. Even though this chapter clearly shows that Ibn 'Arabi held Judaism and Christianity as abrogated by Islam, it nuances this assertion by showing that through obedience to the Qur'anic command requiring submission and the payment of the indemnity tax (*jizya*), the People of the Book are metaphysically subsumed within the broader cosmography of Ibn 'Arabi's conception of Islam and the absolute cosmological authority of the Prophet Muhammad.

In chapter 3, "Competing Fields of Universal Validity," I situate Schuonian Perennialism within the larger discursive tradition of essentialist, religious universalism through a comparison with the universalism of Friedrich Schleiermacher (d. 1834). In so doing, I throw into relief how Schuon, and those writing within the orbit of his interpretative field, make a Copernican turn away from Ibn 'Arabi's hierarchical Muhammadan cosmology to a multireligious model of cosmic pluralism united by a Schleiermacherian notion of a transcendent and universally valid religious a priori, or "religion as such." To clearly demonstrate this turn, I historicize Ibn 'Arabi's discourse on the religious Other in relation to his Andalusian home of Seville and show how it notably echoes the polemical style of Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064) against Judaism and Christianity. Like Ibn Hazm, Ibn 'Arabi claims that the People of the Book were guilty of textual corruption (*taḥrīf al-naṣṣ*) and not simply a corruption of meaning (*taḥrīf al-maʿānī*) as implied in Perennialist discourse. Rather than due to any particular soteriological power of Judaism or Christianity, or their respective symbolic systems, the salvation of the Protected People (*ahl al-dhimma*) appears to be metaphysically determined for Ibn 'Arabi by their submission to Islamic authority and their participation in its political sphere.

In chapter 4, "Ibn 'Arabi and the Metaphysics of Race," I reveal a buried order of politics underneath the Perennialist cosmology discussed in chapter 3 ironically constituted by and through long-held European discursive strategies of racial exclusion. Through a detailed comparison of Schuon's discursive practices with that of nineteenth-century Aryanist discourse, this chapter argues that although Schuon claims to recognize the universal validity of all religions beyond the limits of exoteric exclusivity, his work consistently presents as self-evident *the metaphysical superiority* of an Indo-European spiritual typology over that of the Semitic. Here, Ibn 'Arabi's "Semitic" propensity for subjectivism is understood as lacking the enlightened objectivity necessary to consistently discern the transcendent formlessness of essential truth from religious particularism. Thus, Ibn 'Arabi's own exclusive association with Islam and the Prophet Muhammad is rejected as an exoteric, and therefore *less authentic*, mode of spirituality in contrast to the more "essential" and autonomous religious truth of "pure metaphysics." The extent to which Ibn 'Arabi is thus decoupled from so-called Semitic subjectivism is the extent to which he is claimed to be an enlightened representative of Islam and authentic purveyor of the universal core of all religions—*the religio perennis*.

In the concluding chapter, "Mapping Ibn 'Arabi at Zero Degrees," I situate key discursive elements of Schuonian Perennialism within a genealogy of German idealism leading back to Kant (and ultimately Plato) to show metaphorical resonances with a Kantian metaphysics of autonomy and its attendant universalism. In contradistinction to Ibn 'Arabi's heteronomous absolutism explored in the first part of this study, here I track how Schuon's religious essentialism *functionally* echoes the discursive practices that mark Kant's "universal" religion as definitively defined against Semitic heteronomy. While both Kantian and Schuonian universalist cosmologies thus appear to reflect a similar Copernican turn where an autonomous, a priori universal perspective forms the essence of all

religion, I argue that these respective discourses *also* metaphysically reflect the *imperial cartography* of the Copernican age itself and its attendant ideological conceit of a universal perspective that claims to transcend the confines of geocentric cosmology—that is, its own ethnocentric situatedness. I thus contend that it is precisely the discursive practices and grammar of this larger Eurohegemonic tradition of universalism—*along with its attendant religious, racial, and civilizational superiority*—that Schuonian Perennialism naturalizes within its interpretive field. I conclude by suggesting that the overlapping discursive formations of Kantian and Schuonian universalism conceal absolutist modalities of supersessionism that are ironically similar to those openly posited by Ibn 'Arabi. The exclusivism inherent within such discourse not only calls into question the Western ideal of religious universalism and the possibility of nonexclusivist religious identity but also throws into relief the historically constituted and situated nature of all discourse that aspires to transcendent truth.

Mapping Ibn 'Arabi at Zero Degrees

The conclusion situates key discursive elements of Schuonian Perennialism within a genealogy of German idealism leading back to Kant to show metaphorical resonances with a Kantian metaphysics of autonomy and its attendant universalism. In contradistinction to Ibn 'Arabi's heteronomous absolutism, this chapter tracks how Frithjof Schuon's religious essentialism *functionally* echoes the discursive practices that mark Kant's "universal" religion as defined against Semitic heteronomy. While both Kantian and Schuonian universalist cosmologies thus appear to reflect a similar Copernican turn where an autonomous, universal perspective forms the essence of all religion, this chapter argues that these respective discourses *also* metaphysically reflect the *imperial cartography* of the Copernican age itself and its attendant ideological conceit of a universal perspective. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the overlapping discursive formations of Kantian and Schuonian universalism conceal absolutist modalities of supersessionism that are ironically similar to those openly posited by Ibn 'Arabi.

The mark of the true church is its universality. — Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*.

Profane thought is always the portrait of an individual even when it is mingled with some glimmerings of knowledge, as must always be the case since reason is not a closed vessel.—Frithjof Schuon, *Logic and Transcendence*.

Metaphysics—the white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own *logos*, that is, the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason.—Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*.

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Excerpt: In the preceding pages I have discussed critical ways that scholars working from within (as well as on the margins of) the interpretive field of Schuonian Perennialism have mapped out Ibn 'Arabi's universalism in contradistinction to the Andalusian Sufi's own cosmological mapping of the religious Other. In tandem with textual comparisons between Ibn 'Arabi and those of his Perennialist interpreters, I have endeavored to identify and trace the formative contours of Schuon's own universalist cartography. I compared Schuonian discourse to the nonreductive, religious universalism of Schleiermacher to contextualize the Perennialist reception of Ibn 'Arabi within the modern tradition of religious essentialism—that is, the concept of a universal religious essence underlying all historical religions. I demonstrated how Schuon's conflicted reception of Ibn 'Arabi strikingly echoes racialist discursive practices of nineteenth-century Aryanism—a conceptual lineage that held its own notion of what counts for the universal and, more important, *who is most capable* of discerning it. In the conclusion that follows, I revisit the broader concerns alluded to in the introduction of this study

regarding the nature of universalism itself and how the conceptual lineage of its modern Euro-American formation bears upon contemporary reading practices of Ibn 'Arabi and "religion" more broadly. As such, I discursively situate key elements of the Schuonian language-game within a deeper genealogy of German idealism to show foundational resonances with a Kantian metaphysics of autonomy and its attendant universalism. Schleiermacher is famous for developing the first systematic treatment of religion as an essence unique to itself. Yet, Schleiermacher's romantic reliance on intuition and feeling to describe the essence of religion was directly related to a larger Kantian tradition. Simply put, Kant famously argued that certain knowledge of the "noumenal" realm (i.e., the divine "*as such*") was impossible through conceptual experience even though *the practical idea* of God was ethically necessary. Thus, as Grace Jantzen notes, "Schleiermacher, and the religious Romantics who followed him, sought to escape the Kantian strictures by affirming that while God could not be discovered in thought, it is possible to experience God in pure preconceptual consciousness." Nevertheless, it is clear that Kant *also* believed there is an essence of "religion"—only he situated it within moral reason as opposed to Schleiermacher's romantic notion of intuition and feeling. Thus, as Jantzen notes, "what was up for debate in Schleiermacher's thinking was not whether such an essence *could be* postulated but *rather in what it could be said to consist*."

Although the metaphysical perspectives of Kantianism and Schuonian Perennialism are situated at *polar ends* of a rather vast continuum regarding the human potential for knowledge of the divine, in what follows I set aside these differences and focus instead on their shared intellectual genealogy of religious universalism. As such, I trace how their discursive practices are imbricated within a particular grammar of what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have called "metaphorical thought." Building off of the Copernican metaphor I developed in relation to how Schuonian universalism decenters Ibn 'Arabi's hierarchical cosmology, the ensuing analysis is framed against the metaphorical backdrop of the Copernican age and its imperial cartographic perspective. While I adumbrate this backdrop in broad strokes, the heart of my analysis centers on a comparison of Schuonian and Kantian language-games. Here, I not only argue that Schuon shares with Kant the philosophical and religious metaphorics of Platonic idealism situated within a common Euro-Christian tradition, but that Schuon's exposition on the *religio perennis* also *functionally* echoes Kant's creation of a "universal" religion defined through the primacy of internal autonomy over its Kantian opposite of "heteronomy"—that is, *externally received* religious form devoid of true morality and systematically symbolized in Kant's late writings by Judaism *itself*. Reading Schuon alongside of Kant in this way thus suggests how deeply the Kantian conceptual grammar of universalism—including its attendant Othering of Judaism qua "the heteronomous"—is embedded within Perennialist interpretive approaches to religious universalism and the metaphysics of Ibn 'Arabi. Indeed, the force of this inherited conceptual lineage proves even more remarkable given the fact that Schuon roundly disavowed Kant's philosophy in shrill terms. In the end, I show how the discursive formations of Schuonian universalism paradoxically harbor absolutist modalities of supersessionism that are similar to those openly posited by Ibn 'Arabi. The exclusivism inherent within such discourse brings into view the historically constituted and situated nature of all claims to inclusive or "transcendent" universalism and the localized forms of religious subjectivity they authorize.

Copernican Cartography and the Hubris of Zero Degrees

The idea that there exists a "universal beyond time and space" has been a seminal conceit in European imperialism since the end of the fifteenth century. The modern European attempt to find an objective, "universal" perspective "independent of its ethnic and cultural center of observation" has been dubbed by Santiago Castro-Gómez "*the hubris of zero degrees*." Here, Castro-Gómez alludes to the agenda announced at the start of the 1884 International Meridian Conference in Washington, DC, "to create," according to the conference chair, Rear Adm. C. R. P. Rogers, "a new accord among the nations by agreeing upon a meridian proper to be employed *as a common zero* of

longitude and standard of time throughout the world." The meridian thus agreed upon was at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, England.

Building on the work of Enrique Dussel and Walter Mignolo, Castro-Gómez observes that such a European positionality of "zero degrees" emerged as the result of the Spanish conquest of America and the imperial need for cartographic precision. Like the astronomical revolution of Copernicus, which transcended the confines of geocentric cosmology, European cartographers of the sixteenth century transcended the cartographic depiction of an ethnocentric world contained within a circular boundary. As Castro-Gómez notes, such a shift in perspective completely revolutionizes the scientific practice of cartography. In making the point of observation invisible, *the geometric center no longer coincides with the ethnic center*. Instead, cartographers and European navigators who now possess precise instruments of measurement, begin to believe that a representation made from the ethnic center is prescientific, since it is related to a specific cultural particularity.

It was from this new notion of perspective, dissociated from an "ethnic center," that the Western conceit of "truly scientific and 'objective' representation" emerged as the "universal point of view"—"a sovereign gaze external to the representation." Indeed, Slavoj Žižek has called such positionality "the privileged *empty point of universality*" through which the acknowledgment of "the Other's specificity is the very form of asserting one's own superiority." Such universality assumes a clear view of "absolute knowledge," which, as Mignolo posits, amounts to "knowledge that hides its own geopolitical grounding."

As a seminal, and self-described, inheritor of this Copernican innovation of cartographic perspective, Kant's radical form of "transcendental" idealism definitively broke from the premodern metaphysical conception of innate ideas as transcendent a priori, while it nevertheless retained the metaphysical possibility of a necessary and universal a priori knowledge solely through autonomous reason (i.e., through conceptual categories) and its cognition *of* external objects (as opposed to the *heteronomous effect* of objects on the self). This is what David Pacini has called the "Kantian 'critical standpoint,' " which replaces the traditional "idea that the world constitutes me with the idea that I constitute the world." Kant thus charted a new course between classical metaphysics and empirical science, comparing his own innovation to that of Copernicus.

Schuon's universalism is likewise inscribed as a self-conscious Copernican turn away from a premodern hierarchical religio-centrism to a heliocentric model of religious unity made possible through recourse to what could be thought of as a similar "transcendental" religious a priori, mediating between classical metaphysics and modern religious pluralism. As Schuon himself asserts:

> It has become impossible to provide an effective defense for a single religion against all the others by declaring the rest anathema without exception; to persist in doing so—unless one is living in a society that is still medieval, in which case the question does not arise—is a little like wishing to maintain the Ptolemaic system against the evidence of verified and verifiable astronomical data.

Rather than the premodern, confessional understanding of heteronomous religious form as absolute for the religious subject, here the a priori category of the essence of religion *as such*—that is, the *religio perennis*—is absolute, by which all external religious forms are constituted as so many manifestations of the divine.

While both Kantian and Schuonian universalist cosmologies thus appear to reflect a similar Copernican turn where notions of an autonomous, a priori universal perspective form the bases of two (albeit very different) religious epistemologies, following the insight of Castro-Gómez I argue that these respective discourses *also* metaphysically reflect the *imperial cartography* formed within the Copernican age itself and the hegemonic universalism it produced. In such Copernican or imperial

mapmaking, the cartographer is transposed from an ethnic location to a universal Archimedean metaposition. From this ethnically decentered position, the imperial cartographer is removed from the realm of the Other. Thus, while claiming scientific "objectivity," imperial mapmakers of the Copernican age pictorially and discursively colonized geo-political space through naturalizing hierarchies of civilizational and religious difference in Euro- and Christocentric terms. As Mignolo notes, this cartographic "colonization of space (of language, of memory)" formed "a larger frame of mind in which the regional could be universalized and taken as a yardstick to evaluate the degree of development of the rest of the human race." Like the Žižekian notion of the "empty point of universality," such a *hubris of zero degrees* concealed its own situated position of enunciation and exported local European history as universal truth. Thus universalized, such world-ordering "would become the epistemological base that gave rise to the anthropological, social, and evolutionist theories of the Enlightenment."

Although sixteenth-century European imperialism was therefore important in the Western conceptualization and production of the Other, it was the paradigm shift of Cartesian mind–body dualism in the seventeenth century that philosophically informed a discursive reduction of social subjectivities "to physical dimensions and correlates." Indeed, as James Byrne points out:

> The major effect of mind-body dualism was a privileging of the rational, intellectual and abstract over the physical, sensuous and practical. This in turn reinforced the trend in Western thought—*a trend which had roots in a particular Christian anthropology*—to view the body as the locus of error, weakness and sin.

Indeed, Cartesian mind–body dualism and its attendant primacy of reason "*over the physical, sensuous and practical*" was indeed a major problem for Kant and his contemporaries. By way of a solution, Kant sought a dual freedom: an a priori rational autonomy that justified not only a "freedom from metaphysical illusion" but also a freedom from all empirical and subjective sources of reality. The Kantian transcendental ideal of autonomy thus contends that there is a universal modality of reason that remains independent of and unconstituted by the external world, yet constitutive of it. Indeed, the universal power that Kant sought to harness through his idea of "the *autonomy* of pure reason" framed not only his mature philosophy but also his later conception of "pure" moral religious subjectivity—a subjectivity he fully fleshed out in his tellingly entitled work *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* (*Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*), published in 1793. Yet, to appreciate Kant's particular religious language-game articulated here (and its attendant *prelapsarian* metaphorics), it is necessary to read it, *as it was intended*, not as *mere* philosophy (as somehow dissociated from religion), but as a work of "philosophical theology" in dialogical tension, *but not opposition*, to "biblical theology" as Kant himself clarifies. As such, *Religion* must be read in light of its own politico- theological context, as well as its deep genealogy of "Christian anthropology" that Byrne importantly points to above.

Kant's Religion: Platonism, Christianity, and the Jewish Question

Kant's north-German Protestant university metaphysics, as Ian Hunter observes, was deeply infused with Christian Platonic anthropology. Such an anthropology posited that while the human soul is created, it retains a trace of the divine image through its rationality and freedom. By freeing itself from "sensual slavery," the rational mind could attain to spiritual wisdom within the intelligible divine order through the indwelling Christ and divine law. It was the divine order, and not the created world, that was understood to be the source of all knowledge. While Kant maintained this strict epistemological divide, he situated human reason, instead of a purported indwelling divinity, as pure rational being (*Vernunftwesen*) and therefore pure intelligence (*homo noumenon*).

Thus, in *Religion*, Kant establishes human autonomous reason as self-regulating moral law—that is, "reason's inner voice of duty"—in place of divine intelligence by invoking the Christian Platonic idea

of the *Logos* as the divine archetype: "the idea of him emanates from God's essence; he is to that extent not a created thing but God's only begotten Son, 'the *word* (the *Let it be so!*) through which all other things are, and without which nothing exists that has been made.' " As such, Kant claims that "to *elevate* ourselves to this ideal of moral perfection, i.e., to the archetype of the moral attitude in all its purity, is a universal human duty." Indeed, the Kantian idea of the pure rational being, as Hunter notes, not only exists independently of space and time but also has a dual intellectual function: (1) to intelligize pure forms of experience and (2) to govern the will by thinking the form of its law. It is through these intellectual processes that "Kant's *homo noumenon* or rational being is supposed to free himself from the 'sensuous inclinations' that otherwise tie the will of empirical man (*homo phenomenon*) to extrinsic ends or goods."

Thus, in *Religion*, Kant theorizes this path to the autonomy of moral reason as the final phase of the development of religion in human history. Although presented as a philosophy of religion, *Religion* is equally a "history of reason" that prefigures Hegel's own dialectical teleology of history. Kant therefore emplots a teleological historical narrative in *Religion* that culminates in the realization of autonomous reason. Beginning with a Hellenized Judaism, Kant's religion evolves into a Christianity whose progressively mature forms increasingly discard the restraints of external religious law and finally emerges as an autonomous form of "pure rational religion." Kant's teleological, universalist approach to history can therefore be understood as an attempt to show a progressive development from *homo phenomenon* to *homo noumenon*, and his critique of religion theorizes this progression. Thus, in *Religion*, Kant states:

> It is . . . a necessary consequence of the physical and simultaneously of the moral predisposition in us—the latter being the foundation and simultaneously the interpreter of all religion—*for religion finally to be detached gradually from all empirical determining bases, from all statutes that rest on history* and that, by means of a church faith, unite human beings provisionally in order to further the good, and *thus for pure rational religion ultimately to rule over all*, "so that God may be all in all."

Here, Kant posits a universal *religious essence* as a divinely given "moral predisposition" of the human being that has served as the foundation of all positive religions. The purity and sole truth of this autonomous morality has facilitated the progressive detachment of the positive religions from their historical accretions—that is, their scriptural laws. This emancipatory metanarrative finds its telos in the salvific emergence of a "*universal rational religion* and thus . . . a (divine) ethical state on earth."

Kant goes on to clarify that because we cannot know God in and of God's self, we can only approach God through our own moral sensibilities: "This idea of a moral ruler of the world is a task for our practical reason. We are concerned to know not so much what God is in himself (what his nature is) as what he is for us as moral beings." Such a statement perfectly exemplifies Kant's "Copernican" stance toward religion—a stance where, as Stephen Palmquist explains, "instead of viewing historical faith as the core and moral action as the secondary element, Kant views the latter as the core and locates the former on the periphery."

It is from this moral theological perspective that Kant therefore asserts that "the universal true religious faith" is *triune*: it has faith in a God that is a "*holy* legislator," "*benign* governor," and "*just* judge." What is important here is that Kant subsequently notes that this *universal true faith* "offers itself on its own to *any human reason* and is, therefore, *found in the religion of most civilized peoples.*" According to Kant, this is the reason most so-called civilized religious traditions have a conception of a triune God. Indeed, in a footnote, Kant offers "the religion of *Zoroaster*," "the *Hindu* religion," "the *Egyptian* religion," and "the *Gothic* religion" as direct examples. More important, however, Kant states that "even the *Jews* seem to have pursued these ideas in the last time periods of their hierarchical constitution." This is so, Kant argues, because they accepted the

title of "son of God," but only differed from Christians in their rejection of Jesus as a truthful claimant.

Yet it is not Kant's provocative, if simply ignorant, assertion regarding Jewish theology that concerns me here, but his more discrete proposition that the Jews could be counted as a "civilized" people *only* "in the *last time periods* of their hierarchical constitution," when they supposedly took up the idea of a triune godhead. This is to say—in accordance with Kant's prior declaration—that they were originally uncivilized *because* they lacked such triune theology and were thus *necessarily* without "any human reason." While Kant, *in the end*, agrees that "Christianity arose from Judaism," he does so only within the context of the later history of Judaism when "*this otherwise ignorant people* had already been reached by much foreign (Greek) wisdom." Indeed, "the Greek philosophers' moral doctrines of freedom," Kant contends, "*shocked the slavish mind*" of the Jew. Kant thus notes that such Greek teachings enlightened Judaism and provided it with the morality and autonomous reason necessary to facilitate the coming of Jesus. Indeed, perhaps Kant's most infamous (if not *his most disregarded*) assertion in *Religion* is his categorical assertion that "*Judaism is properly not a religion at all*." Because the Hebrew Bible supposedly contains no conception of a "future life," Kant's rather puritan textual reductionism led him to assume Judaism was not ethically but *only* politically situated and thus "*a sum of merely statutory laws*, on which a state constitution was based." Indeed, even the invocation of "the name of God" in the Jewish tradition, according to Kant, does not make Judaism a religion, since in this theocratic context God is "venerated merely as a secular regent who makes no claim at all concerning and upon conscience." Kant thus describes Judaism as "*an irksome* but dominant church faith *devoid of moral aim* (a faith whose *slavish service* can serve as example of any other on the whole *merely statutory faith*, the like of which was universal at that time)."

In the second division of *Religion*, entitled "Historical Presentation of the Gradual Founding of the Dominion of the Good Principle on Earth," Kant maps out "not only a succession in time, but equally *the ascent of the rational principle toward full self-consciousness*." In this teleological metanarrative, where Christianity ultimately becomes the "*true universal church*," Kant refuses to admit Judaism *any* historical role in the emergence of such universal religion. Indeed, according to Kant, "the *Jewish* faith stands in no essential connection whatsoever, i.e., in no unity according to concepts, with this . . . history we want to examine."

Given Kant's open opposition to any religious tradition of "statutory faith" as emblematically epitomized in Judaism, it should come as no surprise that Jesus serves in Kant's historical teleology of reason as the founder of "the first true church." According to Kant, Jesus brought only "*pure teachings of reason*." Rather than demanding "the observance of external civic or statutory church duties," like Judaism, Jesus taught that "only the pure moral attitude of the heart shall be able to make a human being pleasing to God." Thus, Kant asserts that Christianity arose as "*a pure moral religion* in place of an ancient cult." Since Christianity was bound "*to no statutes at all*," it contained "*a religion valid for the world*, not for one single people." Thus, in the final section of *Religion* entitled "On the Pseudoservice of God in a Statutory Religion," Kant states:

The true, sole religion contains nothing but laws, i.e., practical principles of whose unconditional necessity we can become conscious and which we, therefore, acknowledge as revealed through pure reason (not empirically). . . . Now, to regard this statutory faith (which is in any case restricted to one people and cannot contain the universal world religion) as essential to the service of God in general, and to make it the supreme condition of divine pleasure taken in human beings, is a *religious delusion* the pursuit of which is a *pseudoservice*, i.e., a supposed veneration of God whereby one acts directly contrary to the true service required by God himself.

Indeed, in *Religion*, Kant seldom grows weary of describing Judaism as a "delusional" *because* "slavish" religion mindlessly observing revealed law and tradition in opposition to the pure revelation of

reason. In fact, this dualism between statutory bondage and reasoned freedom informs the entire metaphorical language-game of *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*—its framing metaphor equating the human moral predisposition with autonomous "bare rational faith." For Kant, such religion "pure of all statutes, is inscribed in the heart of every human being." By emplotting humanity's progressive liberation from scriptural bondage, Kant puts forth his own teleological salvation history of "bare reason." In perhaps the most iconic passage of *Religion*, Kant thus states:

The cloaks under which *the embryo first formed* itself into the human being *must be cast off* if he is now to step into the light of day. The leading string of holy tradition, with its appendages—the statutes and observances—which in its time rendered good services, is little by little becoming dispensable, indeed in the end a fetter, *when he enters adolescence*. As long as he (the human genus) "was a child, he was astute as a child" *and knew how to combine with statutes—which had been imposed on him without his collaboration. . . . "But now that he becomes a man, he puts away what is childish*."

Here, Kant sounds a clarion call for humanity to divest itself of its religious clothing or "cloaks"—that is, the restraints of traditional "statutes and observances." While such prescriptive veils were necessary in the beginning stages of human history, they must now in humanity's maturity be "cast off" in the naked light of truth.

Of course, commentators are quick to note that in the aforementioned passage Kant refers nearly verbatim to Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (13:11): "As long as he (the human genus) 'was a child, he was astute as a child. . . . But now that he becomes a man, he puts away what is childish." Yet what has seemingly gone unnoticed is how this passage more broadly echoes chapter four of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (1–11), which reads:

My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; *while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law*, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" *So you are no longer a slave but a child*, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods. Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? How can you want to be enslaved to them again? You are observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted.

In terms of both tone and import, the beginning of chapter 4 of Galatians is much closer to Kant's passage above, whereas 1 Corinthians 13 addresses the importance of love. In this section of Galatians the problem Paul rails against is that his Christian followers have apparently been observing Jewish law, which he importantly equates with the subservience of *slavery*. Indeed, in Galatians 4:10 above, Paul complains that his followers are observing the Jewish calendar: "You are observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years." As Ursula Goldenbaum notes, in Galatians:

Paul is eager to draw a sharp line between Jews and Christians, and he does not shy away from abusing Jewish religion and law as incompatible with Christian faith. He calls the Jews "immature"—in obeying their law they were immature children and indistinguishable from servants; in contrast, Christians were led into freedom by Jesus Christ. The law is considered to have served as the "pedagogue," keeping us in line until the appearance of Jesus Christ, but no longer needed once the savior had come and set us free.

In an insightful analysis, Goldenbaum traces how Kant's famous line and thesis "*Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity*" that opens his 1784 essay "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?' " draws upon German Lutheran readings of Galatians as part of a wider debate regarding Jewish emancipation. The policy of the Prussian state "towards Jews in the eighteenth century was characterized by attempts to keep the Jewish community small and their tribute payments high and to limit their economic activities to a few professions." During Kant's day, Jewish disenfranchisement was made worse by Frederick the Great's 1750 *General-Privilegium*, which further limited the freedom of Jews in terms of property rights and trade.

In 1782, only two years prior to Kant's famous essay on enlightenment, Joseph II of nearby Austria granted Jews unprecedented freedom in his Edict of Tolerance, which became the subject of heated debate in Prussia. A year later, Moses Mendelssohn, Kant's most famous Jewish interlocutor, published his treatise *Jerusalem*—a text that would prove seminal to the Jewish Enlightenment by presenting "the Jews as capable of morals, and thus ready to become citizens." On the other side of the debate was the popular Enlightenment theologian Johann Salomo Semler. As Goldenbaum observes, Kant's discourse strikingly echoes that of Semler, who

> contrasted Christian religion, which he saw as universal and moral, with Jewish religion, seen as particular and political with hardly any morals. Being bound by the Jewish statutory law, Jewish religion could not develop any further and thus remained essentially static. . . . Christian religion had changed from its early beginning until the present time and it would further change in infinity, becoming less and less dogmatic and more and more pure in terms of morals.

Indeed, for Semler, as with Kant, the infinite change that Christianity undergoes amounts to a teleological history where

> no particular Christian dogma could be taken as its essential religious truth. Its true and pure message lay rather hidden in all parts of its doctrine and emerged with increasing clarity throughout history. Only at the end of the world, pure morality would appear as its actual message. . . . *Because the historical process would lead to more and more morality, it would create finally one universal religion of humankind, making all human beings Christians.*

As Goldenbaum notes, "the congruence" between Kant's ideas and those of Semler is "*almost literal*" and she therefore concludes that "there is sufficient evidence as well that Kant found his model for enlightenment in Semler's theology of history." Moreover, Goldenbaum shows that Kant's notion of "immaturity" (*Unmündigkeit*) in his first line of "An Answer to the Question" is similarly derived from a common German Lutheran translation of the beginning of chapter 4 in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, which I quote above. Thus, Kant's notion of enlightenment, which, according to Goldenbaum, "sees the development of pure morality as a progress within the history of Christianity, thus excluding Jews qua Jews from this process," is indebted to the enlightenment theological discourse of his day, which he first put forth in somewhat coded language in "An Answer to the Question" and then "explicitly states in his *Religion*" nine years later.

While Kant does not use the word "immaturity" in *Religion* as he did in his essay on enlightenment, the notion of a progressive movement from immaturity to enlightened reason forms the millenarianist basis of the entire text. For my purposes here, this teleological evolution is best understood in Kantian terms as a historical progression from religious "heteronomy" to enlightened "autonomy." Although Kant does not use this binary pair in *Religion*, evidence for its logical extension is found in his *Critique of Practical Reason* by way of definition:

> The sensible nature of rational beings in general is their existence under empirically conditioned laws and is thus, for reason, *heteronomy*. The supersensible nature of the same beings, on the other hand, is their existence in accordance with laws that are independent of any empirical condition and thus belong to the *autonomy* of pure reason.

Here, Kant defines "heteronomy" as human "existence under *empirically conditioned laws*"—that is, laws that are sensibly determined through external historical processes as opposed to those morally determined through internal reason. Similarly, in *Religion*, as I quote above, Kant asserts that as a consequence of the human "moral predisposition," religion will "*be detached gradually from all empirical determining bases, from all statutes that rest on history*." It is therefore quite clear that for Kant, positive religions—or what are sometimes referred to as "empirical religion[s]"—are *empirically conditioned* by history and thus heteronomous. As such, Kant's definition of the binary pair autonomy/heteronomy can be directly mapped onto the narrative emplotted in *Religion*, where the heteronomously bound adherents of historical religions (symbolized first and foremost by Jews and Judaism) will naturally progress to enlightened autonomy by denuding their respective religions from "*all empirical determining bases*"—or in another translation, from "*all empirical grounds of determination*." The *telos* of Kant's evolution of religious autonomy is thus attained, as Kant confirms in the same passage, when "the abasing distinction between *laypersons* and *clerics* ceases, and equality arises from true freedom" *because* "everyone obeys the (nonstatutory) law that he prescribes to himself." Indeed, this Kantian narrative on the teleological development of religious autonomy has helped to form how "enlightened" religious subjectivity is understood in the secular-liberal tradition. As Susan Meld Shell observes:

> Kantian autonomy ennobles liberal concepts of freedom and equality by grounding them in an objective moral principle—a principle that is deemed to be accessible to all ordinary human beings on the basis of reason alone and *that does not depend on a particular religious dispensation or the blind acceptance of authority*.

The Metaphysics of Nudity in Kant and Schuon

As displayed most clearly in the titular framing metaphor of *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, as well as in Kant's iconic passage above beginning with "*The cloaks* under which *the embryo first formed* itself into the human being *must be cast off* if he is now to step into the light of day," Kant employs what Mario Perniola has called a "metaphysics of nudity," which Perniola traces to Greek thought in contrast to a Hebrew "metaphysics of clothing."

Although Perniola is quick to note that neither the Greek nor Hebrew tradition can be reduced to such rigid metaphysical categories, Perniola's insight regarding the Platonic tradition of metaphysical nudity is particularly helpful in my comparison of Kantian and Schuonian language-games, which as I noted above can both be understood as (radically) different interpretations of Platonic idealism situated within a common German Lutheran intellectual history. Thus, as opposed to the symbolism of the ancient Near East, where nakedness was a mark of degradation and shame—and conversely, clothing symbolized divine splendor—the Greek metaphysical perspective understood nudity as "clarity of vision." This idea is fully formed in Plato's conception of truth, as Perniola notes:

> In the myth of the cave, the path that leads to truth moves progressively from a vision of shadows and specular images to the contemplation of ideas. The metaphor of the "*naked*" *truth* comes from a conflation of the concept of truth as visual precision and the idea that eternal forms are the ultimate objects of intellectual vision. From this foundation, the entire process of knowledge becomes an unveiling of the object, a laying it entirely bare and an illumination of all its parts.

Yet, this Platonic metaphysical perspective of nudity takes as its ultimate object the soul and understands the body as an earthly obstacle. Thus, "only when the soul is naked—*psuchē gumnē tou sōmatos*, the soul stripped of the body (*Cratylus* 403b)—does it acquire complete freedom." This idea is echoed in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians: "Put to death, therefore, *whatever in you is earthly* (3:5). . . . These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now *you must get rid of all such things*. . . . Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have *stripped off* the old self with its practices (3:9)."

Thus, in *Religion*, Kant echoes such a Christian Platonic metaphysics of nudity through the assertion, quoted above, that the human being's religious "appendages—the statutes and observances"—are "cloaks" of the material world that have been "*imposed on him without his collaboration*" and thus are "a fetter." Now that humanity has matured, such clothing "*must be cast off*" so that the naked truth can be realized. Here, Kant's metaphorics also draw upon the anti-Jewish polemics of German Lutheran theology, thus making Judaism *the* "delusional" archetype of "pseudoservice" that serves no higher purpose than a heteronomous politics of coercion. As Kant writes in *Religion*, the subjects of the original "*Jewish* theocracy" were "attuned to no incentives other than the goods of this world," and thus "were capable of no other laws than partly such as imposed burdensome ceremonies and customs . . . in which an external coercion occurred and which were, therefore, only civil laws, the inside of the moral attitude not being considered at all." Judaism is thus understood as *merely material*—having nothing to do with a pure and universal religion of reason. Thus, as part of Kant's "transcendentally" idealist language-game that sought to overcome epistemological dependence upon the material world through recourse to universal reason, the Jews became a metaphor for "the impurity of empirical reality, of 'matter.' " As Michael Mack notes, it was precisely this Kantian discourse that essentialized "the Jewish as the 'heteronomous' " and thus set the stage for the nineteenth-century German stigmatization of Jews as *nonmodern* and thus politically corruptive.

In his late 1798 work *The Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant once again makes recourse to a metaphysics of nudity in relation to Judaism, stating that although "dreaming of a conversion of all Jews (to Christianity in the sense of a *messianic* faith)" is no longer sensible, still we can consider it possible even in their case if, as is now happening, purified religious concepts awaken among them and *throw off the garb* of the ancient cult, which now serves no purpose and even suppresses any true religious attitude.

After calling for Jews to thus *denude* themselves of the "garb" of their traditional observances, Kant goes on to explain that it is only their public acceptance of "the religion of *Jesus*" that would "call attention to them as an educated and civilized people who are ready for all the rights of citizenship and whose faith could also be sanctioned by the government." Thus, Kant concludes:

The euthanasia of Judaism is pure moral religion, *freed from all the ancient statutory teachings*, some of which were bound to be retained in Christianity (as a messianic faith). But this division of sects, too, must disappear in time, leading, at least in spirit, to what we call the conclusion of the great drama of religious change on earth (the restoration of all things), when there will be only one shepherd and one flock.

As may be supposed from Kant's telling call for "the euthanasia of Judaism," it was indeed "partly on the basis of its own Kantian premises that German nationalism emerged as a specifically anti-Jewish movement."

As I noted in my analysis of Schuon's Aryanist discursive practices, while Schuon understood clothing as "*form, or particularity*," he sacralized nudity as "*a return to the essence, the origin, the archetype, thus to the celestial state*." Schuon's discourse thus strikingly echoes the above Kantian metaphorics and metaphysics of nudity as "pure" truth. Indeed, Schuon summed up his entire metaphysical approach through a metaphorized articulation of the binary between form and essence—that is, a movement away from "the *Religio formalis* [as] the garment" toward "the *Religio perennis* [as] the body."

Schuon's metaphorics of nudity, like that of Kant's, is *also* tied to a particular conceptualization of Semitic religious subjectivity. This perspective nostalgically longs for a return to the primordial truth of a "Golden Age" *before* its apparent veiling by Semitic subjectivity. As Schuon states:

> In the origin—in the "Golden Age"—*the truth pure and simple* was saving by itself, and this to a certain extent is the point of view of Platonism; later it was necessary to reveal the aspect most appropriate to its saving effect, and it was thus necessary *to clothe* it in an argument efficacious for certain mentalities, and *this is what the Semitic religions have done*.

While Schuonian Perennialism is thus based on a discourse of decline from an ancient golden age and hope of a palingenetic return to an original state similar to "Platonism," the Kantian notion of "pure rational religion" is marked by a forward-looking, melioristic vision of history, which Kant himself likened to a "metamorphosis." Yet these polar differences in metaphysical perspective notwithstanding, both Kant and Schuon evince a common metaphorical grammar in which Semitic religious subjectivity represents heteronomy, while a primary basis of "pure" autonomous or objective "truth" is located in "foreign (Greek) wisdom" for Kant and "Platonism" for Schuon.

Kantian Autonomy and the Schuonian Discourse of Relativity

For Kant, the difference between heteronomous and autonomous religion depends on the ability for any religion to be universalized. As Shell notes, for the Jews "to carry out ceremonial rites forever on the basis of an authority that cannot in principle be shared by man is to put heteronomy, as Kant conceives it, at the core of one's faith." In *Religion*, because such heteronomous religion is based on the idea of a God who sends revelation and its attendant laws—and "acquaintance with these laws is possible not through our own bare reason but only through revelation . . . propagated among human beings through tradition or scripture"—then such religion is what Kant describes as merely "a *historical* faith" and "not *a pure rational faith*." Thus, according to Kant, it is "the pure moral legislation" attained through "bare reason" that "is not only *the inescapable condition of all true religion as such, but it is also that which properly constitutes religion itself*, and for which statutory religion can contain only the means to its furtherance and expansion." Historical faiths are therefore for Kant multiple and can have "*different and equally good forms*," while their "statutes, i.e., ordinances regarded as divine, . . . *are chosen and contingent*." In other words, Kant sees outward religious form as relative and not essential. Thus, in his 1795 work *To Perpetual Peace*, Kant famously states:

> *Differences in religion*: an odd expression! Just as if one spoke of different *moralities*. No doubt there can be different kinds of historical *faiths*, though these do not pertain to religion, but only to the history of the means used to promote it, and these are the province of learned investigation; the same holds of different religious *books* (Zendavest, the Vedas, Koran, and so on). But there is only a single *religion*, valid for all men in all times. Those [faiths and books] can thus be nothing more than the accidental vehicles of religion and can only thereby be different in different times and places.

Kant's assertion here, that historical faiths and their scriptures "*can thus be nothing more than the accidental vehicles of religion*," is representative of what Talal Asad has called "the missionary's standpoint." As Asad explains:

> The missionary cannot reform people unless they are persuaded that *the formal ways they live their life are accidental to their being*, channels for which other channels can be substituted without loss. And thus from one religion to another, or from living religiously to living secularly.

An essential component of Schuon's Perennialism is a discourse of "relativity," or what Schuon calls "the principle of relativity," as an integral ingredient for the coherency of Schuon's logical break with the Aristotelian law of noncontradiction through symbolism and as another way of expressing Schuon's emblematic notion of "the transcendent unity of religions"—that is, the idea that the contradictory differences among external religious forms are ultimately nonessential to the underlying essence that unifies them. Schuon himself asserts that although "Revelations more or less *exclude* one another, this is so of necessity" because God "expresses Himself in an absolute mode" and such absoluteness "concerns the universal content rather than the form, to which it

applies only *in a relative* and symbolical sense." As such, Schuon states: "Revelation is absolute in itself, *but relative in its form*."

Indeed, the similarities between Kant and Schuon regarding the so-called relativity of religious form are worth exploring in more detail here. In *Religion*, written two years prior to the aforementioned passage from *To Perpetual Peace*, Kant asserts the following:

> There is only *one* (true) *religion*; but there can be many kinds of *faith*.—One may say, further, that in the various churches, set apart from each other because of the difference in their kinds of faith, one and the same true religion may nonetheless be found.

Here, like Schuon, Kant asserts that in essence, religion is absolute, but in form, it is varied. Thus, Kant goes on to state:

> It is therefore more fitting (as, indeed, it is actually more customary) to say, This human being is of this or that (Jewish, Mohammedan, Christian, Catholic, Lutheran) *faith*, than, He is of this or that religion. The latter expression should properly not be used even in addressing the general public (in catechisms and sermons); for, it is too scholarly and not understandable for them, as indeed the modern languages also do not supply for it any synonymous word. *The common man understands by it always his church faith, which strikes his senses, whereas religion is hidden inwardly and depends on moral attitudes*.

Once again, Kant here makes the distinction between "faith," which he understands as *historically* occurring in various forms, and "religion"—that is, "*the true, sole religion*"—which he understands as "revealed through *pure reason* (not empirically)."

And again, Schuon's language-game, although metaphysically distinct at the level of theory, is functionally identical., "*The ethnic diversity of humanity* and the geographical extent of the earth," according to Schuon, are the sources of "*the need for a plurality of religions*." Schuon thus argues that the idea "of one unique religion for all . . . does not escape contradiction" since it posits an "absoluteness and universality," which opposes "the *necessarily relative character* of all religious mythology." Like Kant's aristocratic "*true, sole religion*" that is only universally revealed through "*pure reason*" but not understood by the "common man," Schuon concludes that "only *pure metaphysics* and *pure prayer* are absolute and therefore *universal*."

Thus, for both Kant and Schuon, the "pure" essence of religion—however individually perceived, either by reason or gnosis (respectively)—is marked by true autonomy, that is, a direct, internal realization of *naked truth* as opposed to an external, heteronomous revelation that is veiled by form. According to this Kantian and Schuonian perspective of autonomy, formal or historical religious traditions are received from outside of the self, and thus indirect and *nonessential*. In both Kant and Schuon, adherence to such heteronomous tradition is understood as ultimately "slavery" to an external form, while religious autonomy is the essence of freedom. Indeed, it is precisely Jewish adherence to heteronomous law and knowledge that, in the eyes of Kant (who as noted above echoes Paul [Galatians 4:1–11]), makes Judaism "that *slavish* faith (in days, confessions, and customs of the service of God)."

In a striking echo of Kant's aforementioned assertions, Schuon similarly proclaims:

> For the Semite, everything begins with Revelation and therefore with faith and submission; man is a priori a believer and consequently a servant: intelligence itself takes on *the color of obedience*. For the Aryan by contrast . . . Revelation is not a commandment that seems to create intelligence ex nihilo while at the same time *enslaving it*, but appears instead as the objectification of the one Intellect, which is at once transcendent and immanent. Intellectual certainty has priority here *over a submissive faith*.

While Semitic intelligence (no matter how divinely inspired) is, for Schuon, *enslaved* by external revelation, "Aryan thought" perceives the universal "nature of things" *itself*. Schuon therefore

categorizes Semitic intelligence as passively "subjective" and Aryan thought as naturally in tune with "objective" truth. Here it is important to note that Schuon uses the idea of subjectivity in the common-sense notion of "being dominated by or absorbed in one's personal feelings, thoughts, concerns" and is the antithesis of the Kantian notion of "transcendent subjectivity," which refers to an idealized "thinking subject" as the essential ground of cognition that constitutes objective reality through the universal validity of a priori reason. As Jill Buroker importantly notes, such transcendental subjectivity "is not to be confused with the empirical subjectivity of contingent sensible qualities that vary from individual to individual." Thus, in Kantian terms, Schuon's Semitic "subjectivity" should be understood as *merely* empirical subjectivity that predominantly relies upon *heteronomous* recourse to jurisprudence and ritual practice—what Schuon refers to in *Castes and Races* as a Semitic "*need for external activities*." In Schuon's deployment, Aryan objectivity "is none other than the truth," and Christ's "certain Aryan quality" is demonstrated "*in his independence—seemingly 'Greek' or 'Hindu'—toward forms*." Like Kant's notion, quoted above, that Jews were "attuned to no incentives other than *the goods of this world*" and "*capable of no other laws than partly such as imposed burdensome ceremonies and customs*," Schuon claims that the Semitic "style" of Muhammad "*attaches itself meticulously to human things*" and Semitic subjectivity is accidental and thus "*enclosed in a dogma*."

Indeed, Houston Stewart Chamberlain (d. 1927), whose Aryanist discursive practices were compared to those of Schuon, was heavily influenced by Kantian idealist anthropology, going so far as to write an entire book on Kant that quotes from *Religion* as an anti-Semitic and pro-Aryan proof text. In his earlier and more well-known work *Foundations of the Nineteenth*, Chamberlain employs the Kantian "idealist" notion of pure religion against so-called Semitic religion:

> Wherever the Semitic spirit has breathed, *we shall meet with . . . materialism*. Elsewhere in the whole world religion is an idealistic impulse . . . but the imperious will [of the Semite] immediately lays hold of every symbol, every profound divination of reflective thought, *and transforms them into hard empirical facts*. And thus it is that with this view of religion *only practical ends are pursued, no ideal ones*.

Here, Chamberlain follows the Kantian language-game of associating Judaism "as a group that has followed not the path of transcendental freedom but that of enslavement to the material world."

Like Kant and Chamberlain, Schuon similarly associates materialism with the typology of the Semite as evinced not only in his aforementioned assertion regarding a Semitic "need for external activities," but also in his description of Muhammad's "Semitic" attachment "to human things" in contradistinction to Jesus's "Aryan" tendency "*toward the idealistic simplification of earthly contingencies*." Thus, Schuon's notion of Aryan "*independence . . . toward forms*" is functionally analogous to Kant's "*autonomy* of pure reason" as separate from empirically conditioned sensibility. Indeed, Schuon notes that the point is not to deny matter, "but *to remove oneself* from its seductive tyranny; *to distinguish in it the archetypal and pure from the accidental and impure*."

Exclusive Inclusivity and the Accidental Nature of Relative Form

As I have shown, both Kant and Schuon display an analogous notion that commitment to an essentialist discourse of religious relativity is indicative of enlightened *autonomy*, while fidelity to a particular revelation and its law is *empirically* subjective and *heteronomous*—what Schuon in exasperation referred to in Ibn 'Arabi as "unintelligible denominationalism." Indeed, even William Chittick himself is not opposed to employing the Schuonian discourse of "relativity" when necessary, such as when he states in his work on Ibn 'Arabi and religious diversity:

The stress of a given religious community on a specific self-revelation of the Guide brings into existence its hard edges. God's guidance provides a (*relative*) divine justification for focusing on a single manifestation of the unqualified and nondelimited Real and ignoring others. But *to make*

absolute claims for a revelation that by nature can only be one of many *brings about a certain imbalance and distortion* that modern-day observers quickly sense.

Chittick's incongruous break with Perennialist antimodern "tradition" through deference here to the outside authority of "modern-day observers" against religious absolutism is telling and seems to be particularly constituted by a contemporary secular-liberal sensibility opposed to religious discourses of exclusivism. His clear Schuonian argument that there can only be "*relative*" and never "*absolute claims* for a revelation" rests on two premises: (1) there are "by nature" many (valid) religions, and (2) making such absolute claims "*brings about a certain imbalance and distortion*."

Since I have shown in detail in the first three chapters of this book that Ibn 'Arabi clearly *did make absolute claims* regarding the supersession of Islam and the Qur'anic abrogation of all previous revelations, I will not belabor these points again here. Rather, I wish to simply point out the unstable and situated logic of such a Schuonian argument for religious "relativity" at work in Chittick's above statement. Although such discourse is mobilized in the name of *inclusive* universalism and the "validity" of all religious laws, it nevertheless paradoxically ends up *excluding* those very same religious laws it ostensibly professes to include by denying the *absolute validity* of any given revelation. In other words, for a universalist insider, Chittick's argument may certainly seem valid, while for a committed (nonuniversalist) adherent of any particular revelation, this same argument would in many (*if not most*) cases be totally invalid. As Hugh Nicholson observes, "The effort to dissociate religion from exclusionary, 'us' versus 'them' relations ends up merely transposing the act of exclusion to a meta-level where the excluded 'other'—in the form of exclusivist theologies—is not immediately recognized."

The work of the Perennialist scholar Reza Shah-Kazemi serves as an even more compelling example of the universalist paradox of *exclusive inclusivism* displayed by Chittick above. In *Paths to Transcendence: According to Shankara, Ibn Arabi, and Meister Eckhart*, Shah-Kazemi legitimizes his well-rehearsed and oft-repeated Schuonian discourse of relativity—or "transcendence"—through recourse to the authority of both Ibn 'Arabi and Schuon:

> The forms of the traditions may be seen as so many paths leading to a transcendent essence, realized as one by the mystics only at the summit of spiritual realization; short of this summit *the differences between the traditions are to be seen as relative* but nonetheless real on their own level. The forms of the traditions, at one in respect of their single and transcendent essence, are expressions of this essence, and, for this very reason, should be taken seriously as paths leading back to the essence, rather than rejected on the basis of their unavoidable relativity in the face of the Absolute. *This conclusion is in accordance with the principles made explicit by Ibn Arabi . . . and also with the universalist perspective associated chiefly with the name of Frithjof Schuon.*

In his universalist treatise on the Qur'an and interfaith dialogue, *The Other in the Light of the One*, Shah-Kazemi similarly grounds a discourse of relativity within the purview of Ibn 'Arabi and Schuon, attempting to square the circle of what he himself refers to as "the paradoxical combination of particularism and universalism."

In the introduction to *The Other in the Light of the One*, Shah-Kazemi confidently claims "the universalism expounded here upholds as irreducible the differences of outward religious forms, for these differences are seen as divinely sanctioned: they are diverse forms reflecting the principle of divine infinity, *not just accidental expressions of human diversity*." Yet when he attempts to situate Ibn 'Arabi's thought from within such universalism, Shah-Kazemi qualifies his assertion thus:

> The oneness of the message . . . implies a diversity of formal expressions, these expressions not being reducible to each other on the formal plane, *even if they are considered, in their formal aspect, as "accidental" in relation to the "necessary" import of the supra-formal substance.*

Here, Shah-Kazemi offers a typical Schuonian "esoteric" contradiction (conveniently resolved through the discourse of relativity) claiming that while the "formal expressions" of differing religions are indeed absolute and irreducible in relation to each other, *they are also* simultaneously reducible, and thus "accidental," in relation to their common "supra-formal substance"—a substance Shah-Kazemi goes on to identify as "religion as such" in contradistinction to "such and such a religion":

> While such and such a religion is distinct from all others, possessing its own particular rites, laws and spiritual "economy," *religion as such* can be discerned within it and within all religions; *religion as such being the exclusive property of none, as it constitutes the inner substance of all*.

Echoing the selfsame Kantian essentialist discourse of religion as "pure reason" (quoted above)—that is, "There is only *one* (true) *religion*; but there can be many kinds of *faith*"—here Shah-Kazemi's "supra-formal substance" is none other than the unitive *essence* of religion itself (i.e., the *religio perennis*) that underlies all particular religious forms. Thus, in relation to his oft-repeated assertion regarding the simultaneous *absolute* and *accidental* nature of religious form, Shah-Kazemi is simply proposing a hierarchy of perspective, ultimately claiming that in the final comparison with the universal kernel of the *religio perennis*, the diverse particularities of competing religious forms are merely husks and thus *necessarily secondary*. As such, Shah-Kazemi ends up operationalizing Asad's aforementioned description of the "missionary's standpoint"—a standpoint where outward religious forms become "*channels for which other channels can be substituted without loss*."

While I will return to the implications of Shah-Kazemi's ultimate missionary stance in a moment, it is essential to note that in *The Other in the Light of the One*, Shah-Kazemi continuously struggles with a Schuonian preunderstanding of Ibn 'Arabi's so-called universalism and the subsequent contradictions that follow. For example, immediately after his above assertion regarding the irreducibility of the diverse religions "on the formal plane" and their simultaneous reducibility in terms of a common "supra-formal substance," Shah-Kazemi attempts to conciliate such discursive dissonance by turning once again to the thought of Ibn 'Arabi in relation to the evidential authority of Islamic prophetology:

One may assert, in accordance with Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutical principles, that any attempt to abolish or ignore the formal differences between the revelations violates the divine intentionality; the diversity of revelations is divinely willed, and thus deploys rather than contradicts the unity of the message.

The diversity of laws, paths, and rites, however, must not obscure the fact that the religion ordained through the last Prophet is nothing other than *the one religion that was ordained through all previous prophets*.

Shah-Kazemi goes on to argue that for Ibn 'Arabi this "one religion" unites all religious dispensations within a single underlying "substance or principle." Yet, as I have shown throughout this work, to associate such an inclusive and essentializing universalism with Ibn 'Arabi's hermeneutics is a "strong misreading" of the Andalusian Sufi's prophetology and his attendant cosmography of religious difference. Rather than understanding this "one religion . . . ordained through all previous prophets" as a common esoteric core at the heart of all contemporaneous religious dispensations, Ibn 'Arabi clearly assents to the Islamic supersessionist view that Muhammad was *the ultimate* and *only universal* renewer of the primordial "religion of Abraham." Although all previous messengers revealed afresh this primordial religion, for Ibn 'Arabi, it is fully preserved *solely* in the Qur'an, which is the only revelation to remain divinely protected from corruption. Indeed, as I demonstrated in chapters 2 and 3, Ibn 'Arabi adhered to the classical Islamic supersessionist doctrines of abrogation (*naskh*) and textual corruption (*taḥrīf al-naṣṣ*) of pre-Qur'anic revelations.

While Shah-Kazemi admits that for Ibn 'Arabi and other "normative" Sufis, "Islam in the particular sense would indeed be regarded as the most complete religion, *qua* religion, the final, comprehensive and universally binding revelation," he also asserts that these selfsame Sufis simultaneously affirm "the holiness, virtue and truth which are present in principle within other revealed traditions." Yet, because of his reliance on Schuonian preunderstandings, as well as canonical misreadings within the interpretive field of Ibn 'Arabi, Shah-Kazemi's discourse gives way to slippage concerning how "religion" is defined between medieval and modern contexts. Ibn 'Arabi defined religion primarily through the concept of obedience and *not* by the modern universalist notion of an underlying religious essence inhering in all revealed religions. Religion, *as such*, for Ibn 'Arabi, was marked by an external continuity of sacred prescriptions revealed by successive prophets beginning with Adam and ending with Muhammad. *As a matter of course*, Ibn 'Arabi affirmed the "holiness, virtue, and truth which are present *in principle* within other revealed traditions," but that says nothing about how he viewed the contemporary salvific efficacy of those traditions. Because all of the previous prophets were ultimately Muhammad's deputies (*nuwwāb*) Ibn 'Arabi certainly understood them to be perennially integral. Yet, *it does not follow*, as I have shown, that Ibn 'Arabi viewed the dispensations that such prophets revealed as similarly integral throughout the course of history. For Ibn 'Arabi, all dispensations other than that of Muhammad have been either entirely abrogated or rendered subject to the conditions of the indemnity tax (*jizya*) prescribed by verse 9:29 of the Qur'an. In either case, it is clear that Ibn 'Arabi understood the religious Other as totally subsumed within the purview of the Prophet Muhammad and not religiously autonomous. In other words, Ibn 'Arabi's was a totalizing politico-metaphysical discourse, based around a perennial notion of the essence of Muhammad—that is, the "Muhammadan Reality" (*ḥaqīqa muḥammadiyya*)—and *not* a perennial religious essence. Although Shah-Kazemi, who here follows Chittick, importantly emphasizes Ibn 'Arabi's profoundly heteronomous recourse to Islamic law, Shah-Kazemi's and Chittick's attendant assertions that Ibn 'Arabi accepted all contemporaneous religious laws as equally valid *deny the very basis* of his (*universalizing*) Islamic universalism—that is, the absolute particularity of Ibn 'Arabi's heteronomy. That is to say, if each revealed legal tradition from every religion is equally absolute (as such Perennialist scholars claim), then the heteronomous formalities of each tradition are thereby *relativized* and rendered *nonessential*.

Indeed, in the same discussion of "religion as such" (i.e., "the one religion" or the *religio perennis*) referred to above, Shah-Kazemi once more attempts (and here "carefully") to circumvent critiques such as Asad's problematization of the missionary's standpoint—that is, the accusation that he is simply arguing for a notion of inclusive universalism where competing religious forms are *made* accidental and secondary to (ideological) conceptions of an essential unity:

> It must be carefully noted here that this view of a religious essence that at once transcends and abides within all religions *does not in the least imply a blurring of the boundaries between them on the plane of their formal diversity*. Rather, the conception of this "essential religion" presupposes formal religious diversity, regarding it not so much as a regrettable differentiation *but a divinely willed necessity*. . . . Each revealed religion is totally unique—totally "itself"—while *at the same time being an expression of a single, all-encompassing principle which integrates it within religion as such*. Each is thus different from all the others, in form, *and also identical to all the others in essence*.

While the supposed harmony between particularism and unity among religious forms and essence is here (yet again) asserted, Shah-Kazemi's categorical slippage from *nonaccidental*—or "divinely willed necessity"—to " '*accidental*' in relation to the 'necessary' import of the supra-formal substance" exposes an underlying Schuonian discourse of religious authenticity. In his work *Echoes of Perennial Wisdom*, Schuon asserts that "*the essential takes precedence over the accidental*" and "*the Principle takes precedence over its manifestation*—either *by extinguishing it, or by reintegrating it*." Thus, in the above

passage, Shah-Kazemi directly echoes Schuon's privileging of religious essence—that is, "*a single, all-encompassing principle*," or the *religio perennis*—over all "accidental" religious forms.

Indeed, only several pages earlier Shah-Kazemi states with no apparent irony:

> *No one interpretation can therefore be put forward as right and true to the exclusion of all others*. One must repeat: to exclude the exclusivist reading is in turn to fall into a mode of exclusivism. Thus, a truly inclusivist metaphysical perspective must recognize the validity of the exclusivist, theological perspective, *even if it must also—on pain of disingenuousness—uphold as more compelling, more convincing, and even more "true," the universalist understanding of Islam*.

Although Shah-Kazemi here begins by claiming the universal validity of all religious subjectivities, he then emphatically asserts that such a claim *must* include exclusivism—yet he does so only to immediately contradict himself in the very next sentence. While he thus claims that no particular interpretation can be said to be "*right and true to the exclusion of all others*," Shah-Kazemi is thereby compelled to admit that his universalist position is "*more compelling, more convincing, and even more 'true'*" than the exclusivist (and now *excluded*) Other. Thus, even Shah-Kazemi's careful attempt to embrace the exclusivist to avoid falling "into a mode of exclusivism" *fails*. Just as Kant's so-called universal religion of autonomous reason must reject heteronomous religious form as "accidental vehicles of religion," so too must Schuonian Perennialists exclusively reject similarly conceived *heteronomy* (i.e., exclusive attachment to particular religious dispensations) as ultimately less "true." As Kant's essentialist religion of "bare reason" (i.e., religion *as such*) ends up being a religion onto itself—that is "the true, *sole religion*"—so too does "*esoterism as such*," that is, the *religio perennis*, as "*the total truth*" for Schuonian Perennialists. As Schuon himself states: "esoterism alone is absolutely monotheistic, it alone recognizing only one religion under diverse forms."

As Wouter Hanegraaff observes, this type of a Perennialist position views exclusivist theologies as representing "'lower' levels in a hierarchy, or stages in a process of evolution towards genuine spiritual insight, which means that they are imperfect." "It is difficult to see," Hanegraaff trenchantly adds, "how this should be distinguished from other forms of exclusivism or, in some cases, dogmatism." Indeed, as Wendy Brown notes:

> The universal tolerates the particular in its particularity, in which the putative universal therefore always appears superior to that unassimilated particular—a superiority itself premised upon the nonreciprocity of tolerance (the particular does not tolerate the universal). It is the disappearance of power in the action of tolerance that convenes the hegemonic as the universal and the subordinate or minoritized as the particular.

Shah-Kazemi's aforementioned special pleading—as *authorized by* a universalism ascribed to Ibn 'Arabi—attempts to argue that all revealed religions are contemporaneously united within one single religious essence, yet his allegiance to Schuonian Perennialism ultimately must disenfranchise nonuniversalist religious Others as less free, that is, (slavishly) attached to the *material* particularities of *relative form*. As Shah-Kazemi states elsewhere: "all 'religions' are true by virtue of the absoluteness of their content, *while each is relative due to the particular nature of its form*." Put in Kantian terms, that which is absolute in all religions—that is, for Schuonians, the underlying transcendent essence of the *religio perennis*—is *pure truth*, yet the particular "statutes and observances" of each religion are secondary and therefore *less* true. Thus, for Schuonian Perennialists, those who heteronomously adhere to the laws of only one religion, while not recognizing the universal validity of the pure truth of other religions, are mired in the materiality of form and thus, *necessarily*, Other.

Throughout this book, I have shown how much of the Schuonian field of interpretation surrounding Ibn 'Arabi has attempted in varying degrees to separate his unitive mysticism from heteronomous

modes of religious absolutism and its attendant political cosmography. Yet, rather than a manifestation of an ostensible "cosmic intellect"—an intellect, as James Cutsinger suggests, that is "unaffected by the limitations of historical circumstance"—Schuon's "universalist" cartography clearly bears the burden of his own socio-historical genealogy. This cartographic burden, as I have argued above, can be understood as a hermeneutics of religious autonomy, which finds its full form in the ideas of Kant as carefully systematized in his late work *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*. Although such a hermeneutics has undergone meticulous and subtle refinement within the Schuonian field of interpretation—and especially regarding the thought of Ibn 'Arabi—it is not unique to Schuon or even to Perennialism, but is to be found at the very beginnings of Sufi studies in the West.

Indeed, the first European scholarly article solely dedicated to Sufism strikingly echoes a Kantian metaphysics and metaphorics of autonomy. In "A Treatise on Sufiism" (written in 1811 and published in 1819), Lt. James William Graham of the British East India Company relates that a Sufi may be "*a person of any religion or sect.*" Such a "mystery," according to Graham, lies in the fact of the Sufi's "total disengagement" from the sensory world, which entails "*an entire throwing off . . . of the practical mode of worship, ceremonies, &c. laid down in every religion.*" Yet, this process of "*throwing off . . .* the practical mode of worship"—what Graham also tellingly refers to as the "*pharisaical mode of worship*"—only happens when the mind of the Sufi is "properly nurtured *and become[s] matured*" through "tuition and due reflection." According to Graham, this marks the first stage of the Sufi path when the mind "*may throw off* those things which it was at first taught to revere, and enter into the view of a sublimer system." It is from the view of this "sublimer system" that "*man arrives to a knowledge of his own nature*" and thus "*may himself then look upon those outward prescribed forms as nugatory*."

Graham's interpretation of Sufism thus faithfully echoes the Kantian discourse of autonomy and its metaphorics of nudity and teleology of universal truth attained by gradually shedding the veils of religious form, which is inevitably associated with Semitic heteronomy—in Graham's words a "*pharisaical mode of worship.*" As Carl Ernst has trenchantly noted, when British Orientalists "discovered" the "Sooffees" in the latter half of the eighteenth century in India, the term *Sufi-ism* was invented "as an appropriation of those portions of 'Oriental' culture that Europeans found attractive." In terms of religion, perhaps the particular thing that eighteenth-century Europeans found *most* attractive was their own image. As Pacini observes, such thought marked a "shift from a conception of religion as conformity to the divine order of being to a conception of religion as conformity to the human ordering of ideas." This "modern religion of conscience"—or "looking glass religion"—was based on the Kantian "view of the modern subject whose most enduring trait was its dissociation from the world around it, and what was more, its subsequent transformation of that world into an image of itself."

Thus, in the Copernican cartographic revolution of such a Kantian looking-glass religion, the sanctified perspective of European subjectivity as an invisible "sovereign gaze"—or what Castro-Gómez also refers to as "the power of a *Deus absconditus*"—emerges as universalized truth. Here, Kant's teleology of autonomous religiosity envisions "religion finally to be detached gradually from all empirical determining bases, *from all statutes that rest on history*." In likewise fashion, the mapping strategy of Schuonian Perennialism—which claims an autonomous perspective based on "*the supra-formal substance*" within every religion—purports to transcend (and thereby *have power over*) the accidental, while those beholden to particular religious traditions are unwittingly controlled by such (*relative*) forms. Brown describes such strategic constructions as "*the autonomy of the subject from culture*—the idea that the subject is prior to culture and free to choose culture." It is indeed the conceit of autonomy, and its attendant pretense to *culturelessness*, through which post-Kantian, Euro-American thought has removed itself from the map of history and universalized situated Western epistemology as truth *itself*. Such principles of autonomy continue to be employed in contemporary

liberal discourse to legitimate the subordination of culture to the purported universal, while simultaneously perpetuating the claim that the political practice of universalization is not culturally imperialist since "as universals, these principles are capable of 'respecting' particular cultures," while "nonliberal orders themselves represent the crimes of particularism, fundamentalism, and intolerance, as well as the dangerousness of unindividuated humanity."

Under the weight of practices that echo strategies of universalism found from Kant through nineteenth-century Aryanism—strategies that I have shown are embedded within Schuonian Perennialism—Ibn 'Arabi's recourse to revealed law is *tolerated* within Perennialist discourse *only* as long as he is anachronistically understood to "transcend" religious and political rivalry and thus pluralistically acknowledge the contradictory truth claims and practices of other traditions by situating them as *secondary* and *accidental*. This type of distinction between religion and politics is maintained, as Russell McCutcheon points out, by the presence of the "idealist dualism of essence/manifestation." Thus, Kantian and Schuonian idealism both share discursive strategies that claim to pluralistically accept *the essential core* of every religion, but at the ultimate cost of religious and socio-historical *difference*. This approach universalizes an imagined, internal "esoteric" wisdom as primary, thereby dissociating "all connections and associations with larger issues of context, politics, and power."

Denuded of all trace of historical particularity, autonomy thus becomes a modern marker of religious, ethnoracial, and civilizational superiority, while heteronomy represents those inferior Others still epistemologically encumbered by their own socio-historical garb. David Theo Goldberg has referred to such a metanarrative of Othering as "racial historicism," which "elevates Europeans and their (postcolonial) progeny over primitive or undeveloped Others as a victory of History, of historical progress, even as it leaves open the possibility of those racial Others to historical development." Such racial historicism can be likened to what Ashwani Sharma has referred to as "whiteness as 'absent presence,' " which "seeks to stand for and be a measure of all humanity. *It operates as a universal point of identification that strives to structure all social identities*." Indeed, drawing on Emmanuel Levinas's philosophical defense of heteronomy and his notion of "ontological imperialism," Robert Young notes:

> In Western philosophy, when knowledge or theory comprehends the other, then the alterity of the latter vanishes as it becomes part of the same. ... In all cases the other is neutralized as a means of encompassing it: ontology amounts to a philosophy of power, an egotism in which the relation with the other is accomplished through its assimilation into the self.

Such a universalizing ontology of the self, as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari note, can be understood as a mode of "European racism" that "never detects the particles of the other," but rather "propagates waves of sameness until those who resist identification have been wiped out (or those who only allow themselves to be identified at a given degree of divergence)." Indeed, the debate about Jewish emancipation in nineteenth-century Germany discussed above was fueled by a project rooted within Kantian universalism and such an imposition of *sameness*. Because Jews were perceived as lacking the Kantian ideal of autonomous religious subjectivity, they were "excluded from an idealist body politic." To become a member of the modern German state, Jews needed to "lose their otherness"—that is, *to shed their clothes of historical difference*, in Kantian terms.

Thus, in both Kant and Schuon, calls to *cast off* religious form are tied to the assumed superiority of an imagined "white" European autonomous subjectivity—what Brown calls "the fiction of the autonomous individual"—over and against a purported "slavish" heteronomy of Semitic religious subjectivity. Such clear discourse conflating autonomy with racial superiority is thus a stark and ironic indication that Kantian and Schuonian so-called modes of "pure" universalism and "objectivity"

are in fact quite the opposite—that is, historically situated European presuppositions regarding what counts as authentically religious.

While Ibn 'Arabi enunciated a *universalizing* discourse of abrogation and the supersession of Islam over all other religions, both Schuon and Kant posited a universal religious essence or disposition accessible to all human consciousness and thus imagined their respective universalisms to be free of religious exclusivism and prejudice. Yet, as I have shown in chapter 4, Schuon understood that his divinely inspired "message" of the *religio perennis* was out of all religions the only true "monotheistic" way of knowing God, rising above the confusion of belief and the passivity of faith." As such, Schuon replaced the Muhammadan *Logos* with the Virgin Mary, who as the representative of the *religio perennis* holds "celestial supremacy" and "spiritual and cosmic supereminence." Likewise, Kant understood his ostensibly Christian, universal religion of autonomous morality to be superior to all "historical" religions—thus claiming "*pure rational religion ultimately to rule over all*." Indeed, Kant's final call for the "euthanasia of Judaism" (as quoted above) through an inner conversion to "pure moral religion" was, according to Paul Rose, "in effect nothing more than a secularization of the old Christian idea that the Old Testament and the Jewish religion had been superseded by the New Testament and Christianity."

Thus, in ironically similar ways to the absolute religious discourse of Ibn 'Arabi, Kant and Schuon offer their own versions of abrogative supersessionism. Yet unlike Ibn 'Arabi, their discourse is additionally racialist in particularly modern terms. Where, as I have shown, Ibn 'Arabi is discursively open about his religious exclusivism, Kant and Schuon conceal theirs within so-called universal discourses that claim to holistically include all (*true*) religions by acknowledging their essential core. In the face of such schemas that obscure and thus naturalize their exclusivist presuppositions, Kantian and Schuonian universal assertions can only be construed as ideological. The radical incongruity inherent within these discourses further calls into question the entire premise of religious universalism and the possibility of nonexclusivist religious identity. These paradoxical inconsistencies are indeed a confirmation (of the postmodern truism) that exclusivism is inherent within the construction of any claim to truth. Thus, in discussing such contradictions in other related examples of universalist theology, Nicholson observes that "the entirety of religious discourse and practice . . . *would appear to be implicated, either directly or indirectly, in relations of religious rivalry*."

Just as Castro-Gómez argues that the universal taxonomical categories that emerged in the sixteenth century were the products of local European epistemology in the service of imperial designs, Kant's own discourse of universalism "pertains not," as Hunter puts it, "to universal truth, but to *a particular regional way* of acceding to truth as 'universal.' " Such regional particularity is especially significant in the face of Kant's (and by extension Schuon's) embedded racism. Thus, as Emmanuel Eze notes, the Kantian universal idea of pure human reason "colonizes humanity by grounding the particularity of the European self as center even as it denies the humanity of others."

In the end, it would seem that both Kantian and Schuonian thought reflect the cartographic approach of early modern European imperialism and its attendant ideological conceit of a universal perspective that claims to transcend its own ethnocentric situatedness. It is precisely the discursive practices and grammar of this larger Eurohegemonic conceptual lineage of universalism—*along with its attendant religious, racial, and civilizational superiority*—that Schuonian Perennialism inherits and naturalizes within its interpretive field. While this study has shown that Ibn 'Arabi's mysticism was heteronomously constituted by his religious tradition and intellectual lineage, it has also shown that the modern Western conceit of "religion" as a universally transcendent essence cannot exist in vacuo. Although the long-standing European discursive tradition of autonomy claims a universal "empty" space, it would appear that not only nature but also the *nature of human discursivity* abhors such emptiness. "All knowledge," as Young warns, "may be variously contaminated, implicated in its very formal or

'objective' structures." Indeed, as the history of European epistemology shows—and the Schuonian discourses on Ibn 'Arabi in the foregoing chapters corroborate—it is none other than the self-image of Western subjectivity that so often fills the void left by the transcendence it claims to have attained. <>

ISLAM AND THE FATE OF OTHERS: THE SALVATION QUESTION by Mohammad Hassan Khalil [Oxford University Press, 9780199796663]

Can non-Muslims be saved? And can those who are damned to Hell ever be redeemed? This book examines the writings of important medieval and modern Muslim scholars on the controversial question of non-Muslim salvation. The book pays considerable attention to four of the most prominent figures in the history of Islam: al-Ghazali, Ibn 'Arabi, Ibn Taymiyya, and Rashid Rida. Also examined are works by a wide variety of other writers, from Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya to Mulla Sadra to Shah Wali Allah of Delhi to Muhammad 'Ali of Lahore to Sayyid Qutb to Yusuf al-Qaradawi to Farid Esack to yet others. The book demonstrates that although the influential theologians featured in this book tended to shun a truly pluralistic conception of salvation, most envisioned a Paradise populated with non-Muslims—and a God of justice and, more significantly, mercy. Their sundry interpretations of the Qur'an and hadith corpus—from optimistic depictions of Judgment Day to notions of a temporal Hell and salvation for all—challenge commonly held assumptions about Islamic scripture and thought.

Rethinking Our Assumptions: The Question

"what does Islam say about the fate of non-Muslims?" This ubiquitous question has clear and profound theological and practical implications. It also tends to evoke one-dimensional responses. And with academics, pundits, and politicians debating whether we are approaching, or even already engaged in, a "clash of civilizations," there has been a recent proliferation of discourses that present the matter in black and white.

One popular sentiment is that Islam condemns non-Muslims to everlasting damnation. "In this light, the people who died on September 11 were nothing more than fuel for the eternal fires of God's justice," Sam Harris proclaims in his *New York Times* best seller, **THE END OF FAITH**. An entirely different response, less common but gaining currency, is that Islam, at its core, is ecumenical: it recognizes other traditions as divinely ordained paths to Paradise. In his celebrated book, **NO GOD BUT GOD,** Reza Aslan makes precisely this point, depicting Jews and Christians as "spiritual cousins" to Muslims.

Further complicating matters for the serious inquirer is the fact that there is a lacuna in the Western study of Islam on the topic of soteriology—a term derived from the Greek *sōtēria* (deliverance, salvation) and *logos* (discourse, reasoning), thus denoting theological discussions and doctrines of salvation. Yet nearly fourteen centuries since Islam's inception, this remains a subject on which Muslim scholars write extensively. And rightfully so: salvation is arguably *the* major theme of the Qur'an.

In point of fact, the question at hand is not a simple one, regardless of whether by "Islam" one means the sacred texts of the faith or the theological positions presumed to be grounded in those texts. There has always been a general agreement among Muslim scholars that, according to Islamic scripture, some will rejoice in Heaven while others will suffer in Hell. But who, exactly, will rejoice, and who will suffer? And what is the duration and nature of the rejoicing and the suffering? These have long been contentious issues—issues that ultimately involve working out the precise implications of God being both merciful and just.

In what follows, I examine the writings of some of the most prominent medieval and modern Muslim scholars on this controversial topic, demonstrating, among other things, just how multifaceted these discussions can be. The four individuals I have selected for my analysis are Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935). These scholarly giants, whose names and legacies are familiar to any student of Islamic studies, continue to influence countless Muslims, from Jakarta to Jeddah to Juneau. But before attempting to elucidate their thought and assess their place in the Islamic soteriological narrative, we must first explore the nature of salvation in Islam and the attendant notions of Heaven and Hell.

A Brief Introduction to Salvation in Islam

Whether it takes the form of a soft whisper in prayer or a piercing chant before a crowd, the Qur'an's most often recited sura (chapter) is its first, "al-Fātiḥa" (The Opening). In reciting it, believers highlight the role of God as "Master of the Day of Judgment" (Q. 1:4) and beseech His guidance to "the straight path: the path of those You have blessed, not of those who incur anger, nor of those who go astray" (1:6–7). There is a sense of urgency in this appeal. Toward the end of the Qur'an, we read: "By the declining day, humanity is [deep] in loss, except for those who believe, do good deeds, urge one another to the truth, and urge one another to steadfastness" (Q. 103:1–3). The message is unambiguous: people must choose their life paths wisely.

It is God's messengers who bring this reality to light. The Qur'an frequently portrays the Prophet Muḥammad (d. 11/632) (as well as the messengers before him) as a "bearer of good news" (*bashīr*, *mubashshir*) and a "warner" (*nadhīr*, *mundhir*) (2:119) to those whom he commands to "worship God and shun false gods" (16:36). Good news of continuous paradisiacal pleasure is given to "those who have faith and do good works" (Q. 2:25), while warnings of continuous anguish in the flames of Hell are given to "those who reject faith and deny [God's] revelations" (2:39). Thus, although both outcomes come to fruition *only* through God's will, the dichotomy between salvation and damnation is closely associated with the distinction between obedience and disobedience and what Toshihiko Izutsu describes as the Qur'an's "essential opposition" of *īmān* (belief, faith, assent, sincerity, fidelity) and *kufr* (unbelief, rejection, dissent, concealment of the truth, ingratitude).

These themes are captured in the following plea to Pharaoh's people by an unidentified "believer":

> My people, follow me! I will guide you to the right path. My people, the life of this world is only a brief enjoyment; it is the hereafter that is the lasting home. Whoever does evil will be repaid with its like; whoever does good and believes, be it a man or a woman, will enter

> Paradise and be provided for without measure. My people, why do I call you to salvation [*al-najāh*] when you call me to the Fire? You call me to disbelieve in God and to associate with Him things of which I have no knowledge; I call you to the Mighty, the Forgiving … our return is to God alone, and it will be the rebels who will inhabit the Fire. [One Day] you will remember what I am saying to you now, so I commit my case to God: God is well aware of His servants. (Q. 40:38–44)

While there is a notion of salvation in this world (*al-dunyā*), the Qur'anic emphasis is undoubtedly on the next (*al-ākhira*).[7] Indeed, the Qur'an has much to say about Judgment Day, which is referred to as, among other names, the Last Day (*al-yawm al-ākhir*) (2:8), the Hour (*al-sāʿa*) (6:31), the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāma*) (21:47), and the Day of Reckoning (*yawm al-ḥisāb*) (38:16). It is on this "day" that "whoever has done an iota of good will see it, but whoever has done an iota of evil will see that" (Q. 99:6–8), for all souls, none of which are born tainted with sin, are responsible for their own actions (6:164). Because humanity is generally prone to err, however, its deliverance, and indeed triumph, is predicated on self-rectification and, above all, divine forgiveness. Thus, the frequent claim that Islam has no concept of salvation because it has no doctrine of original sin is true only if we assume a narrow definition of salvation. When discussing eschatological reward and punishment, it is customary for Muslim theologians, including those examined here, to employ the Qur'anic term *najāh*, which appears in the plea to Pharaoh's people in the passage quoted above and is typically—and for good reason—translated as "salvation" or "deliverance."

Looking to prophetic traditions, or hadiths, we learn that individuals on the Last Day will be required to cross a bridge.[9] Those believers (*muʾminūn*, sing. *muʾmin*) who successfully traverse it will make their way into Heaven, which the Qur'an calls the Home of Peace (*dār al-salām*) (6:127), the Lasting Home (*dār al-qarār*) (40:39), Paradise (*al-firdaws*) (18:107), the Garden (*al-janna*) (81:13), and its plural, Gardens (*jannāt*) (4:13). Hell is described by names such as Gehenna (*jahannam*) (3:12), the Fire (*al-nār*) (2:39), the Crusher (*al-ḥuṭama*) (104:4), and the Bottomless Pit (*al-hāwiya*) (101:9), and it awaits sinners and unbelievers (*kāfirūn* or *kuffār*, sing. *kāfir*) who fall.

Underscoring the consequentiality of decisions made in this life, the Qur'an depicts both multileveled, multigated afterlife abodes in great detail. As Sachiko Murata and William Chittick observe, "No scripture devotes as much attention as the Koran to describing the torments of hell and the delights of paradise." While some of these descriptions parallel features of the afterlife according to older traditions, including ancient Egyptian religion, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity, we also observe certain characteristics representative of the Arabian environment in which Islam arose. Apart from enjoying the peaceful presence of God (Q. 6:127), Heaven's inhabitants will find, among other things, rich gardens (42:22), rivers (2:25), shade (56:30), green cushions (55:76), superb rugs (55:76), meat (56:21), fruits (77:42), youths who serve them cups overflowing with pure drink (56:17–18, 78:34), and companions with beautiful eyes (44:54)—a clear contrast to the pangs and burning agonies of Hell (22:19–22, 88:4–7), where the wretched will be veiled from God (83:15).

When considering Qur'anic references to the hereafter it is important to keep in mind that many such references are, to quote Michael Sells, "placed in an elusive literary frame that gives them a depth far beyond any simple-minded notion of heavenly reward and hellish punishment"; there "is an openness as to what the warning or promise actually means." At the heart of these descriptions—interpreted literally or metaphorically—is the spur to transform and rectify the audience.

But it is precisely the Qur'an's openness that helps to explain some of the more heated debates in Islamic intellectual history. Consider, for instance, that while the Qur'an declares that God "guides whomever He wills" and "leads astray whomever He wills" (14:4), it also states that those who disregard God's message "have squandered their own selves" (7:53) and that their punishment is "on

account of what [they] stored up for [themselves] with [their] own hands, and God is never unjust to His servants" (3:182). It is perhaps not astonishing, then, that Muslim theologians have long debated the role of human agency. Without attempting to resolve the matter, it should suffice to note that the vast majority of Muslim scholars have affirmed in varying degrees *some* form of human responsibility, and it is generally presumed that the admonition of messengers can induce a bona fide moral response.

A righteous response is that which is in tune with the pure natural disposition (*fiṭra*) God instilled in humankind (Q. 30:30). According to a traditional reading of the Qur'an, at some point in the mysterious, primordial past, God brought forth all of Adam's descendants and asked, "Am I not your Lord?" to which they replied, "Yes, we bear witness" (7:172). As Seyyed Hossein Nasr explains:

Men and women still bear the echo of this "yes" deep down within their souls, and the call of Islam is precisely to this primordial nature, which uttered the "yes" even before the creation of the heavens and the earth. The call of Islam therefore concerns, above all, the remembrance of a knowledge deeply embedded in our being, a confirmation of a knowledge that saves, hence the soteriological function of knowledge in Islam.… The great sin in Islam is forgetfulness and the resulting inability of the intelligence to function in the way that God created it as the means to know the One. That is why the greatest sin in Islam and the only one God does not forgive is *shirk*, or taking a partner unto God, which means denying the Oneness of God.

Accordingly, "every community has been sent a warner" (Q. 35:24), a "guide" (13:7), and a "messenger" (10:47), with Muḥammad being the "seal of the prophets" (33:40) sent to all of humanity (25:1). While it is clear that messengers warn of impending doom for the wicked, Muslim scholars continue to dispute over what awaits individuals who never receive this warning, that is, the "unreached." (The verse "every community has been sent a warner" need not mean that each and every person has received the divinely inspired message or that all communities have "adequately" preserved it.) According to the Qur'an, it is *because* of messengers that people will "have no excuse before God" (4:165); "every group that is thrown in" Hell will confess that it received a "warner" (67:6–11); and in a passage that we shall revisit often, God, speaking in the plural, announces, "We do not punish until We have sent a messenger" (17:15). Nevertheless, the Qur'an also states that Pharaoh transgressed *before* receiving the warning of Moses (79:17). Can one "transgress" and still be saved solely on the grounds that one never encountered the message? Or, perhaps more controversially, should we broaden our understanding of "warners" and "messengers"? For instance, some theologians hold that these terms often connote "reason." But assuming that the statement "We do not punish until We have sent a messenger" (Q. 17:15) refers to messengers as traditionally understood (that is, select humans who convey God's message), and assuming that it represents a general principle applicable both to this life and to the next, we are left without an answer to the question of how exactly God will deal with the unreached in the life to come. Similarly unclear is the qualification(s) for being counted among the "reached" in the first place. Is mere exposure to the message all that matters? Or is there more to it?

The Qur'an, through its openness, undoubtedly allows for a wide variety of soteriological interpretations. Although it foretells the ominous destiny awaiting specific figures, such as Satan (Iblīs) (17:61–63), Pharaoh (Firʿawn) (79:15–25), and the Prophet's callous uncle Abū Lahab and his similarly heartless wife (111:1–5), the fact that its warnings are typically general in nature allows for an array of viewpoints regarding the fate of those whose destiny has not been revealed. The question of the status of those innumerable individuals who do not fit, or at least appear not to fit, the Qur'anic categories of righteous believers and unrighteous unbelievers is vexing. The Qur'an refers in passing to those who are in between the two groups (35:32) but never explicitly mentions their fate. It also provides a tantalizingly brief reference to the "people of the heights" (*al-aʿrāf*)

standing between Heaven and Hell (7:46–49) but leaves us wondering whether they are outstanding on account of their elevation (on "the heights") or in a state of limbo on account of their being in between Heaven and Hell. It is, therefore, not surprising that Muslim scholars have failed to reach a consensus on questions such as, What awaits unrepentant, sinning believers, particularly those who seem to reflect the rebellious (Q. 72:23), evildoing (37:63), oppressive (78:22) nature of Hell-bound unbelievers? What about "sincere" monotheists who are not part of the Muslim community? Or even "earnest" polytheists, deists, agnostics, and atheists? What *exactly* constitutes salvific belief and damnatory unbelief?

Salvation for Whom?

Like other faiths, Islam has developed its own unique currents of soteriological intra- and, more relevant for our purposes, interreligious exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. I define these terms as follows: "exclusivists" maintain that only their particular religious tradition or interpretation is salvific and that adherents of all other beliefs will be punished in Hell. "Inclusivists" similarly affirm that theirs is the path of Heaven but hold that sincere outsiders who could not have recognized it as such will be saved. "Pluralists" assert that, regardless of the circumstances, there are several religious traditions or interpretations that are equally effective salvifically. This terminology would seem alien to premodern and many modern Muslim scholars, but this tripartite classification—versions of which are commonly employed by many contemporary philosophers of religion[23]—allows us to develop a clearer conception of the Islamic soteriological spectrum. Needless to say, these categories are not monolithic, and I shall examine various subcategories, particularly in those cases where further distinctions are necessary.

Soteriological pluralists often point to Qur'anic passages such as 5:48, which indicates that God never intended for humanity to remain a single community with a single law:

We have revealed to you [Muḥammad] the scripture in truth, confirming the scriptures that came before it and as a guardian [*muhaymin*] over them: so judge between them according to what God has sent down. Do not follow their whims, which deviate from the truth that has come to you. We have assigned a law [*shirʿa*] and a path [*minhāj*] to each of you. If God had so willed, He would have made you one community, but He wanted to test you through that which He has given you, so race to do good: you will all return to God and He will make clear to you the matters about which you differed.

In this light, it is notable that while the Qur'an presents itself as "the criterion" (*al-furqān*) (25:1), it also states that it is only one in a line of divinely revealed books that includes the Torah (*tawrāh*) (3:3), Psalms (*zabūr*) (4:163), and Gospel (*injīl*) (3:3). This is why Jews and Christians are designated as People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*), and it is this proximity to Muslims that best explains why the latter may intermarry and share meals with the former (Q. 5:5). And while many Muslims argue as a matter of faith that the scriptures on which contemporary Jews and Christians rely have been corrupted, one pluralist position is that a careful reading of the Qur'an (particularly 2:75–79, 3:78, 4:46, and 5:13) leads only to the conclusion that *certain groups* among the People of the Book "distorted" scripture by misrepresenting its message and supplementing it with falsehoods. An apparent example of this distortion would be the Jewish and Christian exclusivist claim, "No one will enter Paradise unless he [or she] is a Jew or Christian" (Q. 2:111). The Qur'an rejects this claim and promises heavenly reward to "any who direct themselves wholly to God and do good" (2:112). Even more poignant are Q. 2:62 and 5:69, passages that portend the salvation of righteous, faithful Jews and Christians and a mysterious group called the Sabians:

> The believers, the Jews, the Christians, and the Sabians—all those who believe in God and the Last Day and do good—will have their rewards with their Lord. No fear for them, nor will they grieve. (2:62)

For the believers, the Jews, the Sabians, and the Christians—all those who believe in God and the Last Day and do good—there is no fear: they will not grieve. (5:69)

Reflecting on Q. 2:62, which is probably the most often cited passage in pluralist discourse, Mahmoud Ayoub laments the fact that exegetes have generally restricted its message in several ways, such as declaring it abrogated (meaning that it was revoked and replaced by Qur'anic statements revealed later in time) or accepting "the universality of the verse until the coming of Islam, but thereafter [limiting] its applicability only to those who hold the faith of Islam." Another restrictive interpretation maintains that the reference to Jews, Christians, and Sabians is based on origins, affiliations, or even ethnicity, rather than religion.[28]In a similar vein, many theologians hold that the reference in Q. 5:48 to the divisions within humanity is not a vindication of this diversity, especially in a context in which Muḥammad's corrective message (a "guardian" over the previous scriptures) is made available: Islam alone is the "straight path" to God. This particular interpretation allows for declarations like that made by the famed scholar of hadith and jurisprudence Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) that anyone who follows a religion other than Islam is an unbeliever and the same applies to any self-professing Muslim who doubts this or considers other religions valid.

Along these lines, soteriological exclusivists often cite the Qur'an's condemnation of the unforgivable sin of *shirk* (associating partners with God) (4:116), as well as its censure of various beliefs and practices of Jews and Christians. Well known is Q. 9:29, which calls for war against those People of the Book "who do not believe in God and the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden, who do not follow the religion [*dīn*] of truth" until they surrender and pay a tax called the *jizya*. (Needless to say, the precise meaning and implications of this command are issues of debate among Muslims.) The next two verses (Q. 9:30–31) rebuke Jews for taking their rabbis as lords and saying, "Ezra [ʿUzayr] is the son of God" (an ostensibly Arabian phenomenon),[32] and Christians for taking Jesus and their monks as lords and saying, "The Messiah is the son of God." Two verses later, we find the pronouncement that it is God "who has sent His messenger with guidance and the religion [*dīn*] of truth, to show that it is above all [other] religions" (9:33). As such, the Qur'an characterizes those People of the Book who accept what was revealed to them (for example, the Torah) but reject "what came afterward" as "unbelievers" (2:90–91). We are also informed that "any revelation" God causes "to be superseded or forgotten," He replaces "with something better or similar" (Q. 2:106). Accordingly, Q. 5:3—believed by many to have been the last verse revealed—states, "Today I have perfected your religion [*dīn*] for you, completed My blessing upon you, and chosen *islām* as your religion." Most significant in exclusivist discourse, however, are Q. 3:19 and 3:85, which speak of *islām* being the only acceptable religion, or *dīn*:

> True religion [*al-dīn*], in God's eyes, is *islām*. Those who were given the Book disagreed out of rivalry, only after they had been given knowledge—if anyone denies God's revelations, God is swift to take account. (3:19)

If anyone seeks a religion [*dīn*] other than *islām*, it will not be accepted from him [or her]: he [or she] will be one of the losers in the hereafter. (3:85)

One may object, however, that the Qur'anic conception of *dīn* may not be as rigid as later interpreters have made it out to be. And *islām* (to be precise, *al-islām*) may be understood literally and broadly as "submission" to God (or "the submission"), rather than simply reified Islam. In the words of one modern translator of the Qur'an, the "exclusive application" of *islām* to followers of Muḥammad "represents a definitely post-Qur'anic development." The Qur'an itself uses the

term *muslim*—the active participle of the verb *aslama* (to submit) from which *islām* is derived—in a manner that is undoubtedly general in nature. To quote Mahmut Aydin,

When Joseph demanded to die as a "muslim" in his prayer [Q. 12:101] and Abraham described himself as a "muslim" [Q. 3:67], they did not mean that they were members of the institutionalized religion of the Prophet Muhammad. Rather, they meant to submit to God/Allah and to obey God's orders.

There is in fact more to be said about the role of semantics in this debate. As I indicated earlier, the Qur'an presents *īmān* and *kufr* as opposing orientations with contrasting soteriological consequences. While *īmān* is usually translated as "belief," it also denotes faith, assent, sincerity, and fidelity; while *kufr* is usually translated as "unbelief," it also denotes rejection, dissent, concealment of the truth, and ingratitude. In this light, although the Qur'an rejects certain Jewish and Christian truth claims, one could argue that it only condemns "wicked" People of the Book living in the Prophet's context who recognized the truth of his message yet deliberately denied it (3:70–86), ridiculed it (5:57–59), and rebelled against it—a rebellion that would explain the Qur'anic call to arms. Although "most" People of the Book in contact with Muḥammad are described as being "wrongdoers" (Q. 3:110), what are we to think of the remaining Jews and Christians? Similarly, the scriptural censure of "associationists" (*mushrikūn*), that is, those guilty of *shirk*, could be contextualized in light of the injustices and antagonism that Arab pagans and others engendered in their defiance of the Prophet. In other words, rather than being entirely a doctrinal matter, *shirk* might also connote hubris and insolence against those seeking to devote themselves to God alone. It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that the Qur'an characterizes certain People of the Book—all or some of whom would qualify as monotheists by modern designations—as "associationists" in Q. 9:33, immediately after informing us that they "try to extinguish God's light with their mouths" (9:32) and immediately before noting that "many rabbis and monks wrongfully consume people's possessions and turn people away from God's path" (9:34).

Soteriological pluralists need not maintain that the various, equally salvific religious paths are equally true ontologically. Many pluralists, for example, argue that although Islam and Christianity are just as effective salvifically, the truth claims of the former are superior to those of the latter. Some, however, are willing to go a step further. To quote the Iranian thinker Abdolkarim Soroush:

> The vast scope of insoluble religious differences compounded by the self-assurance of everyone involved gives rise to the suspicion that God may favor … pluralism and that each group partakes of an aspect of the truth.… Is the truth not one, and all the differences to paraphrase [the Persian mystic Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273)], "differences of perspective"?

For those who are not moved by the pluralist project, and also not satisfied with the exclusivist alternative, there is inclusivism. A group I classify as "limited inclusivists" maintain that, among non-Muslims, only the unreached may be saved (even if there is no consensus on how exactly they will be judged, if at all). This is based in part on a generalized reading of the scriptural pronouncement that God does "not punish until [He has] sent a messenger" (Q. 17:15), as well as the following prophetic proclamation (recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* hadith collection): "By Him in whose hand is the life of Muhammad, anyone among the community of Jews or Christians *who hears about me* and does not believe in that with which I have been sent and dies (in this state), will be among the denizens of the [Fire]."

Limited inclusivists reject the claim often made by exclusivists, especially in modern times, that the category of the unreached no longer exists. These inclusivists may insist that non-Muslims must encounter specific features of the final message—the message in its "true" form (however

understood)—in order to be counted among the reached; should they then refuse to submit, they would be considered "insincere."

On the other end of the inclusivist spectrum, "liberal inclusivists" assert that the category of sincere non-Muslims includes individuals who have been exposed to the message in its true form yet are in no way convinced. Thus, liberal inclusivists generally read passages such as Q. 17:15 and the aforementioned "*who hears about me*" hadith—assuming they accept the authenticity of this hadith (most Sunnis do)—in much the same way limited inclusivists (not to mention pluralists) read those verses that condemn Jews and Christians, that is, they elucidate, contextualize, and/or qualify the statements in light of other scriptural passages and assumptions.

The debate among inclusivists, then, revolves around the question, What qualifies as a sincere response to the Islamic message upon encountering it? For limited inclusivists, the answer is simple: conversion to Islam. For others, the answer is either conversion or active investigation of the content of the message. For liberal inclusivists, if the message were never seen to be a possible source of divine guidance, it would make little sense to speak of a sincere response. But however one qualifies sincere non-Muslims, inclusivists generally agree that these are individuals who never actively strive to extinguish the light of God's message and never take on the rebellious, evildoing, oppressive characteristics of the damned. The God of mercy and justice, so goes the argument, would surely save such earnest non-Muslims, if only through some form of intercession on Judgment Day.

Such discussions of the fate of non-Muslims have intensified in recent decades. This discourse has fostered a unique debate, particularly evident in the context of Western scholarship, which pits pluralists against inclusivists. At the same time, however, numerous modern treatments of Islam seem to present the exclusivist paradigm in passing, as a foregone conclusion. Johannes Stöckle writes, "The impure who are not purified by Islam shall be in hell-fire," while Muhammad Abul Quasem affirms that "entry into Islam fulfills the most basic requirement of salvation." Neither Stöckle nor Abul Quasem qualifies these statements, leaving the reader with the impression that salvation is reserved only for Muslims, the adherents of reified Islam. Like many earlier scholars, Abul Quasem also presents a pessimistic view of the Islamic afterlife: on the basis of a famous hadith, he states that most of humanity, 999 out of every one thousand, "will fall down into Hell"; however, he adds, since sinning believers will attain "salvation after damnation," it is "only infidels [who] will be suffering in Hell forever." (I provide an optimistic inclusivist reassessment of the hadith on the 999 in chapter 1.) Pessimistic exclusivism is also a common theme in historical portrayals of the earliest Muslims. On the basis of historiographical writings and hadith collections, Patricia Crone argues that the common belief among those factions that evolved into the groups later referred to as Sunnis, Shi'ites, and Khārijites was that salvation could only be achieved through Islam and under the guidance of a single, "true" imam (leader): "Anyone who joined the wrong caravan became an unbeliever (*kāfir*), for there was only one community of believers." Thus, all other leaders were illegitimate and led their "caravan[s] to Hell." This image of a solitary, select caravan stands in sharp contrast to the conception of a faith that embraces and even promotes other religious paths. Despite occasional publications by scholars such as Fred Donner, who presents Islam as an originally ecumenical tradition embracing certain Jews and Christians, this and similar visions of Islam are, seemingly, less popular. This helps to explain why, particularly in recent years, growing contingents of Muslim pluralists have been active in promoting their own paradigms, leading, in turn, to inclusivist rebuttals by their coreligionists. I survey this modern debate, particularly in its Western manifestation, later in this book.

Salvation for the Damned?

While the discourse of salvation on Judgment Day has attracted a great deal of attention, another pivotal controversy hinges on the duration of punishment: are the inhabitants of Hell doomed to be chastised in the Fire for all of eternity, despite the temporality of their evil deeds and despite God's ability to grant them an opportunity to reform themselves at some point in the hereafter? Here, too, we find a plethora of responses in the history of Islamic thought, with theological discussions of the eternality of Hell (and even Heaven) beginning to proliferate from around the second/eighth century. In fact, as we shall see, this may have been a divisive topic as early as the period of the first four caliphs (11–40/632–661). I refer to those who hold that everyone will be granted everlasting life in Paradise as "universalists." In contrast, "damnationists" maintain that at least some will endure everlasting chastisement. Universalists who believe that all of Hell's inhabitants will be admitted into Heaven following a significant period of time—the overwhelming majority of Muslim universalists—will occasionally be described as having interim and ultimate positions (for example, "interim inclusivism" or "ultimate universalism").

It is perhaps only fitting at this point to restate my initial observation: discussions of salvation in Islam have generally been plagued with oversimplifications. One possible explanation for why this is true of modern scholarship is an overreliance on a limited array of Muslim creedal, theological, and popular works. Many of these works present "Islam's position" as follows: while sinning believers may be punished in Hell for a finite period of time, eternal damnation awaits anyone who dies an unbeliever. This belief forms part of the Islamic creed according to theologians as prominent as Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933), Shaykh Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142), and ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1355). The famous Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935) implies it by stating that only a group of monotheists (that is, believers) will be taken out of the Fire—a Fire that he never characterizes as finite. This damnationism is also presented in a number of Muslim theological works as the consensus, or *ijmāʿ*, opinion. This is extremely significant given the widespread acceptance of the prophetic report that reads, "My community shall never agree on an error." Even so, from an academic standpoint, conscious of the realm of influential historical orientations and textual possibilities, regarding the everlasting damnation of unbelievers as "Islam's position" is problematic. And yet the eternality of Hell is considered standard in many foundational Western academic works that describe either Muslim scholarly views or the Qur'an itself. The following examples serve to illustrate this point:

1. In **ISLAM: THE STRAIGHT PATH,** specifically in a discussion of the Qur'anic afterlife, John Esposito writes:

> The specter of the Last Judgment, with its eternal reward and punishment, remains a constant reminder of the ultimate consequences of each life. It underscores the Quran's strong and repeated emphasis on the ultimate moral responsibility and accountability of each believer.… In sharp contrast [to Heaven's inhabitants], the damned will be banished to hell, forever separated from God.

2. In **MAJOR THEMES OF THE QUR'AN** by Fazlur Rahman (d. 1988), we find a similar account of the life to come:

> The central endeavor of the Qur'an is for man to develop … "keen sight" here and now, when there is opportunity for action and progress, for at the Hour of Judgment it will be too late to remedy the state of affairs; there one will be reaping, not sowing or nurturing. Hence one can speak there only of eternal success or failure, of everlasting Fire or Garden—that is to say, for the fate of the individual.

3. In **APPROACHING THE QUR'ÁN: THE EARLY REVELATIONS**, Michael Sells describes the Day of Judgment as a time when what "seems secure and solid turns out to be ephemeral, and what seems small or insignificant is revealed as one's eternal reality and destiny." Accordingly, we read in Sells's translation of Q. 98:6 that unbelievers will have an "eternal" stay in the Fire.

To be sure, the field of translation can be a theological battleground. As we shall see, much debate revolves around the wording the Qur'an employs in discussing the duration of punishment in Hell and the extent to which it differs from depictions of heavenly reward. Two common word types cited in these discussions are those that have the three-letter root *kh-l-d* (for example, *khālidīn* or *khulūd*) and *'-b-d* (for example, *abad* or its accusative form *abadan*). An expression like *khālidīn fīhā* (Q. 9:68), used in reference to Hell, can be translated as "they will remain in it forever" or, simply, "they will remain in it"; *khālidīn fīhā abadan* (Q. 72:23) can be translated as "they will remain in it forever" or "they will remain in it for a long time." If we assume the latter translation, we are left with a series of questions: does the Qur'an contain *any* categorical affirmation of Hell's eternality? Does the fact that "transgressors" will remain in Hell "for ages" (*aḥqāban*) (Q. 78:23) mean that there is a limit to their stay after all—even if they were guilty of *shirk*? Is the Qur'anic reproval of those Jews who maintained that the punishment in the Fire would only last "a limited number of days" (3:23–24) a forewarning that chastisement is everlasting or that it is just considerably longer? When the Qur'an states that "their punishment will not be lightened, nor will they be reprieved" (2:162), and "they will have no share in the hereafter" (2:200), is it speaking of a temporal or eternal reality? If the latter, is it not possible that such statements are ultimately qualified by God's volition, as indicated by the Qur'anic pronouncement in 6:128 that Hell's inhabitants will remain in the Fire "unless God wills otherwise"? Is the Qur'anic declaration that Hell's inhabitants will remain in the Fire "for as long as the heavens and earth endure, unless your Lord wills otherwise: your Lord carries out *whatever* He wills" (11:107) significantly different from the pronouncement regarding Heaven's inhabitants: "they will be in Paradise for as long as the heavens and earth endure unless your Lord wills otherwise—*an unceasing gift*" (11:108)? (The overwhelming majority of Muslim scholars take the expression "for as long as the heavens and earth endure" to mean "forever.") Leaving aside the Qur'an, what are we to make of reports attributed to the Companions of the Prophet, several of which I examine in chapter 3, which seem to foretell the eventual salvation of Hell's inhabitants? Can they be harmonized with other traditions that appear to affirm the exact opposite? And, from a theological standpoint, is salvation for *all* (including, for example, Pharaoh, Abū Lahab, Hitler) just? Conversely, is *everlasting* damnation fair and congruous with God's merciful nature?

Many modern scholars of Islam have overlooked the fact that the eternality of Hell has long been a contentious issue among Muslim thinkers. To the best of my knowledge, the earliest English academic work to focus exclusively on this controversy is James Robson's article "Is the Moslem Hell Eternal?" Published in *The Moslem World* journal in 1938, the article is a response to the twentieth-century universalist Maulana Muhammad Ali. Robson's conclusion is that the Islamic Hell must be eternal and that this has historically been the consensus view of Muslim scholars. (I examine this debate between Ali and Robson in chapter 3.) Western scholarship has had little to say on the matter since 1938 besides those numerous instances in which the eternality of Hell is assumed. One interesting exception is Jane Smith and Yvonne Haddad's monograph **THE ISLAMIC UNDERSTANDING OF DEATH AND RESURRECTION (**1981). "In general," Smith and Haddad assert, "it can be said that the non-eternity of the Fire has prevailed as the understanding of the Muslim community" thanks to important scholars who took note of the careful wording of the Qur'an and certain hadiths—even though "the vast majority of reports support the understanding of the eternality of the Fire." This is to be sharply contrasted with Binyamin Abrahamov's relatively

recent assessment that, despite the presence of detractors, the "orthodox" position has been Hell's eternality. I evaluate these conflicting statements below.

Salvation and God

One important corollary of exclusivist–inclusivist–pluralist and universalist–damnationist discourses is that they allow us to reconsider the nature of the Qur'anic God, the subject of considerable discussion in Western scholarship. Writing nearly a century ago, W. Knietschke describes Him as "an Absolute Despot" whose prevailing concern is justice rather than loving mercy. Along these lines, almost half a century later, Daud Rahbar argues that the Qur'an's "central notion is God's strict justice," and that "all themes are subservient to this central theme"—a theme that is constantly reaffirmed in reference to the Day of Judgment. To this he adds, "God's forgiveness, mercy and love are strictly for those who believe in Him and act aright. Wherever there is an allusion to God's mercy or forgiveness in the Qurʾān, we find that within an inch there is also an allusion to the torment He has prepared for the evil-doers."

Although Johan Bouman states that he is not completely satisfied with Rahbar's study, and acknowledges the fact that the Qur'an is replete with references to mercy, he ultimately agrees with Rahbar that divine justice trumps all other characteristics in the Qur'anic universe. In contrast, Sachiko Murata and William Chittick characterize mercy as "God's fundamental motive." Meanwhile, Fazlur Rahman, who speaks of God's "merciful justice," writes:

The immediate impression from a cursory reading of the Qurʾān is that of the infinite majesty of God and His equally infinite mercy, although many a Western scholar (through a combination of ignorance and prejudice) has depicted the Qurʾānic God as a concentrate of pure power, even as brute power—indeed, as a capricious tyrant. The Qurʾān, of course, speaks of God in so many different contexts and so frequently that unless all the statements are interiorized into a total mental picture—without, as far as possible, the interference of any subjective and wishful thinking—it would be extremely difficult, if not outright impossible, to do justice to the Qurʾānic concept of God.

David Marshall defends Rahbar and Bouman and argues that Rahman's emphasis on divine mercy is a function of what J. M. S. Baljon describes as a modern hermeneutic strategy that features both a "blurring out of terrifying traits of the Godhead" and "the accentuation of affable aspects in Allah." Marshall maintains, also in agreement with Rahbar, that the Qur'an presents the unbelievers as "utterly excluded from any experience of God's mercy" once this life ends. I assess these conflicting claims below.

It is worth stressing that these discussions are informed by particular understandings of Islamic soteriology. Despite its obvious salience, however, a search for contemporary critical studies on salvation in Islam leaves much to be desired. Many of the currently available works present a particular author's reading of Islamic scripture; when Muslim soteriological discourse is examined, the analyses, with few exceptions, are relatively brief and superficial. It is my hope that the present work will demonstrate the benefits of delving further into this critically important field.

The Question Reconsidered

Each of the four chapters of this book explores the specific views of eminent Muslim scholars on the fate of non-Muslims. This is accompanied by an examination of their methodologies, specifically, how they develop their arguments, employ Islamic scripture, and situate themselves vis-à-vis the larger hegemony of Islamic thought. To be clear, my main focus is Muslim scholarly discussions of the soteriological status of adults of sound mind living in a post-Muḥammadan world who do not believe in the content of the Islamic declaration of faith, the *shahāda*, which affirms both the existence and the unity of God, as well as the messengership of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh. Other aspects of

Islamic theology and even soteriology are beyond the compass of the present work. Where relevant, however, I address auxiliary topics, such as the line between belief (*īmān*) and unbelief (*kufr*), as well as the fate of those individuals who lived during the interstices between prophets, the so-called people of the gap (*ahl al-fatra*)—a category that includes Arab pagans who died just before the era of Muḥammad's prophethood and were thus not exposed to the divine message, at least in what is considered its true, unadulterated form. These particular discussions become relevant when considering the soteriological status of individuals living in a post-Muḥammadan world who have not been "properly" exposed, if at all, to Islamic scripture. Because my chronological focus is on life beginning with the judgment of the Last Day, I do not examine specific deliberations on the nature of the period that immediately follows death and precedes Judgment Day, that is, the period of the *barzakh*. For our purposes, such discussions generally fail to provide meaningful additional or alternative soteriological insights. I should add that although I take into consideration the environments and periods in which these authors were writing (no one writes in a vacuum), it is not my intention here to provide a comprehensive sense of these circumstances and their influences on each author. Owing to the paucity of historical evidence available, especially in the case of medieval scholars, such an enterprise would be extremely speculative.

As I noted earlier, the four central figures of this book are Ghazālī, Ibn ʿArabī, Ibn Taymiyya, and Rashīd Riḍā. Although quite diverse, this sampling is by no means exhaustive or inclusive of all the major schools of Islamic thought, such as the Shi'ite, Māturīdite, and Muʿtazilite. Nor is it even representative of the diversity of viewpoints within the schools of thought represented here. With regard to milieus, although I reference scholars of various backgrounds, my main selections tend to represent Middle Eastern, Muslim majoritarian contexts. (Even the Andalusian Ibn ʿArabī made his way to the Middle East, where he composed his most important works.) And, needless to say, all four are men. Nevertheless, the authority of these four exceptional, paradigmatic figures extends well beyond their respective schools of thought, and they have long received and will likely continue to receive extensive attention throughout the Muslim world. Their interpretations of Islam, therefore, are extremely and unusually consequential.

Given the importance of each of the four scholars, and the benefits of comparative analysis as a means of evaluating their conclusions, I explore some related discussions by later thinkers, identifying instances of influence, convergence, and divergence. While these are not intended to be comprehensive analyses of all the potential issues that arise from the writings of the four central figures, they nonetheless shed light on the significance of the soteriological claims and contentions that we shall encounter. Chapter 1 focuses on Ghazālī's optimistic inclusivism and includes a brief excursus on the comparable soteriological views of the much later twelfth/eighteenth-century Indian theologian Shāh Walī Allāh (d. 1176/1762). Chapter 2 highlights Ibn ʿArabī's distinctive mystical vision and briefly looks at its impact on Sufi thought, as seen in the works of the Persian Shi'ite philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1641). Chapter 3 is a discussion of the writings of Ibn Taymiyya, the controversy surrounding his universalist arguments for a noneternal Hell (including a dispute over whether this was really his position), a response by the Ashʿarite scholar Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355), an expanded defense of universalism by Ibn Taymiyya's disciple Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350), and a strikingly similar twentieth-century debate between Maulana Muhammad Ali (d. 1951) of Lahore and the Western scholar James Robson (d. 1981). Chapter 4 features Rashīd Riḍā's relatively eclectic approach and surveys some noteworthy modern trends, from the famous neorevivalist Sayyid Qutb's (d. 1966) move toward exclusivism to South African activist Farid Esack's promotion of pluralism.

Given the differences in both emphasis and audience, these discussions tend to be uneven. Compared with Ghazālī, for instance, Ibn Taymiyya devotes more of his attention to the question of

whether Hell will one day cease to exist. Furthermore, the inclusion of the mystic Ibn ʿArabī might seem out of place in light of his unique esoteric approach. T. J. Winter explains why, in his work, he chose to focus only on exoteric discussions of salvation:

> Islamic mysticism has been excluded, not because it is less normatively Islamic than the [formal exoteric theology] but because of the difficulties posed by the elusive informality of much Sufi discourse, with its tropical and hyperbolic features of poetic license whose aim is typically to interpret or arouse transformative affective states rather than to chart fixed dogmatic positions.

Nevertheless, Winter rightly implies that were one to examine the esoteric, Ibn ʿArabī would be a logical selection. Given his widespread influence, the inclusion of his vision provides an important additional layer of depth. And while it is true that Ibn ʿArabī's discourse is often elusive, the relevant aspects of his soteriology are sufficiently discernible.

I show that while none of the central figures of this book qualify as soteriological pluralists, neither are they exclusivists. Instead, all four represent different shades of inclusivism. While most leave the door of salvation open for sincere individuals who have encountered but not accepted the final message, Ibn Taymiyya, whom I classify as a limited inclusivist, vindicates only unreached non-Muslims. Yet this constitutes only his interim position, as he, along with Riḍā, favors ultimate universalism: both conceptualize Paradise as the final abode of every single person. Among the two nonuniversalists, Ghazālī maintains that all but a small group of people will be saved, while Ibn ʿArabī argues that Hell's inhabitants will eventually begin to enjoy their stay in the Fire despite being veiled from God—a view that I classify as "quasi-universalism." Thus, all but one anticipate the ultimate deliverance of the damned from chastisement, and in the eyes of all four, *at least* the overwhelming majority of humanity will ultimately enjoy a life of pleasure and contentment.

In demonstrating this, I explain how some of these scholars' views have been misunderstood and misrepresented in contemporary works. I also show that although they were motivated by diverse historical, sociocultural impulses (the precise identification of which is outside the scope of the present work), belonged to various schools of thought, and espoused dissimilar soteriological doctrines, their discussions of the salvation of Others emphasize the same two themes: (1) the superiority of Muḥammad's message, which is often tied to the notion of divine justice and the idea that the way God deals with His servants is related to their acceptance or rejection of His final message when its truth has become manifest, and (2) the supremacy of divine mercy (*raḥma*), which is often associated with the notion of divine nobility and the idea that God generously overlooks His right to punish those who may "deserve" it.

As we shall see, all four scholars seem to portray mercy as the Qur'anic God's *dominant* attribute. This runs counter to the conclusions of scholars such as Daud Rahbar, Johan Bouman, and David Marshall, who instead reserve that description for God's "strict" justice. This also discredits the notion that the emphasis on divine mercy is simply a *modern* hermeneutic phenomenon. What is more, like Fazlur Rahman, most of the central and peripheral figures of this book do not seem to view divine mercy and justice as being mutually opposed. Even when universalists characterize God as being overwhelmingly merciful and not bound by considerations of justice, they may nevertheless assert that it would be unjust for God to punish people in aeternum. This latter assertion is to be sharply contrasted with those of scholars, particularly Muʿtazilites, who made it a point to stress the correlation between justice and unceasing torment. (In fact, the Muʿtazilites often included unrepentant sinning believers among Hell's eternal inhabitants.) Common among the four scholars is the view that mercy is—in either all or most cases—the reason God punishes in the first place: to rectify those plagued with moral imperfections. According to the universalists, chastisement cures all spiritual ills; once Hell's inhabitants submit to God wholeheartedly they will find themselves in a state

of happiness—a position that is incompatible with the assumption held by scholars such as Rahbar and Marshall that, according to the Qur'an, divine mercy will never be granted in the afterlife to those who reject faith.

Be that as it may, we have no reason to think that either universalism or quasi-universalism has come to represent the prevailing view among Muslims in general and Muslim scholars in particular. I suspect that Jane Smith and Yvonne Haddad arrived at the conclusion that the conception of a noneternal Hell has "prevailed as the understanding of the Muslim community" for two reasons. First, Ibn Taymiyya's student Ibn Qayyim, whose arguments for universalism Smith and Haddad briefly cite, is a high-profile scholar whose writings have helped shape popular modern movements. Later in this book, however, I show that the intellectuals of these movements have responded to his universalism in radically different ways. Second, Smith and Haddad ascribe the position that punishment is of limited duration to the creeds of the major Sunni theologians Ṭaḥāwī, Ashʿarī, and Nasafī. But as I noted earlier, their statements on God pardoning Hell's inhabitants are strictly in reference to believers and should be regarded as responses to the position maintained by numerous Muʿtazilites and Khārijites that sinners, Muslim or otherwise, will be eternally damned. The material I present in this book corroborates Binyamin Abrahamov's assessment that the dominant stance among traditional scholars has been the eternality of Hell, specifically, damnationism. Yet I part company with Abrahamov in my assessment of the nature and degree of that dominance. Given the enduring influence of the scholars examined here (in general and in matters soteriological), it is problematic, particularly from an academic standpoint, to claim that damnationism represents orthodoxy—unless, of course, one chooses to side with a particular theological group. One would be justified to think of the matter as having been ultimately unresolved, especially since orthodoxy in Sunni Islam is generally based on *informal* authority, namely, the community of scholars. Indeed, there was never a formal council that declared (or could declare) the noneternality of Hell and/or its punishment a heresy. More important, while most traditional scholars have been damnationists, the proportion of those who were not is greater among the leading figures of Islamic intellectual history. Ibn ʿArabī's argument for a noneternal punishment has attracted scores of Sufis, and a wide variety of groups have adopted Ibn Taymiyya's universalism. A crucial component of the latter's argument is the notion that universalism, far from being discredited by appeals to an alleged consensus, can be traced to some of the most well-known Companions of the Prophet. If there is any truth to this claim, it would be an understatement to describe the implications as profound, and this would certainly cast a shadow of doubt over the prevailing reading of Islamic scripture. Whatever the case may be, the doctrine that every single person will one day live a life of contentment is significant enough that it cannot be placed in the same category as other minority opinions that have attracted far fewer advocates. The latter include the view that Hell's inhabitants will eventually perish, that is, ultimate annihilationism, and the rare opinion attributed to, among others, Jahm ibn Ṣafwān (d. 128/745) that both Heaven and Hell are finite in duration. To claim without qualification that eternal damnation is characteristic of Islam is to mask centuries of serious scholarly debate and alternative scriptural considerations.

Likewise, one must be cautious when addressing the seemingly more popular question of whether Islam promotes exclusivism, inclusivism, or pluralism. We can affirm that, while there is no one orthodox position, pluralism in Islam, as in Christianity, has historically been marginalized. The fact that, as we shall see, the inclusivists Ibn ʿArabī and Riḍā are recurring figures in contemporary pluralist works only seems to underscore this point. Indeed, it is not easy to locate *indisputable* examples of premodern Muslim pluralists. Even Rūmī, the Sufi poet invoked by the contemporary pluralist Abdolkarim Soroush in a quotation cited earlier, occasionally makes statements one would not expect from a pluralist, as when he rebukes a man named al-Jarrāḥ for adhering to Christianity rather than Islam. (If these statements represent poetic license, might not

the same be true of Rūmī's seemingly ecumenical declarations?) Even so, it is also not easy to locate *indisputable* examples of premodern Muslim exclusivists. Thanks in large part to scriptural statements such as "We do not punish until We have sent a messenger" (Q. 17:15), countless Muslim scholars have regarded limited inclusivism (the view that the unreached may be saved) as a bare minimum. Even Nawawī, whose ostensibly exclusivist pronouncement I cited earlier, maintains that God will excuse non-Muslims who never "heard" of the Prophet for not adhering to his way. Accordingly, when surveying classical commentaries of the Qur'an, we typically find both that pluralist interpretations are effectively ruled out and that salvation is rendered possible for the unreached.

Now between exclusivists and pluralists, it is perhaps not *as* difficult to identify premodern examples of the former. There is in fact at least one prominent medieval theologian whose proclamations are unmistakably exclusivist: the fifth/eleventh-century Andalusian scholar Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064). His exclusivism, developed in an Iberian context "fraught with *Reconquista* angst," is predicated on the unusual belief that mere exposure to anything having to do with the Islamic message—even if all one hears are rumors and inaccuracies—makes one culpable for not converting to Islam. Ibn Ḥazm goes so far as to make the baseless, perhaps defensive assertion that this "minimal/superficial exposure" criterion represents the consensus view. What is more, he claims that all of humanity has somehow encountered the Prophet's message and—at least in the case of sane adults—can therefore be considered reached. For a medieval scholar, the combination of Ibn Ḥazm's stringent soteriological stance and his assessment of the facts on the ground is nothing short of bizarre. It is telling that when a scholar like Ghazālī argues for an inclusivist doctrine that clearly violates Ibn Ḥazm's alleged consensus, he never once bothers to mention this "consensus" view; if there really were anything near a consensus, we would have expected preemptive responses by Ghazālī to his many potential detractors. It is also revealing that Ghazālī wastes no effort to defend a claim that was surely obvious to most premodern scholars: some non-Muslims, especially those living far from Muslim lands, had never heard anything—positive or negative—about the Prophet.

I would hazard that the norm in Islamic thought, even in modern times, has been to recognize the existence of at least some contemporaneous non-Muslims who do not qualify as reached, and that, accordingly, inclusivism has generally prevailed. What is less clear, however, is which form or forms of inclusivism have been dominant. But since inclusivism covers a wide spectrum of orientations, this obscurity is hardly insignificant. Consider, for instance, the case of a limited inclusivist who espouses a minimal/superficial exposure criterion to determine which non-Muslims are culpable, while also holding that, in order to be saved, the unreached must independently arrive at a specific form of monotheism, one that rejects, for instance, mainstream Christian doctrines concerning Jesus. We might consider this an extreme form of limited inclusivism: although it allows for the salvation of some non-Muslims, the line between it and exclusivism appears blurry.

It is remarkable that only one of the four central figures of this book (Ibn Taymiyya) espouses limited inclusivism, yet not an extreme form, and only as an interim position. Again, the other three advocate more liberal versions of inclusivism (of varying degrees), and all four envisage a Paradise that is one day replete with non-Muslims. To be sure, none of these scholars—living in contexts far removed from our own—would have recognized a reading of Islamic scripture that leaves room for the contemporary assertion that "the people who died on September 11 were nothing more than fuel for the eternal fires of God's justice" (and not simply because some of the victims were Muslim).

More important is the following observation: all four scholars utilize most of the same texts (the exceptions being a few hadiths and other reports that usually function to supplement a particular argument), emphasize similar themes, and yet, because of differences in hermeneutic strategies and motivations, arrive at conclusions that are notably dissimilar. The dissimilarities become even more

pronounced when one takes into consideration the other positions surveyed in this book. Whatever one's reading, Islamic scripture undoubtedly gives rise to the kind of polysemy that makes the often monolithic characterizations put forth by numerous writers a demonstration of apologetic misrepresentation, polemical oversimplification, or intellectual laziness. Indeed, we would do well to avoid simply echoing a single side of a particular debate, even if that side happens to represent a majority.

"What does Islam say about the fate of non-Muslims?" This question should not be taken lightly, for its implications are far-reaching: how one views the Other affects how one interacts with the Other. While it is true that Islamic law (*sharīʿa*) lays out the rules of proper conduct, its interpreters are scholars whose theological presuppositions undergird their approaches to law. And while soteriology is but one of many factors that govern intra- and interfaith relations, it is a factor nonetheless. A universalist paradigm, for instance, might promote recklessness on the assumption that all will be made well; or it might spur people to acknowledge the good—actual or latent—within every single individual on the assumption that although life's paths are many, they all somehow lead to the Garden. Exclusivists might go to great lengths to win over the hearts of non-Muslims in an attempt to save them; or they might look down upon them as the damned—and treat them as such. By the same token, what "Islam says" about the salvation of Others also affects how Others regard Islam and its adherents. However one chooses to approach the question at hand, I submit that a deeper appreciation of the rich diversity of possibilities is both necessary and overdue.

All Paths Lead to God: The Case of Ibn ʿArabī

The Andalusian Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240) is one of the most well-known mystics of world history. He argues that God will judge individuals according to what they can discern. But, because all paths lead to God, even the wicked, barred from Paradise, will one day be spared chastisement. This chapter explores Ibn 'Arabi's unique esoteric approach to the topic of salvation, and includes a brief look at the writings of another mystic, Mulla Sadra (d. 1640), also known as Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi.Ibn 'Arabi.

The epithet "the grand master" (*al-shaykh al-akbar*) belongs to Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, more commonly known as Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240). His is "the great name" in Islamic theosophical mysticism.[1] Not only have his teachings "dominated much of Sufism," but it could be argued that, with the possible exception of Ghazālī, no intellectual figure has been more influential in the history of Islam. Born into an elite family in 560/1165 in the city of Murcia in al-Andalus (Muslim Iberia) and raised from the age of eight in Seville, he had the privilege of meeting eminent scholars, including no less than the renowned philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averroes, d. 595/1198). While still young and, as he puts it, unable to grow facial hair, he experienced a mystical moment that forever changed his life. He subsequently withdrew from society and began to receive additional "illuminations" (or "openings"). What followed was an extraordinary encounter with Jesus, who instructed him to abandon his worldly possessions. Before long, he met again with Jesus, this time accompanied by Moses and Muḥammad. The three Abrahamic giants are said to have received Ibn ʿArabī under their protection. Feeling impelled to journey eastward, he eventually made his way to Mecca, arriving there in 598/1202. He was so moved by his experience at the Kaaba that he began to compose what would become his magnum opus, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (*The Meccan Openings*), a voluminous work containing an extensive exposition of his Sufi doctrine. In 620/1223, he finally settled in Syria, where he completed and revised the *Futūḥāt*. It was there that he produced another influential (albeit much shorter) work, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (*The Bezels of Wisdom*), which, he maintains, was dictated to him by the Prophet in a dream and which expounds the wisdom in the teachings of twenty-seven prophets, beginning with Adam and concluding with Muḥammad himself.

With hundreds of works on a variety of topics ascribed to him, Ibn ʿArabī is widely regarded as the most prolific of all Sufi writers. Of all his writings, however, the *Futūḥāt* and the *Fuṣūṣ* often evoke the strongest reactions by both supporters and detractors, and it is the worldview expounded in these that allows us to make sense of Ibn ʿArabī's approach to the topic of salvation. While one might argue that his soteriology is either pluralistic or *indescribable*, I maintain that it would be safest to classify him as a liberal inclusivist. And, as we shall see, while he affirms the salvation of "sincere" non-Muslims, because of his belief that every single path we take is not only created by but leads to God—a God of mercy (*raḥma*) and nobility (*karam*)—he maintains that *all* of humanity, including even the most wicked, will ultimately arrive at bliss.

God Is All

Adorning the walls of countless homes worldwide are decorative lists of the ninety-nine "most beautiful names" of God. These names, most of which are taken verbatim from the Qur'an, signify God's attributes. He is Allah, the Compassionate, the Caring, the Creator, the Shaper, the First, the Last, the Vast, the Victorious, the Glorious, the Great, the Light, the Living, the Loving, the Forgiving, the Finder, the Firm, the Affirming,the Avenger, the Abaser, the Exalter, the Enricher, the Rich, the Real, the Peace, the Patient, the Propitious, the Illustrious, the Incomparable, the Noble, the Holy, the One, and so on. These names, William Chittick observes, "are the single most important concept" in Ibn ʿArabī's works: "Everything divine or cosmic, is related back to them."

This takes us to one of the most controversial yet crucial aspects of Ibn ʿArabī's teachings, a doctrine that eventually acquired the name "Oneness of Being" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). According to this often-misunderstood doctrine, God is "all," not in the "pantheistic sense" but in the sense that all of creation "is a locus of manifestation for the divine names." In other words, everything reflects God in some way and is thus a "sign" of the divine (even if the Almighty Himself remains incomparable). People are exceptional in this regard because they are "created in the form of God" and are the only beings allotted every divine attribute. Hence, meditation on *every* divine name is required for those seeking both a better understanding of reality and the actualization of their potential for human perfection.

It is precisely the attempt to comprehend all the properties of the divine attributes that defines the *Futūḥāt*, and it can only be an attempt given the Almighty's limitlessness. Indeed, "God is greater" than any of our conceptualizations of Him. But God's vastness entails a complication. As Ibn ʿArabī explains, "Neither your heart nor your eye ever witnesses anything but the form of your own belief concerning God." Thus, people "worship only what they believe" about God; "they only worship that which is created." This leads to the bold proclamation that everyone is, in a sense, an "idol-worshiper," as each person's conception of the divine represents a particular "carving" of an idol, and it is only through such idols that people can recognize God. Fortunately for humanity, the Compassionate pardons this form of idol worship.

By the same token, Ibn ʿArabī simultaneously maintains that, because God is "all," everyone, to some extent, "knows" God, even if many are oblivious to the fact that the very objects they witness (not to mention themselves) manifest divine names. What is more, because these names exist "within every conceptualization" of the human mind, *every* single belief is, in a sense, true and meaningful. This, Ibn ʿArabī informs us, is a fact recognized by those attaining to perfection who actualize all the divine names latent in their pure natural disposition (*fiṭra*): they "have been given an all-inclusive overview of all religions, creeds, sects, and doctrines concerning God" and deem none of them erroneous and consider none of them vain, as it "was not without purpose that [God] created the heavens and the earth and everything in between" (Q. 38:27). And because all things—including all religions and systems of thought—reflect an aspect of the divine, they also lead to the

divine. As the Qur'an itself affirms, "Everything is brought back to God" (57:5); "all journeys lead to Him" (5:18).

Even so, the many paths, however true and meaningful they may be, are not all the same. Some people, particularly those who fail to attain a "proper balance" of all the divine attributes contained in their pure natural disposition, approach God in a state of "wretchedness"; others approach Him in a state of "felicity." "The road of felicity," Ibn ʿArabī proclaims, "is that set down by revealed religion, nothing else." (This is despite the fact that the "felicitous" recognize the significance of the other roads.) Conversely, it is only "the existence of the revealed religions" that produces unbelief, "resulting in wretchedness." Remarkable, therefore, are the implications:

> God gives to His servants from Himself, and also on the hands of His messengers. As for what comes to you on the hand of the Messenger, take it without employing any scale. But as for what comes to you from the hand of God, take it with a scale. For God is identical to every giver, but He has forbidden you from taking every gift.

God's creation is replete with both the beneficial and the harmful. It is His revelations, however, that allow us to distinguish the one from the other and to recognize our moral responsibility: "accept whatever the Messenger gives you, and abstain from whatever he forbids you" (Q. 57:7). The ideal, therefore, is the narrow yet inclusive "straight path" of Muḥammad.

The Superiority of the Final Message

Although God has "assigned a law and a path to each" community (Q. 5:48) (such as the Torah revealed to the followers of Moses), one revelation, Ibn ʿArabī asserts, stands above the rest:

The Muḥammadan leader chooses the path of Muḥammad and leaves aside the other paths, even though he acknowledges them and has faith in them. However, he does not make himself a servant except through the path of Muḥammad, nor does he have his followers make themselves servants except through it. He traces the attributes of all paths back to it, because Muḥammad's revealed religion is all-inclusive. Hence the property of all the revealed religions has been transferred to his revealed religion. His revealed religion embraces them, but they do not embrace it.

In metaphorical terms, the "path of Muḥammad" is like sunlight, while all other divinely revealed religions are like starlight. With the appearance of the former, the latter disappear (which is not to say that they no longer exist) and, if anything, only contribute to the luminosity of the former. The final message is nothing short of exceptional.

Despite Ibn ʿArabī's clear preference for his own tradition, in recent years there has been an intensifying debate over whether he leaves the door open for the kind of religious pluralism that accepts other faiths in a post-Muḥammadan context as independently valid paths to Paradise (however conceived)—paths that are not necessarily equal to Islam in all respects but are at least equally salvific. The pluralist Frithjof Schuon (d. 1998), a leading thinker of the Sophia Perennis school of thought, maintains that he does. Schuon writes:

> [It] has been argued that [Ibn] ʿArabī denied [the universality of religion] when he wrote that Islam was the pivot of the other religions. The truth is, however, that every religious form is superior to the others in a particular respect, and it is this characteristic that in fact indicates the sufficient reason for the existence of that form. Anyone who speaks in the name of his religion always has this characteristic in mind; what matters, where the recognition of other religious forms is concerned, is the fact—exoterically inconceivable—of such recognition, not its mode or degree.

It is easy to appreciate Schuon's contention when one considers what is reputed to be Ibn ʿArabī's most well-known lines of poetry, at least in the West:

> *My heart has become capable of every form: it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks.*
> *And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's [Kaaba] and the [tablets of the Torah] and the book of the Koran.*
> *I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith.*

Nevertheless, as T. J. Winter rightly notes, claims of Ibn ʿArabī's pluralism "need to be tempered by a survey of his less eirenic statements." In the *Fuṣūṣ*, for example, Ibn ʿArabī explicitly rejects the doctrine of the divine incarnation in Christ (on the assumption that it *restricts* God) and says that its advocates are guilty of unbelief (*kufr*). As we shall soon see, this charge of unbelief is in fact qualified and does not entail the damnation of all or even most Christians. Still, in other writings, Ibn ʿArabī, in passing, pejoratively refers to certain Christians as associationists (*mushrikūn*), those who ascribe partners to God.

More significant, however, is the fact that within the *Futūḥāt* itself, Ibn ʿArabī avers that Muḥammad's message is not simply superior to other messages but supersedes them as well: it does not abrogate their sacred *truths*, but it does abrogate their sacred *rulings*. Thus, were the previous messengers alive during Muḥammad's time, "they would have followed him, just as their laws [*sharāʾiʿuhum*] have followed his law [*sharʿahu*]."

Although it would be tempting to dismiss Ibn ʿArabī's ostensibly conflicting statements concerning religious diversity as contradictions resulting from his mystical approach, I submit that we have no reason to jump to this conclusion (even if such contradictions exist in other matters). Again, Ibn ʿArabī's so-called Oneness of Being doctrine renders all beliefs, religious or otherwise, "true" in at least one sense: they are of divine origin; they are "real." From this standpoint, even "a temple for idols" can be worthy of love. But true or real is not necessarily the same as proper or salvific. It is the divine message that indicates which beliefs and practices lead to supreme contentment. In the pursuit of salvation, perfection, and satisfaction, Ibn ʿArabī points to the "path of Muḥammad." God, he writes, conveys to humanity "His actual situation on the tongue of His messengers so that He will have an argument against those who contradict His speech and who say about Him things that oppose what He has said about Himself." In short, to reject Muḥammad's message is to challenge God. But it is only the "insincere" rejection of this (or any other) divine message that leads to the lowest prospects.

"… Until We Have Sent a Messenger"

Ibn ʿArabī writes extensively of the rewards awaiting the righteous and the punishments to be meted out to the rejecters. But what of those who do not recognize the very best of what God provides as such? What of those who are simply not convinced by the proofs of His messengers, particularly Muḥammad? Like Ghazālī, Ibn ʿArabī does not present Islamic supersessionism as grounds for the damnation of earnest non-Muslims. Instead, he invokes the familiar theme of mercy. But he goes a step further than Ghazālī, espousing a liberal form of inclusivism comparable to the doctrine ascribed to Jāḥiẓ. As we saw in the previous chapter, Ghazālī concedes that Jāḥiẓ's liberal inclusivism is rationally sound, yet he ultimately dismisses it as scripturally indefensible. Ibn ʿArabī challenges us to reread scripture. Consider his explication of the Qur'anic pronouncement "We do not punish until We have sent a messenger" (17:15):

> Note that [God] did not say, "until We send forth a person." Hence the *message* of the one who is sent must be established for the one to whom it is directed. There must be clear and manifest proofs established for each person to whom the messenger is sent, for many a sign [*āya*] has within it obscurity or equivocality such that some people do not perceive what it proves. The clarity of the proof must be such that it establishes the person's [messengership] for each person to whom he is sent. Only then, if the person refuses it, will

> he be taken to account. Hence, this verse has within it a tremendous mercy, because of the diversity of human dispositions that lead to a diversity of views. He who knows the all-inclusiveness of the divine mercy, which God reports, [*encompasses*] *all things* [Q. 7:156], knows that God did this only because of mercy toward His servants.

By extension, non-Muslims who do not recognize Muḥammad's messengership are not culpable. Following this line of reasoning, it is noteworthy that the Qur'an speaks of unbelievers among pagans and People of the Book being damned only after having received "*clear* evidence" (*al-bayyina*) (Q. 98:1–6). The wording of this verse would suggest that the *clarity* of the final message must be established before one could be chastised for refusing to accept it. This interpretation arguably finds support in other passages such as Q. 4:115, a verse that condemns anyone who "opposes the Messenger, after guidance has been *made clear* to him [or her]."

Accordingly, sincere non-Muslims for whom the Prophet's "messengership" (or "evidence" or "guidance") has not been "made clear" may qualify as true *muslims*, even if some of their beliefs are incongruous with his message, as in the case of Trinitarian Christians. As Ibn ʿArabī observes, the term *islām* in the Qur'anic context (specifically, 3:19) denotes "submission" (*inqiyād*), not reified Islam. Hence, owing to the wide range of human submissions to the divine and the consequent wide range of manifestations of bliss, there are—on the basis of mystical insight—*at least* 5,105 "degrees of the Garden," only twelve of which are designated specifically for "the Muḥammadan community." Hell is the everlasting abode not of anyone who does not identify as a follower of Muḥammad but, rather, of those who refuse to surrender to God after the truth has been made clear to them. These are the "guilty ones" (Q. 36:59) who "deserve" their fate. Ibn ʿArabī identifies these "people of the Fire who are its [true] inhabitants"—an expression derived from a prophetic report—as the arrogant (*mutakabbirūn*), who, like Pharaoh, claim to be divine; associationists (*mushrikūn*); those who divest God of His attributes (*muʿaṭṭila*); and hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*). Their dismissal of the reality of the one God—a reality affirmed in the pure natural disposition—constitutes a failure to recall their primordial covenant with God:

> When your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness concerning themselves, He said, "Am I not your Lord?" and they replied, "Yes, we bear witness." So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, "We were not aware of this." (Q. 7:172)

Be that as it may, the "people of the Fire who are its [true] inhabitants" can only encompass those for whom the proofs of the message are established (in the manner I described earlier). This is why, again, it is *only* "the existence of the revealed religions" that produces unbelief "resulting in wretchedness." The "people of the Fire," therefore, do not include "earnest" individuals who have never had what they could recognize to be a compelling encounter with any form of the message, particularly the message conveyed to all prophets: "There is no god but Me, so serve Me" (Q. 21:25).

Nevertheless, Ibn ʿArabī's soteriology ensures that everyone will at some point—even after death—be exposed to at least one of God's messages in a manner that is manifestly compelling prior to being consigned either to Heaven or Hell. This is implied by Ibn ʿArabī's position on the fate of deceased children, those who are mentally impaired, and those who lived during the interstices between prophets, that is, the people of the gap (*ahl al-fatra*). As reported in a hadith, and as a confirmation of divine justice, Ibn ʿArabī maintains that such individuals will be distinguished from the rest of humanity and assigned a messenger on the Day of Resurrection. This messenger-of-resurrection, whose message would presumably be unanimously regarded as genuine, will present his people with a tremendous test: he will command them to enter the Fire. Those who obey will find it cool—just as Abraham found the fire of this life when his people cast him into it (Q. 21:69)—and they will proceed to the Garden; those who refuse to enter the Fire will be thrust into its

painful depths. Interpreted literally or metaphorically, this is a daunting test, but one that is at least symbolically similar to those of this life. (As we shall see, although Ibn ʿArabī writes about "the heights" [*al-aʿrāf*] [Q. 7:46–49], he does not identify this landmark as either the site of this test or a place of limbo.)

We may speculate, then, that non-Muslims in a post-Muḥammadan world who have never had a compelling encounter with any form of the message (that is, the Qur'an or any of the earlier revelations) will be treated in the manner of the people of the gap. As for righteous non-Muslims who, in this life, accept at least one form of the message (for example, the Torah) and do not reject other forms on account of insincerity, Ibn ʿArabī's soteriology suggests that they will be among the inhabitants of Paradise. We may suppose that the same is true of non-Muslims who earnestly investigate the final message after recognizing aspects of the truth within it yet who pass away without ever converting to Islam.

Compared with Ghazālī's form of inclusivism, Ibn ʿArabī's criterion is ostensibly simpler (albeit more vague) and seems to expand considerably the circle of *muslim* non-Muslims. It would be superfluous for Ibn ʿArabī to provide specific examples of "goodhearted" non-Muslims living "far beyond the lands of Islam" or to list the specific features of the messagethat one must encounter to be considered "reached." Again, for Ibn ʿArabī "proper" exposure is simply that which the recipient finds compelling. (According to Ghazālī, learning about certain qualities of the Prophet and his message is presumed to be necessarily compelling—even if the recipient fails to recognize this.) Additionally, unlike the soteriology articulated by Walī Allāh centuries later, Ibn ʿArabī does not—explicitly at least—limit his inclusivism to those who fail to recognize the reality of revelation on account of their "stupidity" or obsession with worldly affairs.

As with both Ghazālī and Walī Allāh, however, Ibn ʿArabī's inclusivism is predicated on a controversial reading of scripture. To be sure, it is not immediately apparent that Q. 17:15 leaves the door wide open for the salvation of sincere non-Muslims who would normally be considered among the reached. Yet one need not be rooted in Sufism to appreciate the logic of Ibn ʿArabī's tenable, thought-provoking interpretation. What is, therefore, most unusual about his soteriology is his stance regarding the wicked: although barred from the Garden, even they will come to enjoy a life of bliss—where one would least expect it.

A Paradisiacal Hell?

Among the denizens of Ibn ʿArabī's Hell, only believers (whatever their religious affiliation)—punished in the first place because of their sins—will one day delight in the rich gardens of Paradise. Those remaining behind will never leave. Yet while Ibn ʿArabī's interpretation of scripture renders Hell eternal, the same is not true of its punishment. This is borne out in his discussion of the following Qur'anic passage:

The wretched ones will be in the Fire, sighing and groaning, there to remain for as long as the heavens and earth endure, unless your Lord wills otherwise: your Lord carries out whatever He wills. As for those who have been blessed, they will be in Paradise, there to remain as long as the heavens and earth endure, unless your Lord wills otherwise—an unceasing gift. (11:106–108)

These verses, Ibn ʿArabī explains, indicate that the "wretched" will remain forever in the Fire, but never describe "the state within which they will dwell" as "unceasing"—an adjective reserved for the "gift" awaiting the "blessed." Instead, we are informed that God "carries out whatever He wills"—a statement Ibn ʿArabī highlights. He also draws attention to Q. 56:33, which states that Heaven's provisions will "neither be limited nor forbidden" (*lā maqṭūʿa wa-lā mamnūʿa*). Islamic scripture, he observes, never offers a similar proclamation concerning the torments of Hell. This is

notwithstanding the Qur'anic reference to the "lasting punishment" (*ʿadhāb al-khuld*) (10:52) that "will not be lightened" (*lā yukhaffaf*) (2:162). Notice, however, that the "evildoers" will merely "taste" the "lasting punishment" (10:52). If "tasting" signifies a finite phenomenon, then it would only be during this "tasting" period that chastisement would "last" and "not be lightened."

Ibn ʿArabī's conviction in the temporality of punishment is derived principally from his conception of divine mercy. Citing the Qur'anic pronouncement "My mercy encompasses all things" (Q. 7:156) and a prophetic report that quotes God as saying, "My mercy outstrips My wrath," Ibn ʿArabī asks rhetorically, "How could there be everlasting wretchedness? Far be it from God that His wrath should take precedence over His mercy … or that He should make the embrace of His mercy specific after He had called it general!" Because wrath in the form of punishment experienced by the inhabitants of Hell is "a thing," an ephemeral accident (in the philosophical sense), we should expect mercy to encompass it, limit it, and dominate it. It is not of the essence of God, the Necessary Being, and is therefore a fleeting "deviation"; it must necessarily "dwindle and become nonexistent." Reality, therefore, is circular: it begins and ends in mercy. Reflecting further, Ibn ʿArabī provides us with the following rumination:

I have found in myself—who am among those whom God has innately disposed toward mercy—that I have mercy toward all God's servants.… The possessors of this attribute are I and my peers, and we are creatures, possessors of fancy and personal desire. God has said about Himself that He is "the most merciful of the merciful" [*arḥam al-rāḥimīn*] [Q. 7:151], and we have no doubt that He is more merciful than we are toward His creatures. Yet we have known from ourselves this extravagant mercy. How could chastisement be everlasting for [the wretched], when He has this attribute of all-pervading mercy? God is more noble than that!

Nobility is a recurring theme in Ibn ʿArabī's soteriological expositions, as it is often paired with mercy to explain why God does what is best and forgives what is worst. The Qur'an states, "Let harm be requited by an equal harm, although anyone who forgives and puts things right will have his [or her] reward from God Himself" (42:40). With this principle in mind, and given God's nobility and superiority, Ibn ʿArabī insists that He (the Forgiving) "will pardon, show forbearance, and make things well." How else would He treat His creatures, all of whom are weak and dependent on Him? As one hadith instructs, one should only assume the best of God. Even if we suppose that scripture both promises eternal reward and threatens eternal punishment, the Qur'an only tells us that we should "not think that God will break His promise" (14:47); there is no similar affirmation of His threat. And were God to limit or qualify His threat, it would allow for a deeper appreciation of His mercy. We know that God is "the best of those who are merciful" (Q. 23:109), but we have no evidence that He is "the best of those who punish."

It is true that mercy, nobility, and forgiveness are not the only divine attributes. They must be considered alongside those that denote "subjugation, domination, and severity." Ibn ʿArabī finds that both types figure prominently in the Qur'an. What allows him to accentuate mercy, however, is not only the aforementioned passages but also the special positioning of the divine names "the Compassionate (al-Raḥmān), the Caring (al-Raḥīm)" (Q. 1:1). These names appear in the *basmala* formula ("In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Caring") with which the first sura of the Qur'an begins and which precedes all but one of the remaining suras (the exception being sura 9). What better confirmation of mercy's precedence?

When, then, will mercy triumph over wrath through the cessation of chastisement? Ibn ʿArabī identifies this moment as the termination of the Day of Resurrection, a "day" that will likely last fifty thousand years. At that point, all of the "people of the Fire" will finally recognize what they had affirmed in the primordial covenant: they are God's servants. It is, therefore, only when the

wretched end their discord (*shiqāq*) and submit to God wholeheartedly that their wretchedness (*shaqāʾ*) will cease. For, in the first place, their chastisement was the result of their protesting God's actions. Thus, they "will pluck the fruit of their words [at the primordial covenant], 'Yes, [we bear witness]' [Q. 7:172]. They will be like those who submit to God after apostasy. The authority of 'Yes' will rule over everything and finally give rise to their felicity."

This transformation will necessarily occur because the accidents of "falsehood, unbelief, and ignorance" are temporal, whereas "faith, truth, and knowledge"—attributes of the divine—endure forever. All people will continue to exist on account of their connection to the Necessary Being; it is only their evil accidents that will cease. What other possibility could there be? The very injunction to worship God, against which Hell's inhabitants rebelled, was itself an accident. Ibn ʿArabī classifies this kind of worship as "worship based on commands" (*ʿibādat al-amr*), meaning that it accords with the precepts of the prophets. Because "every accident comes to an end" in the afterlife, the wretched, along with everyone else, will only engage in the form of worship they had always engaged in, without necessarily realizing it: "essential worship" (*al-ʿibāda al-dhātiyya*). They will recognize that their very existence is defined by submission: "There is no one in the heavens or earth who does not come to the Lord of Mercy as a servant" (Q. 19:93) So while the wicked currently enjoy the freedom to sin, they will one day find true bliss in the removal of this freedom. (Although Ibn ʿArabī's God is "the only true and real actor," He has nonetheless "compelled" people "to have free choice" in matters of this life. God's "will in the things is that they be what they are.")

To his imaginary interlocutor who insists that Hell's denizens could never attain God's mercy because of His justice, Ibn ʿArabī invokes the Qur'anic message of hope: "My servants who have harmed themselves by their own excess, do not despair of God's mercy; God forgives *all* sins" (39:53). Accordingly, [God] brought forgiveness and mercy for the repentant and those who do good deeds, and He also brought it for those who are "immoderate," those who do not repent. The latter He forbids to despair, and He confirms the point with His word "all." Nothing could be greater in divine eloquence concerning the final issue of the servants at mercy.

One apparent problem with this assertion, however, is that although God "forgives all sins," as the Qur'an clarifies elsewhere, He forgives everything but *shirk* (associating partners with Him) (4:48). Associationists who "choose other protectors beside Him, saying, 'We only worship them because they bring us nearer to God'" (Q. 39:3), are therefore denounced. This, Ibn ʿArabī clarifies, is not because of their *shirk* per se but because of their rejection of "worship based on commands": they "set up" for themselves "a special road of worship which was not established" for them by a revealed law. Yet, like everyone else, these associationists were a party to the primordial covenant. Even they will be forgiven, Ibn ʿArabī intrepidly declares, once they come to realize that, in reality, they had only ever worshiped God, "for no worshipper worships any but God in the place to which he ascribes divinity to Him." To support this claim, Ibn ʿArabī points to the Qur'anic statement "Your Lord has ordained [*qadā*] that you should worship none but Him" (17:23). Thus, when the Qur'an states that "each party" of those who ascribe partners to God rejoices "in what is theirs" (30:32), Ibn ʿArabī interprets this as real happiness in the hereafter, as such rejoicing is "not known in this life, or rather, it occurs for many but not all." Similarly, the Qur'anic statement "God is pleased with them, and they with Him" (98:8) refers to everyone, and not, as most assume, those residing in Paradise.

Time and again, Ibn ʿArabī challenges his readers to think outside the proverbial box. Interestingly, he finds an additional hint of mercy toward the wretched where one might least expect it: the Qur'anic term for punishment, *ʿadhāb*. Although it is used frequently and only in the context of threats, given the common Sufi belief that scripture contains multiple layers of meaning and that

God's judicious selection of words contains lessons for those who reflect, Ibn ʿArabī is keen to observe that the three-letter root of *ʿadhāb* (*ʿ-dh-b*) connotes sweetness, pleasantness, and agreeableness. What this signifies is that the Qur'an's recurring use of this particular term in referring to chastisement is "good news from God," as it mysteriously suggests that the suffering in Hell will become "sweet when mercy envelops" those consigned to it. Thus, the punishment of the Fire is called *ʿadhāb* "due to the sweetness [*ʿudhūba*] of its food." And it is precisely the initial agonizing torments that allow one to taste of this "sweetness."

Like Ghazālī, Ibn ʿArabī conjures the image of a compassionate physician causing a patient harm for the greater good. Chastisement is therapeutic; it rectifies. This is to be expected given mercy's pervasiveness and predominance; "wrath disposes itself only through mercy's ruling property. Mercy sends out wrath as it will." "Sweetness," therefore, will manifest itself once the punishment serves its purpose, that is, when the wicked reform themselves, consciously submit to God, and resign themselves to their fate, surrendering any hope of leaving Hell. At that point, in a dramatic show of compassion, the nineteen angels guarding Hell (Q. 74:30–31) will stand in the way of the angels of chastisement, and the Fire, like Abraham's fire, will feel cool. After this first bliss, the "damned" will never again feel pain and will actually find their perpetual "punishment" pleasant. And this enjoyment will be tremendous: "There is no surprise if roses are found in rose gardens. Surprise comes from roses in the pit of the Fire."

Meanwhile, the people of Paradise will find pleasure in climbing a wall separating Heaven and Hell, gazing at the latter, and appreciating their own peace and security, which they would otherwise take for granted. Interestingly, this very wall, which Ibn ʿArabī conflates with "the heights" (*al-aʿrāf*), is taken to be yet another sign of the noneternality of punishment on the basis of its Qur'anic description:

> On the same Day, the hypocrites, both men and women, will say to the believers, "Wait for us! Let us have some of your light!" They will be told, "Go back and look for a light." A wall with a gate will be erected between [the hypocrites and believers]: inside it lies mercy, outside lies torment. (57:13)

According to the Sufi worldview, that which is inside (*al-bāṭin*) takes precedence over that which is outside (*al-ẓāhir*). Since mercy is located inside the wall, it constitutes the essence of the wall. And given mercy's supremacy, it must eventually conquer chastisement, making it accessible to Hell's inhabitants. Curiously, however, the gate within the wall will remain forever shut. But this impediment of passage is, as we shall soon see, to the benefit of people in both abodes.

The Veil

Although all will eventually attain felicity as they proceed toward God, the righteous will be spared the "deserts, perils, vicious predators, and harmful serpents" found along the way. Furthermore, God will continue to distinguish heavenly reward from hellish "torment" even after the completion of the Last Day. Wrath in the form of experienced chastisement will cease to be for the reasons I noted earlier. But since the divine attributes are necessarily eternal, and since wrath is one such attribute, the Fire must be everlasting, and the "attribute of chastisement" must "remain forever" with the true inhabitants of Hell. Accordingly, even though the latter will be in a state of bliss, there will always be a fear that they may once again be punished—an imagined scenario that will never actually take place. Ibn ʿArabī explains:

> No chastisement will remain in the Fire except imaginal chastisement within the presence of imagination, in order that the properties of the divine names may subsist. A name necessitates only the manifestation of the property that its reality demands. It does not specify the presence nor the individual.… Hence, whenever the property of the Avenger

> becomes manifest within an imaginal body or a corporeal body or in anything else, its rights are fulfilled through the manifestation of its property and effectivity. So the divine names continue to exercise effectivity and determine properties for all eternity in the two abodes, and the inhabitants of the two abodes never leave them.

In this way, although all of God's "creatures are drowned in mercy," the "property of mutual contradictoriness" of His names persists.

Imagined punishment, however, is not the only distinction between the inhabitants of the two abodes. More remarkable is "the veil." According to the Qur'an and hadith corpus, Heaven has eight gates, while Hell has seven. All fifteen gates will eventually open, but a mysterious "eighth gate" of Hell will remain shut. This eighth gate constitutes "the veil" concealing God. While the people of Heaven will find true, euphoric pleasure in the indescribable vision (*ruʾya*) of the divine, the people of Hell will *always* be veiled (*maḥjūb*) from that vision.

The Qur'an states that the inhabitants of Gehenna (*jahannam*) will neither live nor die (20:74). As Ibn ʿArabī explains, they will not "die" because they will "find relief through the removal of pain"; they will not "live" because "they will not have a bliss like the bliss of the folk of the Gardens, a bliss that would be something in addition to the fact that He has relieved them in the abode of wretchedness." Yet even in the inability to behold their Lord there is mercy:

> Were God to disclose Himself to [Hell's inhabitants] in the Fire, given their precedent evildoing and their worthiness for punishment, that benevolent self-disclosure would yield nothing but shame before God for what they had done, and shame is chastisement—but chastisement's period has come to an end. Hence they will not know the joy of witnessing and vision, so they will have bliss while being veiled. The goal is bliss, and it has been achieved with the veil—but for whom? How can the bliss of the vision of God be compared to bliss with the veil!

Despite Hell's obvious inferiority, another reason its inhabitants will be better off barred from Paradise relates to their very nature. Because they are immoderate, Ibn ʿArabī informs us, they will have extreme "constitutions," either "hot" or "cold." Hell itself consists not only of scorching heat but also of biting cold (*zamharīr*). This is made evident in the hadith corpus; the Qur'an is less explicit, stating that Paradise has neither scorching heat nor biting cold (76:13) and referring to a fluid in Hell that, according to one interpretation, is "extremely cold" (*ghassāq*) (38:57). Ibn ʿArabī holds that God, out of His wisdom, will keep "the bitter cold of Gehenna for those with hot constitutions and the Fire for those with cold constitutions.… If they were to enter the Garden with the constitutions that they have, they would suffer chastisement because of the Garden's equilibrium."

As such, happiness has nothing to do with physical locations per se but everything to do with "what is accepted by the constitution and desired by the soul." Thus, wherever "agreeableness of nature and attainment of desire are found, that is the person's bliss."

In the final analysis, Ibn ʿArabī cannot be described as a universalist. But considering his belief that all of humanity will ultimately attain harmony and contentment, he is what I would describe as a quasi-universalist. And yet there are instances in which he appears to contradict himself and approach something resembling universalism. In the *Fuṣūṣ*, for example, he leaves open the possibility that Hell's denizens may in fact enjoy "an additional, distinct bliss like the bliss" of the people of Paradise. There are other instances in which one wonders why he does not go the extra step of affirming this "additional bliss." In his discussion of "the veil," for example, Ibn ʿArabī cites the Qur'anic statement "On that Day they will be veiled from their Lord" (83:15). Never does he point to the expression "on that Day" as a hint of temporary veiling. In contrast to his insistence that scripture never explicitly describes punishment as everlasting, it is curious that he stretches the

meaning of this particular verse to reflect an eternal reality. Considering the esoteric nature of his writings, however, it is to be expected that some interpretations will seem selective.

Excursus: Corroborating Ibn ʿArabī's Quasi-Universalism: The Case of Mullā Ṣadrā

Ibn ʿArabī's quasi-universalism impressed a variety of Muslim scholars of later generations, from the Persian exegete ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 736/1335) to the Yemen-based mystical writer ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 832/1428) to the Ottoman "master of Islam" (*shaykh al-Islām*) Muḥammad ibn Ḥamza al-Fanārī (d. 834/1431) to, perhaps most significant of all, the Persian Shi'ite philosopher Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, more commonly known as Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640). As "one of the most profoundly original and influential thinkers in the history of Islamic philosophy," Ṣadrā has left an indelible mark on Iranian and Shi'ite history. Born in approximately 980/1571 in Safavid Iran, he lived in an era in which Twelver Shi'ism was the official state religion. Ṣadrā's own world, however, encompassed both Shi'ite and Sunni thought. In his search for "transcendent wisdom," he mastered speculative theology (*kalām*) and the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā, Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), and Ibn ʿArabī. Much of Ṣadrā's eclectic study was conducted early in his life in the city of Isfahan; however, his Sufi leanings earned him the wrath of the religious establishment, and he was eventually forced into exile. Following a familiar pattern, he withdrew from society to connect with his spiritual self. This was followed by a return late in his life to his native city of Shiraz, where he spent much of the remainder of his days teaching.

The differences between Ṣadrā and Ibn ʿArabī are many, thanks to Ṣadrā's range of influences, but so too are their similarities. This becomes apparent when comparing their worldviews and soteriologies. Most relevant for our purposes are two of Ṣadrā's works: his magnum opus, *al-Asfār al-arbaʿa al-ʿaqliyya* (The four intellectual journeys), which was completed by 1038/1628, and his commentary on the Qur'an's first sura, which was composed four to six years later. Like Ibn ʿArabī, Ṣadrā speaks of the human limitation in conceptualizing the divine and thus each individual's "idol-carving," God being the true object of all forms of worship, God being the final destination of all human paths, and essential worship. Ṣadrā also affirms that Hell will become an abode of bliss, as the end decreed by "the most merciful of the merciful" will be one of joy for all of creation. He even adopts the punishment-to-sweetness (*ʿadhāb*-to-*ʿudhūba*) argument and presents mercy as the "root" of chastisement. Thus, all harm is in fact beneficial; divine wrath is itself a manifestation of divine mercy.

Ṣadrā's quasi-universalism may surprise those familiar with some of his other works, particularly *al-Ḥikma al-ʿarshiyya* (*The Wisdom of the Throne*), which may have been his final work. In it, Ṣadrā quotes one of Ibn ʿArabī's many affirmations of bliss within Hell and then states, "Now as for myself and what I have learned from the studies and practical (spiritual) exercises to which I have devoted myself, it would appear that Hell … is not an abode of comfort." Instead, it "is only a place of pain, suffering, and endless torment; its pains are continuous and constantly renewed, without ceasing." These particular statements, however, must be read in context. As Mohammed Rustom notes, given the Safavid repression of certain forms of Sufi philosophy (or theoretical Sufism), Ṣadrā occasionally conceals or minimizes his connection to Ibn ʿArabī. The *Ḥikma*, compared with most of his other writings, uses less technical language and is accessible to a broader audience. Thus, Rustom argues, in the *Ḥikma* Ṣadrā disassociates himself from his real views on Hell for the sole purpose of avoiding censure. (It should be recalled that he was expelled from Isfahan precisely for his Sufi views.) This is corroborated by James Morris's observation that "Ṣadrā's suppression here in [the *Ḥikma*] of all but the faintest allusion to his agreement with Ibn Arabi is in keeping with one level of intention in his work," that is, to reach a broad audience without undermining himself.

It is, therefore, telling that Ṣadrā uses the word *appears* in his statement on Hell in the *Ḥikma*. In contrast, in the *Asfār*, he writes, "*There is no doubt* that the entry [into Hell of] the creature whose end is that he should enter Hell" will be "agreeable" to "his nature and will be a perfection of his existence," and that which is agreeable "is not chastisement." As we have seen, and as we shall see in the next chapter, making the case for the salvation of the damned is often a recipe for controversy.

Closing Thoughts

In relation to his argument for inclusivism, Ibn ʿArabī's case for quasi-universalism requires a deeper appreciation of his esoteric approach to scripture: he reinterprets certain Qur'anic verses (for example, 30:32 and 98:8) and terms (for example, *ʿadhāb*) in ways that a myriad of theologians have found especially unsettling and perplexing. It is thus not surprising that aspects of his soteriology have often been misunderstood. Yet Ibn ʿArabī maintains that any interpretation of scripture that differs from the "literal meaning" is a "most wondrous" error: how could one give preference to the authority of one's own "reflection and consideration" over that of the divine? Many of Ibn ʿArabī's opponents, of course, would ask the same question of him. And his response would be that his reading of scripture is guided by insights gleaned through mystical "unveiling" (*kashf*) and is, therefore, inaccessible to many. It is true that compared with most philosophers (*falāsifa*) and speculative theologians (*mutakallimūn*) Ibn ʿArabī appears to be less concerned with utilizing outside systems of thought. Nevertheless, given his obvious uniqueness, the claim made by Chittick that Ibn ʿArabī "places himself squarely in the mainstream of Islam by basing all his teachings upon the Koran and the Hadith" must be qualified.

Be that as it may, it is difficult to overestimate Ibn ʿArabī's contribution to Islamic soteriology. Inspired by the notion that God is "all," he casts a new light on Islamic scripture—one that draws attention to passages and linguistic nuances that buttress the case for universal mercy. As with Ghazālī, Ibn ʿArabī's writings represent a challenge to coreligionists who fail to recognize the extent of God's compassion. Yet Ibn ʿArabī moves beyond Ghazālī, espousing a notably more inclusive inclusivism. In the absence of any direct evidence, it is reasonable to assume that he, like Ghazālī, conceived of Paradise as being the more popular final destination. But even if this were not the case, Ibn ʿArabī speaks of mercy and forgiveness being granted to the "people of the Fire who are its [true] inhabitants"—a group Ghazālī designates as "those who will perish." Given the "accidental" nature of sin, Ibn ʿArabī's quasi-universalism addresses the theodicean problem we encountered in the previous chapter, of whether a merciful God would punish His servants eternally for having committed temporal sins. But Ibn ʿArabī's conception of overwhelming mercy also manages to account for divine wrath, which is made manifest through the very existence of Hell (however paradisiacal it may seem) and "the veil" blocking its inhabitants from the *real* reward.

Ibn ʿArabī was not the first proponent of quasi-universalism. The heresiographer Abū al-Fatḥ al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) in his *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal* (Sects and creeds) traces this doctrine back to at least the third/ninth century: Jāḥiẓ, the same Muʿtazilite who reportedly espoused liberal inclusivism, is also said to have maintained that the inhabitants of the Fire will eventually be transformed, adopting a fire-like constitution and experiencing pleasure within an abode that is agreeable to their nature. Whether Jāḥiẓ actually advocated this is an issue of debate, but this reference in a text that predates Ibn ʿArabī is one indication that this doctrine was, in some form or another, in circulation early on. Even so, it would be reasonable to assume that Ibn ʿArabī's particular elucidations and elaborations are all his own. In a telling passage, he confesses that he knows of no other person who has ever portrayed God's contentment with His creation in such a positive light: "I have called attention to it here," he explains, "only because mercy has overcome me at this moment." (Interestingly, Ṣadrā, writing four centuries later, would claim that he himself had met no one who

realized just how merciful God will be in the life to come.) To those traditionally trained scholars who deem quasi-universalism unjustifiable and overly optimistic, Ibn ʿArabī offers the following:

[There is a] difference between him who desires the spreading of God's mercy among His servants—whether they be obedient or disobedient—and him who desires to take God's mercy away from some of His servants. This second person is the one who prohibits the mercy of God that embraces all things, but he does not prohibit it to himself. Were it not for the fact that God's mercy takes precedence over His wrath, the possessor of this attribute would never attain to God's mercy.

Although Ibn ʿArabī's mercy-for-all approach has attracted many supporters, damnationist critics have long regarded it as a heretical innovation. Other critics include prominent advocates of an alternative vision of universal mercy. In the next chapter, we shall encounter a traditionalist rejection of quasi-universalism—in favor of universalism itself. <>

KNOWING GOD: IBN ʿARABĪ AND ʿABD AL-RAZZĀQ AL-QĀSHĀNĪ'S METAPHYSICS OF THE DIVINE by Ismail Lala [Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, Brill, E-Book: 9789004401648; Hardback: 978900440051 1]

Can we know God, or does he reside beyond our ken? In Ibn ʿArabī and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī's *Metaphysics of the Divine*, Ismail Lala conducts a forensic analysis of the nature of God and His interaction with creation. Looking mainly at the exegetical works of the influential mystic, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), and one of his chief disseminators, ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 736/1335?), Lala employs the term *huwiyya*, literally "He-ness," as an aperture into the metaphysical worldview of both mystics. Does Al-Qāshānī agree with Ibn ʿArabī's conception of God? Does he agree with Ibn ʿArabī on how God relates to us and how we relate to Him? Or is this where Sufi master and his disciple part ways?

"Is God apophatic or kataphatic, according to Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī?" This was the first question I was asked at a medical ethics conference by a stranger who had discovered my doctoral study was to do with the ubiquitous Sufi. Notwithstanding the abrupt nature of the enquiry, or perhaps because of it, I felt vindicated, for my research addressed this very issue through analysis of the term *huwiyya* (literally, He-ness or ipseity). But, in so doing, it also followed advice I was given during my first lecture: "Most of you will not make it in academia," our professor announced rather matter-of-factly, "for those of you who do, pick a guy." A question and a guy—these, then, are the twin pillars upon which is constructed the edifice of my research. My question: What is the true nature of God? My guy: ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 736/1335?), a disciple of the enigmatic Sufi theorist, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240). So, technically, there are two guys, but one must go through the master to get to the disciple.

This work is about the Sufism of Ibn ʿArabī and one of the chief disseminators of his thought, al-Qāshānī, specifically. But it is also about mysticism, generally, and the way we perceive God, and the way He interacts with us and we with Him. With articles devoted to him numbering in the thousands, commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* alone in the hundreds, and translations in the scores, Ibn ʿArabī surely is, and has been, one of the most widely read and studied mystics of all

time. His style is so tightly honeycombed with preciosity and involutions that it has at once enamoured and beguiled all who have had the good fortune, and bad luck, to stumble upon it.

So, what sets this work apart from its precursors? For the answer, we must reconnect with our two acquaintances: the idea—a detailed analysis conducted from primary texts on a single term that is conspicuously emblematic of his "monism," and which is scrupulously contextualized in Ibn ʿArabī's two most enduringly popular works, the *Fuṣūṣ* and the *Futūḥāt*; and the guy—al-Qāshānī, who Toshihiko Iztusu in his seminal work, *Sufism and Taoism*, relies on more than Ibn ʿArabī himself to elucidate his Sufi *Weltanschauung*. The former adheres to the Joycian maxim that in the is contained the universal and is a window that no one has yet peeked through; the latter a lacuna that no one has yet filled.

Excerpt: "But words are things," urges Byron, "and a small drop of ink, /Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces/That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think." It may make millions think, but it would be folly to suppose the millions were of the same epoch, or that it would make people of varying eras think in the same way. Equally, a word may elicit an effect alone, or may be contextually directed, or often be both, but in very different ways. The temporal aspect, following a synchronic/diachronic bifurcation, has already been mentioned. But Toshihiko Izutsu also ramifies the denotations of terms into either "basic" or "relational" meanings. A hierarchy of words is further posited by the linguist with "focus-words" at the semantic summit. The worldview the Qurʾan

creates and perpetuates, says Izutsu, is the product of an intricate lattice of key terms, which generate linguistic microcosms with a nominal nucleus, or focus word. These semantic fields, with the focus-word at their center and key terms orbiting them, are bound to other semantic fields by polyvalent key terms that act as connective tissue fastening these fields together to form an entire conceptual outlook. While this unitary, synchronic method frames our analysis of the lion's share of Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī's works, here a historical aperçu is dimly adumbrated, for if Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī use the term in their own way, their notion is still informed by huwiyya's historical dimension. Huwiyya is an abstract noun from the pronoun huwa (he) and comes directly from the lexicon of Hellenistic learning. It has also been suggested that it is a loan-word based on the Syriac hāywā. The relationship between huwiyya and mawjūd, and which should be used for the same Greek word, constituted a significant dilemma for Arabic translators of Greek philosophical texts. Indeed, Ibn Rushd's (d. 595/1198) "overwhelming interest" was "in the difference between 'mawǧūd' or 'huwiyya' which signifies the essence of the thing and the 'mawǧūd' or 'huwiyya' which signifies the true. … Should they use 'mawǧūd,' despite its misleading paronymous form, or coin a new word and say 'huwiyya?'"

First appearing as a cameo in the works of Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī's (d. 259/873) circle, there is a close association between huwiyya and the abstract noun anniyya as both are translations for the Greek terms on ("being") and einai ("to be"). Huwiyya, nonetheless, is also employed by these early translators as an antonym for "otherness." Adamson suggests that huwiyya is most used to denote on whereas anniyya is mainly reserved foreinai. Yet there are cases when the converse is also true. The interchangeability between the terms suggests that the difference between them was not sufficiently delineated. Indeed, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) resolutely declares the two to be synonyms. In al-Kindī's circle, then, huwiyya and anniyya are used to refer to God, in terms of his existence, which is often presented with the ordinal adjective alūlā (the first). This means the nature of God's existence is not expressed by the term, only its priorness to everything. However, there are also passages of the Theology of Aristotle translated by al-Kindī's circle that clearly deny that the First has being. Thus, the term is also applied to that which does have being first, which is the intellect. Adamson hypothesizes that: … the Adaptor is trying to hold on to the idea that God is being, though he is prepared to admit that God does not have being, perhaps thinking that this would imply that God has being as something external attributed to him. In this case, huwiyya (and anniyya) is "the immediate effect and proper effect of the First, with all things being indirect effects through the mediation of the intellect." There are other times, though, when it refers to the unknown-ness of God. We are told that His huwiyya is "not perceived in any way. He is the one whose name is unknown, to say nothing of His substance." Another connotation of anniyya and huwiyya used by this early theologian/ translator is that it is an articulation of God's simplicity, meaning, "His being [is] nothing other than what it is" because "if God had attributes distinct from His being, He would not be truly one." Again, this is not an outright negation redolent of the hypertranscendentalism of the Muʿtazilites, for it is conceded that though God has no attributes because He is their cause, He is still connected to them in the way a cause is connected to the caused. In this sense, then, He does have attributes. Also, at other times, it seems positive attributes, at least in principle, can be said to be identical to God's huwiyya. Al-Kindī himself further uses huwiyya to underscore the simplicity of God he equates God's being to His simplicity. This means the primary difference, according to al-Kindī, is that God's huwiyya does not have multiplicity; everything else, in contrast, does. The term huwiyya thus has the following early meanings:

1. It denotes God in terms of His priorness to everything else.
2. It is a term for the first thing to have being, that is, the intellect.
3. It connotes the unknown-ness of God, who cannot be apprehended by intellects.

4. It represents the positive attributes of God that are His being insofar as He is their cause but are not, He as He is one and simple.
5. It means the simplicity and unity of God, as opposed to the multiplicity of all other things.

By al-Fārābī's time, huwiyya was already very much part of the philosophical lexicon, which is why the late philosopher, Ibn Rushd, is somewhat of an outlier in seeking to explain the term. Al-Fārābī, without feeling the need to elucidate the term, makes an important distinction between māhiyya and huwiyya: the former connotes conceptual essence, and the latter, an individual, existing manifestation of that essence, such as man, and Fred who is a man. He also distinguishes between mental and extra-mental (that is, proper) existence, with huwiyya being employed for the latter. The only example where there is no distinction between māhiyya and huwiyya, according to al-Fārābī, is in God. This is because every essence needs an external stimulus to bring it into existence, notwithstanding God. Huwiyya seems to be a term of extraordinary versatility. In the Liber de Causis, it is applied to the whole gamut of beings, from God, the first Being, to pure intelligences, to beings with sensible existence. Indeed, in Ibn Rushd's commentary of Aristotle's Metaphysics, it is "said to assume as many meanings as Aristotle has categories." Moreover, according to Ibn Rushd, not only may huwiyya be used for substances and accidents, it may also denote both the essence of a thing, andwhether it is true, that is, actual or existing.In both cases, the word is the same, but the meaning very different. A.M. Goichon identifies eleven uses for huwiyya in Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā, the primary denotation being "a concrete being considered universally." Ibn Sīnā expounds much on the distinction between māhiyya and huwiyya initially presented by al-Fārābī, and the term clearly plays a pivotal role in his philosophy. All these meanings and associations of huwiyya were available to Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī, and inform their own usage of the term, though one does not find in either a conscious philosophical use of it. Indeed, Ibn ʿArabī displays little appetite for the application of unvarnished philosophical explanations and categorizations for the nature of God. The absolute essence of God can never be comprehended, much less categorized. Yet we would be hasty if we assumed this was the Andalusian's last word on the matter. For God, in the manner he relates to His creation—through the Names—opens avenues for comprehension and categorization. And it is in this sphere that Ibn ʿArabī avails himself of every mode of thought and articulation in order to depict and display the nature of God and the nature of his interaction with the Cosmos.

The huwiyya of God, says Ibn ʿArabī, in its numinous transcendence does not admit of any of the Aristotelian categories. But shun the categories he does not because it furnishes him with an adaptable framework within which to characterize and convey the communicable nature of God—His comparability (tashbīh). And how this facet, though not God in His supra-rational transcendence (tanzīh), relates to and is realized in the phenomenal world. Denis Gril is correct, then, to adduce Ibn ʿArabī's treatment of the Aristotelian categories as an example of "the way in which a Sufi appropriates concepts that may originally be used for another purpose, for his own purposes." Yet to consider that Ibn ʿArabī would acknowledge his debt to, or even actively appropriate and absorb the categories, and use it as his point of departure for huwiyya would be presumptuous. Being part of his cultural heritage, these ideas palpitated in his mind, ideas that would be resurrected in the domain of his explanation and argumentation. To conflate organic absorption and conscious assimilation would, nevertheless, constitute an error and a leap, both of which play down his originality and play up the contribution of his precursors. Though I am unwilling to acknowledge active assimilation of Aritostle's categories, it is nonetheless undeniable that Ibn ʿArabī makes passive use of the categories to answer two fundamental questions, as Gril puts it: "What can we know about God and how did the universe come into being?"

In other words, what is the connection between "the Essence, the Attributes and the Acts?" The problem with these questions and the reason Ibn ʿArabī never employs the categories to delineate the transcendent reality of God is that "the knowledge we can have of God is strictly contrary to that which we have of the universe." This is because "the categories allow us to think about the world but not its transcendent principle." The true nature of God—His huwiyya—thus cannot be expressed in positive terms. This does not indicate that the Names of God, His Attributes, are extra-categorical, nor that they had not been subjected to categorization prior tolbn ʿArabī. Indeed, though not overtly associated with or connected to Aristotelian categories, divine Attributes and their implications for the Cosmos had kindled the curiosity of many philosophers and theologians in the Islamic tradition before Ibn ʿArabī entered the scene. Ibn ʿArabī's contribution is not in the way he applies the categories; it is the way in which he adapts them. Not allowing application of the categories to God in His Absoluteness and even expressing displeasure at the mere contemplation of the absolute divine Essence (but contemplating it anyway), Ibn ʿArabī applies the two categories of action and affection to the divine Names. Names such as "the Avenger" (al-Muntaqim), "the Grateful" (al-Shakūr) and "the One Who responds" (al-Mujīb) to advertize how God reacts and responds to His creation. His unique contribution, however, is in establishing a "correspondence between divine nature and the form of the world." Each existent in the phenomenal world, Ibn ʿArabī proclaims, has a noumenal counterpart on "the divine side." The mystic thus theologizes Aristotelian categories. Furthermore, because he has installed an ontological connection between the divine Names and the cosmos, the function of the categories becomes ontological as well as theological. Huwiyya, then, is a term that sits at the intersection of the Venn diagram of Hellenistic thought, the philosophical tradition of Islam and Sufism. This study does not scrutinize the appropriation of the term from Hellenistic learning to Sufi literature, nor does it analyze the evolution and various incarnations of it in the Islamic mystical tradition. It simply charts Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī's own usage of the term and what they mean by it in their principal works: the Futūḥāt and Fuṣūṣ for Ibn ʿArabī (with a greater emphasis on the latter), and the lexicons of al-Qāshānī and his Taʾwīlāt. A direct comparison of the two mystics in the context of this term will then be attempted to disinter the similarities and display the differences, and to decipher what these say about the authors. As with any such study, the point of departure must be each author's own definition of the term under investigation, inasmuch as it has been defined by them, and it is from this definition that this study, too, begins.

*** The foregoing attempts to explain why in al-Qāshānī's works his methodology, his style and his content vary so widely from his master; why he is so reticent to explore all the meanings of huwiyya even though he clearly subscribes to them; why he bowdlerizes and expurgates Ibn ʿArabī's metaphysics; and why he modifies Ibn ʿArabī's thought. It is because his audience was different, and because his purpose was different. This is not to suggest that all al-Qāshānī has achieved is the production of a sanitized and simplified conceptual outlook of Ibn ʿArabī's thought. It is indeed sanitized and simplified, but in emphasizing the uncontroversial aspects of Ibn ʿArabī's thought and accentuating the pedagogical facet of the Fuṣūṣ and the Futūḥāt, al-Qāshanī forges a new worldview as well. This new conceptual outlook is the cumulative effect of all the small changes, additions and omissions al-Qāshānī makes to Ibn ʿArabī's Weltanschauung, thereby creating a metaphysics that is not only faithful to his Sufi master, but also one more in keeping with the spirit of his time. Al-Qāshānī's world, though one of more religious tolerance in general, appears more restrictive in terms of the acceptance of Ibn ʿArabī's ideas. Indeed, we know that al-Qāshānī was fending off attacks, not only from exoteric scholars, some of whom anathematized him, but also from powerful Sufi orders generally, and prominent Sufis specifically. The Andalusian, conversely, enjoyed widespread celebrity and renown in his final years. Al-Suyūṭī lists scores of masters in the traditional sciences of Ḥadīth, fiqh and tafsīr who approved of Ibn ʿArabī during this period in Damascus. Many

of these traditional scholars even considered the Sufi to be the pole (quṭb) of his era. Ibn ʿArabī could therefore afford to be daring, vibrant and even a little reckless. He could afford to direct his works solely to the Sufi adepts and obscure it for everyone else. Al-Qāshānī had no such luxury. In a new world of suspicion and cynicism towards Ibn ʿArabī's ideas, of many exoteric and Sufi detractors, and few allies, he had to assume the mantle of defender and educator. And it is around these two objectives that all his works orbit. This meant that his works had to be instructive and succinct, they had to be faithful to the school but uncontroversial, they had to encapsulate the major tenets of Ibn ʿArabī's highly abstruse thought but be simple enough for a beginner. With all these demands, walking along the slenderest of tightropes, al-Qāshānī produced his lexicons and the Taʾwīlāt, and if it does not meet all the above criteria, it certainly comes close. <>

Unsaying God: Negative Theology in Medieval Islam by Aydogan Kars [Oxford University Press, 9780190942458]

What cannot be said about God, and how can we speak about God by negating what we say? Traveling across prominent negators, denialists, ineffectualists, paradoxographers, naysayers, ignorance-pretenders, unknowers, I-don't-knowers, and taciturns, **Unsaying God: Negative Theology in Medieval Islam** delves into the negative theological movements that flourished in the first seven centuries of Islam.

Aydogan Kars argues that there were multiple, and often competing, strategies for self-negating speech in the vast field of theology. By focusing on Arabic and Persian textual sources, the book defines four distinct yet interconnected paths of negative speech formations on the nature of God that circulated in medieval Islamic world. Expanding its scope to Jewish intellectuals, Unsaying God also demonstrates that religious boundaries were easily transgressed as scholars from diverse sectarian or religious backgrounds could adopt similar paths of negative speech on God.

This is the first book-length study of negative theology in Islam. It encompasses many fields of scholarship, and diverse intellectual schools and figures. Throughout, Kars demonstrates how seemingly different genres should be read in a more connected way in light of the cultural and intellectual history of Islam rather than as different opposing sets of orthodoxies and heterodoxies.

Why Sufism, and Why the Thirteenth Century?

Traveling across negators, denialists, ineffectualists, paradoxographers, naysayers, ignorance-pretenders, unknowers, I-don't-knowers, and taciturns, this book aims to introduce the apophatic theological positions that developed in the medieval Islamicate world. It is particularly interested in tracing their circulation among Sufis, and specifically in the thirteenth century. I should add a note, however brief, in justification of my choice to concentrate on thirteenth-century Sufism in this book. I will mention only three main reasons, which respectively correspond to the current literature on apophasis in Islam, comparative mysticism, and theories of mysticism.

First, Sufis of the thirteenth century compose the most unexpected yet prominent group cited in the current scholarship of apophaticism in Islam. The 1970s witnessed the rise of the concept "apophasis" in the study of religion, as a term that indicates not just a speech-act but also a new, ethicalized divine transcendence associated with mysticism. Within this broader turn in reinterpreting negative speech in religion and philosophy, a large body of works on Islam has cited primarily thirteenth-century Sufi masters, especially Ibn al-`Arabi and Rūmī, as the foremost

representatives of Islamic apophasis or negative theology.' In this background of scholarship, it is paradox and mysticism that widely come to mind when we talk about apophaticism. Ibn al-Arabi and Rūmī are by far the most cited names for apophasis in Islam, while Henry Corbin's (d.1978) list added Persian Sufi masters who lived in the same century, such as Najm al-Din Kubrã (d.1221), (Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī (d.1336), and (Aziz Nasafi (fl.l.13th CE). A closer focus on this period and its figures not only reveals how forms of apophaticism adopted by these Sufis fit into the larger Islamicate world but also elucidates what was apophatic in theological context—in which sense, under which specific historical conditions and discursive regulations, and with which peculiar performative dimensions. Through a focus on Sufism, I will test whether the common equivalence of mysticism and negative theology is tenable. This study suggests that it is not.

Second, the description of thirteenth-century Sufism as the pinnacle of Muslim apophaticism reflects the broader description of the period in a comparative scholarly perspective. These were the most exciting times for the study of apophaticism—the golden age of Abrahamic apophatic theologies—as Michael Sells remarked:

> The 150-year period from the mid-twelfth to the beginning of the fourteenth century constitutes the flowering of apophatic mysticism. Almost simultaneously, the apophatic masterpieces of the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian traditions appeared, which would include, among others, the writings of Ibn `Arabi (d. 1240), Rumi (d. 1273), Abraham Abulafia (d. ca. 1291), Moses de Léon (d. 1305), the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Beguine mystics culminating with Hadewijch (fl. 1240) and Marguerite Porete (d. 1310), and Meister Eckhart (d. ca. 1327).

Apophasis lived on after this period in the post-exilic Kabbalah of Isaac Luria [d.1572], in the Spanish mystics, in Jacob Boehme [d.1624], and widely throughout the Islamic tradition. Yet it never again held as central a place in mystical language.' This argument is extremely enticing for any student of comparative mysticism. What might be the reasons for such a synchronic and widespread blooming—if indeed this was the case—of apophaticism across kin religions? Why did such apophaticism never resurface?

While the depictions of the thirteenth century as the pinnacle of Sufism are widespread, the extent to which these representations inherit the earlier orientalist or Muslim modernist baggages is not always clear. The preeminent British scholar of Sufism, Arthur Arberry (d.1969), for example, adopted an essentializing yet popular decline paradigm of Sufism, wherein the thirteenth century became the period when Islamic mysticism reached its climax and then gradually decayed (for nearly eight centuries!), never to recover.' An in-depth study of apophaticism in Islam up to the end of the thirteenth century provides a better understanding for such larger comparative perspectives on mysticism. The present study does not find substantial evidence in support of a conspicuous flowering of apophaticism on the divine essence among Muslims during this period. Paradoxical forms of negative theologies did intensify, but we also witness the decay of other forms that were more powerful in the previous centuries. Hence this study refuses to uphold the thesis of the thirteenth-century flowering of apophatic theologies among "the daughters of Abraham." We will unearth strong trans-religious interactions of apophaticism, particularly among the Muslim and Jewish mystical and philosophical traditions. On the other hand, these cross-pollinations developed much earlier than the thirteenth century, and mostly beyond the mystical currents of these religions.

The final reason is related to an even broader theoretical challenge on the relationship between mysticism and its institutionalization. The supposed opposition between mysticism and institutional religion has long overshadowed the study of religion as well as Sufism. Like Arberry, Spencer Trimingham (d.1987) in his **SUFI ORDERS IN ISLAM** (1971), among other influential studies, depicted a progressively institutionalized history of Sufism, which meant for both men the gradual regression of authentic mysticism in Islam. This commonly presumed opposition between

institutional religion and mysticism has been challenged since the late 1970s. Most remarkably, a group of comparative religionists developed what is called the constructivist approach, which has literally reversed the perennialist claims on mysticism and highlighted the importance of religious institutions, doctrines, scriptures, and established norms and practices in grounding, catalyzing, and even constructing mystical experiences. Accordingly, mysticism is not the experiential, authentic seed of religious institutions and doctrines but rather their fruit. Within this theoretical context, how apophaticism relates to the institutionalization of mysticism emerges as a pivotal question that awaits a historically grounded answer. Depending on the theoretical position a religionist adopts, the expectations will be diametrically opposed to each other. Does the organization of mysticism in the form of orders [tawā`'if] and idiosyncratic methods [tarīqāt] associated with specific eponymous Sufi masters inhibit, or rather intensify apophaticism among Sufis?

The assumed flowering of apophatic mysticism curiously follows the beginning of the long process of the formation of Sufi orders. Yet an unresolved theoretical dilemma appears here: many scholars, including those who assume a golden age in the thirteenth century, also hold that apophaticism is inherently resistant to institutionalization, systematization, formality, and organization. Hence the relation of apophaticism with institutionalization is yet to be addressed on historical grounds. With its focus up to the beginning of the organization of Sufism in the form of orders, the current study traces whether the emerging institutionalization catalyzed or hindered Sufi variations of apophaticism in the thirteenth century. The present analysis does not find any tangible intensification or waning in apophatic theologies as a direct result of the institutionalization of mysticism in the f0rm of nascent Sufi groups beginning to construct and gather around the lineages, methods, and practices associated with charismatic eponymous figures. The absence of such correlation further suggests that the ubiquitous association of mysticism with apophaticism is a problematic one.

A Guide to Negative Theology: Are the Mutazilites Negative Theologians?

So who were the negative theologians among medieval Muslims?' Until recently scholars of religion associated negative theology or negativist forms of theology in Islam particularly with a group of speculative theologians who emerged in eighth-century Iraq: the Mutazilites. Doxographers of other theological schools usually called them "the negators," or "deniers," of God's attributes. When Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'arī (d.936) introduced the Mutazilite view on divine unity in a few sentences, he employed the Arabic negations some seventy times in a dizzying one-page "description," if it can be called that.

The image of Mutazilites as the most famous standard-bearers of Islamic negative theology has persisted right up into modern scholarship, though what is meant by "negative theology" is rarely explained. The Mu`tazilite doctrine indeed indicates a fundamental weakness of "negative theology"—the standard term via which modern scholars of religion conceptualize apophatic performances in theology. While the Mutazilite firmly negated the reality and applicability of divine attributes to God, they did not follow the unknowability principle widely associated with negative theology. They maintained that God's essence, or the truth of Her ipseity [haqīqat dhāt Allah], was rather knowable. Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzis (d.1209) observation is perceptive:

Dirār [d.815] among the theologians, and [Abū Hamid] al-Ghazālī among the later ones, argued that we do not know the truth of the ipseity of God—which is the claim of the philosophers. The majority of the theologians among us [i.e., the Ash`arites] and among the Muctazilites have argued that She is, indeed, knowable [annaha ma'lūma].

Al-Razi's point about the essential accessibility of God to human intellect is widely supported by a variety of prominent sources. Hence there is an unjustified leap from the negation of attributes to

the divine unknowability and inaccessibility in calling a Mutazilite scholar a negative theologian. Medieval scholars were keenly aware of the difference between the two theological questions, and the Mu`tazilites embodied a reference point for scholars to clarify their own positions. In his correspondence with the eminent philosopher Nasīr al-Din Tusi (d.1274), the Sufi master Sadr al-Dīn Qūnavī (d.1274) argued that "everybody who ponders seriously agrees that the divine reality is unknowable [majhūla]." In his response, Tūsī felt obliged to correct Qūnavi s generic statement, clarifying the philosophical stance that he followed:

> it was necessary for Qūnavī rather to say: "the philosophers have agreed upon this (unknowability)." For, the Mutazilite masters among the theologians assert that the divine reality is rather knowable to human beings as She is [haqíqatihi ta'ala ma`lūma lil-bashar kamā hiya]."

In turn, Qūnavī indeed agrees with the refinement that Tūsī brings to divine unknowability. In his response to Tūsi s correction, Qūnavī indicates that he actually meant the Aristotelian philosophers and the verifier Sufis, and not theologians, by the phrase "everybody who ponders seriously."" While Sufis and philosophers agree on divine unknowability, the Mutazilites state the opposite, both for Tūsī and Qūnavī. Observers like Ibn Taymiyya (d.1328) and al-Dhahabī (d.1348), however dissident they were toward these traditions, confirmed their schema.

The claim that "God is known" (in the sense of both ma`lūm and ma`rūf) is repeated and underscored in Mutazilite texts from early on. In the Epistle of Whoever Seeks Guidance [Kitab al-Mustarshid] al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm (d.860) employs both Arabic verbs to emphasize that God is knowable: "people know that things can be perceived as they really are and certainly known even if they are absent from us, for God is cognized and after the quotations will consistently use singular female pronoun. In both cases, the pronouns addressing God will be capitalized. I find four benefits in distinguishing my voice from the voice of my sources in terms of gender, creating a tangible tension. First, it faithfully transmits my original sources. Subtle examples of gender play in my sources will become visible, and possible anthropomorphic inclinations will make better sense, as we will see particularly in the final chapter. Second, the gender difference between the voices of author and of the sources and scholars explored in the book will better highlight the gender tension inherent in Islamic theological writings. It will constantly remind the English reader that the Arabic "He" of my sources is predominantly a term that transcends gender when referring to God. The popular Muslim conception of "He beyond 'h' and `e" will be better transmitted to the English reader. Third, differentiating my voice will distance me from the conventional linguistic practice in Anglophone scholarship. Through this distance, I will be able to challenge the implicit normativity of an English and Arabic (rather than, say, Persian or Turkish) theology and gender ideology in academic writing. "He" is a valid pronoun to address God only in some of the languages that Muslims speak, and this author aims to avoid the common practice of endorsing theologies that are meaningful only in these languages. Finally, my use of feminine pronouns will not only remind us of the trans-male nature of the referent, but also the unjustifiable use of male pronouns today as a transgender term in Anglophone scholarship. I hope to resist the hegemony of androcentrism in academic and theological discourse without compromising historical rigor in rendering my sources.

Compass

The current chapter has introduced the framework, content, and the basic conceptual problems in discussing "negative theology" as such. Accordingly, the move from "negative theology" to "negative theologies" is not sufficient to solve our conceptual problem in approaching Islamicate theological landscapes. Any question about "negative theology," in singular or plural, does not have a precise answer, mainly because "negative theology" is too broad and vague a term if we survey the theological questions that were asked or if we recall the breadth and depth of theological discourses.

The current chapter has provided a conceptual introduction and narrowed down the scope of the next chapters to the negative theologies of the divine essence.

The following four chapters of the book thus focus on the wellspring of the field of theology: the divine ipseity. Within this narrower theological and dearer conceptual topography, they trace four distinct yet interconnected paths of negative speech on the nature of God that widely circulated in the medieval Islamicate world. These families of negative speech formations are loosely defined as "double negative," "philosophical," "paradoxical," and "amodal" apophatic paths. The formation and career of each of these paths are analyzed in a separate chapter of this book. These studies suggest that Islamicate scholars could apply more than one of these methods of negating the discourse on God's essence in different works or contexts. Moreover, the same methods of negation could be adopted by rival groups. For example, the set of strategies that define philosophical apophaticism were also adopted by the critics of philosophy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the transmission of philosophical apophaticism in Andalusia from al-Kindi to Moses Maimonides, not only polymaths like al-Batalyawsī (d.1127), but also surprising names such as the ascetic mystic Ibn Masarra (d.931) played significant roles. On the other hand, the Jewish theologian Nethanel al-Fayyūmī (d.n65) and the Shāfi`ī judge of Fa-timid Cairo, al-Qudā`ī (d.1062) followed Ismā`īlī apophaticism by adopting not only their famous "double negation" but also their complex cosmology. In the same vein, the apophatic strategies that Sufis applied were often shared with non-Sufis, and even anti-Sufis. The cases the book introduces illustrate not only the plurality of negative theologies of the divine essence but also the porousness of intellectual boundaries between schools, sects, and religions, Judaism and Islam in particular. Conversations on "Islamic," and for that matter "Jewish" or "Christian," negative theologies, should bear in mind the theological osmosis that took place across religious traditions. If we tend to define religions as separate belief systems—and we still widely do—such definition attributes theology a decisive yet undeserved role in determining religious differences and boundaries. This study encourages finding another definition of religion that goes beyond beliefs and ideas, insofar as it demonstrates that theologies were shared intellectual projects that had little respect for religious boundaries.

The presence of multiple ways of negating discourses on divine essence indicates that there is no single "negative theological tradition" even with reference to one problem within the Islamic intellectual heritage. While there is no unified theology or creed among Muslims in the absence of an authoritative "church," clergy, or consistent state regulation, the questions asked and the answers provided were not only diverse and contextual but also considerably overlapping among scholars and intellectuals from different backgrounds and religious affiliations. From a wider methodological perspective, the study adopts a historicist, contextualist approach to the study of negative theologies and apophasis. Accordingly, every discourse is composed of a finite set of connected propositions and performatives, and there is neither one method nor infinite methods of negating a given discourse. Apophatic possibilities are discourse-dependent insofar as the rules, methods, performative dimensions, and wider implications of negating a discourse are partially defined by the discourse itself. The book hopes to convince the reader that there is no unbounded, absolute, or infinite negation; negative speech is a historically embedded performance that should be contextualized within the multilayered discursive spaces that it affirms in order to operate.

This study displays the inherent affirmativity in any given speech performance, and its findings are in stark contrast with the popular associations of "negative theology" with broad themes like "infinite critique," antidogmatism, mysticism, or morality. Yet, the book avoids extended theoretical discussions, comparisons, or reflections on the contemporary significance of, or appeal to, apophasis and negative theology in philosophy, comparative religion, or constructive theology. The primary purpose of the current book is to inform readers about negative theologies of divine essence in Islam, introducing a historical perspective, vast fields of scholarship, and diverse intellectual schools

and figures. It has a clear theoretical framework, while theoretical discussions are either completely removed or minimized in favor of deeper analysis of Islamic intellectual history. Such valuable and unavoidable philosophical discussions and comparisons should wait until we have a better grasp of Muslim negators, denialists, ineffectualists, paradoxographers, naysayers, ignorance-pretenders, unknowers, I-don't-knowers, and taciturns. Their diverse self-negating speech formations not only stated but also performed the unsayability of the excessive, saturated theme of theological discourse through their own failure of saying. <>

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS OF AŁT'AMAR: POLITICS, ART, SPIRITUALITY IN THE KINGDOM OF VASPURAKAN edited by Zaroui Pogossian and Edda Vardanyan [Armenian Texts and Studies, Brill, 978-90-04-40099-3, 978-90-04-40038-2

Contributors are Krikor Bélédian, Jean-Claude Cheynet, Patrick Donabédian, Bernard Flusin, Tim Greenwood, Gohar Grigoryan, Armen Kazaryan, Davit Kertmenjyan, Sergio La Porta, Jean-Pierre Mahé, Zaroui Pogossian, Robert Thomson (†), Alison Vacca, Edda Vardanyan.

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS OF AŁT'AMAR is dedicated to an outstanding architectural monument of medieval Armenia – the church of the Holy Cross, built in the tenth century on the island of Ałt'amar on Lake Van, and a UNESCO world heritage site. This jewel of architecture has been researched mainly from an art historical perspective. The current multi-author volume offers diverse studies aimed at placing the construction of the church in its proper historical, political, religious, and spiritual context. It explores the intellectual climate in the Kingdom of Vaspurakan during the reign of its founder, King Gagik Arcruni, the Kingdom's relations with Byzantium and the Abbasids, analyzes local historiography, biblical exegesis, hagiography, veneration of the True Cross, and royal ideology. Novel interpretations of architectural features and sculptural decorations close the volume.

Le livre est consacré à l'un des plus importants monuments architecturaux de l'Arménie médiévale, l'église de la Sainte-Croix construite au Xe siècle sur l'île d'Ałt'amar sur le lac de Van. Elle est inscrite sur la liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO. Ce joyau de l'architecture arménienne a été étudié principalement dans la perspective de l'histoire de l'art. Le présent volume multi-auteurs propose une diversité d'approches qui placent la construction de cette église dans le contexte historique, politique, religieux et spirituel. Il étudie l'ambiance intellectuelle du Royaume du Vaspurakan durant le règne de son fondateur, le roi Gagik Arcruni, les relations du Royaume avec Byzance et les Abbassides, il analyse l'historiographie locale, l'exégèse biblique, l'hagiographie, le culte de la Vraie Croix et l'idéologie royale. De nouvelles interprétations des particularités architecturales et des décors sculptés achèvent le volume.

All interested in medieval history, historiography, hagiography, relics, visual arts and biblical exegesis, art and architecture, particularly Armenian art, including in its political context between Byzantine and Abbasid Empires.

Jean-Pierre Mahé: Préambule (English Translation)

Ałt‘amar est devenu, pour la postérité, le monument le plus célèbre d’un royaume du Vaspurakan1, qui a existé, au sud de l’Arménie, entre 908 et 1021. Le Vaspurakan est consacré comme une entité territoriale distincte par le traité de 591, quand les conquêtes de Maurice entraînent la division de la province du Turuberan, en Tarawn, à l’Ouest, sous contrôle byzantin, et en Vaspurakan, à l’Est, sous domination sassanide.

L’étymologie de Vaspurakan est heureusement assez transparente pour laisser entrevoir par quelle évolution un banal adjectif en -akan, a pu acquérir un sens toponymique localisé dans cette région. Il est clair en effet que le radical est composé de l’épithète vas- signifiant « précieux, de haute noblesse », et de – pur-, reposant sur un thème indo-iranien, qui désigne le « fils », comme c’est le cas par exemple dans le nom du fleuve Brahmapoutre. Le Vaspurakan est donc la terre qui appartient en propre aux « fils de haute noblesse ».

Qui sont ces mystérieux personnages ? Tout simplement, les frères cadets ou les cousins du roi. Bref, tous les princes du sang, qu’il vaut mieux tenir à l’écart de la cour pour éviter les intrigues de palais, et autres rivalités fratricides. Movsēs Xorenac‘i nous apprendo qu’à l’époque arsacide ces princes étaient consignés au Nord du lac de Van, près des pêcheries royales d’Arbe-rani, et qu’ils ne pouvaient quitter ce secteur sans se rendre coupables de haute trahison. C’est ainsi que leur domaine princier fut qualifié de vaspurakan et que, par une sorte de métonymie, cet adjectif fut transformé en nom propre pour désigner des territoires de plus en plus étendus : au vie siècle, l’Est du Turuberan puis, dès le viie siècle, presque tout le Sud-Est arménien, si l’on en croit la Géographie d’Anania Širakac‘i.

Quand Gagik Xač‘ik (908–943) fonde, en 908, le royaume du Vaspurakan, le domaine arcrunide s’étend, du Nord au Sud, de l’Araxe aux montagnes du Korduk‘, baignées par le Tigre, et d’Ouest en Est, depuis le lac de Van jusqu’au lac d’Urmia. Il comprend 33 des 35 cantons attribués au Vaspurakan par Anania Širakac‘i. S’y ajoutent la province de Mokk‘, et six autres cantons. Passagèrement Gagik Xač‘ik a même réussi à contrôler une partie de la plaine de l’Ararat que ses successeurs n’ont pas conservée. Bien que le futur constructeur d’Ałt‘amar ait prétendu se faire couronner par Yūsuf « roi de l’Arménie tout entière », son domaine se concentre essentiellement sur l’Arménie vanique, berceau d’Urartu et principal foyer d’arménisation au milieu du premier millénaire avant notre ère.

Premier roi du Vaspurakan, Gagik Xač‘ik est en fait l’héritier du patient travail de ses ancêtres, qui affichèrent des ambitions royales dès la seconde moitié du Ixe siècle. C’est son père, Derenik Grigor, qui commande à T‘ovma Arcruni la grande saga historique achevée en 904 à la gloire de la lignée des Arcrunides. En réplique à la réécriture de l’ancienne historiographie mamikonienne par les serviteurs des Bagratuni, comme Łewon ou l’auteur qui se cache sous le masque de Movsēs Xorenac‘i, les maîtres du Vaspurakan revendiquent une geste dynastique supérieure à celle de leurs rivaux de l’Arménie septentrionale et surtout une plus grande légitimité apostolique à dominer la nation arménienne.

Car, si les Bagratuni, dans la plaine de l’Araxe, contrôlaient tous les lieux saints de la conversion officielle du pays, au rve siècle, par Grégoire l’Illuminateur, ils ne gardaient que peu de vestiges les reliant à la première évangélisation par les apôtres et disciples du Christ. Certes, le Tarawn conservait la mémoire d’un « siège de l’apôtre Thaddée », mais ce territoire fut annexé par Byzance dès 966, et surtout Thaddée n’avait fait que passer par l’Arménie avant de partir pour l’Orient. Au contraire, les Arcruni pouvaient prétendre à l’héritage de saint Barthélemy, enterré à Artaz, où, revenant de Perse, il avait jadis été consacré évêque d’Arménie1. Cette légende fut sans doute élaborée à l’époque du prince Hamazasp Arcruni, qui gouverna la périphérie du lac de Van de 762 à

785, afin d'accompagner l'ascension dynastique de sa lignée et de qualifier le Vaspurakan pour abriter le siège de l'Église nationale.

Cet événement longuement préparé se produisit vers la dernière année du pontificat de Yovhannēs V, mort en 925, et dura jusqu'en 950. Sur le chevet de l'église de la Sainte-Croix, selon l'interprétation proposée par le regretté Michel van Esbroeck, Élie fait face à Barthélemy et Jean Baptiste à saint Grégoire l'Illuminateur.

Aujourd'hui, quand on découvre l'église de la Sainte-Croix esseulée sur l'île d'Ałt'amar, on a peine à croire qu'elle était environnée d'un port et d'un palais entouré de remparts, avec des tours et des bastions, un chemin de ronde où le roi et ses courtisans pouvaient causer à l'aise en admirant le paysage. À l'arrière-plan, s'étageait une ville, qui resta fort prospère au moins jusqu'au xve siècle. Devant la solitude actuelle, on se croirait revenu à l'époque reculée où le sol paraissait vierge de tout vestige.

Mais tous les lecteurs du Continuateur de T'ovma Arcruni savent bien qu'Ałt'amar était le couronnement de plusieurs campagnes architecturales qui avaient commencé à se déployer d'un bout à l'autre du Vaspurakan, bien avant le règne de Gagik Xač'ik. Son père, Derenik Grigor, avait fait aménager, à l'Ouest et à l'Est d'Amrakan, comme on appelait alors la célèbre roche de Van, des salles de festin creusées dans la roche. Gagik Xač'ik y ajouta des ornements dorés, une citerne et un aqueduc souterrain, des églises troglodytes ou bâties en pierre, au sommet et au pied du promontoire.

En fait, depuis 895, quand il était devenu sparapet du Vaspurakan, le prince s'était efforcé d'aménager le territoire de son État, en le dotant de toutes les protections, naturelles et surnaturelles. En 904, en même temps que la roche de Van, il restaure la forteresse de Ostan et bâtit dans la ville de Getk', un palais d'été donnant sur la vallée de l'Araxe et le mont Ararat. À Marakan, il érige la forteresse de Jork', entourée d'une cité protégée par des remparts, avec un palais d'hiver.

À partir de 915, tout en bâtissant l'église de la Sainte-Croix, la ville et le palais d'Ałt'amar, il adjoint un autre palais à la forteresse de Ostan. Tous ces monuments, d'architecture militaire et civile, s'accompagnent de multiples églises, dont les vocables suggèrent tour à tour la protection des saints – comme Surb-Gēorg sur le lac de Van – et le triomphe des fins dernières, comme Sion, Yarut'iwn (la Résurrection) et Hambarjumn (l'Ascension).

La Croix du Christ tient une place d'honneur dans ces sanctuaires. On vénère une croix thaumaturge à Ostan, dans l'église de la Mère-de-Dieu (Astua-cacin). Depuis l'époque du catholicos Nersēs III (641–661), une relique de la vraie Croix est conservée dans le monastère du mont Varag : Gagik Xač'ik la couvre d'or et de joyaux et l'enchâsse dans une somptueuse staurothèque.

On notera que notre église de la Sainte-Croix porte le nom de Surb Xač', et non pas de Surb Nšan. Il y a plus d'une nuance entre ces deux termes, et l'on pourrait même soutenir qu'ils ne désignent pas, stricto sensu, la même réalité. La sainte Croix est le bois du Calvaire, un objet visible et concret26, qui est l'instrument de la mort du Sauveur et de la rédemption des chrétiens. Depuis l'époque d'Héraclius, elle est devenue un monopole impérial, dont le Basileus distribue les reliques au fur et à mesure qu'il reconquiert son Empire.

Au contraire, le saint Signe est un emblème abstrait, pour ainsi dire immatériel. C'est le symbole igné par lequel Constantin a vaincu. C'est « le Signe du Fils de l'Homme », qui apparaîtra dans le ciel à la fin des temps. La transformation de la Croix concrète du Calvaire en un signe qui échappe aux servitudes spatiales des objets ordinaires est en harmonie avec le versant antichalcédonien de la christologie arménienne. Serait-il excessif de se demander si la préférence du Vaspurakan pour la Croix proprement dite n'est pas déjà l'indice d'une ouverture vers la chrétienté byzantine et toutes

les formes d'art compatibles avec elle, notamment les fresques et les images, comme les peintures et les bas-reliefs d'Ałt'amar?

Au xe siècle, le monastère de Narek devient, en Arménie, le vrai foyer d'étude des arts libéraux et de réflexion religieuse. Sanahin ne s'épanouira pleinement qu'au début du siècle suivant, avec l'abbé Sargis et Grigor Magistros, puis Anania Sanahnec'i. C'est à Narek, et dans le Vaspurakan, que s'élabore la réplique à l'hérésie thondrakienne, qui est le défi le plus grave à l'institution ecclésiale, à la foi dans la divinité de Jésus Christ et dans l'efficacité surnaturelle des sacrements, ou, comme on dit en arménien, des « mystères » (xorhurdk').

Le premier de tous les « mystères » (« mystère profond et prodigieux »), est celui de la sainteté de Dieu, qui rend l'homme conscient de sa propre finitude et de son péché. La racine du péché est la somnolence, la torpeur semblable à la mort. « Veillez et priez » dit l'Évangile. La théologie de Narekavank', fondé en 935 (vingt ans seulement après la Sainte-Croix d'Ałt'amar et sur la rive sud du lac de Van, juste en face de ce monument prestigieux), est beaucoup plus qu'une doctrine argumentée : c'est une pratique raisonnée de la vigilance, un dialogue avec Dieu « des profondeurs du cœur », (c'est-à-dire bien au-delà des formules dogmatiques et des mots de la prière), un accès intime au mystère à travers une série d'éblouissements successifs.

Il estbien connu que cette théologie mystique, proprementvaspurakanienne, a exaspéré le catholicos Anania Mokac'i (942–966), pourtant originaire de la région, mais obsédé par les prérogatives de sa fonction et par la diffusion des idées chalcédoniennes, où il voyait une forme de « néo-nestorianisme ».

Après avoir siégé sept ans à Ałt'amar, il quitte le Vaspurakan, et va s'installer auprès du roi Abas Bagratuni (929–953), la médiocrité intellectuelle incarnée. De là, il fulmine des anathèmes contre l'évêque Xosrov Anjewac'i36, étroitement lié à Anania, abbé de Narekavank', qui sera plus tard accusé à son tour.

Il me semble que nous devrions avoir à l'esprit cette théologie du mystère quand nous contemplons l'église de la Sainte-Croix d'Ałt'amar. « Mystère » doit s'entendre dans toute l'extension sémantique du terme xorhurd et dans toutes les activités liturgiques et les modes de pensée qu'il implique. Par mystère, on peut désigner l'essence même de Dieu, mais aussi la liturgie, le rituel, et les sacrements qui en découlent, ainsi que la démarche anagogique, par quoi l'on remonte de l'ombre à l'image, de l'Ancien au Nouveau Testament, du visible à l'invisible, du symbole à l'essence surnaturelle qu'il représente. Telle est, n'en doutons pas, la clef des peintures et des sculptures d'Ałt'amar, ainsi que des énigmes qu'il nous faut déchiffrer.

Ce n'est là, sans doute, qu'un aspect isolé des questions et des recherches que peut susciter un monument tel que la Sainte-Croix. Mais je compte sur la variété de vos interventions pour élargir notre horizon intellectuel autant qu'il le faudra.

Jean-Pierre Mahé: Preamble Translated

A't'amar has become, for posterity, the most famous monument of a Vaspurakan1 kingdom, which existed in southern Armenia between 908 and 1021. Vaspurakan is consecrated as a separate territorial entity by the treaty of 591, when the conquests of Mauritius entailed the division of the province of Turuberan, in Tarawn, in the West, under Byzantine control, and in Vaspurakan, in the East, under Sassanid domination.

The etymology of Vaspurakan is fortunately quite transparent to suggest by what evolution a banal adjective in -akan, could acquire a toponymic sense located in this region. It is clear that the radical is composed of the venerable epithet "precious, of high nobility", and "pure", based on an Indo-Iranian

theme, which designates the "son", as it is the case for example in the name of the river Brahmaputra. Vaspurakan is therefore the land that belongs to the "sons of high nobility".

Who are these mysterious characters? Quite simply, younger brothers or cousins of the king. In short, all princes of the blood, it is better to keep away from the court to avoid palace intrigues, and other fratricidal rivalries. Movsēs Xorenac'i informs us that at the time of Arsacid these princes were recorded north of Lake Van, near the royal fisheries of Arbe-rani, and that they could not leave this area without being guilty of high treason . Thus their princely domain was called vaspurakan and, by a kind of metonymy, this adjective was transformed into a proper name to designate more and more extensive territories: in the sixth century, the East of Turuberan and, from the seventh century, almost all of Armenia's south-east, according to Anania Širakac'i's Geography.

When Gagik Xač'ik (908-943) founded, in 908, the kingdom of Vaspurakan, the arcrunid domain extends, from North to South, from the Araxe to the Korduk mountains, bathed by the Tigris, and of West to East, from Lake Van to Lake Urmia. It includes 33 of 35 cantons attributed to Vaspurakan by Anania Širakac'i. In addition there is Mokk 'province, and six other cantons. Gagik Xač'ik even managed to control part of the plain of Ararat that his successors did not keep. Although the future builder of Ałt'amar claimed to be crowned by Yūsuf "King of Armenia as a whole", his domain is mainly focused on the vanic Armenia, cradle of Urartu and main center of Armenization in the middle of the first millennium BC.

First king of Vaspurakan, Gagik Xač'ik is in fact the heir of the patient work of his ancestors, who displayed royal ambitions in the second half of the twelfth century. It was his father, Derenik Grigor, who commissioned T'ovma Arcruni the great historical saga completed in 904 to the glory of the line of Arcrunids. In reply to the rewriting of the ancient Mamikonian historiography by the servants of the Bagratuni, such as Łewon or the author who hides under the mask of Movsēs Xorenac'i, the masters of Vaspurakan claim a dynastic gesture superior to that of their rivals. Northern Armenia and above all greater apostolic legitimacy to dominate the Armenian nation.

For if the Bagratuni, in the plain of Araxe, controlled all the sacred places of the official conversion of the country, in the fourth century, by Gregory the Illuminator, they kept only few vestiges connecting them to the first evangelization by the apostles and disciples of Christ. Admittedly, the Tarawn kept the memory of a "seat of the Apostle Thaddeus", but this territory was annexed by Byzantium in 966, and especially Thaddeus had only passed through Armenia before leaving for the East. On the contrary, the Arcruni could claim the inheritance of St. Bartholomew, buried at Artaz, where, having returned from Persia, he had formerly been consecrated bishop of Armenia. This legend was probably developed at the time of Prince Hamazasp Arcruni, who governed the outskirts of Lake Van from 762 to 785, to accompany the dynastic rise of his lineage and describe the Vaspurakan to host the headquarters of the National Church.

This event was well prepared and took place towards the last year of the pontificate of Yovhannēs V, died in 925, and lasted until 950. On the bedside of the Church of the Holy Cross, according to the interpretation proposed by the late Michel van Esbroeck, Elijah faces Bartholomew and John the Baptist to St. Gregory the Illuminator.

Today, when we discover the Church of the Holy Cross lonely on the island of Ałt'amar, it is hard to believe that it was surrounded by a port and a palace surrounded by ramparts, with towers and bastions, a walkway where the king and his courtiers could chat at ease while admiring the landscape. In the background was a city, which remained prosperous at least until the fifteenth century. In front of the present loneliness, one would think oneself back to the remote period when the ground appeared virgin of any vestige.

But all readers of T'ovma Arcruni's Continuer know that A't'amar was the culmination of several architectural campaigns that had begun to unfold from one end of Vaspurakan to the other, long before the reign of Gagik Xač ' ik. His father, Derenik Grigor, had arranged, in the west and east of Amrakan, as the famous rock of Van was called, feast halls dug in the rock. Gagik Xač'ik added gilded ornaments, a cistern and an underground aqueduct, troglodyte or stone-built churches at the top and at the foot of the promontory.

In fact, since 895, when he had become a sparapet of Vaspurakan, the prince had endeavored to arrange the territory of his state, endowing it with all the protections, natural and supernatural. In 904, together with the rock of Van, he restores the fortress of Ostan and builds in the city of Getk ', a summer palace overlooking the valley of the Araxe and Mount Ararat. In Marakan, he erects the fortress of Jork ', surrounded by a city protected by ramparts, with a winter palace.

From 915, while building the Church of the Holy Cross, the city and the palace of Ałt'amar, he added another palace to the fortress of Ostan. All these monuments, military and civil architecture, are accompanied by multiple churches, whose words suggest in turn the protection of the saints - as Surb-Gēorg on Lake Van - and the triumph of the latter, as Sion, Yarut'iwn (Resurrection) and Hambarjumn (Ascension).

The Cross of Christ holds a place of honor in these shrines. A miracle worker's cross is venerated in Ostan, in the church of the Mother of God (Astua-cacin). Since the time of the Catholicos Nersēs III (641-661), a relic of the true Cross is preserved in the monastery of Mount Varag: Gagik Xač'ik covers it with gold and jewels and enshrines it in a sumptuous staurotheca.

It should be noted that our church of the Holy Cross is called Surb Xač ', not Surb Nšan. There is more than one nuance between these two terms, and one could even argue that they do not designate, strictly speaking, the same reality. The Holy Cross is the wood of Calvary, a visible and concrete object, 26 which is the instrument of the death of the Savior and the redemption of Christians. Since the time of Heraclius, it has become an imperial monopoly, whose Basileus distributes the relics as he regains his Empire.

On the contrary, the Holy Sign is an abstract emblem, so to speak immaterial. It is the igneous symbol by which Constantine has conquered. It is "the Sign of the Son of Man", which will appear in the sky at the end of time. The transformation of the concrete Cross of Calvary into a sign that escapes the spatial servitudes of ordinary objects is in harmony with the antichalcedonian slope of Armenian Christology. Would it be excessive to ask whether Vaspurakan's preference for the Cross proper is not already indicative of an opening to Byzantine Christianity and all art forms compatible with it, including frescoes and images? , like the paintings and bas-reliefs of Ałt'amar?

In the 10th century, the Narek monastery became the real home of study of liberal arts and religious reflection in Armenia. Sanahin will fully flourish only at the beginning of the following century, with the abbot Sargis and Grigor Magistros, then Anania Sanahnec'i. It is in Narek, and in Vaspurakan, that the reply to the Heresy of the Thondra, which is the most serious challenge to the ecclesial institution, to the faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ and to the efficacy supernatural of the sacraments, or, as they say in Armenian, "mysteries" (xorhurdk ').

The first of all "mysteries" ("profound and prodigious mystery") is that of the holiness of God, which makes man conscious of his own finiteness and sin. The root of sin is drowsiness, torpor like death. "Watch and pray," says the gospel. The theology of Narekavank ', founded in 935 (just twenty years after the Holy Cross of Ałt'amar and on the south shore of Lake Van, right in front of this prestigious monument), is much more than a well-argued doctrine : it is a reasoned practice of vigilance, a dialogue with God "from the depths of the heart", (that is to say, well beyond dogmatic

formulas and words of prayer), an intimate access to the mystery through a series of successive dazzling.

It is well known that this mystic theology, properly Vaspurakanian, exasperated the catholicos Anania Mokac'i (942-966), though originally from the region, but obsessed by the prerogatives of his function and by the diffusion of Chalcedonian ideas, where he saw a form of "neo-Nestorianism".

After seven years in Ałt'amar, he left Vaspurakan, and settled with King Abas Bagratuni (929-953), intellectual mediocrity incarnated. From there, he fulminates anathemas against Bishop Xosrov Anjewac'i, closely linked to Anania, abbot of Narekavank ', who will later be accused in turn.

It seems to me that we should have in mind this theology of mystery when we contemplate Ałt'amar Holy Cross Church. "Mystery" must be understood in all the semantic extension of the term xorhurd and in all the liturgical activities and the modes of thought that it implies. By mystery, we can designate the very essence of God, but also the liturgy, the ritual, and the sacraments that flow from it, as well as the anagogic approach, by which we go back from the shadows to the image, from the Old to the New Testament, from the visible to the invisible, from the symbol to the supernatural essence that it represents. Such is, no doubt, the key to Ałt'amar's paintings and sculptures, as well as enigmas that we must decipher.

This is, no doubt, only an isolated aspect of the questions and research that a monument such as the Holy Cross can provoke. But I rely on the variety of your interventions to broaden our intellectual horizon as much as we need.

Introduction by Zaroui Pogossian and Edda Vardanyan

In 915 King Gagik Arcruni (Artsruni according to other transcription systems) set the foundation stone of the church of the Holy Cross on the island of Ałt‘amar (Aght‘amar according to other transcription systems). The construction was completed in 921 and Gagik dedicated this most bedazzling sanctuary to the Instrument of Salvation, a sign of both victory and a palladium for Christians. The Ałt‘amar island in Lake Van was also the capital of Vaspurakan, recognised as an independent Kingdom by the ‘Abbasid Caliphate in 908.

This masterpiece of architecture, unique for the wealth of its painted and sculptural decoration, has drawn the attention of art historians well beyond specialists in Armenology or Near Eastern studies. Indeed, the magisterial volume on Ałt‘amar by Sirarpie Der Nersessian published in Harvard in 1965 has set the stage for scholarly explorations ever since. While recent works have refined our knowledge on certain specific aspects of its artistic, architectural or political context, Der Nersessian’s trailblazing book remains unsurpassed for its comprehensiveness. However, our knowledge of the material remnants of the monument has greatly improved since then. Advances in other relevant fields, like historical topography, religious and political history of the period, interdisciplinary approaches that combine textual/exegetical and artistic analysis, can provide new data and novel perspectives. When placed against the background of King Gagik’s other pious foundations, as well as his religious and political concerns, the church of the Holy Cross assumes ever greater importance.

Situated on the southern borders of historical Armenia, in constant and complex political-military interaction with the Byzantine Empire, the ‘Abbasid Caliphate, the Bagratid Kingdom to the north and various smaller Islamic polities of the region, Gagik conceived of his Kingdom in Christian terms and represented his royal ideology using Christian symbols, expressed both materially and textually. Thus, each fortified site was juxtaposed to a constellation of churches with symbolically important dedications, among which the church of the Holy Cross was the most significant. The patronage of relics, especially of the True Cross, was equally important for Gagik’s ideology of rulership both from political and spiritual perspectives. Standing next to the royal palace and the seat of the

Catholicos for the period of 930–950, the church of Ałt‘amar was the centre of a whole network of monasteries and relics, aimed at inspiring intense theological reflections and profound piety.

Not surprisingly art historians have traditionally taken the lead in the study of the church of the Holy Cross. A new appraisal of the historical circumstances of its foundation, both regional and local; its dedication to the True Cross; the relationship between its unique decorative programme and available textual sources, or its political and spiritual implications seemed to be overdue. In order to bring forth these multiple aspects that shaped or found their expression in the church of the Holy Cross on Ałt‘amar, a conference was convened in Paris on 22–23 September, 2014, at the Institut d’Études Avancées and the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. A further purpose of this scholarly gathering was to mark the 1100th anniversary of the foundation of the church of Ałt‘amar in 915, as the year 2015 drew near. Our aim was to bring scholars working in different fields so as to present multi-faceted approaches to the study of the church, complemeting art-historical or architectural investigations by placing the Kingdom of Vaspurakan at the turn of the Millennium in its proper historical context, including its relations with the neighbouring Byzantine Empire, the ‘Abbasid Caliphate, as well as the Bagratid Kingdom of Armenia. Papers in this collected volume are the result.

We start our explorations into these subjects with a Préambule by Jean-Pierre Mahé which provides an appropriate setting for appreciating the articles that comprise the book and focus on history, spirituality, relics and patrons, aspects of art and architecture, theology, biblical exegesis, and royal ideology.

The first three papers reveal the diverse facets of history and historiography about Vaspurakan. Their authors’ observations paint a picture of Vaspurakan as a regional power with its peculiar traditions of historical writing and legal culture, its rather independent relationship with the Byzantine Empire and the ‘Abbasid Caliphate despite Bagratid efforts of centralisation, and its importance to both imperial centres.

Tim Greenwood traces the Arcrunis’ perception of their past and their self-representation as actors in the (tenth-century) present while they consolidated their hold on Vaspurakan and the island of Ałt‘amar. He delves into the intricacies of the most important piece of historical production from Vaspurakan—the History of T‘ovma Arcruni and his continuators. While the significance of this History for the study of ninth- and tenth-century Vaspurakan has long been appreciated, Greenwood looks into T‘ovma’s narrative strategies and the construction of a Vaspurakan ‘present’ based on its past. In fact, T‘ovma was unashamedly a historian of the house of Arcruni, commissioned to compose a family history recording the deeds of its members, both in the distant past and in recent times. T‘ovma was writing from a clerical perspective with a clear sense of how Christian princes should conduct themselves. His knowledge of the Armenian past was fashioned by earlier authors, notably Ełišē and Movsēs Xorenac‘i. Greenwood rightly notes that given this background T‘ovma found himself in discomfort when confronted by the realities of contemporary Vaspurakan, with Arcruni princes in violent dispute with one another, performing acts which transgressed divine law and family ties. T‘ovma sought to reconcile these themes within his composition by employing various narrative techniques, such as emphasising the malign influence of the Sāǧid emir Awšin as a way of transferring responsibility away from Arcruni princes and absolving them from the consequences of their actions. Greenwood reflects on how Ełišē’s portrait of the perfidious Yazkert (Yazdegird) II supplied the archetype for Awšin and affirms that T‘ovma’s narrative is more sophisticated than has previously been appreciated. This careful fashioning can be traced also in T‘ovma’s extensive remodelling of the remote past in which Arcruni princes were given prominent roles. Indeed, T‘ovma exploited a range of sources and the vestiges of these can be detected in the text. Several passages that apparently rely on non-Armenian literary traditions attest the cross-cultural connections that characterised the epoch when the church of the Holy Cross on Ałt‘amar

was built. Greenwood concludes his study by analysing the contribution of legal documentation to the History that has not previously been recognised. An investigation of legal instruments, including land charters, allows us to gain new insights on contemporary legal culture and practices in Vaspurakan.

A Byzantine perspective on Vaspurakan is brought to the fore by Jean-Claude Cheynet who looks into the history of tenth-century Vaspurakan within the context of the Imperial military policy of expansion to the east. The annexation of Vaspurakan to the Byzantine Empire c. 1021/22 marks the final impact of this policy on the fate of Arcruni Vaspurakan. Cheynet notes the paucity of information on direct ties between the Empire and Vaspurakan throughout the tenth century, singling out De Administrando Imperio as the most important relevant source. In this light, artistic exchanges between the Empire and Vaspurakan as may be detected in certain iconographic features of the church of the Holy Cross on Ałt'amar, is one way of filling the gap in the written record. Another way is to explore the involvement of various Armeno-Byzantine aristocratic families in the formulation of Byzantine military policy on its eastern frontier. Cheynet remarks that most of these families held estates granted to them by the Empire in areas bordering on Armenian lands. This geographical position allowed them to be well-informed about the internal situation in Armenia. The author traces two main geographical orientations of eastward expansion favoured by rival family groups and explores the implications of different preferences and policy-lines on the fate of Armenian regions, such as Tarawn and later Vaspurakan, both annexed to the Empire. Rich sigillographic evidence is used as supporting material and allows the author to follow the fortunes of high-placed individuals, their movements and their military/imperial careers. Such individual histories provide keys for appreciating Armeno-Byzantine relations in this period. Moreover, the analysis sets the background for understanding the process and motivations whereby the Kingdom of Vaspurakan was ceded to the Empire by Gagik's heirs—Gurgēn and Senek'erim Arcruni. Their subsequent emigration and settlement in the same Imperial territories that about a century earlier were held by the older Armeno-Byzantine nobility, emerge as re-enactments of an already tried-out pattern both on the Armenian and Byzantine sides. Arcruni kings' very decision to bestow Vaspurakan upon the Empire in exchange for Imperial titles and estates in Cappadocia is also contextualised by reconstructing their earlier contacts with Constantinople, including a meeting with Emperor Basil II in the year 1000 during his campaign in the Caucasus. The religious consequences of this annexation included the establishment of Chalcedonian bishoprics throughout Vaspurakan, which according to Cheynet had started to appear even before the incorporation of the Kingdom into the Empire. The Byzantine policy towards Vaspurakan since the middle of the tenth century, thus, emerges as one of the most vital elements in its eastward expansion.

The other major power whose political and military fortunes had a direct bearing on Vaspurakan was the 'Abbasid Caliphate. It is from this other 'external' point of view that Alison Vacca investigates the evidence on the region of Vaspurakan (Arabic Basfurrağān, Busfurrağān or Basfurğān), looking at Arabic sources. Their perusal suggests a significant new perspective on both Arab perception of the area and the autonomy of local rulers. Starting with the famous account of the seventh-century Arab conquests, al-Balādurī's Futūḥ al-Buldān, and as early as the first contacts between Muslim Arabs and Armenians, Basfurğān was seen as an independent entity. The scant attention of Arabic historiography to the region or to the dealings of the local Arcruni family, with the possible exception of Tağārib al-umam of Ibn Miskawayh (d. 1030), is off-set by this idiosyncratic prospective that contributes to a better understanding of Vaspurakan's multi-faceted political dealings. Thus, comments of 'Abbasid-era historical and geographical texts about the province of Basfurğān and the Arcrunis are still significant. Intriguingly, the primary concern noticeable in Arabic sources about tenth-century Basfurğān is its relations with Armīniya and Muslim élites in the region, underscoring once more Vaspurakan's autonomy. While Arabic histories chronicle the tension

between Sāǧids, the Arcrunis, and the Bagratids, the extant Arabic geographies tell another story: they outline social and trade networks instead of military and political alliances. While acknowledging the Sāǧid expeditions into Armīniya, these sources focus instead on sketching cities and populations and on noting important facts for travellers and traders, becoming important sources for the reconstruction of social and economic history. The study of specific towns of Basfurǧān gives us some idea of how Arabs viewed the land, its people, and the networks that tied Arcruni territories to the wider Islamic world.

The likely dedication of the church on Ałt'amar to the Holy Cross necessarily implies a deeply felt veneration for the Instrument of Salvation by its founder—Gagik Arcruni. However, this was hardly limited to Gagik's personal piety but reflected wider devotion to the cross, and the True Cross in particular. Three papers explore hagiographical traditions about the True Cross and its cult in the Byzantine Empire and Vaspurakan, revealing its spiritual, religious, and political implications.

Bernard Flusin opens this set of papers by analysing the cult of the True Cross in Constantinople, focusing on the description of feasts involving the precious relic in the relevant chapters of De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae. The period taken into consideration is contemporary to Gagik's rule in Vaspurakan and allows the reader to appreciate any possible similarities, parallel developments and differences in the veneration of True Cross relics in the Byzantine Capital and in Vaspurakan. Flusin describes the three main feasts of the cross according to De Cerimoniis and explores the role of the emperor in these celebrations: one at mid-Lent, another between the 28th of July and the 13th of August when True Cross relics were taken into procession in the streets of Constantinople, and the most important grand celebration that took place on September 14th—the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Relying on troparia sung during the Feast of the Exaltation recorded in the contemporary Typikon of the Great Church Flusin emphasises an important dimension of the emperor's association with the cult of the True Cross: the Instrument of Salvation was exalted as an instrument of (imperial) victory, a palladium of the Christian Empire and a guarantor of its preeminence in the world until the Second Coming. He demonstrates that these concepts were not new to the tenth century but were rooted in legends about Constantine the Great, such as his Vision of the Cross or the Discovery of the Cross by Helen. In fact, according to Flusin, the celebration of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross in Constantinople predated the sixth century and the two elements that will persist in an on-going tension over the centuries were its hallmark since the earliest days: on the one hand the Feast was linked to the name of Constantine the Great and included a strong imperial component, on the other hand, it was an all-Christian celebration and the role of the celebrating bishop (or the Patriarch) could not be ignored. However, between the seventh (when the main relic of the True Cross was translated from Jerusalem to Constantinople) and tenth centuries important changes took place in the content and form of the celebration of all the three feasts. The role of the emperor, already important, became ever more exalted by different means. Firstly, this was linked to the location of the relics and secondly to the emperors' greater involvement in the liturgy. Tracing the whereabouts and movements of True Cross relics in Constantinople since the fifth century indicates that between the end of the seventh and ninth centuries they were deposited and remained in the premises of the Great Palace, underscoring the emperor's close physical and spiritual links to the holiest relic of Christendom. In the tenth century they were housed in the main palatial church of Theotokos at the Pharos, as a part of a larger collection of Passion relics. When Constantine VII sat on the imperial throne, the church of the Pharos was one of the most important depositories of relics in Constantinople. This marked a most crucial transformation in the sacred landscape of Constantinople, reducing the significance of the Great Church as a centre of relics and holiness and buttressing the churches within or near the Great Palace. Presumably, such imperial patronage of relics, especially those of Christ, were known also to the rulers of neigbhouring Armenia, including Vaspurakan.

That there were certainly common trends in patronage practices becomes evident in Zaroui Pogossian's investigation. While the author focuses on the cult of the True Cross of Varag (in Vaspurakan), she provides also ample evidence on the importance of the veneration of the True Cross in Armenia in general and in Vaspurakan in particular. She first explores the origin and development of the cult of the True Cross of Varag, never undertaken before, placing it in the second half of the seventh century. This process is linked to the rise of interest in True Cross relics after the Restitution of the True Cross in Jerusalem by Heraclius in 630, as well as the conquest of Armenia by Arabs, Byzantine-Arab rivalries for the control of Armenia and the changing royalties of Armenian princes in a time of unprecedented political changes in the region. Then, Pogossian delves into a detailed analysis of the earliest written source on the True Cross of Varag—a Homily on the Discovery of the True Cross of Varag—demonstrating that it was a highly sophisticated theological work. Partly, it was an apology for the pro-Arab and anti-Byzantine policies of the last Rštuni rulers of Vaspurakan T'ēodoros and Vard Patrik who were most likely the commissioners of the Homily. Despite this attitude, at this early stage the True Cross of Varag was associated with the Roman Empire, particularly Emperor Constantine and his mother Helen, and military victory, not unlike the Byzantine tradition as outlined by Flusin. Yet, it was also of paramount importance as an Instrument of Salvation that guaranteed the spiritual wellbeing of Christians until the Second Coming, as well as a symbol of election for rulers who possessed a material relic. However, the extraordinary devotion to the True Cross of Varag is to be traced since the second half of the ninth century. It is the only True Cross relic housed in Armenia that has its own feast day and canon of celebration in the Armenian liturgical calendar. Such popularity was due to the patronage of the True Cross of Varag and the monastery of Varag by Arcruni princes, among whom Gagik's role was crucial. Moreover, in the ninth century new elements enriched the 'received tradition' on the True Cross of Varag. Its appearance on Mount Varag was linked to St. Hrip'simē—the 'founding mother' of the Armenian Church—and the First Discovery of the Cross by Protonike. Besides popular piety and spirituality, the True Cross of Varag and its associations with the first saints of the Armenian Church became a token of the Arcruni's independence vis-à-vis their Bagratuni cousins—'Kings of all Armenians'. Gagik's heirs enlarged the monastery of Varag and continued to patronise actively the True Cross of Varag, even after their emigration to Byzantine territory. It was, thus, hardly by chance that Gagik most likely dedicated his splendid church on the island of Ałt'amar to the True Cross. This dedication underscored Gagik's devotion to the True Cross of Varag, with all of the political and religious implications that the possession of such a relic carried. The study concludes with an emphasis on the paramount importance of the True Cross of Varag even after the fall of the Kingdom of Vaspurakan and up to 1915 when the relic perished together with the Armenian population of the region.

Some fifty years after the construction of the church of the Holy Cross on Ałt'amar—in 983 to be precise—Vaspurakan was enriched with yet one more relic of the True Cross. It was an imperial gift sent from Emperor Basil II through Zap'ranik, the prince of the small region of Mokk' in Vaspurakan, who had pursued a successful military career in Constantinople. This most precious donation was dispatched to Bishop Step'anos, the Abbot of the monastery of Aparank'—Zap'ranik's own nephew. The relic, first placed in the church of the Holy Precursor, was eventually traslated to the church of the Mother of God built within the monastic complex for that specific purpose. Jean-Pierre Mahé explores the political, diplomatic and spiritual implications of this imperial gift and its reception in Vaspurakan. The event was immortalised by the greatest medieval Armenian poet and mystic Grigor Narekac'i in his History of the Holy Cross of Aparank' which is analysed in detail in the article. Mahé first places the individuals involved in the translatio of the relic in their political, religious and dynastic contexts, revealing the relationship between Zap'ranik

and various factions in Constantinople (e.g. those involved in the rebellion of Bardas Skleros) and their Armenian supporters or opponents (such as the Taronites family). The largesse of Basil II, at

the time still under regency, may be an indication of his early interest and future plans of expansion in the east, as outlined by Cheynet in this volume, and the diplomatic role of relics (particularly those of the cross) in this pursuit, not unlike Heraclius some centuries earlier. The presence of all three reigning Arcruni princes at the ceremony underscores their unified mode of governing Vaspurakan, as opposed to the Bagratid tradition of appanages assigned to younger sons of the family which led to its loss of unity. Yet, diplomatic and political aspects of this translatio are hardly sufficient for understanding the profound spiritual significance attached to the cross and the True Cross. All of these found their splendid expression in Grigor Narekac'i's poem. Thus, the second part of the article presents a minute discussion of the poem itself, its rich biblical allusions and their allegorical interpretations, which are extended also to Grigor's description of the physical features of the church. As a whole, the poem is a written monument to an event of apparently local significance, which, however, had much wider implications, and where the specificity of the Arcrunis is exalted: their pride in their ancient, autochthonous pagan past was combined with a conviction of their very early conversion to Christianity (before the activities of St. Gregory the Illuminator, according to Arcruni traditions). This was a time when the kings of Vaspurakan, oblivious to the dramatic changes that would shake their kingdom only a couple of decades later, lived the full splendour of their power and the prestige of this southern region of Armenia was high. In this context, the cross and the True Cross—the new Tree of Life—were essential for the popular piety and spirituality, guaranteeing the protection of this Christian Kingdom both from physical and invisible enemies. Such beliefs were encapsulated in a most magnificent way by one of the greatest Armenian poets of all time, Grigor Narekac'i, in his History of the Cross of Aparank'.

The decorations of the church of the Holy Cross, both the internal frescoes and the external reliefs, have been subject to wonder and admiration for centuries. Scholars too have not spared ink in trying to decipher their message and the textual basis of their iconography. In an attempt to connect the images, particularly of biblical and para-biblical subjects, to the written culture of the time two articles focus on apocrypha and biblical exegesis composed in tenth-century Armenia and, when sources allow, in Vaspurakan specifically.

Robert Thomson overviews the available biblical exegesis in Armenian (both original compositions and translations) at the time when the church of the Holy Cross was being constructed. He combines the study of full texts in the exegetical genre with shorter references to and interpretations of biblical verses in other genres. Thomson starts by identifying the persons responsible for the construction and decoration of the church of the Holy Cross as attested by T'ovma Arcruni. According to T'ovma its architect was a famous master by name Manuēl, while the decorations were entrusted to an un-named monk. Thomson presumes that this was an Armenian monk from one of the many monasteries in the region of Van and would have been familiar at least with some of the traditions of biblical exegesis of his time. But the crucial question that the author asks is if the external decorations—the most distinctive feature of the church of Ałt'amar—represented a particular image of rulership and self-image of the Arcrunis, or Gagik specifically, compared to other contemporary noble or royal dynasties of Armenia. A competition between the Arcruni and the Bagratuni families, for example, may be implied by the presence of St. Gregory the Illuminator and Apostle Thaddaeus on the east façade of the church, especially if read parallel to T'ovma Arcruni's written 'incorporation' of the Arcruni family in the story of the conversion of Armenia, within the so-called Abgar Legend. The figure of Christ on the west façade holding a book with a biblical verse (John 8:12 or 9:5) can be read against its interpretation by Nonnus of Nisibis, including reflections on the Last Judgement. The representation of Samson slaying a Philistine on the north façade is compared to the exegesis of this biblical figure. Here the jawbone is of special importance and some authors, such as Ełišē, compared it to the bones of martyrs, another important theme depicted on the church of the Holy Cross. A second image of Samson (killing a lion) may have been understood according to the interpretations given to it by Ełišē, where bees nesting in the

lion's carcass are compared to the apostles. The image of Hezekiah who destroyed the idols could be perceived as an allusion to conversion and abandonment of idolatry, as well as a specific reference to the coeval King Sennacherim, who, according to T'ovma Arcruni, was the founder of the Arcruni dynasty. Thus, a specific Arcruni agenda behind the image may well have been intended. The depiction of Daniel in the lion's den is curious in that it rarely appears in Armenian written sources. Rather, the Book of Daniel was popular in the Armenian tradition due to its prophetic parts. Other images, such as Jonah and the whale, the Sacrifice of Isaac, David and Goliath, are all analysed in view of diverse interpretations given to these figures. Throughout, Thomson consistently evokes possible implications of such scenes for the Arcrunis, especially if these appear also in the one sure source from the region—T'ovma Arcruni's History. The study concludes on a cautious note, reminding the readers that there is no way of knowing whether the unnamed monk responsible for the carving of the images knew any of these biblical exegesis and, even if he did, whether he or the viewers of his art shared such interpretations. Nevertheless, understanding what was available in written form allows us a better comprehension of what was represented figuratively on the exterior of the church, and how it could be adapted by Gagik's court for the glorification of Arcrunik'.

A combined analysis of text and image is taken up also by Sergio La Porta. Following in the footsteps of Sirarpie Der Nersessian he evokes extra-biblical or apocryphal material in an effort to understand some of the specific details in the iconography of the frescoes and sculptural decorations. He also underscores the relevance of Armenian traditions of biblical exegesis transmitted within other types of texts, such as homilies or historiography, that open up diverse interpretative possibilities. The apocrypha are indispensable for appreciating the meaning of various scenes, such as Jonah's baldness after his release from the belly of the whale on the south façade or an angel seizing a bearded man by the hair above the episode of Daniel and the Hebrews on the north façade. La Porta also cites such textual witnesses as the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Acts of Pilate and the Life of Longinus as possible sources that inspired some of the specifics in the internal fresco cycle. The variety of written or oral material that could shed light on a single scene is demonstrated by the example of Samson slaying a Philistine on the north façade. La Porta proposes more than one possible interpretation all supported by sources of different genres ranging from biblical apocrypha to local oral traditions or the invention of biblical genealogies by dynasties closely associated with the Arcrunis, such as the Amatunis. These varied modes of viewing and understanding the same image lead La Porta to caution modern scholars on the results they may expect from the linking of texts and artwork. Not only much of pre-Islamic Armenian art is lost, precluding the possibility of extensive comparative studies, but our knowledge of the kind of texts familiar to tenth-century viewers and the type of responses that the images on the church of the Holy Cross may have evoked, remain rather limited. Our interpretations, thus, need to be flexible and account for the dynamic reception of the unique sculptural and fresco decorations of the church of the Holy Cross by generations of viewers.

The visual splendour created at Ałt'amar leads Krikor Beledian to poetic reflections on the philosophy of images and their increasing importance during the reign of Gagik Arcruni. He suggests that throughout the rule of Gagik and his successors there was an ever-growing awareness of images and their role as paths to spiritual meditation. The proliferation of visible signs of representing the space, linking 'realistic' depictions to allegories, combined with a growing consciousness of the manifestation of human artefacts presupposes a whole new approach to the status of images itself. Beledian goes on to explore these issues in the historiography, spiritual literature and poetry of the time.

Art and architectural history remain privileged domains when it comes to exploring and understanding the church of Ałt'amar. This volume too concludes with a number of contributions in these fields.

Patrick Donabédian starts his art-historical and architectural analysis of the church of the Holy Cross with a discussion on depictions of the cross in early Christian Armenian architecture. He pays attention both to the function and stylistic types of carved crosses, highlighting that after the earliest examples of the so-called 'Greek crosses' framed in a circle, it was the 'victorious' or oblong/ Latin cross that found a wide diffusion in Armenia. This type is attested since the seventh century and most likely spread especially through Byzantine coins. It was sculpted on the lintels of seventh-century Armenian churches before acquiring its best-known expression in xačk'ars (lit. cross-stones) since the ninth century. Due to the exceptional diffusion of the image of the cross it comes as a surprise that very few churches or monasteries in Armenia were dedicated to the Holy Cross, while those bearing the name of the Holy Sign were more numerous. It is possible, Donabédian suggests, that those dedicated to the Holy Cross held a rare relic of the True Cross, while those of the Holy Sign contained a painted image or a material cross (made of wood or metal), crafted for the occasion of the dedication and consecrated according to the rite established by Catholicos Yovhannēs Ōjnec'i in the eighth century. Thus, despite the fact that we possess no foundation inscription and the dedication of the church on Ałt'amar to the Holy Cross appears in later sources, it is possible to hypothesise that Gagik had deposited a relic of the True Cross there. Donabédian then reveals the architectural and planimetric affinities between the Holy Cross on Ałt'amar and the homonymous church of Ałbak—the dynastic burial ground of the Arcrunis, renamed as the church of Ējmiacin of Soradir in the seventeenth century. The importance of crosses in the decorative programme of both churches is emphasised. He sees here the visual expression of the dedication of these churches to the Holy Cross, which finds parallels in neighbouring Iberia.

Armen Kazaryan too explores the affinities between the church of the Holy Cross on Ałt'amar and the one in Soradir. Their ground plans are almost identical, while their respective dimensions exhibit close similarities. Kazaryan notes, however, that the changes introduced in Ałt'amar were intentional and significant. Thus, the architect working on Ałt'amar—Manuēl—faced the challenge of finding new spatial solutions because he had to create suitable surfaces designated for its sumptuous decorations. To demonstrate this point, Kazaryan looks at the location of internal and external decorations from a compositional point of view, indicating how accurately the architect calculated the play of light and darkness that followed the movement of the sun. He masterfully accounted for such changes in natural illumination when conceiving his overall oeuvre. According to Kazaryan this was one of the major novelties of Ałt'amar, the other important innovation being the stylistic features of the sculptural decoration. Kazaryan terms this a 'renaissance' in that architectural and decorative features from the 'classical' world were re-utilised, but with new architectural and art-historical solutions. Importantly, he remarks that for a tenth-century Armenian architect 'classical' traditions included not only those of the Graeco-Roman antiquity, but also the material culture of the ancient Near Eastern civilisations with which Manuēl would have been familiar. Furthermore, Kazaryan indicates that in his description of the church of the Holy Cross the Anonymous Continuator of T'ovma Arcruni employs anthropomorphic symbolism which is unique to this author and, thus, worthy of note.

David Kertmenjian goes beyond the analysis of specific architectural features of the church of the Holy Cross and proposes to place it in the context of the town ensemble that Gagik Arcruni planned and constructed on the island of Ałt'amar. Based on the research of previous scholars but using new computer technologies, Kertmenjian proposes a reconstruction of the palace of Gagik on Ałt'amar which was built adjacent to the church. In doing so, he provides parallels from other parts of the world where one finds a palace-sanctuary complex. He concludes that the palace of Gagik must have been cubic in structure and hypothesises about its size.

The last two papers focus on two specific groups of the external sculptural programme—the most noteworthy and unique feature of the church of the Holy Cross—including their iconography and its interpretation.

Edda Vardanyan's article is dedicated to biblical subjects sculpted in the vine frieze of the church. According to her hypothesis, the dominant theme of the frieze is the Chosen People of God or the 'House of Israel' (Isa 5:7), represented by various images that allude to its history. All the specific scenes in the frieze depict Old Testament figures in a sequential order that follows the history of the People of Israel, starting with Patriarch Abraham and concluding with the Advent of Jesus Christ. Within this overall scheme each biblical figure is allotted a series of episodes whose content is subordinated to Christological typologies: they prefigure the Advent of Christ "the true vine" (John 15:1–7), and transmit a messianic message. In conformity with a major interpretative mode in Christian theology that emphasised typological connections between Old and New Testaments, images of the Old Testament were foreshadowings of New Testament episodes. By representing the history of the Chosen People

of God, the composition of the frieze affirms the fulfilment of this history in Christ and in his Church. Continuing her previous studies that concentrated on the figures of Patriarch Abraham and King David, in this article Vardanyan examines the cycle of Patriarch Isaac and reveals the same principles of representation of the biblical narrative, i.e. Old Testament figures symbolising certain Christological concepts. In this case as well the choice of specific scenes emphasises biblical theophanies, Christological typology and messianic prophecies.

If various sculpted figures on the exterior of the church and the iconography of the interior fresco cycle have been subject to study and scholarly debate, the donor portrait of Gagik Arcruni depicted on the west façade of Ałt'amar has attracted no less attention and even heated discussion. In a book dedicated to Ałt'amar we could not fail to address at least some of the issues regarding the interpretation of Gagik's famous visual representation.

Gohar Grigoryan tackles these issues by analysing the features of Gagik's image on the west façade of the church where he is presenting the model of his church to Christ. Her starting point is the conviction that both the interior and the exterior decoration of the church sought to emphasise the power and glory of the Arcruni dynasty. It is from this perspective that some unusual aspects of Gagik's portrait can be understood. In order to contextualise this, Grigoryan provides examples from the church's decorative programme where biblical scenes, many inspired by the Old Testament, or other visual allusions to the concept of kingship were employed allegorically to exalt the royal family of the Arcrunis. Some such specific images include the motif of the quail on Gagik's mantle with its parallels in Sasanian and Islamic art; the shape of his crown; his posture in a gesture asking for forgiveness; and the significance of Gagik's taller size compared to Christ. These details come to express a particular blend of Gagik's royal ideology. In explaining Gagik's larger figure compared to Christ Grigoryan appeals to comparanda from the Sasanian world, such as bas-reliefs representing kings and gods with similar 'disproportions'. Thus, instead of ascribing such 'discrepancies' in the size of the figures to a 'mistake' of the artist—something rather unlikely in a work commissioned by a highly demanding patron and executed by a renowned master—Grigoryan once more emphasises the importance of considering the relevant royal ideology and propaganda when attempting to understand the message of Gagik's portrait.

Thus, having started with the history of Vaspuarkan, the volume closes with Gagik—the first King of Vaspurakan and the commissioner of the church of the Holy Cross.

In order to place the articles of this collection in a larger context of studies on the church of the Holy Cross on Ałt'amar, we first present an essential bibliography on the subject. This includes descriptions of Ałt'amar by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century travellers, ethnographers

and architectural historians. Then, a list of the most significant monographs on Ałt'amar published in the past sixty years appear in chronological order. A series of historical photographs depicting the church of the Holy Cross on Ałt'amar will aid the readers in visualising this magnificent monument and its landscape. The digital versions of these photographs are currently archived by the Foundation for Research on Armenian Architecture (Rnn, Erevan), to whom we express our heartfelt gratitude for the permission to reproduce them here. These were taken by various twentieth-century photographers, among whom the German historian of architecture Walter Bachmann (1883–1958). Reproductions of drawings by the renowned Armenian painter born in Van—P'anos T'ērlēmēzean (1865–1941)—are unique in transmitting the details of Ałt'amar's decorations. T'ērlēmēzean returned to his native town and lived there for a short time between 1913 and 1915, producing the images in September–October 1914. These drawings, currently preserved in the Matenadaran of Erevan, are published here for the first time.

This collection of articles, enhanced by the visual material, provides variegated approaches to the study of the church of the Holy Cross on Ałt'amar. They not only enrich our understanding of this singular monument, its historical context and its significance for the religiosity and spirituality of medieval Armenia, but hopefully also open up new avenues of scholarly investigation. It is with this hope of stimulating new research that we wish to present this volume to the enjoyment and scrutiny of the readers. <>

Dante's Prayerful Pilgrimage: Typologies of Prayer in the Comedy by Alessandro Vettori [Medieval and Renaissance Authors and Texts, Brill, 9789004405257, 9789004405240]

In **Dante's Prayerful Pilgrimage** Alessandro Vettori provides a comprehensive analysis of prayer in Dante's Commedia. The underlying thesis considers prayer a metaphorical pilgrimage toward a sacred location and connects it with the pilgrim's ascent to the vision of the Trinity. Prayer is movement in Purgatorio and also in Paradiso, while eternal stasis is the penalty of blasphemous souls in Inferno. In the fictional rendition of the poem, the pilgrim's itinerary becomes a specular reflection of Dante's own exilic experience. Prayer's human-divine interaction affords the poet the necessary escape from the overwhelming sense of failure in politics and love. Whether it is petitional, liturgical, thankful, praiseful, or contemplative, prayer expresses the supplicant's wish to transform reality and attain a superior spiritual status.

Pilgrimage and Exile

Prayer is a moment apart, an opening from immanence and contingency onto eternity, the mysterious connection of the finite with the infinite. It is the desire to be united with the Other, to be transported into a different dimension, to occupy a different metaphysical and mental space. Limited by their bodies and minds, human beings believe that prayer offers them a spiritual perspective on the limitless dimension of God. It is an encounter with the unknown world of the spirit, which can offer new and unpredictable insights into earthly life. Prayer is also a "dialogue" with divinity (in the etymological sense of dialogue as "*logos*," "word," and "*dia*," passing "through," someone or something); according to Gregory of Nyssa it is communing and conversing with God (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, n.d.). Its ultimate goal is to be as close as possible to the divinity it implores, in fact to be submerged in God and to be like God (Zaleski and Zaleski 2005, 147–50). The underlying essence characterizing the prayerful phenomenon is movement and transformation. Supplicants aspire to reach a higher spiritual level, to elevate their souls to God, who is far above their condition and, in the common Judeo-Christian theological imagination, is deemed to reside in the heavens, spatially above humans. The upward progression of the soul in prayer finds a more concrete parallel in the physical, horizontal transferring of the pilgrim from one location to another in order to visit shrines and sanctuaries.

Pilgrimage was a widespread form of penance or sanctification throughout the Middle Ages, when the faithful might be asked by their confessor or bishop to perform a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, to Rome, to Santiago de Compostela, to Canterbury, to the shrine of the local saint a short distance away, or more simply to a nearby church as penalty for their sins. Sometimes performing a pilgrimage was a requirement for absolution. In other cases, the wealthy chose to embark on more or less arduous journeys for personal edification. Pilgrimage constitutes an integral part of medieval culture, the pilgrim a crucial figure that tones down social distinctions in a world otherwise dominated by marked class separations and centered on specific roles, such as monks, warriors, and peasants (Nolan and Nolan 1989). The element of foreignness, which characterizes any pilgrim who abandons his or her land in order to visit countries abroad, is also contained in the etymology of the word *peregrinus*:

> the Latin verb *pergere* implies movement that is active, conscious towards a precise destination. But, in order to get there, the pilgrim is also required to *peragere*, to travel across or traverse fields and lands. And, more precisely, as *peragere* very often implies being harried or chased or pursued, both human and political risks were run by passing through foreign lands. Hence, pilgrims as travellers were frequently regarded as foreigners and strangers by those who saw them pass by and, just as often, by those who encountered them when they reached the end of their road. (Pazos 2012, 2)

Their destiny as "foreigners," visiting strange, distant, and sometimes hostile lands, is often indistinguishable from those of exiles, who are pushed out of the comfort of home, not by a desire to improve their spiritual life, but by political or juridical circumstances (Webb 1999, 14 and 2002, 49). With no leisure travel, pilgrims, merchants, and crusaders are the only travelers treading the sparse road system of medieval Europe and the Middle East, reminding their fellow citizens at home of the importance of progression in faith, for pilgrims are the living image of the *homines viatores*, who travel the earth temporarily toward their final and permanent destination in the afterlife.

Prayer has no geographical space, as it is an elevation of the spirit to God, which aims at making supplicants forget their original status, location, and even identity. Its transformative power makes supplicants feel at ease wherever they are. It is the exile's anchor and the only reference point for human beings during their pilgrimage on earth, a dimension that in medieval Christianity is perceived as alien to the "natural" state of the soul, which is the heavenly condition in the afterlife. In a passage of the *Didascalicon* (3.19), Hugh of St. Victor offers a definition of detachment from contingency as the crucial element of every man's spiritual and educational itinerary:

> It is therefore, a source of great virtue for the practiced mind to learn, bit by bit, first to change about in visible and transitory things, so that afterwards it may be able to leave them behind altogether. The person who finds his homeland sweet is a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign place. The tender soul has fixed his love on one spot in the world; the strong person has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his. (ctd. in Taylor 1961, 101)

Spiritual progression is measured by the soul's and the mind's incremental detachment from earthly, worldly things, in order to finally feel at home in any geographic space, but feeling no love for any of them, when life itself turns into a pilgrimage having heaven as its final destination. Christian existence is an itinerary toward the final meeting with the divine and the temporary displacement to visit a holy space mimics and duplicates life's itinerary itself—visiting sacred places and paying homage to relics being in itself an attempt to get closer to God, a tension toward that ultimate goal. Moreover, while traveling to their destinations, pilgrims use prayer as a form of protection and preparation for the religious experience they are about to have. Pilgrimage to a holy shrine is at once a reflection of human life itself and a form of prayer.

Being a tension toward divinity (in the true etymological sense of "tending toward") and a desire to become a less imperfect image of God, prayer fits the narratological design of pilgrimage in the *Comedy*. Rather than embarking on a prayerful adventure toward a relic or a sacred shrine (*The Canterbury Tales*), Dante the pilgrim travels to the "real" image of God, and his journey will conclude with the vision of the Trinity. Prayerful invocation of the divine in Dante also poses a solution to the experiential impasse of his autobiographical exile, for the interaction with God we call prayer creates a detachment from transitory things and locations, so that one's homeland is everywhere or, even better, beyond this world. Exile is not political and human alienation from familiar and beloved people and objects; it is instead the common destiny of all Christian itinerant human beings, whose temporary journey on earth serves as preparation for the permanent abode in the afterlife.

In the late Middle Ages the notion of an itinerant Christian lifestyle was strengthened by the Mendicant Orders, whose insistence on a radical return to the Gospel included wandering from place to place without a stable dwelling (at least in its initial phases), in opposition to the well-established Benedictine Abbeys, which forced their monks and nuns to a vow of stability for life. For Franciscans and Dominicans traveling to find new communities was part of their preaching mission and friars were perpetual pilgrims, whose lives were solely rooted in their faith, not to a particular monastery. According to Thomas of Celano, for Francis of Assisi prayer was not so much a spiritual activity, but an exercise in progressive transformation, so that the supplicant Francis eventually became prayer itself, and the practice of prayer became his identity (Armstrong et al. 2000, 310 and Johnson 2007, vii). The notion of prayer itself possesses a transgressive and revolutionary power, which signifies its desire for change and to be changed (Søren Kierkegaard: "Prayer does not change God but it changes him who prays" 1992, 363). In mystics it has the potential to overturn their lives, but also change the lives of others, with important societal and political implications—hence the suspicious attitude that the mainstream church hierarchy exhibits toward the extreme prayerful behavior of some of them, Francis included. Whether it is petitional, thankful, praiseful, liturgical, sacramental, or contemplative, prayer expresses supplicants' wishes to transform the reality inside or outside of them. The aspired renewal occurs within the confines of the established institution (the Church) and has no aim to topple it, but simply to gradually metamorphose it into something different, purer, and more in line with the dictates of its Founder. Dante the poet never ceases to invoke the purification of a corrupt church and takes the Franciscan movement as his model for a complete change from inside, in which prayer goes hand-in-hand with poverty, for there is no reforming the Church without stripping it of its monetary and political powers. His frequent and sometimes obsessive references to the Donation of Constantine, which Dante believed to be a true historical event, point to the Church's riches as the origin of its political involvement, its deterioration, and its decadence. A radical return to its marginalized, poor, and persecuted beginnings would rediscover its true spiritual and edifying mission.

Prayer is also Dante's own subversive tool in the *Comedy*. Overcoming the frustrations of political failure, amorous troubles, and exile by addressing God and relying on supernatural powers is in agreement with his choice to structure a poem on a journey through the afterworld. The exiled poet becomes the supplicant pilgrim in the poem. Because this world has failed him, his beloved is dead, he is overwhelmed by a sense of guilt for betraying her, he has to leave his country and start his exilic peregrinations—that is when his privileged interlocutor becomes God himself in prayer. The devotional motives of Dante's journey are clear from the choice of the jubilee year 1300, which is an opportunity for indulgence for all Christendom, and a pilgrimage to Rome was considered an excellent way to obtain the remission of sins. The earthly destination of a human pilgrimage transforms into the poetic pilgrimage of the soul to enjoy the vision of the Trinity. Prayer is the privileged form of communication the poet chooses for the pilgrim at crucial moments in his journey. When humans are no longer worthy interlocutors, the supplicant addresses a higher Being. Besides being a comforting device, it serves the purpose of fulfilling a petition or sanctioning an

accomplishment, for the souls as well as for the pilgrim, exclusively in purgatory and in heaven. The *Comedy* features many different kinds of prayer in *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, as well as its opposite, blasphemy, throughout *Inferno*. The chart below displays the most important occurrences of prayers and blasphemous utterances, which will be considered in this study:

Inferno:		
1.65	*Miserere*	Psalm 50
3.103	"bestemmiavano Dio e lor parenti" ["they execrated God and their own parents"]	
5.36	"bestemmian quivi la virtù divina" ["and there they curse the force of the divine"]	
7.1	*Pape Satàn, pape Satàn, aleppe!*	
14.51–60	Capaneus	
25.1–3	Vanni Fucci's "figs"	
31.67	*Raphél maì amécche zabì almi*	
34.1	*Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni*	
Purgatorio:		
1.124–29 and 1.133	Sacramental prayer	Baptism [Virgil purifies Dante before entering purgatory]
2.46	*In exitu Israël de Aegypto*	Psalm 113
3.112–17	Intercessory prayer	Manfred
4.130–35	Intercessory prayer	Belacqua
5.24	*Miserere*	Psalm 50
5.67–72	Intercessory prayer	Iacopo del Cassero
5.88–90	Intercessory prayer	Bonconte
5.130–36	Intercessory prayer	Pia
7.82	*Salve Regina*	
8.13	*Te lucis ante*	
8.8–42	Liturgy	Nighttime prayer
8.70–72	Intercessory prayer	Nino Visconti
8.94–108	Liturgy	Exorcism [Snake chased out of the Valley of Rulers]
9.70–138	Sacramental prayer	Confession
9.140	*Te Deum laudamus*	
10.44	*Ecce ancilla Dei*	

11.1–24	*Pater noster*	
12.110	*Beati pauperes spiritu*	Beatitude 1
13.50–51	Litanies of the saints	
13.124–29	Intercessory prayer	Sapia
13.148–50	Intercessory prayer	Sapia
15.38	*Beati misericordes*	Beatitude 5
16.19	*Agnus Dei*	
16.50–51	Intercessory prayer	Marco Lombardo
17.68–69	*Beati pacifici*	Beatitude 7
19.50	*Qui lugent*	Beatitude 3
19.73	*Adhesit pavimento anima mëa*	Psalm 118
19.137	*Neque nubent*	
19.142–45	Intercessory prayer	Pope Adrian
20.136	*Gloria*	
22.6	*Sitiunt*	Beatitude 4
23.11	*Labia mea Domine*	Psalm 50
23.85–90	Intercessory prayer	Forese Donati
24.151	*Beati cui alluma*	Beatitude 4
25.121	*Summae Deus clementïae*	
25.128	*Virum non cognosco*	Gospel of Luke 1:34
26.130	*Pater noster*	Guido Guinizzelli
26.145–47	Intercessory prayer	Arnaut Daniel
27.8	*Beati mundo corde*	Beatitude 6
27.46–51	Sacramental/liturgical prayer	"*Transitus per ignem*" [Pilgrim crosses the ring of fire]
27.58	*Venite, benedicti Patris mei*	Matthew 25:34
28.80	*Delectasti*	Psalm 91
29.3	*Beati, quorum tecta sunt peccata*	Psalm 31
29.51	*Osanna*	Psalm 117 (line 25)
29.85	*Benedicta*	Luke 1:28
30.11	*Veni, sponsa de Libano*	Song of Songs 4.8
30.19	*Benedictus qui venis*	Matth 21:9; Mark 11:10; Luke 19:38
30.21	*Manibus o date lilia plenis*	*Aeneid*
30.83	*In te, Domine speravi ... pedes meos*	Psalm 30
31.91–102	Sacramental prayer	Baptism [Matelda immerses Dante in Lethe]

31.98	*Asperges me*	Psalm 50
33.1	*Deus, venerunt gentes*	Psalm 78.1
33.10–12	*Modicum, et non videbitis me; et iterum ... modicum, et vos videbitis me*	John 16:16
33.103–35	Sacramental prayer	Baptism [Matelda makes Dante drink the water of Eunoe]
Paradiso:		
2.46–48	Thankfulness	[Pilgrim thanks God for being admitted to heaven]
3.121–23	*Ave Maria*	
7.1–3	*Osanna*	
8.29	*Osanna*	
10.64–81; 11.13–15; 12.1–30; 13.1–30; 14.19–33	Series of liturgical dances	
14.62	"Amen!"	
14.91–126	The liturgy of the Cross	
14.125	Souls' prayerful song	
15.4–6	Souls' prayerful song	
18.70–108	*Diligite iustitiam qui iudicatis terram*	The liturgy of the Eagle
18.115–26	Dante the poet's prayer for justice on earth	
19.97	Thankful song	Eagle dances and sings
20.11–12	Souls' singing	
21.25–42	The liturgy of the Golden Ladder	
21.140–42	Souls' loud cry of approval of Peter Damian's speech	
23.128	*Regina coeli*	
24.112–14	*Te Deum*	
24.130–47	Paraphrase of the Creed	
25.97–99	*Sperent in te*	Psalm 9.11

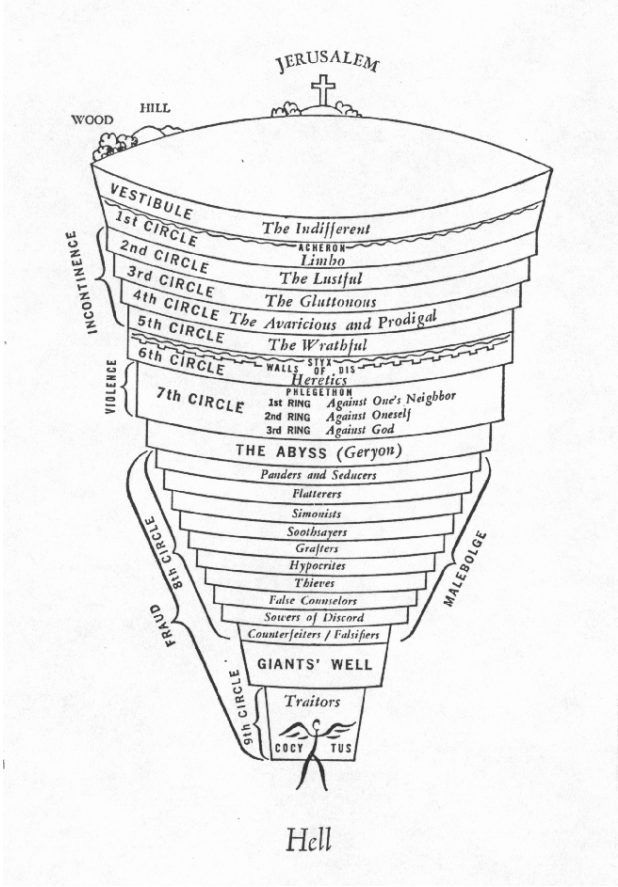
26.67–69	*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus*
27.1–3	*Gloria*
31.79–90	Prayer to Beatrice
32.95	*Ave Maria*
33.1–39	St. Bernard's prayer to the Virgin Mary

The souls of hell are forever excluded from closeness to God in prayer; the anger for their eternal punishment leads some of them to offend God blasphemously, even as they are suffering for their past sins. Prayer is reserved for the condition of the saved in *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. As the kingdom that most resembles the temporal and spatial dimensions, purgatory is where prayer is most prominent and all kinds of prayer throughout the purgatorial mountain have the common goal of attaining a higher and superior spiritual status that will eventually lead to perfect beatitude. Some of the verbal prayers are second-degree prayers, or meta-prayers, because, while they are praying, the supplicants remind the readers of their current prayerful action—and this is a frequent feature of many hymns and psalms. Whenever the pilgrim, the souls of purgatory or heaven, and the angels are at prayer, readers witness some kind of transformation. Prayer implies change and, in the particular context of the *Comedy*, ascent toward a higher level, which is synonymous with increased closeness to God.

The prominent connection of pilgrimage/prayer to upward, divine-bound ascent calls for an investigation of the opposite dynamic of blasphemy as related, not necessarily to downward moment, but to stasis (Lawton 1993 and Levy 1981). Insulting God with words and actions arrests all progression, which is synonymous with pursuit of the final goal and intimate knowledge of the divine. Conflict with God inevitably enacts the opposite dynamic of motionlessness, and Dante's *Inferno* is punctuated by immobilized souls that cannot evade their designated space for eternity. While all souls in hell are bound to remain in the circles Minos assigned them to, those who more specifically attack God blasphemously are portrayed as clinging to the ground. Capaneus and Lucifer are stuck in their positions—their fixity an expression of their punishment—or, when they are free to act, as for example Vanni Fucci is, their multiple transformations bring no substantial changes to their status, as they do not create progression. Capaneus explicitly declares his unchanged intentions to oppose God and is static in his defiant pride while lying flat on the ground. Lucifer is the paradoxical emperor who cannot speak or budge, his flightless wings moving only to make his plight more unbearable, as they create the ice that blocks him at the center of the earth, a reminder of his previous privilege and current punishment.

In its best esthetic manifestation, prayer is also a poetic text. Dante has a predilection for the psalms, the book of the bible containing 150 songs, which, together with the Law and the Prophets, contains the complete teachings of the Jewish faith and shapes the Hebrew Bible (Dante refers to this triad of books in *Par*. 24.136). The poet believed in the tradition that attributed the psalms to King David and calls him "l'umile salmista," "the humble psalmist" (*Purg*. 10.65), metonymically identifying him with his poetic production. The repeated use of Psalm 50 in the *Comedy* (it occurs five times, three in *Purgatorio* and once in *Inferno* and *Paradiso* respectively) reveals at once its penitential purposes and the poet's self-proclaimed affinity with the Psalmist (Hollander 1973, 145–50 and 1998, 143–51). *Miserere* is the first word of the psalm and the first word Dante the pilgrim pronounces in the *Comedy*, and it reverberates with regretful thoughts after King David sinned with Bathsheba and wrote this song begging for clemency, but it also speaks about Dante's own sins, which will be cleansed by means of the journey he is about to start. Besides thematic similarities, there is also an element of self-identification when the author of the "sacred poem" (*Par*. 25.1) repeatedly evokes—and refers to him as his equal—the "singer of the Holy Spirit" (*Par*. 22.38), the best biblical writer (Bloom 1994, 78). The psalms also bear strong connections to music, for they are meant to be sung

and, even etymologically, the Greek word derives from "psallein," "to play a stringed musical instrument." This crucial quality of the psalms greatly contributes to musicality as an additional element of prayer to achieve the souls' closeness to God. Music is a *pharmakon* that heals the penitential souls of their sins and restores them to spiritual health in *Purgatorio* (Ciabattoni 2010, 97–99). Although dotting the entire ascent of Mount Purgatory, the quotation of psalms increases in the Garden of Eden, where they no longer refer to the purification of the souls, but specifically to Dante's preparation for heaven.



As poetic-musical texts, psalms also have esthetic value and their orderly placement in the *Comedy* creates an artistic pattern that is also visual, since the short Latin quotations besprinkled all over *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* are easily located and create an important referential interaction with the bible, thereby sacramentalizing and elevating the text. Implanted as they are in the fabric of the poem, the psalms enrich it by bringing divine language to it, but also by adding content, for every psalm evokes historical or pseudo-historical events and/or spiritual circumstances that are simply hinted at in the few words reported. These insertions imitate and lead up to the more substantial inclusion of biblical or classical materials in the ekphrastic episode of *Purgatorio* 10, 11, and 12. In that section, the convoluted combination of artistic/architectonic representations, prayerful actions, and punishment of the prideful determines how art may be at the origin of pride as well as reconciliation with God, for the tirade against artists' attitudes toward their accomplishments stands side by side with the beauty of art works that elevates the spirit on the first terrace of the prideful (Barolini 1989, 145–64 and 1992, 133–43). The three consecutive scenes represented in the bas-reliefs reveal the miraculous power of contemplative prayer, when the pilgrim synesthetically perceives that he can hear the singing and smell the incense emanating from the sculptures. Being a divine creation, not humanly created representational art, the marble images possess supernatural powers and reproduce the Annunciation, David's transportation of the Ark to Jerusalem, and the Emperor Trajan's encounter with a widow. These three exempla of humility counteracting the sin of pride parallel the thirteen sculpted scenes of punished pride taken from biblical as well as classical tradition in Canto 12. The paraphrase of the Our Father appears to interrupt the flow of these artistic representations in Canto 11, but in fact stands as a complementary element to those depictions, given that each of the seven petitions is expounded in philosophical and theological terms in one single *terzina*, to form additional *formelle*, or representational pictures in successive order. Art literally acquires a constructive, elevating purpose here, as it guides the souls and the Pilgrim to a higher purified state. A reevaluation of humility will lead the poet to ironize the superfluous ostentation of artists' talents, while he tasks himself with nothing less than rewriting the Our Father, a prayer Christ himself formulated and transmitted to the faithful, which becomes the prayer of humility for the prideful souls in purgatory.

Linking heaven and earth, prayer expresses human desire to be united with God in spirit, a figurative bridge between a terrestrial dimension and an ethereal state. Given this particular unifying quality of prayer and God's position in a higher place in human imagination, the most effective figurative notion representing it is "elevation" to God, a rising of the soul to meet the divine. Sacraments are divine simulacra on earth, signs of God's presence in the life of believers. The Pilgrim undergoes several important pseudo-sacraments throughout purgatory: a novel administration of baptism at the beginning of his ascent to the mountain (*Purg*. 1.121–36), the first stage of confession right before the entrance through the gate of purgatory (*Purg*. 9.94–114), its conclusion in the presence of Beatrice, who acts as confessor but is also the victim of his egregious sin (*Purg*. 31.7–36), and a purification ritual resembling a blessing with renewal of baptismal cleansing at the immersion in Lethe (*Purg*. 31.91–105) and the drinking of Eunoe (*Purg*. 33.127–35). These liturgical actions follow a rigorous script, which makes them theatrical in nature. The performance happening in the Valley of Rulers (*Purg*. 8.1–42; 94–108) reenacts the temptation of Eden and is intended for the Pilgrim's benefit, but also serves as a reminder of the negative effects of temptation to the purging souls surrounding him. Although in the safety of ante-purgatory they can no longer be subjected to Lucifer's threats, they are active participants in this ritual of purification against the evil tempter by singing an evening prayer (*Te lucis ante*) and by reacting strongly to the serpent being chased away. Another form of prayerful interchange is intercession, which is an active dialogue between the living and the dead, constantly imploring God and pleading for one another (Thistlewood 2000 and Schneider 2004). Dante makes ample use of intercessions throughout *Purgatorio*, but concentrates most suffrage prayers in the first five cantos, where the souls of the excommunicates and the negligent need all the help they can get from their living relatives and friends, in order to advance more expeditiously toward total purification. The pilgrim is their unique opportunity to send requests back to earth and the poet reprimands consorts and progeny for their negligence or praises them for their active role in advancing the souls of their relatives toward paradise (Nella, his friend Forese Donati's wife in *Purg*. 23.85–93, is among those, since she allowed Forese to reach the sixth cornice with her incessant prayers). Dante even transforms the Beatitudes into prayers of elevation in *Purgatorio*. Originally intended as prophetic aphorisms concerning the destiny of virtuous souls (a sort of new Christian Commandments) and articulated by Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes turn into liturgical prayers, which are sung by an Angel at the end of every presence of the pilgrim on a particular ledge. Of the eight Beatitudes in the gospel, Dante omits two, but then splits one in two sections, in order to obtain seven prayers, one for each of the upward passages. An interchange of genres happens here, because the Beatitudes originally belonged in a sermon and they now become prayers, but the transformation is also from a motto expressing future moral direction to a prayerful text expressing regret for the souls' past lives. As for intercessory prayer and sacramental liturgy, the Beatitudes underline the strong connection between the living and the dead, since they were originally intended as spiritual directives for attaining eternal life in the gospel and they are now repurposed for the use of purging souls in the afterlife.

Since heavenly souls enjoy full communion with God, they no longer need prayer to increase their closeness to him, and theologically prayer has no reason to exist in heaven, for it is the perennial state of heavenly souls to be in contemplation. In *Paradiso*, prayer becomes a purely poetic device that serves the purpose of describing in human words the beauty and harmony of eternal life in full communion with divinity. The notion of dancing as a means to reach closeness to God was always part of mystical reflection. Particularly in the medieval culture immediately preceding Dante, the beguine Mechthild of Magdeburg considers dancing a precious tool to accomplish an increased knowledge of God; similarly, the Franciscan Iacopone da Todi invites all those who want to communicate with God to dance; and Bernard of Clairvaux reaches the same conclusion about the value of dancing when commenting on the psalms. This positive estimation of sacred dance among mystics clashes with restrictions imposed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy through synods, councils,

and above all sermons, aimed at limiting or prohibiting dancing. This disagreement reaches a breaking point in Dante's time, when even Franciscan preachers try to dissuade their congregations from the centuries-long practice of dancing in cemeteries and churches. Devoid of its principal reason of increasing closeness to God, prayer in paradise needs to find creative forms of expression. It is a manifestation of the souls' gratitude for their salvation and for God's goodness, an exultation for their communion as heavenly souls, for the pilgrim's miraculous visit, and for their ability to escort him to the utmost revelation of the Trinity in the Empyrean. Acoustic expression of their ecstatic status in vocal prayer appears not to suffice and is therefore accompanied by a sacred dance, during which the souls draw symbolic shapes in the blinding light making up their own contours as well as designing their surroundings. The poet often hides behind the rhetorical device of ineffability, so that the mysterious use of music and dancing in *Paradiso* helps the readers understand the beauty of the prayerful actions the pilgrim witnessed without in fact getting a precise description of them. Even the symbolic configurations the souls form when appearing to the pilgrim—such as the Eagle, the Cross, and the Ladder—are liturgical in essence and are aimed at reflecting and expressing God's perfect order in opposition to human and earthly imperfection. The ending of *Paradiso* features a series of prayerful texts requesting that the pilgrim be granted the ultimate vision. Beatrice, the poet himself, and St. Bernard all implore God or Mary on Dante's behalf, and *Paradiso* 33 offers the culminating prayerful moment as well as the vision itself.

Once all prayerful and rhetorical requirements have been fulfilled, when Bernard has implored Mary on the pilgrim's behalf within the narrative fiction and Dante the poet has requested divine assistance at the moment he is composing the poem, the sublime ecstasy of seeing God face to face occurs. It is the fulfillment of all prayers of ascent in the *Comedy*, the moment to which the supplicant souls of purgatory aspire and the moment for which the souls of heaven are thankful. For Dante the pilgrim it represents the conclusion of his ascent, whether literal in *Purgatorio* or figurative in *Paradiso*. For the poet it is the apex of his poetic abilities and perhaps the goal of his entire writing career, the conclusion of a poetic journey, the summation of all artistic endeavors. As for the *homo viator* in medieval Christian thought, the ascending journey to the mountain of God is more important than the attainment of the goal itself. The process of "getting there" is what makes Dante's journey worthwhile and what makes the poem a unique artistic accomplishment.

Other studies exist on individual prayers or groups of prayers (the Psalms, for example) and comments on single prayers abound in *lecturae* of specific cantos. Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi and V. Stanley Benfell have shown the importance of the Beatitudes for the poetic structure of *Purgatorio* and the entire *Comedy*. Chiavacci Leonardi argues that their insertion throughout the second canticle becomes a structural component of the poem's ethical fabric, the backbone of Dante's poetics of redemption (1984). Benfell places the Beatitudes in the context of medieval exegesis and shows to what degree Dante's use of them was influenced by previous interpretations (2011). The only comprehensive investigation of the prayerful phenomenon in Dante's work in recent times is Erminia Ardissino's book, *Tempo liturgico e tempo storico nella "Commedia" di Dante* (2009), which has been deeply influential on the topic and has set the tone for my own analysis. Ardissino perceives prayer as a manifestation of divine intervention in human history and shows how, by virtue of the incarnation, Christian believers have modified the course of their personal existential trajectories as well as the course of human history by requesting God's mediation. By basing her excellent argument on wide-ranging analyses of liturgical and prayerful practices in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (and she accurately points out that the word "liturgy" itself as referred to religious practices came into use later), her book shows how Dante interpreted the Christological tenets developed in Thomas Aquinas's and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio's theological studies and applied them to his poetic endeavor, not just the *Comedy*, but also *Monarchia*and the *Epistles*. The result is a sound interpretation of Dante's prayers in light of current liturgical and theological practices. My study focuses more closely on the prayerful phenomenology of

the *Comedy* and formulates interpretive hypotheses on the esthetic and poetic effects of prayers or blasphemous acts scattered throughout the text, particularly (although not solely) for the sake of the pilgrim-protagonist. My understanding is that prayer for Dante was at once an essential and influential element of everyday life, but also a diversion from human history and from his own personal predicament, in order to evade from the existential plight of exile, political disappointment, and personal struggles to find refuge in the eirenic dimension of the afterlife. Prayer *accompanies* his pilgrimage, but also *is* his pilgrimage taking him to a much better place. This perspective has allowed me to include *Inferno* as the place of stasis and to carry out a thorough investigation of all the prayers present in *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* from the point of view of their inclusion in this pattern of movement-ascension-pilgrimage.

If prayer implies movement and change, then Chapter One argues that infernal blasphemy, by contrasting the positive interaction with God in prayer, mirrors the immobility of souls in hell, who are fixed for eternity in the punishments of the various concentric circles. The three central chapters of the book will be devoted to *Purgatorio*, the central canticle, with Chapter Two discussing the biblical psalms, Chapter Three art, humility, and the re-writing of Scripture, and Chapter Four focusing on pseudo-sacramental acts, the theatrics of prayer, and the Beatitudes. Finally, Chapter Five considers dance as the new medium for the heavenly souls to manifest their bliss for being in God's presence.

Instead of being a cryptic phenomenon reserved solely for the initiated religious or a mystical exercise in individuality, prayer in the *Comedy* opens up to political, societal, and philosophical issues, besides structuring the theological and spiritual background of the poem. By connecting prayer to pilgrimage, this study shows how the prayerful phenomenon cannot be disjoined from the poem's essential identity as a journey aimed at a more profound discovery of the self while moving toward the vision of God, the ultimate goal for the medieval pilgrim.

Prayer as Desire to Be Elsewhere

As understood in Dante's *Comedy*, prayer is the desire for the Other, the wish to be elsewhere, and the longing to occupy a different space. This explains why it features so prominently in *Purgatorio*, the realm of transition and change, with souls occupying a temporary dimension after death. It is, however, absent from *Inferno*, where Minos unappealingly assigns the damned souls their positions in one of the nine circles, without any possibility for advancement or change. In *Paradiso* the blessed have attained the goal they so much aspired to in their earthly or purgatorial prayers; all they do now is contemplate the glory of God and the saints; in Dante's heaven, prayer becomes a purely poetic device to describe in human words the beauty and harmony of eternal life in full communion with divinity; prayerful occurrences happen solely for the sake of the pilgrim Dante, who is not himself the supplicant, but becomes the passive agent of prayers that are recited or performed by the blessed.

While prayer is synonymous with progression and positive transformation, verbal or physical profanation of God and all sacred things in hell bears the qualities of stasis, with blasphemers lying immobile on the ground of the third ring in the seventh circle of hell, while fiery rain pours down on them—a meaningful symbol of their own incendiary temperaments which the *contrapasso* has reversed. Their blasphemous utterings sent up to God fall back on them as rain of fire. The peculiar quality of blasphemy as a sin consists of having God himself as its direct goal and purpose, not the sinner's immanent, short-lived satisfaction in life. Unlike other sinners punished throughout the pit of hell, blasphemous souls persist in their sinful attitudes in the afterlife, so that Capaneus and Vanni Fucci continue sinning while they are punished for their past sins toward God in their lives.
In *Inferno* 14 Capaneus's angry pride is now remunerated with powerless stillness, the opposite of prayer as progression toward divinity. Vanni Fucci's metamorphoses in *Inferno* 25 lead to no long-lasting changes because, unlike Ovid's metamorphoses, their double reversal adds up to no

transformative change. In the First Canticle, the "oral" nature of blasphemy results in a transformation of language into cacophonic noise, a crescendo of animalistic sounds, a gradual wordlessness of souls and devils (as well as the poet's own ineffability, 32.1–12), ending with total aphasia in Lucifer. Minos communicates with the souls through his tail; Plutus prayerfully invokes Satan but is incomprehensible to Dante; Nimrod is the only one of the Giants who speaks, but his language is gibberish. Their attempted action to stop or simply frighten the pilgrim is futile wind that moves the air around him, but has no power to arrest the process of his salvation. The silencing of the text starting from *Inferno* 32 has human words superseded by either silence or animalistic sounds. The goats and sheep (32.15), a croaking frog (32.31), storks (32.36), rams (32.50), dogs (32.70), and a barking sound (32.105) replace human words and prepare for the abominable scene of Ugolino's cannibalism in *Inferno* 33 and finally Satan, the nemesis of the Word, who uses his mouth for an inhuman act of cannibalism and is unable to utter any words. The words and actions of all blasphemers are parodic prayers, since they reverse the original function of prayer as positive communication with God. In the specific case of Lucifer, the hymn *Vexilla regis* establishes a particularly solemn atmosphere as introduction to the emperor of hell, in order to make the irony of his representation as a powerless, immobile, and mute creature all the more compelling. Given the "oral" nature of blasphemy, which is conceived in the heart but articulated in words and speech, the silencing of the souls and devils is the most adequate form of *contrapasso* for those who have desecrated God. Slitting the lips or cutting off the tongue were also the actual retributions for the crime of blasphemy in the thirteenth century, and so Dante's imposed, somber speechlessness or incomprehensible language of blasphemous souls becomes a historically accurate poetic punishment for those who committed the grave sin of offending God.

As shown by the taxonomic table in the Introduction, prayer features most prominently in purgatory, because of the purging souls' need and desire to advance to eternal blessedness in heaven. Prayer, together with physical suffering and the contemplation of examples of punished sin or rewarded virtue, is their means of achieving it. Psalms constitute the most important form of prayer, with ten occurrences throughout *Purgatorio*. A frequent use of the psalms in the second canticle sacramentalizes Dante's poem with the recurrent quotation of lines from the Latin vulgate version of the bible. Inserting the most poetic texts in the Hebrew bible into the *Comedy* creates an interesting parallel between King David as "cantor de lo Spirito Santo," "singer of the Holy Spirit" (*Par*. 22.38), and Dante as author of a "poema sacro," a "sacred poem" (*Par*. 25.1). David was inspired to compose the 150 prayerful songs Christians use in their daily "dialogue" with God; Dante the poet deals with equally sacred matters and creates a poem about salvation and damnation. As a song of liberation and redemption, Psalm 113 perfectly describes the condition of the souls of purgatory and it is significantly the first psalm and the first prayer in *Purgatorio* at the moment the souls are ferried across the water to the island mountain. As Charles Singleton has shown, this is also the text that opens an interpretive perspective on the whole *Comedy* as a song of conversion and redemption, from the constraints of Egypt in hell to the liberation of the resurrection in the Holy Land. In the Jewish tradition Psalm 113 belongs to Small Hallel, comprising Psalms 113–118, which is the sequence that is sung on the occasion of joyous festivities. The exegetical tradition places this prayer among those celebrating the arrival on the sacred mountain—God's privileged location—and therefore particularly filled with an exuberant sense of accomplishment on the part of the singer. The arrival at the foot of the mountain is extremely significant for the purgatorial context in which Psalm 113 is sung in Dante's poem and at that particular stage of the pilgrim's trip, since the arduous ascent metaphorizes the strenuous purification process that is about to begin. Psalm 118 (*Purg*. 19.73) bears some unique qualities among all the 150 psalmic prayers for being the longest psalm (as well as the longest chapter of the entire bible) and one of few acrostic texts in the bible. It exalts the Law of God as the immutable rock that leads mankind to salvation, while the supplicants voicing the prayer blame themselves for straying from it. The entire text hinges on law and order,

not simply in its development of this theme, but also in its poetic structure. Being organized around the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet (it is known as the "alphabetical psalm"), it has a very rigid structure and was believed to have been used by King David to teach his son Solomon the letters of the alphabet, but also the spiritual alphabet, the initial steps of a spiritual journey. Psalm 50, David's song of forgiveness for his sin with Bathsheba, dominates the scene as penitential text not just for the Second Canticle but for the entire poem, as Dante's admission of his own sinfulness and confirmation of its original purpose. It punctuates the *Divine Comedy*, symbolically appearing five times, once in *Inferno*, three times in *Purgatorio*, and once in *Paradiso*. Because of its contents, but also in consideration of the various contexts in which Psalm 50 is placed, it is the most self-referential prayer and the one that most resonates with the poet's own spiritual condition. *Miserere*, the first word of the psalm in the Vulgate translation, is also the first word Dante the pilgrim utters in the poem. Psalm 50 is at the opening of the prayerful activity of *Purgatorio* and is certainly the most adequate song to establish an atmosphere of contrition, since it was used during the ceremonial readmission of excommunicates into the Church.

In *Purgatorio* 10, 11, and 12 the interaction of human art and divine creation also clarifies the dynamic at work within prayerful action. Prayer reveals itself to be an oscillation between two entities, the human and the divine spheres, but also two spiritual conditions of the soul, its life with God and its existence in the human body. It is a discursive phenomenon constantly moving from humanity to divinity, but leaving the supplicants to wonder if their silent interlocutor actually participates in the exchange or not—which is the peculiar prerogative of believing in an invisible entity. This dynamic between stasis and movement characterizes prayer in general and contemplative prayer in particular. The two entities at the opposite ends of this exchange, human beings and God, are in two different dimensions, one temporal and one eternal, one mutable and one unchanging, one in history and one beyond it, one originating art and one originating creation. Their dialogic interchange gives rise to the phenomenology of prayerful events.

Purgatory 11 opens with an elaborate rendition of the Our Father, which combines sacred language, theological commentary, and artistic symmetry to structure a new text the souls are required to pray as a form of expiation. The *Pater Noster*, the most important Christian prayer and the only one transmitted directly from Jesus in the gospels, does not appear in its original form, but is recited in *Purgatorio* 11 by the souls of the prideful in Dante's adapted paraphrase—a poetically controversial endeavor positing the poet in competition with God himself, when he should be feeling the humble impulse on the terrace of pride. Art, prayer, poetic mannerism, and theological doctrine form a compact unit in *Purgatorio* 10, 11, and 12. Readers see here for the first time and in a systematic way that prayer is not simply one among many elements in the aesthetics of purgatory, but they realize that it constitutes an integral part of purgatorial theology. Whether it is the paraphrase of the Our Father or the contemplation of sacred scenes, prayer reflects, in its formal structure, the convoluted quality and the second-degree rhetoric that also originates the self-consciousness of pride, so that sin and prayer are tightly conjoined (and not just sin and punishment, as is customary for the rule of *contrapasso* in the *Comedy*). The mysterious dynamic of contemplative prayer accomplishes the miracle of the supplicants' participation in the events portrayed in the contemplated sculptures, or what Dante calls "visibile parlare," visible speech (10.95, my translation). Dante and the souls view the scenes of Mary's Annunciation, David's transportation of the Ark of God, and Trajan's dialogue with the widow as if they were participating in them, for in contemplative prayer the reality being evoked in sacred images and spiritual desires takes material shape. In this dynamism between artistic representation, paraphrasing words of the Our Father, and the reality of the purging process, the major role is occupied by Dante's poetic creation that challenges the Word of God itself by reshaping Jesus's prayer. The poet's glosses make the prayer newly alive; each *terzina* recreates the individual petitions of the Our Father; each petition is expounded and commented on. Each individual *terzina* commenting on the Our Father becomes a sculpted picture in the style of those

carved on the ledge of the prideful and transforms into an image that is connected in a sequential series to all the others before and after. In line with the bas-reliefs that precede them in *Purgatorio* 10 and those that follow in *Purgatorio* 12, each *terzina* becomes a *formella*, a marble sculpture that forms an auditory, oral match with the bas-reliefs on the same ledge.

Purgatory is also the kingdom of intercessory prayers. Viewing the pilgrim Dante as the unique conduit to communicate their saved condition, but also their need for additional help from their living family and friends, many souls use prayers of intercession and express to Dante their desire to be remembered by the living. I have identified eleven instances of souls requesting prayers of suffrage, with a majority of them (six) concentrated in ante-purgatory, where the newly-arrived souls feel a more pressing need to advance to purgatory proper and start their ascent. This type of prayer refers more clearly than others to the condition of exile in allegorical terms, since it expresses a deep-seated desire to move to a different spiritual location. The living and the dead pray for one another, so they can attain a higher status for their souls and compassionately help others do the same. Dante collects requests from the purging souls for prayers to bring back to earth, while unraveling a series of complex familial and relational interactions that have to do with memory and neglect, loyalty and betrayal, guilt and entitlement, love and desire for spiritual purity. The dead reproach family members, relatives, friends, and acquaintances for not interceding for them or simply request more fervent and frequent prayers so they can advance more expeditiously.

The phenomenology of prayer throughout *Purgatorio* is not limited to verbal requests, petitions, thankfulness, and praise, or meta-prayer—for frequently when supplicants pray they call attention to the fact that they are praying, thereby creating a meta-linguistic text. Prayer in the *Comedy* is also liturgical and sacramental. Dante uses a number of canonical Christian prayers, such as *Salve Regina, Te lucis ante, Te Deum, Agnus Dei, Gloria*, and *Hosanna*, which are sung by the souls and/or by angels following the tradition of monastic liturgies. Within the economy of *Purgatorio*, there are three separate episodes of liturgical rituals that happen in an edenic ambience and that dot the ascent to the mountain and form an orderly symmetry, at the beginning, right before entering purgatory proper, and at the moment of departing: the pseudo-baptismal ceremony of purification, when Virgil washes Dante's face and girds him with a rush (1.121–36); the allegorical performance of night-time temptation in the Valley of Rulers (8.22–42; 8.94–108), which in its essence of chasing the source of evil resembles an act of exorcism; and Matelda's final purification of the pilgrim in Lethe (31.91–105) and with the water of Eunoe (33.127–35). Matelda is a priestly figure, but the sacramental acts she performs on the pilgrim never obscure her feminine attraction and her sexual appeal. The result is an ambiguous paradigm conjoining sacredness and sensuality. The sacrament of confession appears symbolically at the entrance of purgatory proper (9.73–138) and a second time in front of Beatrice, who acts as confessor of the pilgrim's past sins (31.1–36). Additionally and very creatively, the poet also uses the Beatitudes, which are originally didactic aphorisms of moral dictates—a form of Christian commandments Jesus gave to his followers in the gospel—as prayerful texts. The pilgrim hears the singing of one of the Beatitudes at the moment an angel erases the P off his forehead when he transitions to the next ledge, a true demonstration of the connection of prayer with advancement and progression. The poet uses six of the nine gospel Beatitudes, but he splits one in two sections and obtains the symbolic number seven, one for each of the ascents to the next ledge (or stage, in the case of the Garden of Eden) of the mountain.

Prayerfulness in general, and psalmic occurrences in particular, become even more prominent in the last cantos of *Purgatorio*, although they acquire more specifically liturgical and ritualistic connotations, since they witness, on one hand, the pilgrim's final cleansing rites, and, on the other, the sacred procession accompanying him to the vision of Beatrice. Six psalms are quoted in the last six cantos of *Purgatorio*—and the numerological parallel is undoubtedly not coincidental: Psalm 91 in Canto 28.80, Psalm 31 in Canto 29.3, Psalm 117 in Canto 29.51, Psalm 30 in Canto 30.83 (this too is an

interesting symbolic match), Psalm 50 in Canto 31.98, and Psalm 78 in Canto 33.1. This is the highest concentration of psalmic quotations in the poem. If added to other prayers and lines that are used as prayers in this context, the six psalms turn this section into the most prayerful of the *Divine Comedy*, with twelve prayers in six cantos—and, again, the numbers reveal a deliberate numerological symbolism. Psalms in Earthly Paradise, however, have a different function than they did previously in purgatory. Psalms 113, 50, and 118 are prayerful songs that reflect the various situations of the souls at their particular purgatorial stage (or even pre-purgatorial, in the case of *In Exitu*, which accompanies their arrival on the shore) and, combined with punishment and regret, constitute their purification process, thereby exercising the typical function of prayer as tension toward unification with the divine. Although Dante participated spiritually in the souls' advancement, these prayers were intended specifically for them alone. The last psalms are instead performed solely on Dante's behalf and are designed to accompany the liturgical rituals that complete his preparation for paradise. What readers experience here is a hypertrophic expansion of space thanks to the increased density of the prayerful phenomenon. As Dante moves into the non-spatial dimension of Earthly Paradise, prayer (together with his physical body) remains his sole connection to movement in space, since its primary quality is to bring the supplicant increasingly closer to God—and there is no other symbolic way to account for this than by making the pilgrim walk or climb. Much like Earthly Paradise, prayerful actions are suspended between earth and heaven; they happen in space, and yet take the supplicant outside of spatial parameters into a "divine dimension." The poet has no other way to account for his progressive approach to the vision of God than by increasing the number of prayers on his way. The last psalms are designed to accompany the liturgical rituals that complete the pilgrim's preparation for paradise. Psalm 31, *Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata*, one of Matelda's three prayers (the other two are Psalm 91 [*Delectasti*], and Psalm 50 [*Asperges me*]), speaks to the importance of forgiveness of sins and of entrusting oneself to divine mercy. Together with Psalms 6, 37, 50, 101, 129, 142, Psalm 31 is one of the seven penitential psalms, which have been used since the primitive Church as songs of repentance, and it is another one of the psalms traditionally believed to have been inspired by David's sin with Bathsheba.

In purgatory and on earth, prayer is a tension toward the divine and an expressed desire to be closer to God or even to become like God. What is its role in heaven, when the blessed souls enjoy full communion with him in the Empyrean? In Dante's *Paradiso*, prayer loses its basic quality of being an attempt to re-establish lost contact with God, of being a more or less successful "dialogue with divinity," since that has already been accomplished and the blessed have somehow become the object of their prayer. In Dante's *Paradiso*, prayer becomes a purely poetic device that serves the purpose of describing in human words the beauty and harmony of eternal life in full communion with divinity. As was the case for some liturgical prayers in *Purgatorio*, heavenly prayers in *Paradiso* only apply to the pilgrim, even if he himself only rarely prays and is, for the most part, the passive agent of prayer. Prayer and movement become crystallized on the souls themselves, who appear to move their glorious bodies for Dante's sake, in a liturgical act no longer aimed at gaining God's closeness and grace, but simply intended as indication of their accomplished salvation. In the absence of time and space, liturgy no longer needs symbolic objects or sacramental matter, as it does on earth or in purgatory. It is the glorious bodies of the saved souls themselves that serve as incessant prayer, their singing now a statement—and no longer a wish—to their achieved goal. While prayer previously expressed a desire to be elsewhere, it now testifies to its achieved destination.

Since the blessed are not in possession of a physical body, their ethereal singing equals the movement of their "glorious bodies," or "lights," as Dante names them, and they express joy for their own closeness to God and for the pilgrim's privileged admission to heaven by dancing, since "[d]ancing is simply another manifestation of the all-embracing, all-pervading concept of *musica*" (Stevens 1986, 159). When they sing, they also dance, as evidence of their bliss that manifests itself in their whole being, given that their voices and the light of their appearance are all that Dante

experiences of them. The Heaven of the Sun displays a complex and articulated liturgy consisting of multiple turning dances and singing, with the wise souls arranged in concentric crowns, but also featuring in their midst two of the most significant sages, St. Francis and St. Dominic. The choreography of this liturgical ceremony is enacted through a series of chiastic patterns involving both the presentation of the two saints, their respective Orders, the two friars introducing them (St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure), and the two crowns of souls surrounding Dante and Beatrice. Binary and mirroring structures throughout this episode poetically signify the common mission of the two Orders, the Franciscan and the Dominican, now conflicting with one another on earth, but meant to be reconciled through the generous and eloquent speeches of their two heavenly representatives.

Liturgy in *Paradiso* also finds other ways of expressing the souls' communion with God and among themselves, in forms and symbols the pilgrim can comprehend. In the Heavens of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, the souls appear to Dante in the shape of a Cross, an Eagle, and a Ladder. All three structures are highly symbolic of the souls' merits and of the significance of that particular heaven. The whole of paradise rejoices with prayers of thankfulness for the pilgrim's performance at his exams on Faith, Hope, and Charity, by singing a *Te Deum* (24.112–14), the line *Sperent in te* from Psalm 9.11 (25.97–99), and the hymn *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus* (26.67–69). It is interesting to note that, even in this atemporal and spaceless dimension, the poet continues to relate prayerful action with biblical and spiritual Christian symbols, while the general quality of prayer remains an upward motion in particular, or movement and change in general.

The most well-known and wide-spread Marian prayer, the *Ave Maria*, bookends *Paradiso*, occurring at the beginning and at the end of it, thereby introducing and concluding the pilgrim's metaphorical ascent to the vision of God. It opens the canticle in the first Heaven of the Moon and closes it in the Empyrean, in both instances being used as a song of transition. Mary is subsequently honored more profusely in Bernard of Clairvaux's final prayer of *Paradiso* 33, where he implores her to grant the pilgrim the ecstatic vision of the Trinity. As demonstration that Dante's whole pilgrimage happens under the auspices and the protection of Mary, she is portrayed as the one rescuing him in *Inferno* 1 and later she is the one who allows the successful accomplishment of his journey by opening the door to the vision of God for him. As she brought salvation into the world at the Annunciation, she protects and guides the pilgrim to the safe conclusion of his journey.

Rather than being an esthetic accessory, an intertextual addition to his poetic text, prayer in all its manifold manifestations constitutes an indispensable component of Dante's poetics in the *Comedy*. It supports the protagonist throughout his journey, from the first hesitant steps in purgatory all the way to the beatific vision; it purifies him together with the purging souls up the seven ledges of the mountain and it allows the blessed souls of heaven to show him their merited salvation, as well as rejoice for his achievements. Prayer is a fundamental structural element for the poem and for the pilgrim; it supports the narrative in the same way it supports any *homo viator* through the pilgrimage of salvation; it becomes the *vademecum*, the accompanying component of any pilgrimage as protection and safety from the perils of the road. In the *Comedy* prayer is the solid architecture that grounds Dante's poetic text in the Christian mystical tradition. <>

How Language Informs Mathematics: Bridging Hegelian Dialectics and Marxian Models by Dirk Damsma [Historical Materialism Book Series, Brill, E-Book 9789004395497; Hardback 9789004337305]

In **How Language Informs Mathematics** Dirk Damsma shows how Hegel's and Marx's systematic dialectical analysis of mathematical and economic language helps us understand the structure and nature of mathematical and capitalist systems. More importantly, Damsma shows how knowledge of the latter can inform model assumptions and help improve models.

His book provides a blueprint for an approach to economic model building that does away with arbitrarily chosen assumptions and is sensitive to the institutional structures of capitalism. In light of the failure of mainstream economics to understand systemic failures like the financial crisis and given the arbitrary character of most assumptions in mainstream models, such an approach is desperately needed.

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Hegel and Marx adopted a "Historical Dialectic" into a "Systematic Dialectic"

Excerpt: Both Hegel and Marx adopted in their work a "historical dialectic" next to a "systematic dialectic". For Marx the former method is confined to his earlier work (up to 1848), whereas he uses the latter method for his study of the "system" of capitalism in his magnum opus *Capital*. This book is a contemporary appraisal of Marx's work, which takes distance from Engels's interpretation of Marx's *Capital* that pervaded much of the twentieth-century both within Marxian circles and among their critics. This modern interpretation stems from research over the past two decades into Marx's *Capital* in light of Hegel's systematic-dialectical works.[1] As a result the Hegelian systematic-dialectical methodology is experiencing a true revival in Marxist circles, a revival that Arthur calls "the New Dialectic". On the one extreme within it, one finds materialist re-evaluations of Hegel. On the other extreme, Marx is viewed as an innovator who struggled to break free from his idealist Hegelian heritage in order to create a truly new materialist dialectical methodology. What binds these new dialectical Marxists together is their acknowledgement of Hegel's profound influence on Marx's method.

Although Marx studied mathematics thoroughly and utilised it in his *Capital* for two important fields at least, one does not usually find instances of its use in the writings of these Hegelian Marxists. The aim of this book is to critically examine whether it is methodologically possible to combine mathematical rigour with a systematic-dialectical methodology and, if so, to provide an indication of how mathematics may be instrumental to a systematic dialectician and of how a systematic-dialectical

perspective may help mathematical model builders. The first three chapters respectively deal with differences and similarities regarding the systematic-dialectical position of Hegel and Marx, Hegel's systematic-dialectical perspective on the mathematical, and finally Marx's use of mathematics (specifically with regard to his schemes of reproduction) within his systematic-dialectical framework. From the evaluation of the latter, it is concluded that there is room for improvement in respect of how Marx's mathematics are embedded in his overall systematic-dialectical framework. The aim of Chapter 4 is therefore to reconstruct Marx's schemes of reproduction in such a way that it makes maximum use of its place within Marx's dialectics with respect to informing its assumptions and at the same time informs how the dialectical exhibition might proceed from there.

As indicated, Chapter 1 will deal with the method of systematic dialectics in general, and it takes up the following themes. Systematic dialectics is a two-phase methodology. In the first phase, the researcher tries to get to grips with the world of the field of enquiry. To do this, one may utilise preliminary categorisations, measurement instruments, models and whatever else enhances our understanding of phenomena pertinent to the field of study (i.e. in our case, the study of capitalism). All research done in this phase endows the researcher with a partial and analytical understanding of phenomena, i.e. aspects of reality. Marx and Marxists refer to this kind of research as exploration [*Forschung*]. To Hegel the research methods to be used in this phase are almost exclusively confined to getting to grips with contemporary developments in the empirical sciences through desk research, but do not encompass any empirical research on the part of the dialectician himself.

In the second phase, the dialectician systematically pieces together what he has analytically ripped apart in the first. The first question to ask in this phase is what defines the system we are interested in. To the founding father of systematic dialectics, Hegel, the answer to this question is a category without which the whole of the field in question would be rendered unintelligible. Space, for example, is the universal principle of the natural sciences, because all material things are spatial. Hence, the study of material observables presupposes the category Space. Marx, in adapting Hegel's methodology to the study of capitalism, found his universal principle not so much in a category as in the most abstract expression of capitalist relations. For him, this is the commodity. So, in contrast to Hegel, Marx's abstractions are informed not only by the thought about a field, but also by the reality of that field: they are abstractions-in-practice.

The existence of abstractions-in-practice and the conflict-ridden take Marx had on social reality implied that he had no fundamental philosophical objections to the articulation of mathematical models alongside, and integrated with, his systematic-dialectical account. As indicated, the difference of opinion between the two on this matter hinges upon the nature of the categories they appropriate for their systematic dialectics. This difference with respect to the kind of abstractions the two utilise itself stems from their respective object of investigation. Where Hegel discusses mathematics, this object is thought. His deeply philosophical question in this context is: what is it that enables us to think at all? His answer – one that, under his influence, is perhaps obvious today – is that thought requires language. If this is the case, Hegel reasons, the structure of language can inform us about the structure of the world we think about (less obvious, though relevant for the mere possibility of knowledge). Mathematical and formal thinking has a place in this structure of language, but it cannot be directly applied at more concrete levels (e.g. the level of society) without elaborate qualitative empirical considerations about these fields. So mathematical models may play a role in the empirical sciences, but not in dialectics.

Marx's subject is capitalism. Commodities in capitalist societies are of some particular use to buyers, while they represent only universal exchange value, i.e. monetary value, to sellers. This universal exchange value permeates all entities and categories in the economic domain as commodification. Consequentially, all concrete capitalist entities and categories – like commodity, price, cost, profit,

value, etc. – can also be understood abstractly, as elements in the produce of the system at large. In other words, where Hegel sees qualitative and quantitative reflection as reconcilable modes of *thinking* only, Marx sees this world *itself* as being both qualitatively and quantitatively constituted. So, quantities are an integral part of capitalism, rather than being externally imposed on it. It is this characteristic of capitalism that enables a (mathematical) modelling methodology to be integrated with systematic dialectics all the way through, albeit with regard to the study of capitalism only (that is, amongst the systems that Marx knew of).

Once the universal principle is identified, the first thing to ask is how the principle appears in total categorial isolation (e.g. in isolation a commodity is just a product that can be of use and hence is imbued with *use* value). Secondly, one could ask how it manifests itself in the world (e.g. when a commodity is produced to be exchanged, it is primarily evaluated on the basis of its *exchange* value). Hence, the answers to those questions usually involve oppositional categories (e.g. although commodities are desired for their potential uses, they are only produced because of their exchange value). Finally, the tension between those categories needs to be resolved, in order to show why the two oppositional categories do not annihilate one another (e.g. how it is that useful products are produced when the producer does not care about use values).

Resolving an opposition of this sort involves either showing how one half of the opposition becomes the other half, or showing how the two halves can coexist (e.g. in generalised exchange in the *market*, exchange values are to some extent held in check by perceived use values). Sometimes the condition for coexistence cannot be found immediately. In that case there often are successive stages of coexistence. The first categories in this succession only partially resolve the tension between the answers to the first two questions, which is fully resolved at subsequent stages.

By asking the first two questions again about the last of the categories found, a new opposition will generally be found which can be resolved again, and so on. It is claimed that all entities and processes found in answer to the aforementioned questions are *necessary* to the field under scrutiny, now represented as an interrelated system.

Chapter 2 researches Hegel's determination of the categorial foundations of mathematics. Hegel provided some tantalising insights into the nature and essence of mathematics. The aim of this chapter is to take up in particular Hegel's thoughts on what we would nowadays call the relations between sets and elements, and his views on why these are only an intermediate step towards understanding the world in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Therefore, Hegel would probably view the representation of more concrete constellations – such as society – in purely formal (i.e. set-theoretical or, in this case, mathematical model) language as regressive.

Despite the amenability of capitalism to mathematical treatment, Marx presumably never got round to exhibiting the models he made alongside and integrated with his dialectics. However, as was said above, there are at least two important fields where he represents aspects of or partial interactions in his theory in "schematic" or algebraic form. The most famous of these are his schemes of reproduction ("schemes" or "models"; Tinbergen, in his early work, also used the term "scheme" for what he later called "model"). If the assumptions Marx calls upon in formulating these schemes are scrutinised from a dialectical perspective, it can be concluded that most of the assumptions that are indispensable for Marx's model are dialectically defensible as either foundational (formally recapping a dialectically obtained result), heuristic (temporarily abstracting from some tendency that was already exhibited dialectically), absence (merely reminding the reader that some entities have not been exhibited and thus cannot be taken into consideration at the current level of abstraction) or because they anticipate the presence of mechanisms that, though not exhibited yet, are crucial to the unhindered working out of a necessary tendency that was exhibited.

Marx did not live long enough to reintegrate the models he built with the overall structure of his work (presuming this was his intention). As a result, he hardly ever defends his assumptions dialectically and makes more of them than he needs to from a mathematical model point of view. Also, the mathematical formulations and expressions he chose are far from ideal from both a mathematical model and a systematic-dialectical point of view. As such, there is room for improvement on all those points. These improvements are worked out with respect to Marx's schemes in Chapter 4. Thus, these schemes and their subsequent improvement indicate how systematic-dialectical accounts may be instrumental in guiding the way to appropriate assumptions and how mathematical models may in turn guide the progress of dialectical accounts. The generalised guidelines that can be formulated as a development and generalisation of this insight form the backbone of this book's conclusion.

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The aim of this book has been twofold. First, it has established how a systematic-dialectical perspective elucidates the nature of mathematics by clarifying the nature of the categories that the mathematical sciences depend upon. Secondly, this book has shown how a systematic-dialectical perspective on capitalism may inform assumptions for mathematical models and how the results of these models can further the systematic-dialectical exhibition that gave rise to the assumptions. Thus, it was shown how the two approaches mutually reinforce each other and are far from being mutually exclusive. The former was achieved by means of an investigation of Hegel's dialectical account of the mathematical (Chapter 2). The latter aim was achieved by a critical evaluation of the assumptions Marx makes when drawing up his schemes (i.e. models) of reproduction from a systematic-dialectical perspective. Since these models are presented alongside Marx's systematic-dialectical account of Capitalism, an exploration of the way Marx has integrated them into his overall account (Chapter 3) and the possibilities for improvement in this respect (Chapter 4) have been instrumental in indicating how a tighter fit might be achieved between the systematic-dialectical foundations of model assumptions, the assumptions themselves, and the model.

Before Hegel's dialectical determination of the mathematical could be presented, however, a more detailed understanding of Hegel's and Marx's historical and systematic dialectics was required (Chapter 1). Thus, the book opened with a methodological chapter describing Hegel's dialectics and Marx's critique thereof, as well as its implications for Marx's own dialectics. In a nutshell, the systematic-dialectical method reconstructs the knowledge about a given object totality, whose intelligibility is fully dependent upon one category: its universal principle. One can, of course, only reconstruct knowledge if one has first acquired enough of it (in the phase of appropriation).

The universal principle is a category without which no sense can be made of the totality under scrutiny. A central reference in this book was Hegel's *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, in which Hegel outlines the systematic interconnections between all fields of knowledge in their totality. In his view three *object* totalities can be distinguished within this totality of all knowledge: the Logic, the realm of "the idea in and for itself"; Nature, the realm of "the idea in its otherness"; and society, the realm of "the idea that returns into itself out of its otherness". Hegel identifies Being, Space, and Free Will as their respective universal principles.

In order to reconstruct the knowledge about an object totality from such a universal principle, Hegel asks himself three questions: α) how does this universal principle appear in total categorial isolation (that is, if one tries to imagine it without taking recourse to any examples)?; β) how does it express itself in the world (that is, how does it appear if one tries to behold all of its instances/examples at once)?; and finally, γ) how can the tension between an α) abstract thought and its β) instances be resolved? By asking the questions α) and β) again about the category found under γ) the process can

start anew, until finally some γ) is found that is at one with its expression and thus would no longer yield oppositional answers to α) and β).

After his systematic-dialectical accounts were complete, Hegel applied these principles to the philosophy of history, which he describes as a battle of the α) "abstract Generality" of the state against the β) principle of specific Subjectivity that would eventually give rise to the new nexus of the γ) Ideal State. In Hegel's view this process could potentially be completed in the post French Revolution society in which he lived.

Marx's criticism of Hegel is twofold. First, in his *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*, Marx criticises Hegel's account of society for being too harmonious. Secondly, and in my view relatedly, in his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy and Dialectics in General* he criticises Hegel's dialectical obsession with the resolution of conflicts, for in Marx's view this precludes Hegel from recognising misrepresentations of Nature in thought as well as actually existing conflicts. Marx's historical materialism that largely took shape in *Die deutsche Ideologie* (which Marx wrote in collaboration with Engels) indicates Marx's partial solution to both problems. In response to the first critique, historical materialism describes material inequalities as an ongoing cause of change and revolution, and thus identifies every society thus far, including capitalism, as a battlefield in which Free Will is anything but actualised. In response to the second critique, this conflict-ridden take on Capitalism also allows for a description of actually existing conflicts. Furthermore, Marx and Engels's account of history takes distance from the received view, thus enabling the recognition of misrepresentations in historical accounts thus far.

So, if one holds that Marx intended his social theories in the *Grundrisse* and *Capital* to be systematic-dialectical (as all authors reviewed in Section 1.4 do – and I concur) it is likely to differ from Hegel's in three respects:

1. 1. The knowledge reconstructed should be appropriated critically, so as to allow for the chance that categories developed in the empirical sciences misrepresent the matter at hand;
2. 2. Its starting point should be materially grounded in the relations of production emanating from material inequalities;
3. 3. Its starting point should allow for unresolved conflicts at every stage of the dialectical exhibition.

Whether Marx's attempt at formulating a systematic-dialectical alternative for Hegel's social theory was successful and the ramifications this has for model building can best be discussed after having setting out Hegel's take on the mathematical, as was done in Chapter 2.

Hegel discusses the Quantitative and its moments as part of 1) the Doctrine of Being, which is the first of the three subdivisions in his *Logic* (the other two being 2) the Doctrine of Essence and 3) the Doctrine of the Concept). This doctrine is itself subdivided into the Sections A) Quality, B) Quantity, and C) Measure. The three object totalities Hegel discusses in his *Encyclopädie*, as well as the subdivisions therein and the sections of those, all relate to each other in the same way as α, β, and γ do. Hence, the place Hegel reserves for his determination of the Quantitative implies that 1) Hegel conceives of the Quantitative as a fairly abstract field that is nevertheless indispensable for the understanding of everything else, and 2) the Quantitative is a reflection on the hopeless multiplicity one is confronted with when trying to get to grips with all concrete instances and examples of the Qualitative at once. In overview, Hegel reasons as follows: On the basis of Quality alone we are unable to make qualitative distinctions, so we enter the realm of Quantity, which is governed by external reflections on sets of elements. The elements are arbitrarily chosen Units One and the sets are Amounts of them expressed through Number in an Intensive Magnitude that has its ultimate

meaning in the bad potential infinity that develops in its Extensive Magnitude, but can only be negatively defined as being beyond the finite. So just as Quality is not sufficient to understand the absolute, so is Quantity. So we need both. That is, we need a qualitative Quantum: γ) Measure. Only though Measure there can be any hopes for practical applications of the Quantitative and its categories.

Since the Qualitative must thus dialectically precede the Quantitative, the mathematical requires the Qualitative for its existence in thought (and no one can be aware of anything that cannot be thought). The fact that mathematics helps us to comprehend reality is a result of this. It does not fit reality because "the book of nature is written in the mathematical language" (as if nature is somehow ontologically quantitative), but because language has evolved a tight fit with reality and by implication so does mathematics. As a result, our knowledge can take on a mathematical form (epistemologically), but this does not imply that the underlying reality is ontologically of that same form.

As to clarifying the nature of the categories that the mathematical sciences depend upon, Hegel's dialectical treatment of the mathematical, when considered in more detail, clarifies the nature of mathematical categories like the One, the successor function and sets and elements from their systematic-dialectical relations to other categories in language, rather than from their mathematical relationships only. To begin with, our understanding of Hegel's dialectical treatment of the Quantitative and the fact that its thinkability springs from the intellect's failure to comprehend the Qualitative all at once and on its own terms, implies further that the One and the successor function have a qualitative base and need not be assumed, as they usually are in mathematics.

Secondly, bringing Hegelian terminology to bear on set theory helps the mathematically minded to understand what Hegel was probably on about as well as helping Hegelians to understand set theory, particularly regarding the proper understanding and use of ordinal and cardinal Numbers. The ordinal number is the number you are arbitrarily assigning to each element as you are counting (that is, ordering) the elements in a set. For Hegel this counting operation involves a continuous move from the elements already contained in the set we Numerated and thus considered and those for which we have not yet done so. The former as Intensive Magnitude determines what the set is and as such positively defines it, while the latter determine what it is not and thus negatively define it. Numeration then, is expanding an Intensive Magnitude into an Extensive Magnitude. So although these magnitudes change, the operation by which this is done (i.e. Numeration by using the successor function) does not. This leads Hegel to consider mathematical infinity, ∞ , as the bad potential infinity that is never reached and the operation of Numeration as the true philosophical Infinity. When the size of a set's Intensive Magnitude is determined by completing the Numeration of all its elements, it no longer matters which element was counted first and which second, for no matter where you started, the Number reached will be the same for any particular given set. From a mathematical perspective we have then reached a cardinal Number, which from a Hegelian perspective is best understood as the Intensive Magnitude or size of a finite set. As such, the size of the set is itself a Unit: it expresses the Number of elements it contains while denying them autonomy.

Hegel's point about the relationship between Intensive and Extensive Magnitudes not only elucidates the use of finite ordinal and cardinal Numbers, but also that of infinite ones. If a set is expanded with all subsets contained within it, the size of the new set is found by raising 2 to the power of the number of elements in that set. By analogy, since the Intensive Magnitude of the denumerable infinite set of all natural numbers N is defined as $\aleph_0$, it contains $2^{\aleph_0}$subsets, so the size or Intensive Magnitude of the power set of N, P(N) , that is of the continuum R, is $2^{\aleph_0}$ and that of P(R) is $2^{2^{\aleph_0}}$, etc. It can be proven that each set thus obtained is of a higher order of infinity than the previous set.

This implies that infinite cardinal Numbers may themselves be ranked in a well-ordering. So just as transfinite iterations of a successor function lead a finite Intensive Magnitude into the bad potential infinity Hegel associates with its Extensive Magnitude, transfinite iterations of the power operation lead an infinite Intensive Magnitude into the "worst" potential infinity associated with the size of the class of all sets V. In short: even for an infinite Intensive Magnitude there exists an Extensive Magnitude through which it gains meaning.

'[S]ince the power set of N […], contains an enormous Amount of infinite sets as elements that therefore must be seen as complete, "finished", limited objects', this way of thinking implies "the existence of an enormous amount and enormously big *actually infinite sets*". This fact, together with the fact that even infinite Numbers can be ordered to fit Hegel's categorial apparatus, at least partially dispenses with the "badness" of Hegel's bad potential infinity in that infinity is no longer just defined as an unreachable Extensive Magnitude beyond every finite Intensive Magnitude, but within the well-ordering of the infinite cardinal Number associated with that set, can itself also be viewed as an Intensive Magnitude. As a result we can now distinguish two principles of philosophical infinity: 1) the principle of Numeration that leads a finite Intensive Magnitude into its potentially infinite Extensive Magnitude; and 2) the principle of the power operation that ultimately leads an infinite Intensive Magnitude into the Extensive Magnitude associated with the set of all sets, V. Because the founding father of set theory, Georg Cantor, was born after Hegel's death, Hegel cannot possibly have been aware of these points.

Chapter 3 next elaborated on Marx's dialectics. It follows Smith in his identification of Marx's universal principle as being the need for *exchange*that arises from the indirect sociality of capitalist production.[2] This indirect sociality itself stems from the institutional separation of the site of production from that of consumption that is so characteristic of capitalism.[3] Not only is this starting point materially grounded in Marx's historical materialist account of human history up until capitalism, it also allows for unresolved conflicts, for producers may fail to sell and consumers may be unable to buy. In either case, real people have real problems caused by the other group. Therefore, in Marx's account, capitalist society is not governed by Free Will, but by the imperative for exchange and thus by "commodification". If products are produced to be exchanged (which determines them as *commodities*), they are produced for their *value* rather than their use. *Value in exchange* does not Measure Qualitative usefulness (for, according to Marx no such Measure can exist), but rather is imposed on the product in capitalism. As such it does not predate the capitalist mode of production and would cease to exist when that mode of production ceased. As such, the further determination of *value in exchange* as *the money form of value* is not a Measure in a Hegelian sense at all, for rather than pinning a Quantity on a pre-existing Quality it is ontologically quantitative through and through. *Value in exchange* is an abstraction actualised through *money*. It is an abstraction-in-practice that rules our daily lives and arbitrates between life and death.

The exchange imperative not only allows for real conflicts, it also serves as an inescapable determinant of human behaviour and thus functions in ways that are similar to forces of nature. So, the mentioned imperative implies at least a similar potential for the application of mathematical models as is present in the natural sciences. Forces of nature and their determinants, however, must be Measured before they can be modelled. Models in the natural sciences therefore work with quantitative representations of pre-existing Qualities (such as length in physics), they are not ontologically Quantitative, whereas the entities that go into modelling capitalism are. The upshot of this is, that pure mathematical quantities can now be seen as a driving force of human behaviour and modelled using purely quantitative techniques and categories. As a result, what Hegel holds for determinations on the level of abstract thinking only can be directly applied to the study of capitalism. It is this observation that led Arthur to contend that the grand structure of the three volumes of *Capital* is homologous to the structure of Hegel's *Logic*.

With indirect sociality the qualities of the product produced are immaterial to the producer. As a result, *money* as *capital* must be the *end of exchange* and each sum of *money* invested in means of production (making it into *constant capital*) must be worked up by labour (employed as *variable capital*) in order to be exchanged for a higher sum of *money* to be reinvested and *accumulated*. From a capitalist perspective, this accumulation takes the form of constant increments in money (as emphasised in the *money capital circuit*), but from the perspective of reinvestment it seems constant increases in the scale of operation are the driving force (as emphasised in the *production capital circuit*). Finally, from the perspective of society the qualitative change in the product (from raw materials to a finished commodity) seem to be the main point of production (as emphasised in the *commodity capital circuit*). The time a production cycle takes can vary and so can the number of cycles for which particular means of production last. If they last for just one cycle, Marx dubs them *circulating capital* and if they last for more than one he calls them *fixed capital*. At this stage, Marx introduces his schemes of reproduction.

Though Marx's schemes of reproduction are commonly considered the first two-sector macroeconomic model ever conceived of, they do not live up to their full potential as mathematical models of systematic-dialectically conceived of interrelationships within capitalism. They model the interactions between *capital*'s two main departments: one producing means of production, the other consumption goods. As such, the model pertains to a rather abstract and general level in Marx's dialectical account. For the model to reflect that, its formulation should refrain from filling in any specific parameters or numbers. Instead, it should be kept as general as possible and therefore formulated purely algebraically (as Chapter 4 did).

Secondly, Marx does not present his model assumptions as though they result from his systematic dialectics, even though many of them might very well be presented like that. Since Volume ii of *Capital*, in which Marx presents his schemes, was only posthumously published on the basis of the drafts and notebooks Marx bequeathed to Engels, we can only guess whether Marx would have done so had he lived long enough to write a more final draft. Either way, the schemes being presented as they are, there is room for improvement in both respects.

Specifically, a systematic-dialectical account may inform four different types of assumptions:

1. 1. foundational assumptions, that outline the important categories to model and indicate how they are related;
2. 2. heuristic assumptions that can be used to create ever more concrete model generations, for instance by setting out a static model and allowing dynamics in later (this is what is going on when Marx first models *simple reproduction* and moves on to *expanded reproduction* later);
3. 3. absency assumptions, which stipulate that certain influences, though not empirically absent, are absent at the level of abstraction the model pertains to;
4. 4. anticipatory assumptions that outline conditions of existence and anticipate them.

Foundational assumptions may follow directly from a systematic-dialectical exhibition. After all, such an exhibition shows the categories that have been shown to constitute the capitalist system at the level of abstraction reached thus far and shows the necessary connections between them, thus providing a first indication of a possible model specification. Heuristic assumptions should be sought after next. A dialectical defence of such assumptions can be that the (static) possibility of the very existence of a posited relationship should be investigated, before the (dynamic) development of such a relationship can even be contemplated. If the dialectical account indicates that a dynamic relationship is imperative, but the model cannot even ground the existence of a static one, the dialectical account so far apparently still lacks completeness and thus further mediating conditions

must be dialectically determined before moving on to the dynamic model of the relationship's development. If, as was the case with Marx's schemes of reproduction, the static model does not preclude dynamics, one may of course move on to drop the heuristic assumption(s) without first returning to the systematic dialectics.

Together these two types of assumptions describe rather positively what the model is about and by implication this gives a lot of information on what is excluded from it. Yet sometimes it is helpful to reflect on the level of abstraction reached in the dialectical exhibition and explicate the influences that one has not yet exhibited and can thus safely abstract from at the level of abstraction depicted in the model (as is the case with foreign trade at the level of abstraction Marx's schemes of reproduction pertain to). The explication of as yet unexhibited influences happens in absency assumptions. These, however, should be no more than a check on the model specification emanating from the foundational and heuristic assumptions. After all, if a certain influence was dialectically determined to be important at the level of abstraction of the model, it should have been a factor in the foundational assumptions or specifically neglected for heuristic reasons.

Finally, the assumptions that anticipate conditions of existence are in place to enable the unhindered expression of a force or tendency whose articulation has been dialectically determined to be necessary for the functioning of the object totality under scrutiny (for Marx's schemes of expanded reproduction the case in point is that of sufficient monetary accommodation and availability of labour power enabling unhindered accumulation of capital). This type of assumption differs from the absency type. The latter explicates the complete absence of something at the level of abstraction modelled (such as foreign trade). In the case of the former, by contrast, some general tendency or entity *has* been determined to exist in the abstract (such as the need for *capital* to *accumulate*), but the exact mechanism by which it might concretely come about has *not* yet been. In such cases it is dialectically permissible to anticipate that possible impediments to the development that was determined as dialectically necessary, will somehow be taken away or rendered harmless at more concrete levels (e.g. monetary accommodation must somehow be offered if the abstract requirement of accumulation is to hold in the concrete). So instead of stipulating that something is *absent* at this level of abstraction, it stipulates that something we cannot yet specify must somehow be *present*. If the force or tendency in question can be successfully expressed in a model under this type of assumption, but not when it is removed, this indicates the need to introduce institutions in the remainder of the systematic-dialectical exhibition that allow the assumption to hold in practice (such as credit). (Of course, if removal of the assumption is unproblematic, it should not have been necessary to formulate it in the first place.) Thus, this fourth type of assumption is particularly useful for indicating the road ahead.

When this categorial apparatus is applied to the assumptions Marx makes in drawing up his schemes of simple reproduction, we can identify the following as foundational (the letters indicate the order in which they were presented in *Capital ii*):

1. **b.** No revolution in values takes place in the component parts of the productive capital.
2. **d.** Society's total yearly product breaks down into i) means of production and ii) means of consumption.
3. **f.** The rate of surplus-value s/v (i.e. surplus-value over variable capital) is constant and given for each department (and set at 100% for both departments).

When we focus on the term "component parts", rather than values, we can accept **b** as simply saying that productive capital can always be decomposed into *constant capital*, *variable capital* and surplus-value, a decomposition that follows directly from Marx's dialectical exhibition. Similarly, the

institutional divide between the site of production and that of consumption means **d** is fully warranted dialectically. Though the terms Marx formulates it in are too strict (focusing on the 100% I placed between brackets), it is dialectically defensible to stipulate that s/v is more or less constant over time since only labour can produce value. Except then for the specific number Marx assumes, assumption **f** is defensible as a foundational assumption as well.

He also makes two heuristic assumptions:

1. **c.** The value of a department's yearly produce is constant and all surplus-value and wages are consumed (so there is no accumulation).
2. **g.** The ratio of variable to constant capital is equal, constant and given across departments.

Marx himself treats **c** as a heuristic assumption. It is in place to focus on what the system is when viewed as static, before it is dynamised. When moving on to expanded reproduction he retains only one element in it: all wages are fully consumed. **g** effectively assumes technical change away. Marx retains this assumption for expanded reproduction, but since technical change is inherent in (the intensive aspect of) accumulation, this is not defensible.

Furthermore, he explicates the absency of some things in three further assumptions:

1. **a .**Products are exchanged at their values.
2. **e.** Depreciation costs equal replacement expenditure.
3. **h.** There is no foreign trade.

Assumptions **a** and **h** follow from the fact that only departmentalisation of capital has been dialectically determined, so distinctions within it that might induce a divergence between prices and values (such as competition or foreign trade) cannot be made yet. For the same reason, only macroeconomic aggregates can be considered at this stage, so any mismatches between depreciation costs and replacement expenditure are likely to level out and **e** can be accepted as well.

Since assumption **c** implies that all values are constant, so too will be the ratios between them. As a result, all more specific assumptions on values and ratios (i.e. **b**, **f** and **g**) are redundant for simple reproduction. The only assumptions Marx really needed to call upon in order to formulate his proportionality condition were **d** (departmentalisation as the foundation of his models), **c** (simple reproduction as the first case to be considered heuristically), **e** (anything depreciated gets replaced and thus represents a cost of production), and **h** (the absence of foreign trade). This condition, (v+s)I=cII, says that the value of consumptive expenditure in the department producing means of production is equivalent to the means of production used up in the department producing means of consumption. Thus, the condition indicates the interdependence between the two departments.

For expanded reproduction Marx adds two more absency assumptions:

1. **i.** There has already been production on an expanded scale.
2. **j.** The sum total of replacement expenditure on *fixed capital* equals the sum total of depreciation allowances for *fixed capital* in each department.

Previous expansion (**i**) must be assumed when discussing full-fledged capitalism, for without it, it cannot be considered full-fledged. Assumption **j**effectively says that capital has no funds other than the value of their produce available from which to replace and accumulate capital and indeed the possibility of outside finance has not yet been dialectically determined.

Finally Marx anticipates that possible obstacles to the dialectically necessary imperative of *accumulation* will be taken away at later, more concrete stages of the dialectical exhibition:

1. **k.** '[*T*]*he amount of money present in a country* is sufficient for both hoarding and accumulation'.

2. **l.** There is always enough labour power on hand.

Here the argument is that the requirement of accumulation can only materialise concretely if somehow these conditions are met in later, more concrete stages of the exhibition, even though we have not yet determined how this might be brought about.

With all these assumptions in place, the proportionality condition for expanded reproduction becomes:$(v + s)\,I - \Delta c\,I = c\,II + \Delta c\,II$

So, with expanded reproduction, the funds spent in the other department by the department producing means of production are lowered by the amount they accumulate, while the capital needs of the department producing means of consumption are actually higher, as it too has to accumulate.

Using the insights developed in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 proceeded to reconstruct Marx's reproduction schemes along dialectical lines. In particular it aimed to:

1. 1) retain only the dialectically defensible (elements of) assumptions;

2. 2) let dialectical reasoning, rather than mathematical ease and rigour, determine the order in which assumptions and equations are presented;

3. 3) present the whole model in its abstract generality and therefore algebraically throughout;

4. 4) explicitly define all time-dependent variables as such;

5. 5) integrate technical change and expansion, or the intensive and extensive aspects of accumulation respectively, in a comprehensive model of expanded reproduction.

Since Marx never brings technical change back in, a model generation had to be added to Marx's schemes in order to achieve the fifth aim. So Chapter 4 first discussed *simple reproduction*, then extensive growth, and finally *expanded reproduction*. The first two are algebraically formulated and (where applicable) dynamised versions of Marx's own models of simple and expanded reproduction respectively. My model of expanded reproduction goes beyond Marx's. I nevertheless used Marx's term, for his *category* encompasses technical change and, in order to achieve as tight a fit as possible between Marx's dialectics and his modelling, the model had to reflect that.

As indicated, simple reproduction requires just four assumptions, which – in keeping with my second aim – were presented in the following order:

1. 1. Foundational: "Society's total yearly product breaks down into *two great departments*": a department producing means of production (i.e. current and additional constant capital) (department p) and one producing means of consumption (i.e. commodities intended for consumption out of wages paid out to variable capital, and out of capitalists' surplus-value) (department c) (compare assumption **d** in Section 3.3).

2. 2. Heuristic: *Simple reproduction* means that: 1) the total value of the yearly produce of both departments (xp and xc) is constant; 2) all surplus-value is consumed; and 3) there are no savings out of wages (compare **c**).

3. 3. Absency: There is no foreign trade (compare **h**).

4. 4. Absency: Aggregate depreciation costs incurred yearly equal aggregate yearly replacement expenditure (compare **e**).

With these in place, all of Marx's results could be formulated. Since the model for simple reproduction is static, there was no insight to be gained from modelling variables as time-dependent yet. Of course, this changes when modelling extensive growth.

To model extensive growth in a dialectically defensible way, the following can be assumed:

2a. Absency: There are no savings out of wages (compare **c**).

1. 5. Absency: There are no price changes (compare **a** and **b**).
2. 6. Foundational: The ratio of s/v (notation: ε) is constant and given in each department (compare **f**).
3. 7. Heuristic: the value composition of capital (κ=c/(c+v)) is constant and given for each department (compare **g**).
4. 8. Absency: All expansion of capital is financed out of surplus-value (compare **j**).
5. 9. Anticipation: There is always enough money available to finance hoarding for replacement purposes and accumulation at the desired rate (compare **k**).
6. 10. Anticipation: An accumulating department will always find sufficient labour power on hand to increase the variable capital it employs by as much as its growth rate requires (compare **l**).
7. 11. Anticipation: Changes in department p's rate of accumulation are always actualised. Department c's actualisable rates are therefore constrained by the amount left by department p. Anticipating eventual recovery, it is assumed department c accumulates in such a way that all of department p's produce is actually sold.

Of these, assumptions 5 through 7 are consequences from the rewriting of assumption 2 into 2a. That is, when all the dialectically indefensible aspects of that assumption are dropped, it is no longer a heuristic, but rather an absency assumption. That is, at the level of abstraction we are now considering, wages are unlikely to exceed subsistence wages by any significant amount and so we can safely assume that savings out of wages do not occur. But now that capital is explicitly allowed to expand, we do need to rethink the way in which this might occur, leading to assumptions 5 through 7. Note that in its current formulation assumption 5 integrates the original assumptions **a** and **b** by focusing on their value aspects, changes in which and price divergences of which, they declare *absent* at this level of abstraction. So the *foundational* elements ("component parts") of assumption **b** are no longer emphasised here and its character too changes. The order in which assumptions 8 through 10 were presented and the reason they can be adopted has been sufficiently explained.

Finally, assumption 11 (which Marx never explicates at all) is only called for if we want to model the effects that a unilateral decision by department p to alter its rate of accumulation has on the other department and the economy as a whole. With the original goal being to see what happens to the conditions for valorisation when introducing accumulation, we did not need the assumption immediately. The assumption can best be viewed as an anticipatory assumption. With only two departments dialectically determined, a department that wants to keep a larger part of its produce for itself (or conversely, sell a larger part of it) can do so. But since doing so regarding consumption goods does not affect accumulation, department p can take the lead. Department c is to respond

according to assumption 11 so as to limit the duration of emerging capitalist crises, and so assumption 11 is anticipatory to the extent that crises are usually overcome eventually.

As a result, the maximum rate of accumulation out of surplus-value possible for department c, θc, is a function of θp:

(4.16)

$$\theta ct=(\varepsilon p+1-\kappa p\varepsilon p\theta pt)(1/\kappa p-1)(1-\kappa c)\varepsilon c\times cptcct-1(1-\kappa c)\varepsilon c$$

(4.16)

Alternatively, given that the relationship $\theta i=gi(1-\kappa i)\varepsilon i$holds for both departments (albeit with different parameters) the actualisable growth rate for department c (gc) can be expressed in terms of the growth rate set by department p (gp):

(4.17)

$$gct=cptcct[(1-\kappa p)(1+\varepsilon p)\kappa p-gpt]-1$$

(4.17)

This equation shows that when department p sets its gp to gp′ during the period under scrutiny, the growth rate for both departments starts to diverge, but it has also been shown that as long as assumption 11 holds, this effect lasts only one year. Thus, the following would then hold: $gc0<g0<gp0=g1=xp1-\delta c1c1=\Delta c1c1=gc1=gp1$. But, says Marx, this is utterly unlikely since there is no dialectically determined mechanism in place yet that will entice department c somehow to consistently buy up the leftovers. But even though smooth adaptation may be unlikely, some adaptation mechanism must exist for capitalism to survive its recurring crises.

In order to go beyond Marx and model technical change as an integral part, heuristic assumption 7 and anticipatory assumption 11 from the model of extensive growth had to be modified to become:

7a. Foundational: The value composition of capital (κ=c/(c+v)) rises with each round of accumulation (operationalised here as a calendar year).

11a. Anticipation: Changes in department p's rate of accumulation are always

actualised in conformity to the latest technology. Department c's actualisable rates are therefore constrained by the amount left by department p. Anticipating eventual recovery, it is assumed department c accumulates in such a way that all of department p's produce is actually sold.

Thus formulated, assumption 7 is finally on a par with Marx's dialectics and is therefore no longer a heuristic assumption, but has become foundational. After all, *capital*'s preference for accumulating low risk *constant capital* over high risk *variable capital* that leads to a rising vcc has long been shown dialectically to ensue from the workings of *accumulation*. So 7a flows immediately from the dialectics leading up to the model. Assumption 11 is essentially retained, albeit that department p's accumulation now restricts department c in both setting the rate of accumulation and securing the latest technology for itself.

In analogy to 4.16, we may then write:

(4.19)

$$\Delta cctcct=[1+(1-\theta pt)\varepsilon p-\phi p+\Delta cptcpt]1\zeta ptcptcct-1$$

(4.19)

This result enables one to prove that balanced growth is impossible with ongoing technical change.

These models show how the models for the categories of *simple reproduction*, *intensive* and *extensive growth* and *expanded reproduction* can be developed alongside and in line with the dialectics that gave rise to the categories themselves. In so doing, the models grow ever more intricate and complex, which reflects how our understanding of the way in which the two great departments are interrelated grows more intricate and complex as well. Finally, the algebraic generalisations presented ensure that the results found (such as the equations describing the way that the factors determining gc interact during transition) are perfectly general and will work with all numbers. Additionally, the algebraic formalisations allow one to see how all vantage points taken until we arrived at the model for expanded reproduction can be conceived of as special cases of this most intricate and complicated model.

So when *extensive growth* is integrated with *intensive growth* a solution in which both departments can grow at the same rate can no longer be constructed. The resulting imbalances can only be remedied if department c consistently follows rule 4.19 above every year. Meanwhile, the relevant equations have grown into quite inelegant monsters and for department c to follow 4.19 it has to somehow take into account department p's rate of accumulation out of surplus-value (θpt), their rate of surplus-value (εp), their vcc ($_{pt}$), its growth rate (ϕp), and the ratio between the value of constant capital employed in both departments cptcct. Meanwhile, it is unclear how this information could reach the other department and, if it did somehow, what mechanism would entice it to act upon it so as to make sure all produce is valorised.

In overview, it can be concluded that the dialectical move from *capital*'s static renewal to its dynamic expansion can be not only depicted verbally through a systematic-dialectical exhibition, but also represented mathematically through a series of model generations, the last of which eventually dispenses with all heuristic assumptions. All in all, careful contemplation of the dialectics of a system has been shown to give extra support to assumptions figuring in formal and/or mathematical representations (i.e. models) of (aspects of) it, which in turn makes such mathematical representations more defensible. I expect both model builders and dialectically inclined system analysts to benefit from this result, for in the very least it has been shown here that the two ways of reasoning are actually quite compatible. I have high hopes for a fruitful debate between the two groups based on the linkages between their fields that this book has brought to light. <>

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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SCARFE by Gerald Scarfe [Little, Brown, 9781408711712 Artist's Edition: 9781404712631]

This is a truly exceptional collection of drawings from one of our most revered cultural commentators. Gerald Scarfe began his career in the 60s working for PUNCH and PRIVATE EYE before taking a job as a political cartoonist for the DAILY MAIL. He then worked for TIME Magazine in New York before starting his long association with the SUNDAY TIMES that still exists today in the form of his weekly drawings. His varied career has seen him work with Pink Floyd (The Wall, Wish You Were Here), Roger Waters and Eric Clapton (The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking), Disney (Hercules), English National Ballet (The Nutcracker), Los Angeles Opera (Fantastic Mr Fox) as well

as produce such iconic images as those for the titles of Yes Minister and Yes Prime Minister. His work has featured in the New Yorker and various BBC TV films such as Scarfe on Sex and Scarfe on Class. Exhibitions of his paintings and drawings have appeared in the Tate Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. He is viewed by many as both a national treasure and a genius.

In the stunning retrospective Scarfe, which expands on 2005's **DRAWING BLOOD** in every way, his work is presented as no book has presented it before. This fully illustrated, 576-page coffee-table volume reveals the truth of sixty years of politics and culture, packed with images that have defined not only one artist's career, but also twentieth and twenty-first century British life. A showcase of Scarfe's glittering career in design, reportage and showbusiness, Scarfe presents drawings, sculptures and photographs alongside witty and poignant captions and stories. Scarfe's muses: Thatcher, Clinton, Blair, May and Trump, as well as many other titanic figures of our times are all here, revealed as they really are by Scarfe's cutting pen. Carefully curated by the artist himself, this monumental book is the definitive guide to the career of a national treasure. <>

The Enchantments of Mammon: How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity by Eugene McCarraher [Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 9780674984615]

Far from displacing religions, as has been supposed, capitalism became one, with money as its deity. Eugene McCarraher reveals how mammon ensnared us and how we can find a more humane, sacramental way of being in the world.

If socialists and Wall Street bankers can agree on anything, it is the extreme rationalism of capital. At least since Max Weber, capitalism has been understood as part of the "disenchantment" of the world, stripping material objects and social relations of their mystery and sacredness. Ignoring the motive force of the spirit, capitalism rejects the awe-inspiring divine for the economics of supply and demand.

Eugene McCarraher challenges this conventional view. Capitalism, he argues, is full of sacrament, whether or not it is acknowledged. Capitalist enchantment first flowered in the fields and factories of England and was brought to America by Puritans and evangelicals whose doctrine made ample room for industry and profit. Later, the corporation was mystically animated with human personhood, to preside over the Fordist endeavor to build a heavenly city of mechanized production and communion. By the twenty-first century, capitalism has become thoroughly enchanted by the neoliberal deification of "the market."

Informed by cultural history and theology as well as economics, management theory, and marketing, **The Enchantments of Mammon** looks not to Marx and progressivism but to nineteenth-century Romantics for salvation. The Romantic imagination favors craft, the commons, and sensitivity to natural wonder. It promotes labor that, for the sake of the person, combines reason, creativity, and mutual aid. In this impassioned challenge, McCarraher makes the case that capitalism has hijacked and redirected our intrinsic longing for divinity—and urges us to break its hold on our souls. <>

ERANOS: AN ALTERNATIVE INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY by Hans Thomas Hakl, translated by Christopher McIntosh with the collaboration of Hereward Tilton [McGill-Queen's University Press, 978-0773540873]

From 1933 and for a period of almost seventy years, Italy's Lake Maggiore region was the gathering place for some of the world's foremost philosophers. Once a year, illustrious thinkers such as Carl Jung, Erich Neumann, Mircea Eliade, D.T. Suzuki, and Adolph Pormann gathered there for Eranos - a meeting of the minds for elite intellectuals. Hans Hakl presents the only complete study of what is arguably the single most important gathering of scholars in the twentieth century. Eranos chronicles

the golden years of Jung, Corbin, Eliade, and Scholem, tracing the roots of the Ascona movement in Theosophy, its later branches, and many lesser-known but no less fascinating figures. Distilling decades of archival research and interviews with Eranos participants, Hakl illuminates the trialogue of religion, esotericism, and scholarship that began with Eranos and continues to the present day. This finely crafted history shows how Eranos played an important counterpart to the dominant spiritual and intellectual history of the twentieth century by encouraging freedom of thought and radicality. Detailing the development and influence of a movement that set the course of contemporary philosophical thought, Eranos is a landmark volume that will draw readers interested in the history of ideas, psychology, religious and cultural studies, Jewish and Islamic studies, the history of science, mysticism, and the development of new age religions. <>

Unsaying God: Negative Theology in Medieval Islam by Aydogan Kars [Oxford University Press, 9780190942458]

What cannot be said about God, and how can we speak about God by negating what we say? Traveling across prominent negators, denialists, ineffectualists, paradoxographers, naysayers, ignorance-pretenders, unknowers, I-don't-knowers, and taciturns, **Unsaying God: Negative Theology in Medieval Islam** delves into the negative theological movements that flourished in the first seven centuries of Islam.
Aydogan Kars argues that there were multiple, and often competing, strategies for self-negating speech in the vast field of theology. By focusing on Arabic and Persian textual sources, the book defines four distinct yet interconnected paths of negative speech formations on the nature of God that circulated in medieval Islamic world. Expanding its scope to Jewish intellectuals, Unsaying God also demonstrates that religious boundaries were easily transgressed as scholars from diverse sectarian or religious backgrounds could adopt similar paths of negative speech on God.
This is the first book-length study of negative theology in Islam. It encompasses many fields of scholarship, and diverse intellectual schools and figures. Throughout, Kars demonstrates how seemingly different genres should be read in a more connected way in light of the cultural and intellectual history of Islam rather than as different opposing sets of orthodoxies and heterodoxies. <>

Knowing God: Ibn ʿArabī and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī's Metaphysics of the Divine by Ismail Lala [Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, Brill, E-Book: 9789004401648; Hardback: 978900440051 1]

Can we know God, or does he reside beyond our ken? In Ibn ʿArabī and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī's *Metaphysics of the Divine*, Ismail Lala conducts a forensic analysis of the nature of God and His interaction with creation. Looking mainly at the exegetical works of the influential mystic, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), and one of his chief disseminators, ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 736/1335?), Lala employs the term *huwiyya*, literally "He-ness," as an aperture into the metaphysical worldview of both mystics. Does Al-Qāshānī agree with Ibn ʿArabī's conception of God? Does he agree with Ibn ʿArabī on how God relates to us and how we relate to Him? Or is this where Sufi master and his disciple part ways?

"Is God apophatic or kataphatic, according to Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī?" This was the first question I was asked at a medical ethics conference by a stranger who had discovered my doctoral study was to do with the ubiquitous Sufi. Notwithstanding the abrupt nature of the enquiry, or perhaps because of it, I felt vindicated, for my research addressed this very issue through analysis of the term *huwiyya* (literally, He-ness or ipseity). But, in so doing, it also followed advice I was given during my first lecture: "Most of you will not make it in academia," our professor announced rather matter-of-factly, "for those of you who do, pick a guy." A question and a guy—these, then, are the twin

pillars upon which is constructed the edifice of my research. My question: What is the true nature of God? My guy: ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 736/1335?), a disciple of the enigmatic Sufi theorist, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240). So, technically, there are two guys, but one must go through the master to get to the disciple.

This work is about the Sufism of Ibn ʿArabī and one of the chief disseminators of his thought, al-Qāshānī, specifically. But it is also about mysticism, generally, and the way we perceive God, and the way He interacts with us and we with Him. With articles devoted to him numbering in the thousands, commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* alone in the hundreds, and translations in the scores, Ibn ʿArabī surely is, and has been, one of the most widely read and studied mystics of all time. His style is so tightly honeycombed with preciosity and involutions that it has at once enamoured and beguiled all who have had the good fortune, and bad luck, to stumble upon it.

So, what sets this work apart from its precursors? For the answer, we must reconnect with our two acquaintances: the idea—a detailed analysis conducted from primary texts on a single term that is conspicuously emblematic of his "monism," and which is scrupulously contextualized in Ibn ʿArabī's two most enduringly popular works, the *Fuṣūṣ* and the *Futūḥāt*; and the guy—al-Qāshānī, who Toshihiko Iztusu in his seminal work, *Sufism and Taoism*, relies on more than Ibn ʿArabī himself to elucidate his Sufi *Weltanschauung*. The former adheres to the Joycian maxim that in the is contained the universal and is a window that no one has yet peeked through; the latter a lacuna that no one has yet filled. <>

Islam and the Fate of Others: The Salvation Question by Mohammad Hassan Khalil [Oxford University Press, 9780199796663]

Can non-Muslims be saved? And can those who are damned to Hell ever be redeemed? This book examines the writings of important medieval and modern Muslim scholars on the controversial question of non-Muslim salvation. The book pays considerable attention to four of the most prominent figures in the history of Islam: al-Ghazali, Ibn 'Arabi, Ibn Taymiyya, and Rashid Rida. Also examined are works by a wide variety of other writers, from Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya to Mulla Sadra to Shah Wali Allah of Delhi to Muhammad 'Ali of Lahore to Sayyid Qutb to Yusuf al-Qaradawi to Farid Esack to yet others. The book demonstrates that although the influential theologians featured in this book tended to shun a truly pluralistic conception of salvation, most envisioned a Paradise populated with non-Muslims—and a God of justice and, more significantly, mercy. Their sundry interpretations of the Qur'an and hadith corpus—from optimistic depictions of Judgment Day to notions of a temporal Hell and salvation for all—challenge commonly held assumptions about Islamic scripture and thought. <>

Rethinking Ibn 'Arabi by Gregory A. Lipton [Oxford University Press 9780190684501]

The thirteenth century mystic Ibn `Arabi was the foremost Sufi theorist of the premodern era. For more than a century, Western scholars and esotericists have heralded his universalism, arguing that he saw all contemporaneous religions as equally valid. In **Rethinking Ibn `Arabi,** Gregory Lipton calls this image into question and throws into relief how Ibn `Arabi's discourse is inseparably intertwined with the absolutist vision of his own religious milieu--that is, the triumphant claim that Islam fulfilled, superseded, and therefore abrogated all previous revealed religions.

Lipton juxtaposes Ibn `Arabi's absolutist conception with the later reception of his ideas, exploring how they have been read, appropriated, and universalized within the reigning interpretive field of Perennial Philosophy in the study of Sufism. The contours that surface through this comparative analysis trace the discursive practices that inform Ibn `Arabi's Western reception back to the eighteenth and nineteenth century study of "authentic" religion, where European ethno-racial

superiority was wielded against the Semitic Other-both Jewish and Muslim. Lipton argues that supersessionist models of exclusivism are buried under contemporary Western constructions of religious authenticity in ways that ironically mirror Ibn `Arabi's medieval absolutism.

For over a century, Euro-American scholars and esotericists alike have heralded the thirteenth-century Spanish mystic Ibn ‘Arabi (d. 1240) as the premodern Sufi theorist of inclusive religious universalism who claimed all contemporaneous religions as equally valid beyond the religio-political divide of medieval exclusivism. Rethinking Ibn ‘Arabi calls into question this Western image of Ibn ‘Arabi and throws into relief how his discourse is inseparably intertwined with the absolutist vision of his own religious milieu—that is, the triumphant claim that Islam fulfilled, superseded, and therefore abrogated all previously revealed religions. By exploring how Ibn ‘Arabi’s ideas have been read, appropriated, and universalized within the regnant interpretative field of Perennial Philosophy in the study of Sufism, Rethinking Ibn ‘Arabi theorizes Ibn ‘Arabi’s own absolutist conception of universalism in juxtaposition to his contemporary universalist reception. The contours that surface through this comparative analysis trace the discursive practices that inform Ibn ‘Arabi’s Western reception back to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conceptions of “authentic” religion where European ethnoracial superiority is wielded against a Semitic Other—both Jewish and Muslim. Rethinking Ibn ‘Arabi thus argues that in ironically similar ways to Ibn ‘Arabi’s medieval absolutism, contemporary Western universalist constructions of religious authenticity contain buried orders of politics concealing supersessionist models of exclusivism. <>

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS OF AŁT‘AMAR: POLITICS, ART, SPIRITUALITY IN THE KINGDOM OF VASPURAKAN edited by Zaroui Pogossian and Edda Vardanyan [Armenian Texts and Studies, Brill, 978-90-04-40099-3, 978-90-04-40038-2

Contributors are Krikor Bélédian, Jean-Claude Cheynet, Patrick Donabédian, Bernard Flusin, Tim Greenwood, Gohar Grigoryan, Armen Kazaryan, Davit Kertmenjyan, Sergio La Porta, Jean-Pierre Mahé, Zaroui Pogossian, Robert Thomson (†), Alison Vacca, Edda Vardanyan.

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS OF AŁT‘AMAR is dedicated to an outstanding architectural monument of medieval Armenia – the church of the Holy Cross, built in the tenth century on the island of Ałt‘amar on Lake Van, and a UNESCO world heritage site. This jewel of architecture has been researched mainly from an art historical perspective. The current multi-author volume offers diverse studies aimed at placing the construction of the church in its proper historical, political, religious, and spiritual context. It explores the intellectual climate in the Kingdom of Vaspurakan during the reign of its founder, King Gagik Arcruni, the Kingdom’s relations with Byzantium and the Abbasids, analyzes local historiography, biblical exegesis, hagiography, veneration of the True Cross, and royal ideology. Novel interpretations of architectural features and sculptural decorations close the volume.

Le livre est consacré à l'un des plus importants monuments architecturaux de l'Arménie médiévale, l'église de la Sainte-Croix construite au Xe siècle sur l'île d’Ałt‘amar sur le lac de Van. Elle est inscrite sur la liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO. Ce joyau de l'architecture arménienne a été étudié principalement dans la perspective de l’histoire de l’art. Le présent volume multi-auteurs propose une diversité d’approches qui placent la construction de cette église dans le contexte historique, politique, religieux et spirituel. Il étudie l’ambiance intellectuelle du Royaume du Vaspurakan durant le règne de son fondateur, le roi Gagik Arcruni, les relations du Royaume avec Byzance et les Abbassides, il analyse l’historiographie locale, l’exégèse biblique, l’hagiographie, le culte de la Vraie Croix et l’idéologie royale. De nouvelles interprétations des particularités architecturales et des décors sculptés achèvent le volume.

All interested in medieval history, historiography, hagiography, relics, visual arts and biblical exegesis, art and architecture, particularly Armenian art, including in its political context between Byzantine and Abbasid Empires. <>

DANTE'S PRAYERFUL PILGRIMAGE: TYPOLOGIES OF PRAYER IN THE COMEDY by Alessandro Vettori [Medieval and Renaissance Authors and Texts, Brill, 9789004405257, 9789004405240]

In **DANTE'S PRAYERFUL PILGRIMAGE** Alessandro Vettori provides a comprehensive analysis of prayer in Dante's Commedia. The underlying thesis considers prayer a metaphorical pilgrimage toward a sacred location and connects it with the pilgrim's ascent to the vision of the Trinity. Prayer is movement in Purgatorio and also in Paradiso, while eternal stasis is the penalty of blasphemous souls in Inferno. In the fictional rendition of the poem, the pilgrim's itinerary becomes a specular reflection of Dante's own exilic experience. Prayer's human-divine interaction affords the poet the necessary escape from the overwhelming sense of failure in politics and love. Whether it is petitional, liturgical, thankful, praiseful, or contemplative, prayer expresses the supplicant's wish to transform reality and attain a superior spiritual status. <>

HOW LANGUAGE INFORMS MATHEMATICS: BRIDGING HEGELIAN DIALECTICS AND MARXIAN MODELS by Dirk Damsma [Historical Materialism Book Series, Brill, E-Book 9789004395497; Hardback 9789004337305]

In **HOW LANGUAGE INFORMS MATHEMATICS** Dirk Damsma shows how Hegel's and Marx's systematic dialectical analysis of mathematical and economic language helps us understand the structure and nature of mathematical and capitalist systems. More importantly, Damsma shows how knowledge of the latter can inform model assumptions and help improve models.

His book provides a blueprint for an approach to economic model building that does away with arbitrarily chosen assumptions and is sensitive to the institutional structures of capitalism. In light of the failure of mainstream economics to understand systemic failures like the financial crisis and given the arbitrary character of most assumptions in mainstream models, such an approach is desperately needed. <>