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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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## **IBN TAYMIYYA AND HIS TIMES** edited by Yossef Rapoport, Shahab Ahmed [Studies in Islamic Philosophy, Oxford University Press, 9780199402069]

Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) is one of the most controversial thinkers in Islamic history. Today he is revered by what is called the Wahhabi movement and championed by Salafi groups who demand a return to the pristine golden age of the Prophet. His writings have been a source of inspiration for radical groups to justify acts of violence and armed struggle.

In order to understand the widespread present-day influence and prominence of this rather obscure medieval figure, the book, through a series of articles written by leading authorities in the field, attempts to study Ibn Taymiyya's original contributions to Islamic theology, law, Qur'anic exegesis, and political thought. The book is the first comprehensive academic treatment of Ibn Taymiyya to appear in a Western language in over half a century.

**Yossef Rapoport** (PhD, Princeton) has been a Fellow in Arabic at the Oriental Institute, Oxford, and is currently a Lecturer in the Department of History at Queen Mary University of London. He has published on Islamic law, gender, cartography and the economic history of medieval Islam.

**Shahab Ahmed** (PhD, Princeton) is Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies at Harvard University. He has also been Assistant Professor of Classical Arabic Literature at the American University in Cairo, Junior Fellow of the Harvard Society of Fellows, Visiting Scholar in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, and Visiting Scholar at the Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad. <>

## **IBN TAYMIYYA by Jon Hoover [Makers of the Muslim World, Oneworld Academic, 9781786076892]**

Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) of Damascus was one of the most prominent and controversial religious scholars of medieval Islam. He called for jihad against the Mongol invaders of Syria, appealed to the foundational sources of Islam for reform, and battled against religious innovation. Today, he inspires such diverse movements as Global Salafism, Islamic revivalism and modernism, and violent jihadism. This volume synthesizes the latest research, discusses many little-known aspects of Ibn Taymiyya's thought, and highlights the religious utilitarianism that pervades his activism, ethics, and theology.

**Jon Hoover** is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Nottingham. He specialises in Islamic intellectual history, medieval Islamic theology and philosophy, Christian–Muslim relations, and the thought of Ibn Taymiyya. He is the author of **IBN TAYMIYYA'S THEODICY OF PERPETUAL OPTIMISM**, [Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, Brill, 9789004158474] considered "essential reading for all scholars working on any aspect of Ibn Taymiyya's thought, or on questions of free will and predetermination in Islamic tradition." — Yossef Rapoport, Queen Mary University of London; as well as numerous articles and book chapters on Ibn Taymiyya's theology and ethics.

'Finally, Ibn Taymiyya, who is one of the most influential thinkers in Islam today, gets his first critical introduction in a Western language. And a really good one: Hoover's book manages a well-readable balance between broad analysis and a presentation that is rich in details.' — Frank Griffel, Professor of Islamic Studies, Yale University

'At last, a book that comes close to solving the enigma of Ibn Taymiyya. Drawing on Jon Hoover's unparalleled knowledge of the Taymiyyan corpus, this is a measured, erudite and plainly accessible intellectual biography of the most fiercely contested scholar of medieval Islam. Hoover shows that Ibn Taymiyya is not always what his modern admirers and detractors make him out to be. If you want to understand Ibn Taymiyya in his own words and in his own time, this concise book is where you should start.' — Yossef Rapoport, Professor in Islamic History, Queen Mary University of London

'Jon Hoover has produced an exquisite introduction to the complex thought of Ibn Taymiyya, one of the world's greatest scholars. This book provides the best path for understanding Ibn Taymiyya's life, his struggles with the ruling authorities and with other scholars, as well as how he conceived of Islam (its law, theology and theodicy) as being centered on worship of God alone. Hoover has captured Ibn Taymiyya's ideas better than any other scholar I know.' — Bernard Haykel, Professor of Near Eastern Studies and Director of the Institute for Transregional Studies, Princeton University

'Written by a leading scholar in the field, this book emancipates Ibn Taymiyya from his contested legacies. With a rigorous investigation of the sources and a good grasp of the latest research, it is a most welcome effort to bring together all aspects of Ibn Taymiyya's turbulent life and challenging thought. Written in an accessible style, it is an insightful introduction to one of the most powerful Muslim minds of all time. Students and scholars

approaching the subject will not be able to do without it.' — Caterina Bori, Associate Professor, University of Bologna <>

## **IBN TAYMIYYA'S THEOLOGICAL ETHICS** by Sophia Vasalou [Oxford University Press, 9780199397839]

Icon of modern-day fundamentalist movements, firebrand religious purist, tireless polemicist against the intellectual schools of his time—the Ibn Taymiyya we know is a thinker we often associate with hard attitudes and dogmatic stances. Yet there is another Ibn Taymiyya that stands out from the pages of his work, the thinker who fashions himself as a master of the *via media* and as a defender of the harmony between human reason and the religious faith. The aim of this book is to shed fresh light on Ibn Taymiyya's intellectual identity by a close investigation of his ethical thought. Earlier Muslim thinkers debating ethical value had been exercised by a number of core questions. What makes actions right or wrong? How do human beings know it? And what is God's relationship to the evaluative standards discerned by the human mind? An investigation of Ibn Taymiyya's engagement with such questions has much to teach us about his intellectual program and particularly about the role of reason and the linchpin concept of human nature (*fitra*) within this program. It also has much to teach us about Ibn Taymiyya's relationship to the intellectual landscape of his time, bringing us up against a rich tapestry of ethical discussions unfolding within theology, philosophy and legal theory in the classical period. At the same time, a close reading of Ibn Taymiyya's ethics invites us to confront not only the content of his thought but its form, and more particularly those features of his writing that fracture our efforts to unify his thought.

Among the topics that played a foundational role in classical Islamic debates about value, two stand out: What makes actions good, and how do human beings know it? In the Islamic milieu, different theologians offered sharply diverging answers to these questions, respectively a question about ethical ontology and ethical epistemology. Using these questions as a focus and drawing on a number of key texts, this book offers a reading of Ibn Taymiyya's ethical thought that is analytically rigorous yet sensitive to its ambiguities. In doing so, it sheds fresh light on the status of reason in Ibn Taymiyya's evaluative understanding and on the conception of human nature that animates it. At the same time, it seeks to locate Ibn Taymiyya's thought within its intellectual context, situating it against the rich tapestry of discussions about ethical value taking place within theology, philosophy, and legal theory. Read against the competing approaches of Mu'tazilite and Ash'arite theologians, Ibn Taymiyya's ethics betrays multiple debts to Ash'arite thought, both in its consequentialist understanding of ethical value and in the conception of reason and human nature that it deploys on the epistemological level. More distinctive in Ibn Taymiyya's approach is the theological vision that drives it, which finds expression in a specific understanding of God's morality and the purposes of the divine Law. In exploring Ibn Taymiyya's ethics, this book also seeks to reflect on the character of his writing as a whole and the hermeneutical challenges it poses.

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Excerpt: Among the many messages Muslims have put out in engaging their religious faith in the contemporary context, there is one that stands out with special tenacity. *Al-Islām dīn al-fiṭra*, it runs. "Islam is the religion of our original nature." It is a catchphrase that has grown to be ubiquitous in the contemporary setting, appearing in a broad spectrum of writings, particularly popular ones, among authors who might otherwise be divided by important differences in intellectual orientation. We hear it among stakeholders of more traditional educational environments. We hear it among members of the broad Islamist movement and others who stand for the new religious approaches spawned by the circumstances of modernity. And when we hear it, its sound is that of a refrain whose presence has come to be so pervasive in the acoustic field that it no longer invites pause. Take the tract by the late Saudi cleric Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-ʿUthaymīn, for example, running under the title *Ḥuqūq daʿat ilayhā al-fiṭra wa-qarrarathā al-sharīʿa* (Rights Demanded by Our Original Nature and Confirmed by the Shari'a), which offers an enumeration of different kinds of rights filed under familiar headings: the rights of spouses, of children, of neighbors; the rights of God. More remarkable than these contents is the fact that the language of *fiṭra*, having appeared in the title, never once appears in the body of the text itself, its function apparently complete in this elliptical gesture and wholly comprehensible (we may suppose) to its readers.

And toward what, one may ask, might this gesture be? Considered more closely, the notion of *fiṭra* here and elsewhere would seem to point us to a particular matrix of relationships or correspondences. At its heart, and most immediately, lies the claim of a correspondence between the demands of our nature and the demands and principles of the Islamic faith. It is a message of harmony that stands out, for example, in the characteristic expression found in a recent popular work on ethics by the prominent Damascene scholar of law Wahba al-Zuhaylī: "Islam does not conflict with human nature or innate desires because it is the religion of our original nature [*fiṭra*] and the religion of moderation."<sup>1</sup> Yet joined to this first correspondence as its implicit alter ego would seem to be another: the message of a correspondence between the prescriptions of the faith and the nature of the prescribed actions themselves. A good illustration of the latter is provided by a remark that appears in a highly popular work by the well-known Egyptian cleric and member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī. "Out of mercy for His servants," al-Qaraḍāwī writes in *al-Ḥalāl wa'l-ḥarām*, "God Almighty has made permissibility and prohibition dependent upon intelligible grounds [*jaʿala al-taḥlīl wa'l-taḥrīm li-ʿilal maʿqūla*], which relate to the welfare of human beings themselves. It thus became known in Islam that the prohibition of something follows upon [or depends on: *yatbaʿu*] its malignancy and harmfulness [*al-khubth wa'l-ḍarar*]." We may notice that al-Qaraḍāwī here accentuates considerations of utility in explaining this correspondence; al-ʿUthaymīn, on the other hand, had sounded the deontological accent with the notion (*ḥaqq*) that figured as his organizing term.

It is this twofold correspondence—connecting the commands of the Islamic faith with our own nature, on the one hand, and the nature of actions, on the other—that would appear to



underlie the pervasive catchphrase as we find it. And with this matrix out in the open, now, those considering this intellectual scene against the classical theological tradition might respond with a certain sense of surprise. For certainly the notion of *fiṭra* as such had hardly been a foreign one in the Islamic tradition, given the deep scriptural roots that grounded it. The notion of *fiṭra* (“the natural disposition” or “constitution,” “our original nature”) makes a key appearance in the Qur’an in the verse that reads: “So set your face to the religion, a man of pure faith [*ḥanīfān*]*—the nature (framed) of God, in which He has created man [fiṭrat Allāh allatī faṭara al-nās ‘alayhā].*” This scriptural base had been enriched by several prophetic traditions taking *fiṭra* as their central term, the most familiar being the one that states: “Every child is born with the natural disposition [*‘ala ’l-fiṭra*], and it is its parents that render it a Jew, or a Christian, or a Magean.” Picking up on the connection forged in the Qur’anic text between human nature and the religion of the original monotheists (*ḥunafā*), this hadith was part of a pool of rich (though not uncontested) resources that had been used to theorize about the positive religious impulses built into the material of human nature. Drawing on these resources, the most important way in which the notion of *fiṭra* had been developed by Muslim writers was as a base disposition for religious belief, or indeed, as some would argue the point more thickly, for the Islamic faith.

Yet the conceptual matrix underlying modern usage would seem to go beyond this intellectual tradition, bringing out a set of connections belonging to the evaluative rather than the more narrowly theological field. And in doing so, it would stir up old ghosts that our readings of Islamic theological history would appear to have laid to rest. Because taken together, the series of correspondences just outlined as the subtext of that well-worn catchphrase—*al-Islām dīn al-fiṭra*—point to an understanding of the relationship between God’s command and human reason that we regard as having been largely rejected by Sunni Muslim theologians in the classical period, when questions about the nature of value and our epistemic access to it had come up for heated debate. It was a debate that came to be known as that of *al-taḥsīn wa ’l-taqbīḥ*—literally, the determination of good and bad—and one that, in the telling most familiar to us, was defined by a binary opposition between the vantage point of Ash‘arite and Mu‘tazilite theologians. Notions of right and wrong, the latter had argued, are intuitively available to the human mind and yield objective moral standards that apply across agents, as much to human beings as to God. It is a position we have often understood through its contrary, which was the Ash‘arite claim that God authors the values of actions by attaching consequences—reward and punishment—to their performance or omission. Right and wrong are constituted through God’s word; and it is through the same means that they can be exclusively known.

In the classical debates, the notion of *fiṭra* was not known to have made an appearance. It was rather the notion of reason (*‘aql*) that figured as the central term of dispute. Yet if we hold our hand over this change of register, the modern notion of *fiṭra*—carrying with it the idea of a correspondence between what the Shari‘a commands and what is already present within us naturally or independently of religious input—would seem to involve a semantic freight not at all far removed from what the Mu‘tazilites had been concerned to claim. In doing so, it would reopen the door of a debate that had long ago appeared to close in the face of Mu‘tazilism and its rationalistic commitments. Whether we call it nature or reason, Mu‘tazilite moral rationalism would not lie far in the distance.

This study began as a desire to reopen that door and discover where it leads. How to understand the historical origins of the characteristic turn of thinking codified in the notion

of *fiṭra*? How seriously to take the message of moral rationalism that appears to buoy it? How to relate this message to the premises and outcomes of the theological discourse inherited from the classical period? [Taken as a question about the contemporary recrudescence of specifically Mu‘tazilite theological views, this would not be a new question to ask. Much has been said already about the presumed modern revival of such views and about the legitimacy of talk of a “neo-Mu‘tazilite” movement. For an in-depth examination of this topic, see Hildebrandt, “Waren Ġamāl ad-Dīn al-Afġānī und Muḥammad ‘Abduh Neo-Mu‘taziliten?” and his book-length study, *Neo-Mu‘tazilismus*.] As so often in Islamic thought, however, questions about the present lead back to the past, and they sometimes retain one there with a tenacity unanticipated by the searchlights of one’s initial investigation. In this case, the return to the past took the form of a return to the terms of the classical debate itself, to consider more directly the contribution of one of its more maverick participants. For standing just outside the familiar perimeter of this debate was a figure who has often been felt to cast a particularly tenebrous shadow over contemporary Islamic thought: the Ḥanbalite theologian Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya.

And accosted with the uncertain curiosity of the present, his writings seemed calculated to provoke a twofold reaction of recognition—and a new surprise. Recognition, because it was soon clear that the notion of *fiṭra* so amply attested in the contemporary scene was one that assumed critical dimensions in his thought, including his writings on ethics. Surprise, because probed more closely, Ibn Taymiyya turned out to articulate a view that appeared to run cross-beam to the shape of the traditional debate on the nature of value as we have often narrated it. Disavowing the binary opposition of Mu‘tazilism and Ash‘arism that has supplied such narratives with their backbone, Ibn Taymiyya called for a new position that would overcome it: not Mu‘tazilism, not Ash‘arism, but something in between. Yet this *via media* was one that Ibn Taymiyya appeared to spell out in explicitly rationalist terms. Right and wrong, he claimed, are known by reason. And while the language of reason would indeed be deployed in couching this claim, Ibn Taymiyya in many places replaced it with another—that of *fiṭra*. The claim then became: We know what is right and wrong by the human *fiṭra*.

Taken seriously, it is an intellectual development that would appear to subvert everything we thought we knew about the shape of this theological debate and to call for a brand new chapter in this well-rehearsed history. A new chapter, a new answer, and one that holds out a double excitement to the reader of the classical theological tradition: in offering a fresh synthesis in an old debate, and in offering a synthesis distinctly framed in rationalist terms. Before us would seem to stand nothing less than the promise of a new claim of moral reason.

It was this surprise that gave the present book its immediate impetus. As it progressed, the historical questions that provided the original impetus quickly transformed themselves into a deeper engagement with Ibn Taymiyya’s ethical thought. Thus, while these questions continue to shadow the present study as its distant framework, and while I hope to be offering some of the material needed for answering them, the study that follows is an effort to engage directly and on his own terms a thinker that still remains—remarkably given his wide influence in the contemporary context—understudied. At the heart of this engagement stands a question about the claim of reason announcing itself in Ibn Taymiyya’s works. How to understand the promise of this claim and how to judge its fulfillment?

Questions about Ibn Taymiyya's engagement of reason have formed a prominent theme in scholarly appraisals of his intellectual legacy. Only until recently Ibn Taymiyya appeared in narratives of the history of Islamic theological and philosophical thought as the herald of a new era of decline and the augur of an antirationalist retrenchment following several centuries of efflorescence in the rationalist sciences. The new age of antirationalism, Majid Fakhry could write in his recent introduction to the Islamic intellectual tradition, was marked by a "return to the Ḥanbalite position which rejected all philosophical, and even theological, methods of discourse, and clung to the sacred text, literally interpreted." [Fakhry, **ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY, AND MYSTICISM**, 101, and see generally chapter 8, "The progress of anti-rationalism and the onset of decline."] And it was Ibn Taymiyya who was identified as one of the salient contributors to this Ḥanbalite re-implosion. More recent writings on Ibn Taymiyya—notably by Jon Hoover, Yahya Michot, and Ovamir Anjum—have sought to reverse this facile judgment, emphasizing the significance of his engagement with the discourses forming the object of his supposed rejection. Taking the question of Ibn Taymiyya's rationalism to one of its most important seats, the present study can be read as a contribution to this larger debate concerning the nature of his legacy.

The focus of this study falls on Ibn Taymiyya's ethical outlook relative to two key questions that shaped classical theological debates about ethics: a question about the nature of ethical value and a related question about the nature of ethical knowledge and the role of reason in achieving this. Piecing this account together involves tackling several separate tasks. Given the long life such questions had led within classical debates, and given the crucial significance of these historical debates in framing Ibn Taymiyya's own enterprise, clarifying his ethical views must in part be pursued as an effort to recount their relationship to preexisting theological topography. This book is thus as much a window into classical theological debates about ethics—particularly Mu'tazilite and Ash'arite approaches to ethics—as it is a window into Ibn Taymiyya's own thinking. Mu'tazilite theologians, of course, have often been celebrated for having pressed a bold claim of reason in ethical matters. Yet what has received less attention among readers of this region of Islamic theological history is the claim of reason that Ash'arite thinkers had articulated in both their theological and legal writings.

Shedding clearer light on Ash'arite ethical thought is important in its own right, giving us new resources for recalibrating our understanding of classical debates. But it is equally important for telling the more specific story that forms the subject of this book. For one of the things I hope to show is that the story of Ibn Taymiyya's ethical views can be told far more compellingly as a story about his relationship to the Ash'arites than as a story about his affinities to Mu'tazilism. It is also a story, as I hope to show, that must partly be told as an account of Ibn Taymiyya's fraught engagement with the philosophy of Avicenna, the perception of whose towering intellectual presence Ibn Taymiyya shared with late Ash'arites but was far more concerned to contest. It may seem both surprising and unsurprising, in this respect, to discover that it is Avicenna's denial of the connection between ethical judgments and human nature (*fiṭra*)—a denial that had made deep inroads into Ash'arite ethical thought—that provides Ibn Taymiyya with a critical context for developing his own view of this connection and of ethical judgments more broadly.

Probing Ibn Taymiyya's ethical outlook thus involves engaging a wider series of intellectual contexts, bringing into view the trajectory of key ethical ideas across the fields of theology, philosophy, and indeed law. Yet classical debates about ethics had always been profoundly

anchored in an underlying structure of theological concerns. Questions that on the surface revolved around matters of value as these pertain to human existence—questions about what *human beings* know regarding right and wrong or what is right and wrong for *human beings* to do—ultimately pointed beyond human life and translated into fundamental questions about the moral life of God himself. A fuller appraisal of Ibn Taymiyya's ethical views must thus also involve transposing his views about human morality into their theological context and considering the understanding of God's morality that complements them and lends them their significance.

Set against this nest of intellectual contexts, one of the conclusions of this book can be stated simply: Ibn Taymiyya's claim of moral reason, examined more closely, turns out to be a rather misleading one. Reason, when it comes to determining right and wrong, carries a far less substantive and far less substantially articulated content than at first sight appears and than the *prima facie* resemblance between Ibn Taymiyya's position and the Mu'tazilites' may lead one to anticipate. Restated in terms of the theological possibilities as we know them, Ibn Taymiyya's view of moral reason in fact coincides with Ash'arism in most of its basic features and with the more limited brand of rationalism expounded by Ash'arite writers.

I speak of stating conclusions "simply." Yet one of the chief messages I hope readers will take away from this book is that simple conclusions are not so easy to wrest from Ibn Taymiyya's work. If Ibn Taymiyya's ethical view, upon closer consideration, turns out to be different from what an initial consideration leads us to expect—if "appearances" can be "misleading" and the realities can surprise our expectations—this already suggests that something unusual must be afoot. Interpretive work, of course, is often about digging more deeply beneath appearances and ferreting out what is not immediately plain to view. Wonder has frequently been thought of as the passion of intellectual inquiry; surprise seems to me a good candidate for one of the main passions that move us not only *to* but *through* the effort to reconstruct a thinker's viewpoint. On one level, this simply reflects the fact that interpretation is an activity that unfolds in time. The web of interpretation begins to weave itself from the very first line of the very first page ("Can it be ... ?" "Does he really mean ... ?" "It would be interesting if ..."); and the progress of interpretation as we pursue our journey through a body of extended writing is partly a matter of partial impressions and early expectations ceding to more holistic perspectives, as more and more of this body comes into view. At the same time, what the notion of surprise seems to flag is our inescapable investment in a particular conception of what interpretation involves—a conception in which the notion of discovery, and ideals of unity, occupy a central place. When we ask "What does *A* think about ... ?," that part of us that remains untouched by sophisticated literary scruples cherishes the prospect of discovering an answer that we could present with reasonable coherence, telling it without being too self-conscious about the act of telling and without needing to lay the nuts and bolts on the table one by one to show how the story was pieced together, what was accepted and what thrown out.

It is an ideal of discovery and self-effacing interpretive unity that comes under special strain when one brings it to Ibn Taymiyya's work. For his views—on the topics that form the subject of this book certainly—turn out to require effort of a particularly concerted kind to be pieced together. The journey into Ibn Taymiyya's account often has all the excitement, yet also all the precariousness, of detective work undertaken under challenging conditions: the conflict of testimonies, the statement made only to be retracted, the circumstantial

evidence here, the witness who unintentionally misleads the jury. Key positions (like the ethical positions of Mu‘tazilite thinkers just referred to) are described in ways that appear like mis-descriptions and have to be carefully winnowed apart. Central distinctions are obscured and have to be dug up. Clear statements are made in one place that appear to be contradicted by the clear implications of others, making the evidence harder to unify. Theses are offered with promissory terseness but never extensively developed, leaving one wondering how seriously they were intended to be taken. Theses are voiced in polemical contexts, leaving one wondering whether they would have been voiced in others. Sifting through these elements exacts a high degree of textual focus and a far more self-conscious attention to the way one relates the different pieces that enter the story one tells. If readers of texts might sometimes be able to avoid dwelling too much on their own form-making activity, the form of Ibn Taymiyya’s works places that self-forgetfulness out of reach and often forces one to show one’s hand.

Such unselfconsciousness is of course never a virtue (if indeed it is even a possibility), and thinkers who place our interpretive fantasies under strain pay us a valuable service in forcing us to interrogate these fantasies and to reflect on the standards and aims that drive our activity. Yet to the extent that certain thinkers expose these fantasies to greater strain than others, this will be important to bring out in limning the character of their intellectual contribution. I would thus argue more strongly that those elements of the *how* of Ibn Taymiyya’s writing that thematize the painter’s hand by hindering it are ones that, far from being mere hindrances or disturbances to the *what* of his views, form an essential and substantive lesson to be learned about his oeuvre. They certainly compel us to ask a more pointed question regarding Ibn Taymiyya’s aims in pressing the claim of ethical reason. They also provide us with resources for understanding why Ibn Taymiyya’s legacy, speaking in elusive voices, may allow itself to be appropriated in plural ways and play host to competing interpretations.

My own conclusions about the principal tendency of Ibn Taymiyya’s ethical thought and about the limited claim of reason that shapes it need to be read against this more complex appreciation of what it means to form conclusions about Ibn Taymiyya’s thought. Although several of the moments of surprise that moved my own investigation forward have been filtered out of view in presenting the story that follows—faithfully to the tradition of inquiry, in its characteristic drive to purify the product of inquiry from the temporality of its process—I hope these actuating surprises, and the way they thematize the act of storytelling, will still be palpable.

So let me say something about how the discussion unfolds. In chapter 1 I set the stage for the discussion by first isolating certain features of Ibn Taymiyya’s intellectual outlook that are of special relevance for approaching his ethical views—namely his advocacy of the *via media*, his engagement of rationalist methods, and his claim of harmony between reason and revelation—and by framing a broad comment about the nature of his writing and the significance of this particular subject in the structure of his concerns. I then turn to my main topic, Ibn Taymiyya’s understanding of the nature of ethical value. Ibn Taymiyya proposes to carve a *via media* between Mu‘tazilite and Ash‘arite approaches, but he appears to draw far nearer to the Mu‘tazilite pole of this intellectual field in espousing an objectivist view of ethical value. Yet the Mu‘tazilites, for their part, had given a prominent place to deontological considerations in spelling out their ethical ontology. A closer study of a number of Taymiyyan texts, by contrast, suggests that Ibn Taymiyya’s objectivism is



construed in overwhelmingly consequentialist or utilitarian terms. The central ethical concept for Ibn Taymiyya is utility (*manfaʿa*, *maṣlaḥa*), and the value of seemingly deontological types of acts is reduced to their utilitarian tendencies, not only for the individual but indeed for the social community.

With this insight in place, in chapter 2 I go on to address Ibn Taymiyya's ethical epistemology, focusing on two salient epistemic notions that he appeals to in his ethical remarks: reason (*ʿaql*) and nature (*fiṭra*). I begin by schematizing the argument (or thought experiment) articulated by Avicenna against including moral judgments in the perspective of human nature, an argument that can be taken to mark a broad distinction between nature and convention. I then turn to Ibn Taymiyya's counterclaim. In his evaluative deployment of the notion of *fiṭra*, I argue, Ibn Taymiyya primarily approaches *fiṭra* as a desiderative principle—as a principle of natural desire, alternately construed as a desire for what is pleasurable and as a desire for what is beneficial. Mined more carefully, this construal reveals that nature cannot be taken to carry the positive status or constitute the source of ethical guidance that Ibn Taymiyya's remarks invite us to assume, reflecting the positive scriptural connotations of the notion of *fiṭra*. Similar limitations attach to the resources of reason. While in certain writings Ibn Taymiyya shows an interest in developing the idea that moral judgments are the product of naturalistic empirical reasoning (*tajriba*), elsewhere he lays strong emphasis on the limitations of reason as a source for knowing the consequences of actions that constitute their ultimate value. The evaluative guidance available to us through our natural or internal epistemic resources thus turns out to be subject to serious limitations. For the full criterion of ethical value, we instead need to look to the revealed Law.

In chapter 3 I make an approach to Ibn Taymiyya's elusive relationship to Ashʿarite ethical thought. Ibn Taymiyya often appears to be locked in relations of bitter conflict with Ashʿarite theology, and this extends to questions of ethics. A closer scrutiny of the facts, however, paints a different picture. A more nuanced survey of the evolving Ashʿarite view of ethics, particularly with regard to the ethical role of reason, and of the Ashʿarite assimilation of Avicenna's ethical ideas reveals Ibn Taymiyya's relationship to Ashʿarism to be one of concealed indebtedness. Some of Ibn Taymiyya's central contentions—not only his claim that right and wrong are known by reason but also his claim that they are known by (desiderative) nature and indeed his claim that value comes down to utility—find their immediate counterparts in Ashʿarite theology.

Turning away from questions about human morality, in chapter 4 I turn to consider what Ibn Taymiyya has to say about the morality of God. A positive emphasis on God's morality—on the fact that God's action is responsive to reasons, that God is just and indeed wise—is central to the ethical *via media* Ibn Taymiyya intends to chart, as it is also crucial for appraising his chief point of friction with the Ashʿarites. This friction expresses itself partly as a contestation of the notion of God's wisdom (*ḥikma*) and of the role of welfare (*maṣlaḥa*) among the aims of the divine Law. While Ashʿarite theorists had foregrounded considerations of welfare in their legal works, in doing so they had appeared to create tension for views they had expressed in a theological context—notably their conservative view of the evaluative grasp of human beings and their denial that concepts of purpose apply to God. I begin by offering a closer reading of this apparent tension within the Ashʿarite viewpoint and the strategies Ashʿarites devised to resolve it. I then detail Ibn Taymiyya's competing conception of God's morality by investigating two questions that



respectively thematize God's wisdom and God's justice: Why does God command the actions He does? And why must God punish? Both topics reopen questions about the nature of ethical value broached in earlier chapters in relation to human morality and reinforce (but also problematize) the understanding of the primacy of utility that emerged there.

Turning back to the domain of human morality, in the first part of chapter 5 I seek to broaden the earlier inquiry into Ibn Taymiyya's ethical epistemology by transposing it to his legal writings and by addressing his understanding of how considerations of welfare stand to be engaged within the legal context. Examining Ibn Taymiyya's stance as expressed on three main levels—in his appeal to "pragmatic" grounds of need in his practical legal rulings, in his emphasis on preponderant utility as a determinant of legal rulings, and in his theoretical remarks about unattested interests (*maṣāliḥ mursala*) as a source of Law—an initial reading bespeaks a robust embrace of the human mind's ability to engage considerations of welfare directly and substantively in isolation from textual safeguards. Yet a closer reading holds up a different picture, displaying the textualist commitments of Ibn Taymiyya's thinking. This reading is supported by an analysis of his position on a debate that forms the hidden backbone of his legal appeal to pragmatic considerations, the debate about the value of actions prior to the advent of revelation (*ḥukm al-af'āl qabla wurūd al-shar'*). The conclusion reached here dovetails with the understanding of Ibn Taymiyya's limited rationalism articulated in chapter 2. Having broadened the bases for this understanding, in the second part of the chapter I seek to locate it against two additional foils by raising a question about Ibn Taymiyya's deeper motivations for pressing the claim of moral reason and by raising a larger question about the relation between reason and revelation within his thought. Once again, there seem to be competing messages at work within Ibn Taymiyya's writings, but I argue that reason must be understood as possessing limited independence and as largely conditioned by, and departing from, the vantage point of religious revelation.

And while my aim in this book is not to effect the historical leap from past to present, in chapter 6 I conclude with some heuristic thoughts about how some of the bridges between past and present might be built. <>

## **IBN TAYMIYYA ON REASON AND REVELATION: A STUDY OF DAR' TA'ĀRUḌ AL-'AQL WA-L-NAQL** by Carl Sharif El-Tobgui [Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, Brill, hardcover: 978-90-04-41285-9, ebook: 978-90-04-41286-6] [Open Source](#)

In **IBN TAYMIYYA ON REASON AND REVELATION**, Carl Sharif El-Tobgui offers the first comprehensive study of Ibn Taymiyya's ten-volume magnum opus, *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql*. In his colossal riposte to the Muslim philosophers and rationalist theologians, the towering Ḥanbalī polymath rejects the call to prioritize reason over revelation in cases of alleged conflict, interrogating instead the very conception of rationality that classical Muslims had inherited from the Greeks. In its place, he endeavors to articulate a reconstituted "pure reason" that is both truly universal and in full harmony with authentic revelation. Based on a line-by-line reading of the entire *Dar' ta'āruḍ*, El-Tobgui's study carefully elucidates the

“philosophy of Ibn Taymiyya” as it emerges from the multifaceted ontological, epistemological, and linguistic reforms that Ibn Taymiyya carries out in this pivotal work.

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## Mise en Scène

Excerpt: It is the turn of the year 1300. The city of Damascus is filled with a heavy sense of foreboding. Where once the vibrant lights of civilization shone forth to illuminate the surrounding lands, a decidedly somber atmosphere now hung thickly over the deserted marketplaces and alleyways. Most of the city's inhabitants had already fled in horror before the impending cataclysm. The governors and intellectual elite had abandoned camp en masse as well, following their terrified populace south into Palestine, then farther down into Egypt, whose perpetually sunny skies had not yet been darkened by the chilly shadow cast by the gathering menace to the north. The land of Syria was under existential threat. Nowhere in the annals of the ancient metropolis had a more fateful day been recorded; for, perched along the northeast border of the city, ready to swoop down like a pack of vultures at the slightest nod from their redoubtable chief, camped the fearsome hordes of the sons of Genghis Khan.

Some time later, in the dungeon of the citadel at Cairo, quite another battle was being waged. Having been sentenced to one and a half years in prison for propagating allegedly anthropomorphic ideas regarding the nature of God, an energetic, bold, and innately combative scholar and man of religion by the name of Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) scarcely seemed fazed by the fact that he was locked behind bars. As long as the prison wards continued to supply him with reams of paper and an ever fresh supply of ink and pens, Ibn Taymiyya could continue to fight a battle infinitely more consequential

than the struggle against the Mongols in Syria; for if Damascus, one of the first of the illustrious external citadels of Islam, were to fall to hostile forces, then much was lost indeed. But if the internal citadel of faith itself were overrun, then *all* was lost, for the stakes here were nothing less than ultimate.

The lines had been drawn long before Ibn Taymiyya's day. Nearly seven centuries had passed since the Prophet of Islam had brought to a chaotic world God's final message to mankind—a revealed Book whose very words were those of God Himself. The message, in its early days, had been clear and pristine. God was al-Ḥaqq, the Ultimate Reality, or the Ultimately Real. He was also al-Khāliq, the Creator of the heavens and earth and of everything they contained. God had also created man and had placed him on the earth to worship his Lord and to work good deeds for as long as he might tarry. Man, inexorably, would one day taste of death, whereafter God would raise him up again, body and soul, to judge him for the sincerity of his faith and the goodness of his works. So was it revealed to them in the Book, and so did they believe in it—with their hearts as well as with their minds.

Yet over the centuries, the clear and unencumbered plains of God's Holy Word had slowly but steadily been encroached upon from beyond the horizon, and foreign troops had come to occupy many a Muslim thinker's mind. The mass translation of Greek and Hellenistic medical, scientific—but especially philosophical—texts into Arabic from the time of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn in the early third/ninth century onward brought a host of new and strange ideas and modes of thinking into the Muslim intellectual landscape. The works on logic, metaphysics, and other disciplines by Aristotle and various Neoplatonic thinkers fascinated and enticed, yet also discomforted and repelled; for here was a sophisticated, brilliantly explicated view of the world, carefully elaborated over the course of centuries by some of the most brilliant minds the world had ever known. Provocatively, it was a view of the world, a vision of reality, that pretended to far-reaching coherence and comprehensiveness and that presented itself, quite compellingly, as based on, as growing out of, as being derived from nothing less than reason itself.

And what cause was there for worry? For does not the Qur'ān itself, in numerous passages, beseech its followers to reflect, to ponder, to exploit their God-given intellects, to employ their minds that perchance they might better fathom the purpose of their existence? "*A-fa-lā ya 'qilūr*" (Will they not then understand?); "*A-fa-lā yatadabbarūr*" (Do they not consider [the Qur'ān] with care?); "*La 'allahum yatafakkarūr*" (Perchance they may reflect).

Yet what to make of it were one to comply with God's behest to use one's intellect only to discover, unsettlingly, that what reason has delivered is somehow discordant with what God—Creator of all things, including man and his intellect—has Himself declared in revelation? For the Greeks spoke of man as well. They too spoke of the heavens and the earth, and of God. Reason, Aristotle tells us, perceives that God is a perfect being. Now, all may agree that God is perfect. But reason, Aristotle tells us further, judges that a perfect being must be, among other things, perfectly simple, indivisible, non-composite. So, while revelation may very well seem to predicate certain qualities or attributes of God—such that He is living (*ḥayy*), self-subsisting (*qayyūm*), mighty (*jabbār*), lovingly kind (*wadūd*), omniscient (*'alīm*), all-seeing (*baṣīr*), and all-hearing (*samī'*)—reason, for its part, avers that God cannot in reality possess any such attributes, for then He would no longer be perfectly simple, as reason requires Him to be, but composite; that is, He would be "composed" of His uniquely indivisible essence and His alleged attributes or qualities.

Similarly, we are told, the dictates of sound reason affirm that God cannot be held to have knowledge of any particular, individual, instantiated thing in the world, as all such things are impermanent, springing into existence one day only to succumb to their demise the next. It follows by rational inference, therefore, that God cannot be held to know any such ephemera, for to know them would imply a relational change (and therefore an imperfection) in His knowledge. But, does not God Himself say in revelation, "*Wa-mā tasquṭu min waraqatin illā ya ‘lamuhā*" (And not a leaf falls but that He knows it)? Indeed, He does. And so the lines are drawn, and the battle is on.

### Introduction Excerpts:

The present work, a revised version of my PhD dissertation, is the first book-length study of Ibn Taymiyya's ten-volume magnum opus, *Dar' ta 'āruḍ al- 'aql wa-l-naql* (Refutation of the contradiction of reason and revelation). This massive treatise, totaling over four thousand pages in the 1979 edition of Muḥammad Rashād Sālim, represents the vigorous and sustained attempt of a major, late medieval Muslim theologian-jurist to settle a central debate that had raged among Muslim theologians and philosophers for more than six centuries: namely, the debate over the nature, role, and limits of human reason and its proper relationship to and interpretation of divine revelation. In the *Dar' ta 'āruḍ*, Ibn Taymiyya—who was, "by almost universal consensus, one of the most original and systematic thinkers in the history of Islam"—attempts to transcend the dichotomy of "reason vs. revelation" altogether by breaking down and systematically reconstituting the very categories through which reason was conceived and debated in medieval Islam.

In the current study, based on a close, line-by-line reading of the full ten volumes of the *Dar' ta 'āruḍ*, I provide a detailed and systematic account of the underlying, yet mostly implicit, philosophy and methodology on the basis of which Ibn Taymiyya addresses the question of the compatibility of reason and revelation. Discontent with previous attempts, Ibn Taymiyya not only critiques but also fundamentally reformulates the very epistemological, ontological, and linguistic assumptions that formed the sieve through which ideas on the relationship between reason and revelation had previously been filtered. Though Ibn Taymiyya does not lay out an underlying philosophy in systematic terms, I seek to demonstrate that a careful reading of the *Dar' ta 'āruḍ* reveals a broadly coherent system of thought that draws on diverse intellectual resources. Ibn Taymiyya synthesized these resources and, combining them with his own unique contributions, created an approach to the question of reason and revelation that stands in marked contrast to previously articulated approaches. Through this ambitious undertaking, Ibn Taymiyya develops views and arguments that have implications for fields ranging from the interpretation of scripture to ontology, epistemology, and the theory of language.

Earlier efforts to address the relationship between reason and revelation in Islam, such as the attempts of the theologians al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) and those of the philosophers Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), are well known and have received due scholarly attention; the current work aims to establish Ibn Taymiyya's contribution to the debate as a third pivotal chapter in classical Muslim attempts to articulate a response to the question of conflict between revelation and reason. Indeed, if Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd epitomize the Muslim philosophers' (or *falāsifa*s) approach to the issue, with al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī representing that of mainstream Ash'arī theology, then Ibn Taymiyya's *Dar' ta 'āruḍ* must be seen as the premier philosophical response to the question of reason and revelation from a Ḥanbalī perspective—a response that is equal to

the works of his predecessors in terms of its comprehensiveness, cohesion, and sophistication. A study of this nature is particularly needed since, despite important recent corrective scholarship, lingering stereotypes of Ibn Taymiyya as little more than a simplistic and dogmatic literalist continue to result in an underappreciation of the true extent and philosophical interest of his creative engagement with the Islamic intellectual tradition as exemplified in a work like the *Dar' ta 'āruḍ*.

The present book is addressed to several distinct audiences. First among these are students and scholars of, as well as those with a general interest in, Islamic theology and philosophy, medieval Islamic thought, Ibn Taymiyya studies, or post-classical Islamic intellectual history. Second, this study is relevant to those with an interest in Christian or Jewish rational theology of the High Middle Ages owing to the shared concerns taken up by medieval Muslim, Christian, and Jewish theologians and philosophers in both the European West and the Islamic East and in light of the common, Greek-inspired vocabulary and conceptual backdrop in terms of which all three communities conceived of and articulated theological and theo-philosophical issues. Finally, given that Ibn Taymiyya's *Dar' ta 'āruḍ* grapples with a philosophical and theological problem of universal import that transcends both centuries and religious communities, this book will be of interest to a broader, non-specialist Muslim readership, as well as to lay readers outside the Islamic tradition who are interested in questions concerning the relationship between reason and revelation more generally.

## Contours of a Conflict

The debate over reason and revelation among classical Muslim scholars centered primarily on the question of when and under what circumstances it was admissible to practice *ta'wīl*, or figurative interpretation, on the basis of a rational objection to the plain sense of a Qur'ānic verse or passage. Of particular concern in this respect were those passages containing descriptions of God, passages whose literal meaning seemed to entail *tashbīh*, an unacceptable assimilation of God to created beings. The Qur'ān affirms not merely that God exists but that He exists as a particular entity with certain intrinsic and irreducible qualities, or attributes. Some of these attributes that are (apparently) affirmed in revelation were held by various groups—particularly the philosophers, the Mu'tazila (sing. Mu'tazilī), and the later Ash'arīs—to be rationally indefensible on the grounds that their straightforward affirmation would amount to *tashbīh*. In such cases, a conflict was thought to ensue between the clear dictates of reason and the equally clear statements of revelation, which resulted in the unsettling notion that a fundamental contradiction exists between reason and revelation, both of which have nevertheless been accepted as yielding true knowledge about ourselves, the world, and God.

The question of how to deal with such rational objections to the plain sense of revelation elicited various kinds of responses from philosophers and theologians, ultimately culminating in the "universal rule" (*al-qānūn al-kullī*), which Ibn Taymiyya paraphrases on the first page of the *Dar' ta 'āruḍ* as it had come to be formulated by the time of the famous Ash'arī theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in the sixth/twelfth century. This rule, in brief, requires that in the event of a conflict between reason and revelation, the dictates of reason be given priority and revelation be reinterpreted accordingly via *ta'wīl*. This prescription is justified on the consideration that it is reason that grounds our assent to the truth of revelation, such that any gainsaying of reason in the face of a revealed text would undermine reason and revelation together.



Ibn Taymiyya makes the refutation of this universal rule his primary, explicit goal in the *Dar' ta 'āruḍ*. In doing so, he endeavors to prove that pure reason (*'aql ṣarīḥ*, or *ṣarīḥ al-ma'qūl*) and a plain-sense reading of authentic revelation (*naql ṣaḥīḥ*, or *ṣaḥīḥ al-manqūl*) can never stand in bona fide contradiction. Any perceived conflict between the two results from either a misinterpretation of the texts of revelation or, more pertinently for the current investigation, a misappropriation of reason. The more speculative (and hence dubious) one's rational premises and precommitments, the more extravagantly one must reinterpret—or twist, as Ibn Taymiyya would see it—revelation to bring it into line with the conclusions of such "reason."

We may illustrate this concept in the form of the following "Taymiyyan pyramid":

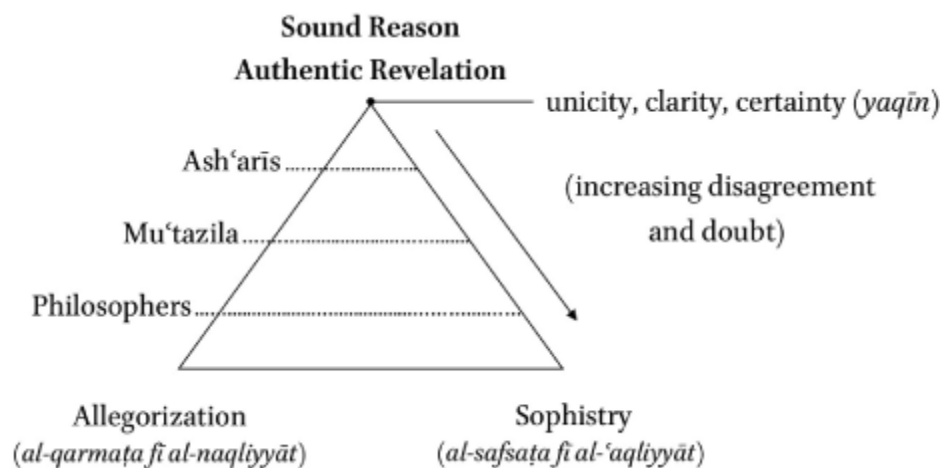


Figure 1

#### The Taymiyyan pyramid

Truth, for Ibn Taymiyya, is that point of unicity, clarity, and certainty (*yaqīn*) at which the testimony of sound reason and that of authentic revelation, understood correctly and without any attempt to interpret it away through allegory or metaphor, fully coincide. At the opposite end of this point lies pure sophistry (*safsata*) in rational matters coupled with the unrestrained allegorization ("*qarmaṭa*") of scripture. As individuals and groups move away from the point of truth where reason and revelation are fully concordant, the wide-reaching unity of their views on central points of both rational truth and religious doctrine gives way to ever increasing disagreement on even the most basic issues—such that the philosophers, in Ibn Taymiyya's words, "disagree (massively) even in astronomy (*'ilm al-hay'a*), which is the most patent and least controversial of their sciences."

In pursuit of his mission to resolve the conflict between reason and revelation, Ibn Taymiyya elaborates around thirty-eight arguments (*wujūh*, sing. *wajh*; lit. "aspects" or "viewpoints") against the logical coherence of the theologians' universal rule and the integrity, in purely theoretical terms, of the premises and assumptions upon which it is based. In the remainder of the *Dar'*, he takes up what seem to be all the instances of alleged conflict between reason and revelation raised by various philosophical and theological schools over the seven centuries of the Islamic intellectual tradition that preceded him. It is here that Ibn Taymiyya both develops and applies a characteristic Taymiyyan philosophy and methodology through which he attempts to dissolve, once and for all, the ongoing conflict between reason and revelation. After doing away with the universal rule, Ibn Taymiyya elaborates an alternative

theory of language that reframes the traditional distinction between literal (*ḥaqīqa*) and figurative (*majāz*) usage—upon which *ta'wīl* depends—in new ways meant to transcend the apparent opposition between the two. Finally, he reformulates key aspects of the philosophers' and theologians' ontological and epistemological assumptions that he holds responsible for producing the mere illusion of a conflict between reason and a plain-sense reading of revelation where, in his view, none truly exists.

Ultimately, Ibn Taymiyya seeks to resolve the conflict between reason and revelation by demonstrating that the very notion of reason employed by the philosophers and theologians is compromised, with the result that the arguments based on such "reason" are incoherent and invalid. His mission is to show that there is no *valid* rational argument that opposes or conflicts with the straightforward affirmations of revelation concerning any of the particular attributes or actions affirmed therein of God, the temporal origination of the universe, or any other topic. If Ibn Taymiyya, as he sees it, can do this convincingly, then the famous "rational objection" evaporates. Purified of its corrupted elements and specious presuppositions, the notion of reason can then be returned to what Ibn Taymiyya holds to be the inborn, unadulterated state of pure natural intelligence ( *'aql ṣarīḥ* ). The final segment of Ibn Taymiyya's reconstructive project in the *Dar'* is to establish precisely what this inborn, unadulterated state of pure natural intelligence is and the manner in which it interacts with revelation.

## Aims, Method, and Scope

The goal of the current work is to provide a detailed and systematic exposition of the philosophy of Ibn Taymiyya as it emerges from the *Dar' ta' āruḍ*. As we shall discover in chapter 2, Ibn Taymiyya led a turbulent life, and this turbulence is reflected in his writing. Not much given to systematic presentation, he is seldom explicit about his overall strategy or its underlying logic. To use a linguistic metaphor, Ibn Taymiyya simply speaks the language and leaves it to his reader to identify and describe the grammar. In the current study, I have attempted to produce a descriptive "grammar" of Ibn Taymiyya's worldview as it emerges in the *Dar' ta' āruḍ*—a "codification," in a sense, of the implicit syntax responsible for the order and coherence of his thought. And, as we shall discover, his thought evidences both order and coherence in abundance, though they do not always emerge clearly amidst the din of clashing swords or the buoyant cadences of earnestly engaged polemic.

In mapping the contours of Ibn Taymiyya's thought, I have divided the *Dar'*, for the purpose of analysis, into two main categories or types of text: (1) Ibn Taymiyya's thirty-eight discrete arguments against the universal rule of interpretation and (2) everything else. The manner in which the text opens gives the impression that the entirety of the *Dar'* is to be dedicated to the elaboration of these arguments. In reality, Ibn Taymiyya presents thirty-eight well circumscribed arguments—some quite lengthy—that together take up most of the first and fifth volumes. These arguments are solely concerned with the validity of the universal rule and do not touch upon any substantive philosophical or theological debates per se. I account for these thirty-eight arguments comprehensively in chapter 3, where I draw out the epistemological renovations Ibn Taymiyya seeks to marshal against the universal rule. The remaining six arguments address substantive philosophical and theological questions, usually at such length that they trail off into extended disquisitions on one topic after another, eventually dissipating into the larger body of the text. It is these substantive discussions—consisting mostly of lengthy citations from previous thinkers and

Ibn Taymiyya's responses to them—that, in fact, occupy the vast majority of the *Dar'*, and it is these discussions that form the surface from which we delve into the deeper structure of Ibn Taymiyya's methodology and thought (which we examine primarily in chapters 4 and 5).

To borrow from the language of the Islamic rational sciences, my goal has been to produce an exposition of the *Dar' ta 'āruḍ* that is "*jāmi' -māni'*," that is, inclusive of the whole of the *Dar'* and exclusive of anything extraneous to it. By "inclusive of the whole of the *Dar'*," I clearly do not mean that I have sought to capture and represent each and every argument or discussion in it. Such an investigation would hardly be feasible nor, indeed, desirable. Rather, I have attempted to identify and extract, in as comprehensive a manner as possible, all the higher-order principles, presuppositions, and implicit assumptions that undergird and motivate Ibn Taymiyya's argumentation in the *Dar'*—those elements that I collectively refer to as the underlying "philosophy of Ibn Taymiyya." These principles are often not stated explicitly but, rather, are embedded within discrete arguments. Therefore, it has been necessary to go beyond the specifics of the individual arguments in order to extract, and to abstract, the universal principles at play. Presenting Ibn Taymiyya's philosophy in the *Dar'* has thus necessitated a substantially different approach than would be required for expositing in English a text whose principles have already been distilled by the author and presented systematically to the original reader. By saying that the distillation I attempt here is comprehensive (or "*jāmi'*"), I mean that it is based on a close reading of the entire text of the *Dar'*, not merely selected portions. The elements of Ibn Taymiyya's worldview that I exposit in this study have emerged organically, over the course of literally thousands of pages of argumentation and discussion, as the dominant leitmotifs of the work. In most cases, I have cited several—and, where possible, all—instances throughout the *Dar'* where a given concept is discussed or point substantiated.

By saying that the current study is "*māni'*," or exclusive of anything extraneous to the *Dar'*, I mean that I have not cross-referenced discussions in the *Dar' ta 'āruḍ* with similar discussions found elsewhere in Ibn Taymiyya's writings, though I have endeavored to read and interpret the *Dar'* in light of the rich secondary literature on Ibn Taymiyya mentioned above. Given the length of the *Dar'* itself, the vastness of Ibn Taymiyya's larger oeuvre, and his well-known habit of addressing the same issue in many different places, a systematic cross-referencing of the primary sources would have hardly been feasible. For this reason, the current study should be seen primarily as an exposition and analysis of the *Dar' ta 'āruḍ* as a discrete work, not as a study of everything Ibn Taymiyya has written on the topic of reason and revelation. The *Dar' ta 'āruḍ* is a lengthy, cumbersome, and intellectually demanding text, one that I have worked to domesticate, to decipher, and to lay open for the reader such that its pith and purpose may be readily grasped. In any case, it is the *Dar' ta 'āruḍ* that, by virtue of its title and opening salvo, appears to be the work Ibn Taymiyya himself meant to be taken as his definitive statement on the relationship between reason and revelation. Happily, the picture that emerges from our present study of the *Dar'* harmonizes closely with the image currently crystallizing on the basis of other studies dedicated to Ibn Taymiyya's thought. This is yet another indication of the consistency and coherence of that thought, notwithstanding its sometimes erratic presentation.

## Structure and Major Themes

This book is divided into two main parts, each consisting of three chapters. Part 1, “Reason vs. Revelation?,” provides the historical and biographical background necessary to situate Ibn Taymiyya and the project to which he dedicates the *Dar’ ta ‘āruḍ*, then examines his contestation of the very dichotomy of reason versus revelation that he inherited.

Chapter 1 provides a broad overview of the historical development of the issue of reason and revelation in Islamic thought in the fields of theology, philosophy, and law from the first Islamic century to the time of Ibn Taymiyya in the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries. As a later, post-classical figure, Ibn Taymiyya makes numerous references and allusions to earlier Muslim thinkers, controversies, and schools of thought; we cannot understand his contributions to this vital debate, much less appreciate them, without sufficient knowledge of what came before him. Though chapter 1 is necessarily broad in scope, the discussion of each figure or school nevertheless focuses on those elements that touch directly upon our main topic—the question of reason and revelation—or that anticipate a distinct line of argumentation in the *Dar’* that is taken up in later chapters. The background provided in chapter 1 is particularly relevant for non-specialists, as it allows them to familiarize themselves with the most relevant antecedent discussions on reason and revelation in Islam before embarking on their exploration of the *Dar’ ta ‘āruḍ* proper.

In chapter 2, sections 1–4 provide a survey of the life and times of Ibn Taymiyya, followed by an intellectual profile that situates him both ideologically and methodologically within the wider intellectual and religious context of late medieval Islam. Section 5 reconstructs Ibn Taymiyya’s reception and interpretation of his own intellectual heritage by examining numerous remarks scattered throughout the *Dar’*. It then presents *his* view of the nature and historical development of the conflict between reason and revelation in the centuries that preceded him. Understanding exactly how Ibn Taymiyya viewed and interpreted the issue is critical for comprehending not only his motivations but also, more importantly, the methodology and overall strategy he deploys in the *Dar’* in his attempt to resolve the dilemma once and for all. Finally, section 6 considers how Ibn Taymiyya represents several earlier high-profile attempts to resolve the conflict between reason and revelation—those of Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Rushd—and how he situates his own project in the *Dar’* vis-à-vis those of his three eminent predecessors. Thus, while the first four sections of chapter 2 complete the background provided in chapter 1, sections 5 and 6 mark the beginning of our full-fledged engagement with the *Dar’ ta ‘āruḍ* itself.

Chapter 3 consists of an exhaustive analysis of Ibn Taymiyya’s thirty-eight arguments against the philosophers’ and theologians’ universal rule. Through these arguments, he attacks not only the rule’s logical coherence but also the main epistemic categories and assumptions upon which it is based. While Ibn Taymiyya himself presents these arguments in a disjointed and seemingly random fashion, I demonstrate in chapter 3 that by breaking down, regrouping, and reconstructing them, we can discern a coherent attempt on Ibn Taymiyya’s part to reconfigure the very terms of the debate in several important ways. First, he redefines the opposition at stake not as one of reason versus revelation but as a purely epistemological question of certainty (*yaqīn*) versus probability (*ẓann*), with reason and revelation each serving as potential sources of both kinds of knowledge. He then builds on this to replace the dichotomy “*shar’-‘aqlī*,” in the sense of “scriptural versus rational,” with the dichotomy “*shar’-bid’ī*,” in the sense of “scripturally validated versus innovated,” arguing that revelation itself both commends and exemplifies the valid use of reason and

rational argumentation. With this altered dichotomy, Ibn Taymiyya attempts to undermine the inherited categorical differentiation between reason and revelation in favor of a new paradigm in which it is the epistemic quality of a piece of knowledge alone that counts rather than its provenance in either reason or revelation. In this manner, he subsumes reason itself into the larger category of "*sharʿī*," or scripturally validated, sources of knowledge.

In part 2, "Ibn Taymiyya's Reform of Language, Ontology, and Epistemology," chapters 4 and 5 explore the main elements of Ibn Taymiyya's underlying philosophy as gleaned from the *Darʿ al-taʿāruḍ*. In these chapters, I provide a systematic account of the positive, reconstructive project that I argue Ibn Taymiyya is carrying out in the *Darʿ*, a project in which he articulates an alternative theory of language as well as a reconstructed notion of reason in his bid to address the problem of the conflict between reason and revelation. In chapters 4 and 5, I present a formal, theoretical summary of all the major elements of Ibn Taymiyya's philosophy—his linguistic and hermeneutical principles, his ontology, and his epistemology—that are indispensable for understanding how his critique of reason and its alleged conflict with revelation is meant to work. In chapter 6, I then illustrate how Ibn Taymiyya applies the principles and methods of his philosophy to one of the most central substantive issues of concern to him (and to the Islamic theological tradition as a whole), namely, the question of the divine attributes, anthropomorphism, and the boundaries of figurative interpretation (*taʿwīl*).

Chapter 4 explores how Ibn Taymiyya seeks to reformulate the theory of language by which revelation is understood. We first examine exactly what authentic revelation (*naql ṣaḥīḥ*) consists of for Ibn Taymiyya and the hermeneutical principles according to which it ought to be interpreted. Ibn Taymiyya proposes a textually self-sufficient hermeneutic, predicated on the Qurʾān's own repeated characterization of itself as "clear" and "manifest" (*mubīn*), against what he deems to be the overly liberal use of *taʿwīl* based on the (in his view irremediably speculative) interpretations of his opponents among the rationalist theologians. We next explore Ibn Taymiyya's larger philosophy of language—resting on the twin pillars of context (*siyāq, qarāʾin*) and linguistic convention (*ʿurf*)—on the basis of which he attempts to discard the traditional distinction between literal (*ḥaqīqa*) and figurative (*majāz*) usage while yet avoiding the simplistic literalism of which his critics have often accused him. Chapter 4 also examines Ibn Taymiyya's account of semantic shifts that took place in certain *termini technici* prior to his day. These shifts in the meaning of key technical terms, he argues, resulted in interpretive distortions that saw later meanings unwittingly projected anachronistically onto earlier texts. The chapter closes with an illustration of Ibn Taymiyya's discussion of this phenomenon via an extended case study of the terms *wāḥid* (one), *tawḥīd* (oneness of God), and *tarkīb* (composition).

Chapter 5 examines Ibn Taymiyya's critique of what the philosophers and later theologians construe as reason, then explores his elaboration of what he deems to be authentic sound reason (*ʿaql ṣarīḥ*). Ibn Taymiyya's critique targets both the ontology and the epistemology of the philosophers by challenging what he sees as their chronic confusion between the realm of externally existent entities (*mā fī al-ʿālam*) and the realm of that which exists only in the mind (*mā fī al-adhhān*). While all knowledge of external reality must ultimately have its basis either in immediate sensation (*ḥiss*) or in reliable transmitted reports (*khabar*), Ibn Taymiyya nevertheless assigns theoretical reason several important functions, namely, (1) to abstract similarities shared by existent particulars into universal concepts (*kullīyyāt*), (2) to



issue judgements in the form of predicative statements relative to existing particulars, and (3) to draw inferences of various kinds on the basis of the innate (*fiṭrā*) and necessary (*ḍarūrī*) knowledge of fundamental axioms embedded in reason and known, therefore, in an a priori (*awwalī*) or self-evident (*badīhī*) manner. Ibn Taymiyya's reformed epistemology—based on experience, reason, and transmitted reports—is undergirded by an expanded notion of the moral-cum-cognitive faculty of the *fiṭra*, or “original normative disposition.” Ultimately, this epistemology is guaranteed by a universalized notion of *tawātur* (recurrent mass transmission), a concept that Ibn Taymiyya borrows from the Muslim textual and legal traditions and applies expansively as the final guarantor of all human cognition.

Chapter 6 brings together the sundry elements of Ibn Taymiyya's attempted hermeneutic, ontological, and epistemological renovations and demonstrates how he rallies them to resolve, once and for all, the contradiction between reason and revelation in medieval Islam, particularly with regard to the question of the divine attributes. Since God, in Islamic ontology, exists in the unseen realm (*ghayb*), Ibn Taymiyya takes up the centuries-old theological debate over the legitimacy of drawing an analogy (*qiyās*) between the empirical (or “seen”) and the metaphysical (or “unseen”) realms of existence. While he argues that such an inference is not valid for establishing the factual existence (*thubūt*) or the specific ontological reality (*ḥaqīqa*) of would-be entities in the unseen realm, he insists that it is not merely legitimate but, indeed, mandatory for us to draw such an analogy on the level of universal meanings (*ma ‘ānī*) and notions (also *ma ‘ānī*) abstracted from our everyday empirical experience. It is only by drawing this latter sort of analogy that we can, in fact, understand *something* meaningful about entities existing in the unseen realm that are denoted by names (*asmā’*) that they share with the familiar entities of our contingent empirical experience.

As I demonstrate in chapter 6, Ibn Taymiyya seeks to preserve God's comprehensibility (and hence His conceivability and, in a sense, knowability to us) by virtue of the names and descriptions that are applied both to Him and to created entities without, however, God resembling His creation in any ontologically relevant way—the only way that, for Ibn Taymiyya, would entail the kind of theologically objectionable *tashbīḥ*, or “assimilationism,” that the philosophical and theological recourse to *ta’wīl* was originally meant to remediate. In this manner, the disparate elements of Ibn Taymiyya's theory of language, his ontology, and his epistemology eventually converge in a synthesis that is meant to accommodate a robust and rationally defensible affirmationism vis-à-vis the divine attributes while yet avoiding the *tashbīḥ* that the Islamic philosophical and later theological traditions so often presumed such affirmationism to entail.

...

Concerning the larger implications of the *Dar’ ta’āruḍ*, perhaps the most compelling part of Ibn Taymiyya's project goes beyond the man himself to the problematic with which he wrestled. In a sense, the whole question of the tension between revelation and reason, which Ibn Taymiyya internalized so poignantly, can in many ways be considered a key problem of Islamic modernity. Though the specific issues have changed—few today, for example, from the most textually-based conservative to the most liberal-minded reformer, are much concerned by the question of the divine attributes—the underlying problematic remains, in significant ways, very much the same. Whether it is the issue not precisely of reason and revelation but, say, of science and revelation or, for instance, the tension



between sacralized and secularized visions of law and government, which has been a particularly troubling issue for Muslims in the modern period, the root of all these issues can be traced to the deeper-lying tensions with which Ibn Taymiyya grappled when confronting the delicate question of the relationship between reason and revelation in his own day.

And, in an almost uncanny way, the crisis that many Muslims have faced since the nineteenth century, both in and with modernity, is strikingly similar to the intellectual crisis (and later also the political crisis) of early and medieval Islam, crises that had come to a head at the time of Ibn Taymiyya and that swept him up, heart and soul, into the great existential drama that played out seven centuries ago. The challenge this time around has come from strikingly similar quarters: then from Greece in the form of an intellectual challenge, today from a modern civilization also descended, intellectually, from Greece. And while in Ibn Taymiyya's day the intellectual and the political challengers were differentiated, the modern period has witnessed something like the intellectual power of Greece and the military might of the Mongols combined—Aristotle and Genghis Khan, if we may, wrapped into one. Now as then, the question remains: How might the tension once more be resolved between the relentless vicissitudes of the times and a Book whose adherents believe was sent down by an eternal God into our world of time and space on the tongue of a prophet some fourteen hundred years ago?

But before we join Ibn Taymiyya on his quest to resolve the discord between reason and revelation, we must first understand the context and the overall intellectual situation that presented itself to him with such existential urgency so many centuries ago. <>

## **IBN TAYMIYYA AGAINST THE GREEK LOGICIANS** introduction and translated by Wael B. Hallaq [Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 9780198240433]

Ibn Taymiyya, one of the greatest and most prolific thinkers of medieval Islam, held Greek logic responsible for the "heretical" metaphysical conclusions reached by Islamic philosophers, theologians, mystics, and others. Unlike Ghazali, who rejected philosophical metaphysics but embraced logic, Ibn Taymiyya considered the two inextricably connected. He therefore set out to refute philosophical logic, a task which culminated in one of the most devastating attacks ever levelled against the logical system upheld by the early Greeks, the later commentators, and their Muslim followers. His argument is grounded in an empirical approach that in many respects prefigures the philosophies of the British empiricists. Hallaq's translation, with a substantial introduction and extensive notes, makes available to a wider audience for the first time an important work that will be of interest to specialists in ancient and medieval philosophy and to historians of logic and empiricist philosophy, as well as to scholars of Islam and Middle Eastern thought.

"A competent and readable translation of a key text of Islamic civilization. The work carries the insignia of Clarendon Press, Oxford is a further testimony of its enduring value. Apart from students of Muslim thought, specialists in philosophies and historians of logic are sure to benefit from this sterling effort. Indeed, it should prove to be of equal interest to all the critics, Muslims or otherwise, of modern science." — *Muslim World Book Review*

"...Hallaq's work should be viewed as an important contribution to Ibn Taymiyah studies,

one that largely appreciates and critically evaluates the thought of this important intellectual of the Mamluk period." — *Mamluk Studies Review*

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Chapter 1

No concept can be formed except by means of definition, as goes the first point by the logicians. First, this asserts that there is no doubt that the onus of proofs rests with him who negates, just as it rests with him who affirms. Second, it may be argued that what is intended by 'definition' is the definiendum itself. Third, all the communities of scholars and advocates of religious doctrines, craftsmen, and professionals know the things they need to know, and verify what they encounter in the sciences, and the professions without speaking of definitions. Another point is that people until this very day are not known to have definitions which accord with their principles. These are the four main points in addition to others which are explored in this chapter.

Chapter 2

The main concept for the second point has to do with the doctrine that states that definition leads to the conception of things. It is asserted against this doctrine that verifiers amongst the thinkers know that the function of a definition is to distinguish between the definiendum and other things, just like name, whose function is not to give a concept of the definiendum, nor to delimit its reality. The claim that definitions lead to forming a concept of things is that of the Greek logicians, the followers of Aristotle, as well as those Muslims and others who have followed their path by believing and imitating them. However, the majority of Muslim thinkers, theologians, and others hold a different view.

Chapter 3

The third point asserted in this chapter has to do with the doctrine that no judgement may be known except by means of syllogism, whose form and content has been stipulated. This is seen to be a negative proposition that is not self-evident. At the same time, there has not been any evidence to say that this is indeed proven, and in fact the logicians themselves admitted that they have made claims that they have not proven and argued without the benefit of knowledge. Establishing this negative proposition with certitude is believed to be impossible according to their own principles. In this regard, there has also been a lot of rejections by many religious innovators, speculative theologians, and philosophers of the prophetic reports which the traditionists retain.

Chapter 4

The point covered in this chapter is the fourth and the enigmatic one which has to do with the logicians' doctrine that syllogism or demonstration leads to the certain knowledge of judgements. The logicians' error concerning the first three points covered in the previous chapters is clear with the least of reflection. It was rather easy to prove and comprehend and the confusions were mostly caused by exaggerations and protracted discussions. For this fourth point, however, it is rather different since a syllogism formed of two premises resulting in a conclusion is in itself valid. The previous points mentioned in the earlier chapters are relatively easy as it was obvious that there was no way to establish with certainty such categorical denials.

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Excerpt

**Ibn Taymiyya's Opponents and his Refutation of the Logicians**

In 709/1309, Taqī al-Dīn Taymiyya spent eight months in a Mamlūk prison in Alexandria. There he apparently received some visitors whose identity we do not know but who had strong leanings towards philosophy. Though his interest up till that time lay in confuting the metaphysical doctrines of the philosophers, he there made up his mind to write a refutation of logic, which he thought to be the ultimate source of the erroneous metaphysical doctrines espoused by the philosophers. His critique culminated in a substantial tome, *al-Radd 'alā al-Manṭiqiyyīn*, one of the most devastating attacks ever levelled against the logic upheld by the early Greeks, the later commentators, and their Muslim followers.

The richly documented biographical and bio-bibliographical accounts of Ibn Taymiyya by contemporary and later biographers and historians enable us to understand both his declared and latent motives in writing against the logicians. It is not difficult to see the reasons behind his biting attacks against that logic which he deemed the sole agent leading to the philosophical doctrines of the eternity of the world, the nature and attributes of God, the hierarchy and mediatory role of the Intelligences, prophethood, the creation of the Quran, etc. All these teachings, as espoused by the philosophers, stood in stark contrast to what he perceived to be the Sunnī *Weltanschauung* that was dictated by the letter of the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet. But markedly less obvious in his attacks on logic are undercurrents of resentment against what he viewed in a good number of other treatises as the most dangerous of all threats which lay in the heart of Islam, namely, speculative mysticism propounded by such influential figures as Ibn Sab'īn (d. 669/1270), Qūnawī (d. 673/1274), Tilimsānī (d. 690/1291), and above all Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240). We must emphasize, however, that it was only pantheistic mysticism which he opposed, for he himself was a member of the traditional, non-Ittīhādī Ṣūfī orders, particularly that of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī.

Ibn Taymiyya could hardly avoid criticizing the logical foundations of speculative mysticism since he categorically rejected the doctrine of the Unity of Existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), its logical underpinnings, and its relationship to Platonic philosophy. His continuous struggle against the Ittīhādī Ṣūfīs had begun much earlier and earned him a number of stays in Mamlūk prisons from 705/1305 onwards. In fact, his aforementioned imprisonment in Alexandria four years later was the unhappy result of a demonstration by more than five hundred apparently Ittīhādī Ṣūfīs who complained to the Sultan about Ibn Taymiyya's belligerent preachings against their spiritual leaders. In an attempt to appreciate the full force of his critique, one can hardly overstress the importance of what he perceived to be the cancerous threat of Ittīhādī Ṣūfism, which he thought to be more calamitous than the invasion of the Mongols.

Even if we were to reduce the objects of Ibn Taymiyya's attacks to the writings of Ibn Sīnā and Ibn 'Arabī, and set aside his scathing and massive criticism of countless other philosophical, mystical, theological, and sectarian doctrines, we would still come to the realization that what Ibn Taymiyya was fighting against amounted to everything that directly

or indirectly derived from what was termed 'the ancient sciences' (*'ulūm al-awā'il*). Ibn Sīnā's cosmology had for its foundation Aristotelian-Ptolemaic doctrines with a Neoplatonic structure in which the emanationist philosophy of being was thoroughly incorporated. His logic was manifestly Aristotelian but not without Stoic and Neoplatonic influences. Likewise, Ibn 'Arabī made use of the Platonic Ideas, and his cosmology integrated not only the pseudo-Empedoclean doctrines of Ibn Masarra (d. 319/931) but above all Alexandrian elements as found in the doctrines of Ikhwān al-Safā'. Admittedly, the latter were indebted to the teachings of Pythagoras and Nichomachus, particularly in their treatment of the metaphysics of number. They were no less indebted to Jābir b. Hayyān (d. 160/776), who was in turn influenced by Plato, Pythagoras, and Apollonius as well as by Indian and Hermetic sources.

More significantly, however, later Sufism, particularly that of Ibn 'Arabī shows affinity with the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā, especially with regard to *wahdat al-wujūd*, the doctrine that generated the fiercest attacks by Ibn Taymiyya. Ibn Sīnā's cosmogony stresses the relation of contingent beings to the Necessary, Absolute Being, and the effusion of the former from the latter. While the effused universe is distinguished from this Being, the generated universe none the less maintains a unitary relationship with the source of its own existence. Thus it is argued that, although the rays of the sun are not the sun itself, they are not other than the sun. Ibn 'Arabī, like many speculative Ṣūfīs, upheld this doctrine and argued the impossibility of two independent orders of reality. And in anticipation of Ibn 'Arabī, Ibn Sīnā, departing from this unitary emanative scheme, seems to have held that the gnostic is capable of attaining a complete union with God. We shall later return to the crucial ramifications of such mystical and philosophic positions, at least as Ibn Taymiyya perceived them, but for the moment shall merely assert that for all these teachings, however philosophically variegated they may be, Ibn Taymiyya held the logic of Aristotle and of those who followed him to be the ultimate culprit. His grievance against logic was not simply that it existed, but rather that it existed in and infested the core of the Islamic religious sciences. He certainly had serious doubts about logic as the organon of philosophy and metaphysics, but when logic penetrated the pale of Sunnī theology and produced such philosophical theologians as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), Āmidī (d. 632/1234), and Urmawī (d. 682/1283), Ibn Taymiyya clearly felt an alarming threat that should be rebuffed. His, then, was the critique of a logic that brought under its wings not only Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Ibn Sīnā, and the rest of the Arabic philosophers, but also, and I think primarily, the pantheistic Ṣūfīs, the Shī'īs and the speculative theologians (*ahl al-kalām*).

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The reader of Ibn Taymiyya's works cannot but be struck by his extraordinary ability to define and isolate the crucial and fundamental principles upon which the most complex systems of thought are erected. He was never distracted by the multiplicity and variety of uses to which logic was put in Islamic religious discourse. Nor did he attempt, as more recent critics have done, to refute or argue against the many secondary, and sometimes marginal, suppositions and postulates of logical doctrines. Instead, he took up a few, but most central and fundamental, logical principles and by undermining them attempted to demolish the entire edifice of logic and, consequently, that of metaphysics as well. Ultimately, his concern rested with the theories of definition (*ḥadd*) and the categorical syllogism, for which he adopted the rarely used Arabic form *qiyās al-shumūl*.

It is not difficult to understand why Ibn Taymiyya should have chosen to attack the entire system of logic through the theories of definition and syllogistics. Since the beginning of the fourth/tenth century, Arabic logicians had held that the acquisition of knowledge, as well as the principles governing the correct uses of the methods and processes by means of which knowledge is acquired, are the tasks of logic. As there must be some postulates presupposing the acquisition of new knowledge, logic was seen as the sole tool through which sound human knowledge can be derived and augmented. On this view, then, logic stood not merely as a set of tautologies, but equally served as an epistemic system, a theory of knowledge proper. In this theory, it was emphasized that, to avoid an infinite regress, the mind must be seen as proceeding from some *a priori* or pre-existent axiomatic knowledge to new concepts (*taṣawwurāt*) by means of definitions. If we know, for instance, what 'rationality' and 'animality' are, we can form a concept in our minds of 'man', who is defined as 'a rational animal'. It is through definitions, then, that concepts are formed.

Once such concepts are acquired, the mind can proceed to a more active level of knowledge by predicating one concept of another. If we have formed the concepts of 'man' and 'intelligent', we can formulate the judgement (*taṣdīq*), true or false, that 'man is intelligent'. A still more developed stage of knowledge may be reached by constructing or ordering (*ta'rif*) judgements in such a manner that we may obtain an inference—be it syllogistic, inductive, analogical, or some other form of argument. However, following in the footsteps of Aristotle, Arabic logicians deemed the syllogism as the only argument capable of yielding apodictic knowledge, and thus they considered it the chief, indeed the only, tool which can bring about *taṣdīq* with certitude.

In order to achieve a complete definition (*ḥadd tāmm*), which is the ultimate pursuit of the logician, there must be taken into account the species (*anwā'*), the genera (*ajnās*), and the differences (*fuṣūl*) partaking in the composition of the definiendum. Failing that, a property (*khāṣṣa*) or a general accident (*'araḍ 'āmm*) may be employed in delimiting the definiendum, though such a delimitation would not be a definition proper but merely a description (*rasm*). Instead of the definition of man as 'a rational animal', a description would be 'a laughing animal', 'laughing' being an accidental attribute. In either case, however, it is through Porphyry's five predicables that a definition or a description may be obtained.

Complete or real definition, the highest objective of the definer, requires a statement of the definiendum's quiddity, represented in the essential attributes constituting the genus and the difference to the exclusion of the property and the general accident. But in making a statement of the quiddity, only the essence as essence must be understood to be constitutive (*muqawwim*) of the quiddity. The essence is that without which a thing having this essence can never be an object of our apprehension. Nor does a thing, to be characterized, require a cause other than its own essence. Blackness is in itself a colour, not due to another factor rendering it a colour; that which caused it to be blackness caused it first to be a colour. More important, the essence cannot, by definition, be removed from a thing of which it is an essence without removing that thing from both mental and extramental existence: the essence as essence is both identical with, and the cause of, quiddity.

An essence in itself has no necessary connection with existence, for existence is *superadded to*, and is *not constitutive of*, quiddity. But existence may attach to the essence either in the mind or in the external world. Genus and difference constitute the means (*sabab*) that bring



about the mental existence of the essence, while form and matter make up the cause of the external existence when individuation is realized. Hence, essence considered as essence exists neither in the mind nor in the external world.

When quiddity attaches to existence, it also becomes attached to attributes that are accidental to it, but which are either separable (*mufāriq*) or inseparable from it (*ghayr mufāriq*). The latter are necessary to (*lāzim*), and constantly conjoined with, quiddity, although they are neither constitutive nor a part of quiddity. In contrast with 'figure', which is the quiddity of a triangle, the attribute necessary to, but separable from, such a quiddity is the triangle's having angles equal to two right angles. The triangle's angles amounting to two right angles represents a necessary quality of triangles but cannot be possible prior to the formation of the *figure* making up the quiddity of a triangle. A necessary, inseparable attribute must thus presuppose a quiddity; and it is in this sense that such an attribute is not constitutive.

In contrast to the necessary and inseparable attribute, the separable attribute, by definition, neither attaches to, nor is necessarily concomitant with, quiddity. The accidental nature of such a predicable allows it to be attached to, or separated from, a subject according to degrees. Youth, for instance, is a separable attribute that detaches itself from man at a pace slower than does the position of sitting down or standing up.

Now, this philosophical doctrine of essence and accident was propagated by Ibn Sīnī, whose writings on the issue represent the culmination of a process that began at least as early as Aristotle, but still served, in its Avicennian form, as the basis of later philosophical discourse. The doctrine puts forth two postulates that emerge as salient features of the basic distinction between essence and accident. These postulates require a distinction to be drawn between quiddity and its existence, and also between essential and necessary, inseparable attributes. It is precisely these two distinctions, together with the more general but fundamental distinction between essence and accident, that formed the chief target of Ibn Taymiyya's criticism of the larger issue of real, complete definition.

Against the foregoing distinction between essence and accident, Ibn Taymiyya forcefully argues that there is nothing intrinsically inherent and objective in such a distinction. That one attribute is considered essential while another accidental is no more than a convention (*waqf*) according to which matters in the natural world are viewed in a certain manner: and convention is nothing but the result of what a group of people invents (*takhtari*) and agrees to use or accepts as a norm. Just as a person can speak of man as a rational animal, another can speak of man as a laughing animal. A person may, in agreement with Greek and Arabic logicians, deem colour an essential attribute of redness and still refuse to take animality to be an essential attribute of man. For Ibn Taymiyya, the attributes of a thing are those attached to it in extramental existence, nothing more or less, and they are all of the same kind. Attempts at designating a particular quality as essential while another as accidental are entirely arbitrary. Besides, such a distinction presumably allows one to conceive an essence abstracted from its necessary attributes, or more concretely, it makes it possible to conceive a crow without including in our apprehension that it is black. The distinction between essential and accidental attributes is simply not found in the objective world of things.

Such a distinction is thus man's own creation and is relative to the particular individual and his own perception of things in the world. More specifically, the distinction is determined by



one's own intention (*maqṣad*) as well as the language (*lafẓ*) that one uses to classify and categorize these things. Here, Ibn Taymiyya clearly anticipates the more recent criticism voiced, among others, by Locke. According to this criticism, attributes are neither essential nor accidental in themselves, but can be so categorized according to our particular view of, and subjective interest in, them. We define tables, for instance, mainly on the basis of our interest in them and the function they have in our lives, without any regard to their colours. If we change the colour of a table from black to green, the change will be considered accidental and thus will not effect a change in our real definition of it. But if our interest in tables lies in their colour, then the same objective reality would be categorized rather differently, and this difference is strictly a function of the language and words that we use to label things existing in the objective world. Imagine a language that does not have the universal term 'table' but instead employs the term 'teeble' for green tables, and 'towble' for brown tables, etc., since the interest of this language and those who speak it lies in the colours of tables. Thus if a teeble is painted brown, it will be *essentially* changed into a towble. A less hypothetical example is afforded by the Arabic language. The fruits growing on palm trees and commonly known in the English language as dates, regardless of whether they are ripe or not, are called in Arabic by several specialized terms, each coined to characterize a particular stage of maturity. Accordingly, *busr* (unripe dates) will cease to be *busr* once they become somewhat ripe, when they will acquire the name *ruṭab*. A more advanced stage of maturity will render them *tamr*. In this case, the real essence changes in accordance with the alteration of the quality of ripeness, a quality not reflected in the English usage. What is essential in Arabic is not necessarily so in English.

The conventions of language also involve another use of nominal essences relative to the special circumstances of individuals using words or referring to things. Real essences require the use of a language that precisely describes, and corresponds to, the quiddity of a thing. Ibn Taymiyya avers that this is not always possible since a person may think of an essence in terms that are wider but inclusive (*taḍammun*) of the essence, or through words that imply or explicitly entail (*iltizām*) that essence. Again, the cases of the Arabic and English linguistic conventions seem adequate to illustrate Ibn Taymiyya's point. The use of the word 'dates' in the English language is inclusive of the essential attributes found in the Arabic *busr*. In this case, the word 'dates' and its real definition remain wider than the objective, external reality of *busr*. Likewise, within one and the same language, the term 'laughing' may be used to indicate 'man' by entailment, since man is the only 'laughing' being.

Thus, the distinction, in Ibn Taymiyya's view, between essential and accidental, necessary attributes is as arbitrary as it is conventional and subjective. Against the argument that the quiddity must occur in the mind prior to the accidental attributes, he insists that a person may conceive the blackness of a thing—blackness being an accidental attribute according to the logicians—without at all conceiving that what he has conceived is a colour, this latter being in their view the quiddity. So also can the mind conceive a human without conceiving that he or she is rational. Thus, just as arbitrary as the distinction between essence and accident is the preferential arrangement of attributes, an arrangement which, Ibn Taymiyya forcefully argues, can exist only in the mind. In the external world there simply exists no such arrangement.

In Ibn Taymiyya's view, the philosophers' arbitrary and, at best, conventional distinction between essence and accident is matched only by their other distinction between, on the

one hand, quiddity *qua* quiddity, that is, essence considered simply as essence, and, on the other, the ontological status of an essence. Essence as essence, Ibn Sīnā and his followers argue, exists neither in the mind nor in the external world. But when genus and difference or, alternatively, form and matter attach to it, it then comes into existence mentally or extramentally, respectively. For Ibn Taymiyya nothing can exist outside the realm of the external world and the sphere of the mind. The essence must therefore be limited to only one of these two modes of existence. In the external world an essence is merely the very thing which exists, a particular and unique individual, while in the mind essence is what is represented (*yartasim*) of that individual therein.

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Ibn Taymiyya's conception of nominal essences stood squarely in opposition to the philosophical doctrine of real essences and its metaphysical ramifications. The realism of this doctrine was bound to lead to a theory of universals that not only involved metaphysical assumptions unacceptable to such theologians as Ibn Taymiyya, but also resulted in conclusions about God and His existence that these theologians found even more objectionable. The dispute, then, centred around a realist theory of universals that, in the opinion of Ibn Taymiyya, proved a God existing merely in the human mind, not in external reality.

We have seen that in the Avicennian tradition essence in itself has no mental or external existence, and that in order for such an essence to subsist in the two modes of existence certain qualities must be added to it. In the same vein, an essence in itself is neither universal nor particular, and in order for it to become universal, universality, which is an accident that exists only in the mind, must be added to it once the mind abstracts the essence from extramental particulars. This abstraction, however, is not limited to the essence of particulars; rather, the mind also abstracts what Ibn Sina characterized as that which is 'common to many' in external reality. Therefore, universality, while being separable from essence, does exist in the external world.

From the foregoing it follows that universals may be, according to a dominant classification, natural, logical, or mental. The natural universal (*kullī ṭabīʿī*) is commonly defined as the nature or quiddity as it is in itself, that is, when it is neither a universal nor a particular, neither existent nor non-existent, neither one nor many, etc.; it is absolute (*muṭlaq*) and unconditioned by anything (*lā bi-sharṭ shay*). The logical universal (*kullī manṭiqī*), on the other hand, is the accident of universality *qua* universality; it is absolute and unattached to anything (*muṭlaq bi-sharṭ al-iṭlāq*). Universality in so far as it is universality, being a logical construct, was generally considered to exist only in the mind without having any ontological status externally. Finally, the mental universal (*al-kullī al-'aqlī*) represents the conjunction in the mind of the nature in itself and universality in itself, that is, nature conditioned by universality (*bi-sharṭ lā shay*).

Moreover, many Avicennian Neoplatonists held the view that these universals subsist in three modes of existence. The first mode is that of divine and angelic minds where they exist 'prior to multiplicity' (*qabl al-kathra*); thereafter, they exist 'in multiplicity' (*fī al-kathra*), when they are individuated in the sublunar world of generation and corruption. And last, they subsist 'after multiplicity' (*ba'd al-kathra*), when, having been abstracted, they exist in our minds.

This theory of universals constitutes the foundation upon which a crucial aspect of philosophical and mystical metaphysics rests. Both Ibn Sīnā and Ibn 'Arabī, and their respective followers, have identified God with absolute existence (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*). Ibn 'Arabī, Qūnawī, and their like took absolute existence to be existence in itself, unconditioned and unaffected by anything (*lā bi-sharṭ shay*). Ibn Sina had already subscribed to a conception of absolute existence that is conditioned by a denial of affirmative attributes (*bi-sharṭ nafy al-umūr al-thubūtiyya*). Still others are reported to have identified such an existence with an absolute existence that is conditioned by complete absoluteness and universality (*bi-sharṭ al-īṭ lāq*). Now, whatever sort of absolute existence was advocated by these philosophers and mystics, all of them affirmed, expectedly, that the absolute existence they postulated exists in the external world.

It is then quite clear that what is at stake in adopting a realist theory of universals is no less than an entire metaphysic. And it is through an examination of this theory, which belongs squarely to the sphere of logic, that Ibn Taymiyya attempts to show how involved logic is in metaphysics. In literally dozens of his treatises, Ibn Taymiyya untiringly asserts time and again that universals can never exist in the external world; they can exist only in the mind and nowhere else. In the external world only individuated particulars exist, particulars that are specific, distinct, unique. Each individual exists in the context of a reality (*ḥaqīqa*) that is different from other realities. The uniqueness of such realities renders the individual what it is in so far as it is an individual (*huwa bi-hā huwā*). It is one of Ibn Taymiyya's cardinal beliefs that externally existing individuals are so distinct and different from one another that they cannot allow for the formation of an external universal under which they are subsumed. Between these individuals there can only be an aspect or aspects of similarity but they cannot be entirely identical. From this it necessarily follows, and Ibn Taymiyya states it explicitly, that the universality of the genus, species, and difference cannot be the essence, and that individual members classed under one of these universals are not identical in essence.

The fact that externally existing individuals are only similar and not identical does not mean that universals cannot be formed. The mind can abstract that quality (or qualities) which is common to a group of externally existing individuals, thus creating a universal that corresponds (*yuṭābiq*) to these individuals. But Ibn Taymiyya rejected the view, espoused by the philosophers, that universals abstracted in this fashion or otherwise partake in the individuals in the external world. The uniqueness of the individual simply precludes the universal, which is common to many, from existing externally. The universal is nothing more than a common, general meaning that the mind retains in order to signify individuals in the real, natural world. The universal and abstract mental meaning, Ibn Taymiyya seems to be saying, is identical with the verbal utterance and the written word that stand for that meaning. The written word corresponds to, and expresses, the verbal utterance, just as the verbal utterance represents and corresponds to the mental concept which applies to any one of the externally existing individuals. In the external world there exists no single entity that can be applied to individuals under which they can be said to be subsumed.

Ibn Taymiyya's rejection of externally existing universals perfectly agrees with, and in fact goes further to enhance, his total opposition to the distinction drawn between quiddity and its existence, particularly its extramental existence. The essence, for him, is no more than a generalization or abstraction by the mind of externally existing individuals; thus, an essence has no existence other than in the mind. Accordingly, man *qua* man, or an absolute man or

human, exists only as a mental concept. From this it follows that all universals, be they natural, logical, or mental, have only mental existence, precisely like absolute existence when conditioned or unconditioned by anything. If absolute existence is merely a mental concept, then the Necessary Existent does not exist in external reality. This conclusion, in Ibn Taymiyya's view, not only demonstrates the confusion and absurdity of the philosophers and mystics who hold a realist theory of universals, but also places them within the pale of heresy and unbelief.

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To say that undermining the philosophical and mystical doctrine of absolute existence was less than crucial for Ibn Taymiyya would be to underestimate the metaphysical consequences of the realist theory of universals, at least as this theory or its ramifications were understood by our author. Refuting this theory was essential because such a refutation proved not only that the God of the philosophers and the mystics is a fabrication of their own minds and has no real external existence, but also prepared the ground for launching another level of criticism against what may perhaps be described as the two most fundamental doctrines of speculative mysticism, namely, the doctrine of 'fixed prototypes' and that of the Unity of Existence.

It is instructive to note here that Ibn Taymiyya's unrelenting attack on the philosophers was in fact double-edged. On the one hand, by refuting philosophical logic he advanced his critique of the metaphysical doctrines of *falsafa*, and, on the other, by undermining logic in general and the realist theories of essences and universals in particular, he sought to shake the dogmatic foundation of mystical pantheism. It is patently clear that Ibn Taymiyya held the philosophers—and, incidentally, the Jahmīs, whom he accused of stripping God of all attributes—responsible for the pantheistic heresies of Ibn Sab'in, Qūnawī, Tilimsānī, Ibn 'Arabī, and their followers.

The first of the two fundamental doctrinal principles upon which speculative mysticism in general and that of Ibn 'Arabī in particular was based is the postulate that non-existents are things that subsist in non-existence (*al-ma'dūm shay' thābit fī al-'adam*). This doctrine is directly connected with the Aristotelian and Avicennian conception of universals and, to a lesser extent, with the forerunner of this conception, the Platonic Ideas. Also connected with this doctrine is the Ishrāqī theory of universals which proclaims that universals exist in the external world as incorporeal substances which subsist in a separate non-material world of archetypes (*ālam al-mithāl*). Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyya associates a modified version of this doctrine with the Mu'tazilīs and Rāfiḍīs. On the view of later speculative mystics, before coming into existence things in the external phenomenal world are potentialities in the mind of the Absolute. God's knowledge of these things, which Ibn 'Arabī called the 'fixed prototypes of things' (*al-a'yān al-thābita*), is identical with His knowledge of Himself, and thus they are both ideas in His mind as well as particular modes of the divine essence. Now, Ibn Taymiyya understood Ibn 'Arabī's to be saying that these prototypes of things as well as their quiddities are not created, and that the external existence of things is a quiddity added to their quiddities. Such an understanding entails the conclusion, which Ibn Taymiyya must have been more than happy to reach, that the prototypes of things subsist outside God's mind, thus making God less than the creator of the universe. This conception would certainly seem harmonious with Ibn 'Arabī's creed that things in the world cannot be changed, not even by God Himself. For this God, on this creed, is not the transcendent God

of the monotheistic religions, but rather an Absolute Being who manifests Himself in all forms of existence in the universe.

This theory of prototypes is inextricably connected with the second Ṣūfī principle of the Unity of Existence. Here, external existence has no being or meaning apart from God, for God, the Absolute Existent, is the only real existence outside the mind. The world is merely a manifestation of the Absolute, and thus it is no more than an expression of divine external existence. From the proposition that reality is one and indivisible, it was easy to maintain, as Ibn Taymiyya did, that in the view of Ibn ʿArabī, Tilimsānī, and other pantheists, the existence of created beings is identical with the existence of the Creator, and that God is indistinguishable from that reality which is other than He.

For Ibn Taymiyya, the theological and juristic ramifications of the doctrine of the Unity of Existence could hardly be more dangerous. Theologically, this doctrine, whether in its milder form expressed by Ibn ʿArabī or the more radical version espoused by Tilimsānī, Farghānī, and al-Ṣadr al-Rūmī, obliterated the distinction between cause and effect, primary and secondary, creator and created. In this doctrine, God becomes the universe, and the universe becomes God, and whatever attribute one cares to attach to created beings will be equally predicable of God. This fact alone suffices to prove the heresies of these pantheists. Moreover, from the juristic standpoint, obliterating the distinctions between God and the universe necessarily entails that in effect there can be no Sharīʿa, since the deontic nature of the Law presupposes the existence of someone who commands (*āmir*) and others who are the recipients of the command (*māʾmūr*), namely, God and his subjects. On these grounds, Ibn Taymiyya strongly charges all pantheists, including Ibn Arabi, with rescinding the Sharīʿa.

It is therefore not surprising that Ibn Taymiyya should equate the speculative mystics' damaging effects on the Sharīʿa with the havoc wreaked by the Tatar invasion of the Eastern Caliphate. That Ibn Taymiyya thought the conscription of the masses in the cause of antinomian Ṣūfism to be as destructive as the Tatars' oppressive control of the community and its Law, easily explains the priority he gave to the refutation of the philosophical foundations of their doctrines.

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Ibn Taymiyya considered the task of demolishing the methodological foundations of philosophy to be incomplete without demonstrating the weaknesses inherent in the syllogism and, more specifically, in syllogistic demonstration. Philosophy obviously rests on arguments, and all valid arguments, it was asserted as early as Aristotle, involve syllogistic reasoning. Even more than his physics and metaphysics, Aristotle's theory of syllogistics and demonstration, which stands central in his *Organon*, remained predominant among later Arabic and non-Arabic philosophers. It was a number of the fundamental rules which govern this theory that Ibn Taymiyya set out to refute.

Aristotle defined the syllogism as 'discourse in which, certain things being stated, something other than what is stated follows of necessity from their being so'. Demonstration, on the other hand, he defined as 'a syllogism productive of scientific knowledge, a syllogism, that is, the grasp of which is *eo ipso* such knowledge ... [T]he premisses of demonstrated knowledge must be true, primary, immediate, better known than and prior to the conclusion'.



A syllogism, Aristotle further stated, is an inference in which the conclusion necessarily follows from two and only two premisses. 'Whenever three terms are so related to one another that the last is contained in the middle as in a whole, and the middle is either contained in, or excluded from, the first as in or from a whole, the extremes must be related by a perfect syllogism.' The three terms, by force of the *Dictum de omni et nullo*, thus require a pair of premisses. A syllogism consisting of one premiss, Aristotle explicitly states, cannot result in a conclusion. Furthermore, one of the two premisses must be affirmative and at least one must be universal. Without meeting these requirements a syllogism will be either impossible or irrevocably defective.

According to this doctrine, then, the syllogism, when valid, has the following features. First, as stated in Aristotle's definition of the syllogism given earlier, all syllogistic arguments of the categorical type must produce new knowledge, or as he elsewhere stated, a syllogism 'makes use of old knowledge to impart new'. Second, a syllogism must consist of no less and no more than two premisses, plus one premiss as a conclusion. Third, it must contain at least one universal premiss. These, of course, by no means constitute all the rules of the syllogism, though they are indeed indispensable for making a syllogism possible. All Arabic logicians writing in the Greek tradition have taken these rules for granted, and the centrality of these rules meant that successfully demolishing them would certainly be sufficient to prove the invalidity or, at least, the uselessness of the syllogistic theory. This is precisely what Ibn Taymiyya set out to do.

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It is significant that, despite his intense disapproval of Greek logic, Ibn Taymiyya insisted on, and never retracted, the proposition that the categorical syllogism is formally impeccable. We have no indication that he was aware of the now well-known critique made by Sextus Empiricus nearly six centuries earlier. The latter strongly argued, as in fact have several other philosophers more recently that the syllogism involves a *petitio principii*, since the conclusion, which is to be proven, is already found (or at least implicit) in the premisses. We are certain, however, that despite the constant preoccupation of medieval Muslim scholars with the issue of circular reasoning (*dawr*), Ibn Taymiyya seems never to have associated the syllogistic form of argument with circularity. This is somewhat surprising since, as we shall see, Ibn Taymiyya persisted in the view that in so far as things in the external world are concerned, the syllogism can lead to no new knowledge whatsoever; in a syllogism treating of such existents there is nothing in the conclusion that is not already found in the premisses. The substantive arguments he adduced to vindicate this position could have been extended—I believe with relative ease—to a more serious charge that the syllogism inherently begs the question. But Ibn Taymiyya does not seem to have been ready to make such a categorical charge.

Why he did not make such a charge is not readily obvious. Ibn Taymiyya conceived the syllogism as an inference that may deal either with mental concepts or with things in the real, objective world. Mental concepts are ideas that can have no external existence, such as, for instance, the rules of mathematics, geometry, and logic. The Law of the Excluded Middle, the Law of Contradiction, mathematical truths, and other similar principles, have no real ontological status apart from their existence in particulars. Yet because they are irrefutable as universal propositions, they can lead to knowledge of particulars subsumed under them. In other words, because, for example, the Law of the Excluded Middle is



irrefutable without it being necessary to enumerate all the particular instances in the world falling under such law, we can derive new knowledge from this law about something that was not considered when the law came to be formulated in our minds. But since the Law of the Excluded Middle is entirely mental, any new knowledge that would be derived therefrom is also mental, teaching nothing about things existing in the natural world. Thus, by acknowledging the possibility of acquiring new knowledge by means of syllogistic reasoning, Ibn Taymiyya was not willing to accept the claim that the form of the categorical syllogism entails the fallacy of a *petitio principii*. At the same time, however, Ibn Taymiyya could not see the utility of mathematical and logical knowledge for the human understanding of the real world. He simply dismissed this knowledge as irrelevant.

The insistence upon the formal validity of the categorical syllogism was due not only to his conviction of the validity of the syllogism in mathematical and geometrical matters, but also of its validity when dealing with external existents. His argument that in such syllogisms there is nothing in the conclusion that is not already found in the premisses cannot, strictly speaking, be interpreted as meaning that a *petitio principii* is involved in these syllogisms, although, admittedly, a case for circularity can be made.

Syllogisms treating of matters in the external world do not yield new knowledge, on the grounds that the so-called universal premisses they contain are not truly universal. They are formed through an enumeration of particulars which, however numerous, can never be the entirety of the particulars existing in the external world. The formulation of a universal then proceeds from particulars to a universal, and then to the same particulars which were enumerated when the universal was formed. In these pseudo-universals, whenever a new particular arises, the universal is no more helpful in deducing an attribute found in that particular than is the particular in lending credibility to the universal. Hence, we can hardly learn anything about the particular through the universal without first learning something about the particular itself.

The sterility of the syllogism for studying *natura rerum* is then to be attributed to a problematic inherent, not in the formal structure of the argument, but rather in the epistemic value of the premiss which is claimed to be universal. Ibn Taymiyya retained the view that apart from the universal statements embodied in the revealed texts, all universal propositions uttered about things in the real world are formed through observation of particulars. This empiricist attitude, however, raises a problem in Ibn Taymiyya's critique. Thus far we have seen him as an advocate of the position that the only non-divine, certain, and exhaustive universals are those employed in mathematics and geometry. And as a confirmation of this position we find him in one place declaring that mathematical principles, such as 'one is half two', are *a priori*, for God implants them in our souls upon birth. Surely, a flagrant contradiction ensues from this assertion, since he also holds that all unrevealed universals are the result of generalizations made by the mind on the basis of empirical observations of particulars that share a certain attribute. A detailed analysis of the apparent contradiction will take us beyond the bounds of this introduction. I will only argue that one way out of this dilemma might lie in establishing a chronology for Ibn Taymiyya's relevant works. The statement concerning the *a priori* character of mathematical universals is found in *Naqd al-Mantiq*, a work whose contents point to a date of composition earlier than his *al-Radd*, where he set forth his arguments in the greatest detail. In the latter work we find a consistent empiricist view to the effect that all universal propositions, including mathematical and geometrical universals, are acquired through an empirical observation of particulars. It

is Ibn Taymiyya's thesis that aside from revelation all human knowledge begins with particulars. The mind first conceives a particular 'one' and then judges it to be half of a particular 'two'. Such knowledge does not come into existence in isolation from the particulars found in the phenomenal world. Having observed that two equal parts of one thing constitute two halves, the mind, upon observing the recurrence of this phenomenon in a number of qualitatively different particulars, will form the generalization that one is half of two. This conception accords with Ibn Taymiyya's cardinal principle that knowledge of particulars occurs in the mind prior to knowledge of the universal, for one knows that ten pebbles is twice the number of five pebbles before knowing that every number is divisible by two and that any number is two times as large as either one of its halves.

If we accept Ibn Taymiyya's position that all universal propositions represent mental generalizations formed on the basis of empirical observation of external particulars, then another difficulty arises with regard to reconciling this position with his earlier assertion that mathematical and geometrical universals do not involve a *petitio principii* since their truth does not depend on a complete enumeration of the relevant particular instances. Now, nowhere does Ibn Taymiyya address the difficulty as posed here. It is clear, however, that he does not develop a classification of universals into types, though he certainly thought of universal propositions as belonging to at least two categories: one is irrefutable, and the other is not. Mathematical principles belong to the former, while empirical propositions belong to the latter. Universal propositions about medical matters, grammatical rules, habitual events in nature, etc., can never be conclusive and irrefutable. The mind cannot simply rule out the possibility of contrariety, such as in the case of the universal proposition 'All animals move their lower jaw when they chew', a proposition proven false by the fact that crocodiles move their upper jaw when feeding. On the other hand, mathematical and geometrical principles are irrefutable, although the mind initially apprehends them by abstracting them from particulars in the external world. Ibn Taymiyya seems to have thought that, once abstracted, these propositions become virtually axiomatic in the mind, and are not susceptible to refutation. Unfortunately, however, we find no explanation as to why mathematical universals, unlike empirical propositions, become irrefutable despite the fact that both types of propositions are abstracted from particulars.

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The philosophers' claims for the truth of the universal proposition in a categorical syllogism drew more than one critical argument from Ibn Taymiyya. In the first place, he insisted that all syllogistic reasoning about things in the external world proceeds from less than universal premisses, since the alleged universality of premisses in such syllogisms is established by incomplete induction. We shall see later how our critic employed this argument in his attack against the philosophers' doctrine which assigns to the syllogism a place logically and epistemologically superior to that of analogy. But even if we suppose, Ibn Taymiyya maintains, that such a premiss is indeed universal, the categorical syllogism remains none the less useless. The first of the two arguments he adduces to prove his proposition is one that derives from Islamic legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), a theory that tends to view all syllogistic arguments of the categorical type, not as inferences, but rather as linguistic analysis of the particulars embedded in a universal statement. These particulars, however, are not to be found subsumed under the universal proposition through a middle term, since the very language expressing the proposition speaks of the predicate as applicable to every individual subsumed under the subject. The implications of this view are clear: the universal premiss

speaks of all its particulars without the need for a middle, and this means that in an inference of the categorical type the minor premiss is superfluous. Indeed, even the conclusion amounts to little more than a particular emphasis upon the major, universal premiss. The conclusion 'Socrates is mortal' does nothing but emphatically particularize the fact expressed in the categorical premiss 'All men are mortal'.

Closely related to, if not part of, this criticism is an argument urged against the famous logical doctrine, first stated by Aristotle, that the premisses of the syllogism must ultimately originate in truths that are necessary and indemonstrable. Ibn Taymiyya maintains that if the syllogistic premisses revert back to self-evident, indemonstrable truths, then all particulars subsumed under these truths are *a priori* self-evident and thus do not need a syllogism.

The other argument he produces against the syllogism issues from his empiricist world-view, namely, that in the external world only individuals exist. It is the knowledge we acquire about these particulars that allows us to form the so-called universal propositions, not the other way round. Our knowledge then proceeds from the particular to the general, from the one to the many. The syllogism is thus useless since through it we are led to knowledge that we have already acquired from the particular. We come to the knowledge that Socrates is mortal before we know that all humans are mortal.

It turns out then that in confirmation of the largely enigmatic acknowledgement of the formal validity of the categorical syllogism, Ibn Taymiyya apparently could not credit the syllogism with impeccable structure or semantic force. Indeed, by insisting on syllogistic entailment as a case of the obvious subsumability of individuals under the universal premiss, Ibn Taymiyya was able to dispense with the *Dictum de omni et nullo*, the backbone sustaining the categorical syllogism. Furthermore, doing away with the *Dictum* also enabled him to question another crucial requirement in the categorical syllogism, namely, that every syllogism must contain no more and no less than two premisses. As we have seen, he deems a truly universal premiss sufficient to yield a conclusion. He demands no other premiss for the inference because all the knowledge needed subsists in that universal premiss. Yet, one premiss may not suffice if the reasoner finds himself in need of additional data in order to arrive at the required conclusion. Thus, the number of premisses in the argument is determined by the particular needs of the reasoner, needs that vary from one person to another. Knowledge is so relative, he maintains, that the same matter may be quite self-evident for one person and not so for another.

That confining the number of premisses in the syllogism to two is arbitrary is proven, he asserts, by the logicians' recognition of the validity of both the enthymeme and the sorites. One of the major reasons given for the suppression of the premiss in the enthymeme is the fact that the premiss is obvious. The suppression of one premiss owing to its clarity is proof that at times one premiss may be all that is needed. At other times, however, even two premisses may be insufficient to yield a conclusion, and thus three or more premisses may be required. The need for more than two premisses is again attested by the logicians' acceptance of the sorites, which is a compound syllogism consisting of a chain of syllogisms in which each term except the first and last occurs twice, once as subject and once as predicate. Thus, the sorites and enthymeme, in Ibn Taymiyya's view, make nonsense of the two-premiss stipulation. If all the premisses upon which the knowledge of the conclusion

depends are to be mentioned, then the number of premisses may be only one or it may exceed ten.

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Thus, the syllogism is open to criticism on more than one account, and as we have seen, the alleged universality of the syllogistic premiss seems to be most vulnerable. A complete induction of all particulars in the external world is postulated by Ibn Taymiyya as impossible, and thus cannot lead to a truly universal premiss or to certitude. The problematic nature inherent in the syllogism renders it hardly superior to analogy, since however valid the syllogism may be, it cannot, by virtue of form alone, lead to a certain conclusion. It is the *subject-matter* of the argument, *not its form*, that determines the truth of the conclusion. If the form is irrelevant, and if the so-called universal premiss in the syllogism is not really universal, then how does the syllogism differ from analogy? Ibn Taymiyya answers that it does not. The syllogism does not differ from analogy except in form, and form, it has been said, is irrelevant to the acquisition of knowledge. Both analogy and the syllogism yield certitude when their subject-matter is veridical, and they result in mere probability when their subject-matter is uncertain. A syllogistic mode of reasoning will not result in a certain conclusion by virtue of form alone.

But what makes analogy and the syllogism equal? Ibn Taymiyya understands analogy in a more developed sense than do Aristotle and other Greek logicians. By the century in which he lived, analogy had already generated one of the most sophisticated discussions Islamic legal theory—and for that matter the history of thought—has ever known, and analogical reasoning was thus developed in an unprecedented manner. Moreover, and this is significant, Ibn Taymiyya was first and foremost a lawyer and jurist, and his world-view was considerably coloured by his characteristically juristic thinking. Now, legal analogy, the paradigm of all analogical reasoning in medieval Islam, was considered complete—but not necessarily valid—when it contained four elements: the original case, the assimilated case, the cause, and the judgement. The original case (*aṣl*) represents the precedent. In the proposition ‘Grape-wine is prohibited’ there is given both the original case, grape-wine, and its judgement (*ḥukm*), namely, prohibition. The assimilated case is the new case for which the jurist seeks to formulate a judgement. If the assimilated case proves to be equivalent to the original case by way of sharing the same cause, then the judgement in the original case is transferred to the assimilated case. Again, the case of wine affords a basic example. Grape-wine was prohibited by the Lawgiver owing to its intoxicating quality. Accordingly, intoxication represents the cause. Date-wine is a novel case whose legal status is yet to be determined. Like grape-wine, date-wine possesses the quality of intoxication which we establish through sense perception. Having determined that intoxication, the cause of the judgement, is present in both date-wine and grape-wine, we transfer the judgement, namely prohibition, to date-wine.

The syllogism, on the other hand, consists of the same elements. The middle term in a syllogism is the cause in an analogy, and the major premiss, which contains the major and middle terms, is equivalent in an analogy to the concomitance (*talāzum*) or necessary relation between the cause, on the one hand, and the original and assimilated cases, on the other. Whatever is required to prove the truth and certainty of the universal premiss in a syllogism will be required to prove that the cause is for certain always concomitant with the judgement. Put differently, the means through which we establish the truth of the

proposition 'All intoxicants are prohibited' are identical with those through which we prove that whenever there is a given intoxicant, prohibition is necessarily concomitant with it. In the same vein, the grounds on which the causality in a judgement may be refuted are identical with those on which the universality of the premiss of a syllogism may be questioned. If there is good reason to doubt the analogy 'Men are corporeal, analogous to horses, dogs, etc.', then there is as good a reason to doubt the major premiss 'All animals are corporeal'. However, since in the external world we have no way of establishing with certainty any universal proposition, we are left with propositions containing only probable knowledge, regardless of whether these propositions are employed in a syllogism or in an analogy. But analogy, Ibn Taymiyya goes on to say, is surely more informative as it includes the mention of at least one particular upon which the conclusion is based, whereas the syllogism, also probable, makes no mention of particulars.

It is obvious that Ibn Taymiyya does not credit the syllogism with the ability to bring about certitude any more than he does analogy. On first appearance he seems to overlook the commonly held doctrine that even if the premiss in a syllogism is not universal, it stands, on the scale of probability, superior to analogy. While the latter, on this doctrine, proceeds from a single particular, the former is established inductively on the basis of a number of particulars. If Ibn Taymiyya did not subscribe to this doctrine it is because he, like all his fellow legists, refused to limit analogy to an inference which proceeds from one particular to another. Islamic juristic theory had already developed a variety of methods and procedures through which the cause of the judgement in the original case is established. It was the task of these methods to verify the absence of another identical case or cases (particulars) in which the cause did not produce the same judgement. For if such a case does exist, the predication of the judgement in the original case becomes questionable, and the transfer of the judgement will not be possible. In the context of the syllogism, the existence of such a case means that the universality of the major premiss is highly dubious. Thus, establishing the universal character of the major premiss is equivalent to verifying that whenever there is a cause there is a judgement; and in the final analysis an examination of other particulars (cases) is involved in both inferences. The difference, if any, between analogical and syllogistic verification is that in the latter the universal subject and predicate are completely abstracted from the particulars, while in the former the predicate is affirmed of the subject in so far as one actual case (particular) is concerned, though such an affirmation is possible only through an examination of a certain number of other relevant cases. The process may be different but the result is identical.

When Ibn Taymiyya spoke of the identical natures of analogy and the categorical syllogism, he was speaking of an analogy whose cause is established by methods which presuppose an inductive survey of all relevant particulars. This developed conception of analogy, together with his considered opinion that in the natural, objective world there can be only refutable universal propositions, amounts to a position—which he does, indeed, take—that analogy and the categorical syllogism are equivalent and interchangeable. In fact, he goes further and argues that not only may an analogy be converted into a syllogism in the first figure and vice versa, but an analogical or syllogistic inference can also be recast in the form of hypothetical and disjunctive syllogisms.

Casting an inference in a formal or non-formal mode is possible, Ibn Taymiyya maintains, owing to the fact that the essence of any inference is not its form but rather the connection between the components within a proposition expressing certain relationships in the



external world. Things in the world are concomitant, and there can be no external particular that is not concomitant or conjoined in one form or another with other particulars. Concomitance (*talāzum*) exists in degrees of strength, from the much-coveted certitude to the lower degrees of probability. If we know for certain that whenever *A* exists, *B* also exists, we can infer with all certainty that *B* exists since we observe *A* to be in existence. Conversely, if we know with the same certainty that when *A* exists *B* can never exist, we will be able to judge without a shade of doubt that *B* now does not exist since *A* exists. In these inferences, whatever the form, our conclusion will be probable if the relationship of concomitance between *A* and *B* is less than certain.

It would hardly be an overstatement to say that for Ibn Taymiyya the challenge facing the logician lies not in an investigation of forms, figures, and moods—which he repeatedly characterizes as far too prolix and otiose—but rather in arriving at the truth and certainty of propositions. For him, this *is* the question. It is also not an exaggeration to maintain that Ibn Taymiyya was an ardent sceptic, but a sceptic who was saved by religion. Our simple minds, he persistently held, cannot establish certainty and truth in the natural world. The only source of truth and certainty is revealed knowledge, knowledge conveyed to us by the prophets. <>

## 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? In **ISLAM AND THE FATE OF OTHERS**, Mohammad Hassan Khalil examines the writings of influential medieval and modern Muslim scholars on the controversial and consequential question of non-Muslim salvation.

This is an illuminating study of four of the most prominent figures in the history of Islam: Ghazali, Ibn 'Arabi, Ibn Taymiyya, and Rashid Rida. Khalil demonstrates that though these paradigmatic figures tended to affirm the superiority of the Islamic message, they also envisioned a God of mercy and justice and a Paradise populated by Muslims and non-Muslims.

**ISLAM AND THE FATE OF OTHERS** reveals that these theologians' 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 widespread assumptions about Islamic scripture and thought. Along the way, Khalil examines the writings of many other important writers, such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Mulla Sadra, Shah Wali Allah of Delhi, Muhammad Ali of Lahore, James Robson, Sayyid Qutb, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Farid Esack, Reza Shah-Kazemi, T. J. Winter, and Muhammad Legenhausen. **ISLAM AND THE FATE OF OTHERS** is both timely and overdue.

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.

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## 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-‘Arabī (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 *kufṛ* (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-ākhirā*). 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-sā‘a*) (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. Those believers (*mu’minūn*, sing. *mu’min*) 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 Qurʾān, 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 Qurʾānic categories of righteous believers and unrighteous unbelievers is vexing. The Qurʾān 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—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 Qurʾānic 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 [*muḥaymin*] 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 [*minḥā*] 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 Qurʾān 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. 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 (**p.9**) 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 [‘Uzayr] is the son of God” (an ostensibly Arabian phenomenon), 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 *kufṛ* as opposing orientations with contrasting soteriological consequences. While *īmān* is usually translated as "belief," it also denotes faith, assent, sincerity, and fidelity; while *kufṛ* 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-Nasafi (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 eternity of Hell is considered standard in many foundational Western academic works that describe either Muslim scholarly views or the Qurʾān itself. The following examples serve to illustrate this point:

1. 1. In **ISLAM: THE STRAIGHT PATH**, specifically in a discussion of the Qurʾānic 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. 2. In **MAJOR THEMES OF THE QURʾAN** by Fazlur Rahman (d. 1988), we find a similar account of the life to come:

The central endeavor of the Qurʾān 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 QURʾĀN: 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 Qurʾān 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 *ʿ-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 Qurʾān contain *any* categorical affirmation of Hell’s eternity? 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 Qurʾānic reproof 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 Qurʾān 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 Qur'ān, 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 Qur'ān 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 Qur'ānic God as a concentrate of pure power, even as brute power—indeed, as a capricious tyrant. The Qur'ān, 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 Qur'ānic 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 'Abd 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 (*kufīr*), 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 ‘Arabī, 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 Shī‘ite, Māturīdite, and Mu‘tazilite. 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 ‘Arabī 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 ‘Arabī’s distinctive mystical vision and briefly looks at its impact on Sufi thought, as seen in the works of the Persian Shī‘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 Ash‘arite 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 neorealist 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 ‘Arabī 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 ‘Arabī 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 ‘Arabī’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 ‘Arabī 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 (*rahma*), 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 Mu‘tazilites, who made it a point to stress the correlation between justice and unceasing torment. (In fact, the Mu‘tazilites 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, Ash'arī, 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 Mu'tazilites 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 'Arabī'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 'Arabī 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, as we shall see in chapter 1, 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 (*shari‘a*) 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.

## **OTTOMAN PURITANISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS**

### **AHMAD AL-RUMI AL-AQHISARI AND THE QADIZADELIS** by Mustapha Sheikh [Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs, Oxford University Press, 9780198790761]

This book is about the emergence of a new activist Sufism in the Muslim world from the sixteenth century onwards, which emphasised personal responsibility for putting God’s guidance into practice. It focuses specifically on developments at the centre of the Ottoman Empire, but also considers both how they might have been influenced by the wider connections and engagements of learned and holy men and how their influence might have

been spread from the Ottoman Empire to South Asia in particular. The immediate focus is on the Qāḍīzādeli movement which flourished in Istanbul from the 1620s to the 1680s and which inveighed against corrupt scholars and heterodox Sufis. The book aims by studying the relationship between Aḥmad al-Rūmī al-Āqḥīṣārī's magisterial Majālis al-abrār and Qāḍīzādeli beliefs to place both author and the movement in an Ottoman, Ḥanafī, and Sufi milieu. In so doing, it breaks new ground, both in bringing to light al-Āqḥīṣārī's writings, and methodologically, in Ottoman studies at least, in employing line-by-line textual comparisons to ascertain the borrowings and influences linking al-Āqḥīṣārī to medieval Islamic thinkers such as Aḥmad b. Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, as well as to several near-contemporaries. Most significantly, the book finally puts to rest the strict dichotomy between Qāḍīzādeli reformism and Sufism, a dichotomy that with too few exceptions continues to be the mainstay of the existing literature.

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#### Excerpt:

Eleven centuries after the migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, corresponding to the seventeenth century of the Western calendar, the religious landscape of Ottoman Turkey was dramatically shaken by a movement of puritanical reformers and activists known as the Qāḍīzādelis. Drawn from a spectrum of backgrounds, but bound together by a unified vision for Ottoman society, these puritans were able to manoeuvre themselves into hugely significant positions of influence such that, by the reign of Sultan Murād IV (r. 1032/1623–1049/1640), they had a virtual monopoly over the pulpits of Istanbul's imperial mosques. Engaging in a campaign to claim back Islam from corrupt scholars and heterodox Sufis, the Qāḍīzādelis promulgated a return to the way of the *Salaf* (the early generations of Muslims), a new vision for the spiritual path and a form of violent activism which had not been seen in Ottoman lands before their time. Disseminating their teachings through the mosque sermon and scholarly writing, they were able to give renewed life to the centuries-old dialectic between orthodoxy and heresy. And drawing as much from local Ottoman Ḥanafism as they did from more exotic Sunni interpretations, these preachers and activists would make an indelible mark on Ottoman piety and serve as paragons for later generations of puritans and revivalists in both Ottoman Turkey and the wider Muslim world.

Qāḍizādeli polemic consisted of invective directed at a host of religious doctrines and practices that had currency in Ottoman lands. Among these were practices such as praying at the graves of saints, audible meditation, mystical singing, and extra-scriptural prayers performed in congregation. The movement was not content with rooting out heresies which impinged upon their interpretation of pristine Islam; it also targeted various social norms and behaviours which it believed compromised upright Muslim behaviour. In this regard, its members were actively opposed to the consumption of coffee, the use of tobacco and opium, and the presence of *kahvehanes* where these habits, deemed by them as licentious, typically happened. What marked the Qāḍizādelis apart within Ottoman society more broadly and from those in the learned hierarchy who shared their concerns about the moral well-being of society was that they placed responsibility for reform of the self, neighbours, and the broader community on the shoulders of the individual. Unsurprisingly, many Ottomans viewed the Qāḍizādelis as little more than an uncouth mob with an irrational and insatiable appetite for censure and violence. Indeed their attacking of religious and social practices that were deeply ingrained within Ottoman consciousness, and to a great extent cherished, would have made little sense to those around them. In every important sense, the Qāḍizādelis were disconnected from wider society, with little regard for much else besides their own utopian vision.

Interest in the Qāḍizādelis is growing fast, not only within the academic community but also, as indicated by online forums, the Muslim public. This should come as no surprise because through understanding the Qāḍizādelis there is the prospect of acquiring a better understanding of later manifestations of religious revivalism in the Muslim world, as well as the more obvious prospect of uncovering new data about a particularly inglorious moment in Ottoman history. These and other reasons have no doubt drawn scholars to the study of the Ottoman seventeenth century. Notwithstanding the burgeoning interest, it is clear that studies to date on the Qāḍizādelis have reached an impasse insofar as they seem unable to move beyond a construction of the movement which characterizes it as proto-fundamentalist. While this reading is by no means unwarranted given what we know historically about the Qāḍizādelis, it is also clear that the movement was more complex than this, coming as it did from within a local Ottoman-Ḥanafī milieu. A further problem with the existing literature is that, too often, scholars have accepted without scrutiny the observations of the Qāḍizādelis as recorded in contemporaneous or near-contemporary Ottoman accounts. This has led to a failure to properly understand the movement's reformist agenda. Moreover, anachronistic readings of the Qāḍizādelis in which they are cast as anti-Sufis, proto-Wahhābīs, or even a phenomenon *sui generis*, of neither the 'Ilmiyye nor from within the masses (*rā'īyya*), are not uncommon.

In terms of their scope, studies have shed important light on the contribution and role of Birgili Mehmed Efendi (d. 981/1573), widely considered the spiritual inspiration of the movement; Qāḍizāde Mehmed (d. 1044/1635), the movement's eponym and under whom the reformist agenda was catapulted into the political centre of Ottoman society; and Üstüwānī (d. 1072/1661) and Wānī Efendi (d. 1096/1685), leaders in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Their associations with the movement are now established and some progress towards understanding the significance of Qāḍizādeli writings has also been made. The best known Qāḍizādeli text is without doubt Birgili's *al-Ṭarīqat al-Muḥamadiyya*, which by the eighteenth century was one of the most widely owned books in the Ottoman domains, and which even today has a place on the curricula of madrasas across the Muslim

world. But there are other figures whose stories in relation to the Qāḍizādelis have yet to be told: Aḥmad al-Rūmī al-Āqḥiṣārī (d. 1041/1632), the subject of this study, is certainly one such figure. A Ḥanafī-Māturidī in terms of school affiliation, a Sufi and, most importantly, contemporary of Qāḍizāde Mehmed, the precise role that he had in relation to Qāḍizādeli puritanism is yet to be determined. This is surprising given that al-Āqḥiṣārī wrote over twenty treatises, many of which share Qāḍizādeli concerns. The first serious survey of al-Āqḥiṣārī's thought has only recently been published—the critical edition and translation of *Risāleh dukhāniyyeh*, or *Epistle on tobacco*, a text which sets out the reasons for the Anatolian's opposition to tobacco. Yet al-Āqḥiṣārī's scholarly *oeuvre* consists of much more than just jurisprudence. He wrote on, *inter alia*, theology, ḥadīth, Sufism, and the science of Qur'an recitation. There is therefore still much work to be done before a fuller appreciation is gained of al-Āqḥiṣārī's contribution to Ottoman puritanism in the seventeenth century.

There can be no doubt that al-Āqḥiṣārī's seminal contribution to Ottoman revivalism was his *Majālis al-abrār wa masālik al-akhyār wa maḥāyiq al-bida' wa maqāmi' al-ashrār*—*The Assemblies of the Pious and the Paths of the Excellent, The Obliteration of Innovations and the Curbing of the Wicked* (hereafter *Majālis al-abrār/Majālis*). A commentary on one hundred ḥadīths collected in the *Maṣābiḥ al-Sunna*—*The Lamps of the Tradition* of Abū Muḥammad Ḥuṣayn b. Mas'ūd al-Baghawī (d. 515/1122), *Majālis al-abrār* is a veritable manifesto for reform that aims to reset Muslim dogma and ritual practice such that both are consistent with his own conception of orthodoxy. Even a cursory perusal of its contents makes it clear why it deserves inclusion alongside the better-known texts of Qāḍizādeli Islam. Significantly, despite the tome that it is, *Majālis al-abrār*, like its author, has been almost entirely overlooked by scholars of Ottoman religious and intellectual history. Therefore the central purpose of this study is to subject the text and, to the extent possible, the author to scholarly inquiry, carefully reconstructing al-Āqḥiṣārī's ideas via a textual excavation of *Majālis al-abrār*. Al-Āqḥiṣārī's location within the Ottoman religious and intellectual milieu of the seventeenth century provides a massive opportunity for uncovering important facts about the programmatic dimension of the reform agenda of the Qāḍizādeli movement. The cumulative effect of these endeavours will provide the clearest picture yet of the aims and ambitions of the Qāḍizādelis generally and al-Āqḥiṣārī specifically.

The findings may be disquieting for those familiar with the existing literature on the Qāḍizādelis. *Majālis al-abrār* betrays al-Āqḥiṣārī's conceptualization of the spiritual path, one which is contiguous in many of its aspects with Naqshbandī mysticism; the study demonstrates conclusively that al-Āqḥiṣārī benefitted from the works of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) and his teacher, Aḥmad b. Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), a link which puts to rest the claim that Ibn Taymiyya's influence on modern Islamic revivalism, especially outside Wahhābī circles, does not begin until the nineteenth century; al-Āqḥiṣārī's advocacy of 'enjoining good and forbidding evil' (*al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa l-nahy 'an al-munkar*) takes on a violent hue, unknown in better-known Qāḍizādeli texts. The study will argue that this implies al-Āqḥiṣārī may have been responsible for the escalation of violence among Qāḍizādeli activists in the latter half of the seventeenth century, a programmatic shift which ultimately led to their downfall. To all intents and purposes, it seems that this forgotten puritan played a central role in the evolution of Qāḍizādeli Islam, standing alongside better-known ideologues like Birgili and Mehmed Qāḍizāde.

The study comprises five chapters. The first chapter is a historical survey of the Qāḍizādeli movement, focusing on its first phase, followed by a critical assessment of the existing

literature within the field. The second chapter introduces Aḥmad al-Rūmī al-Āqḥiṣārī and his tome, *Majālis al-abrār*. Via the textual excavation of the *Majālis*, al-Āqḥiṣārī's thought is situated within the intellectual and religious milieu of Ottoman Turkey, while the chapter also serves as the cornerstone for a reassessment of Qāḍizādeli activism more generally. Since a straightforward biographical account of al-Āqḥiṣārī's life and work is hindered by a lack of sources—the only mention that he is given in the addendum (*dhayl*) to Kātib Çelebi's *Kashf al-ẓunūn* is a brief statement, and in any case misidentifies him as a shaykh of the Khalwatī order—the only way to reconstruct his thought is via his writing. This chapter also introduces the themes and specific content of *Majālis al-abrār*, as well as the authorities cited by al-Āqḥiṣārī. The third chapter begins the textual excavation of *Majālis al-abrār*, commencing with an inquiry into al-Āqḥiṣārī's conception of the spiritual path. There is an examination of al-Āqḥiṣārī's advocacy of and commitment to Sufism, and the convergence of his outlook with the Naqshbandī path. It becomes clear that, despite obvious convergences, al-Āqḥiṣārī was unlikely to have been directly affiliated with the Naqshbandī order—more probably, his appropriation of central doctrines and key devotional practices associated with the order was but an element within a broader commitment towards reforming Ottoman Sufism, and therefore an aspect of the reformism associated with Birgili. The fourth chapter focuses on the principal concern of the *Majālis*, namely the discussion of innovations (*bid'a*) in ritual worship. Al-Āqḥiṣārī cites some of the most famous texts penned on the subject but, as the chapter demonstrates, no text within this scholastic genre is as influential on his thinking as *Iqtidā' al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyya. Since no explicit mention of the *Iqtidā'* is made in the *Majālis*, a detailed textual comparison is undertaken in order to demonstrate the places in the text where al-Āqḥiṣārī either cites verbatim or paraphrases parts of the *Iqtidā'*. A further aim of the chapter is to bring to light those aspects of al-Āqḥiṣārī's reform programme that justify him being linked to the Qāḍizādelis. The final chapter constitutes a survey of the activist strand within al-Āqḥiṣārī's writing, particularly the demand he placed on the Muslim faithful to actively engage in enjoining good and forbidding evil. There is also an assessment of the broader implications of the research findings, including a discussion on al-Āqḥiṣārī's influence beyond the Ottoman lands. The design of this study is guided by its commitment to analysis over historical narrative. It therefore commences with a broad assessment of al-Āqḥiṣārī's ideological outlook, looking particularly at his views on Sufism and his conceptualization of religious innovation, before proceeding with a detailed examination of his revivalist programme. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of al-Āqḥiṣārī's contribution to Ottoman revivalism and avoids the generalizations and misinterpretations that have beleaguered previous studies on the Qāḍizādelis.

Although virtually ignored by Turkish and Western scholarship, the *Majālis* was twice edited in India. The first edition was published in Delhi in 1866; the text includes an interlinear translation into Urdu by Subḥān Bakhsh al-Shikārpūrī and bears the title, *Khazīnat al-asrār—The Treasury of Secrets*. The second edition was published in Lucknow in 1903, the work of 'Abd al-Walī al-Madrāsī, and also comprises an interlinear Urdu translation. It bears the title, *Matāriḥ al-anẓār, tarjamat Majālis al-abrār—The Objects of Examinations, Translation of the Sessions of the Pious*. While some consideration is given to what might have been the possible appeal of the *Majālis* to the nineteenth-century Indian revivalists and reformers, establishing how the text reached the Indian subcontinent falls outside the scope of this study.





A folio from the MS *Michot 0402*

In the tradition of Michot, al-Āqḥiṣārī will largely be allowed to speak for himself. Translations from *Majālis al-abrār* as well as other relevant material from al-Āqḥiṣārī's *oeuvre* feature in generous doses within the body of the present study. All references are to the *Michot 0402* manuscript of the *Majālis* since the two editions of the text are based on incomplete hand-written copies. The manuscript that serves as the basis of this study behoves some description: bound in leather and decorated with a floral motif, it is of thin paper, each folio having a lined-border of red ink. There are annotations and corrections in the margins that are written in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish. The text was copied in a cursive Naskh script though the style is largely regular. At certain places there are additional bits of paper attached to the manuscript which bear notes. There are no stamps suggesting who the original owner might have been or signs that it was an endowment. While the date of the copy and copier are not available anywhere in the manuscript, a watermark clearly visible on one of its folios suggests that it was copied sometime around the end of the seventeenth century or beginning of the eighteenth century. < >

**HANDBOOK OF LEAVING RELIGION** edited by Daniel Enstedt, Göran Larsson and Teemu T. Mantsinen [Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion, Brill, E-Book: 978-90-04-33147-1, Hardback: 978-90-04-33092-4] [open source](#)

**THE HANDBOOK OF LEAVING RELIGION** introduces a neglected field of research with the aim to outline previous and contemporary research, and suggest how the topic of leaving religion should be studied in the future. The handbook consists of three sections: 1) Major debates about leaving religion; 2) Case studies and empirical insights; and 3) Theoretical and methodological approaches. Section one provides the reader with an introduction to key terms, historical developments, major controversies and significant cases. Section two includes case studies that illustrate various processes of leaving religion from different perspectives, and each chapter provides new empirical insights. Section three discusses, presents and encourages new approaches to the study of leaving religion.

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## Excerpt: Leaving Religion: Introducing the Field

In 1968, the New York Times published the sociologist Peter Berger's now famous prediction about the coming decline of religion worldwide. In this context, Berger stated that the remains of religion in the twenty-first century would consist of religious believers "likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture". People around the world were, in short, expected to leave religion altogether as their societies became modern. It was not a question about if the change would occur, only a matter of time. More than 30 years later, in 1999, Berger revised his earlier claim and instead declared the world as desecularised. He is, however, far from alone in criticising, or even dismissing, the century old secularisation thesis, where modernisation of a society goes hand in hand with secularisation.<sup>1</sup> Even though leaving religion – that is the focus in this handbook – has, from time to time, been associated with irreligiosity, agnosticism, and atheism, and, in particular, modernised Western predominantly Christian countries, it can very well also be about leaving one religion from another, or even changing position within the same religious tradition, for example when orthodox Chassidic Jews becoming reformed, liberal Jews.

In 2015, PEW Research Center published the report *The Future of World Religions*, where the overall global tendencies, at least until 2050, are about growth of religion. Around the world, religious population is increasing according to the prediction – the Muslim population will grow significantly, and in 2070 Islam will be at the same size as Christianity, that is around one third of the world population – and only a small percentage of the world's population are expected to be disaffiliated or non-religious. Leaving out a critical discussion about the accuracy of this study and its methodological problems, one of the factors analysed in the statistically based projection was "religious switching," that is religious change on an individual level. Even though religious switching has "a relatively small impact on the projected size of major religious groups in 2050" (PEW Research Center), it may have an effect on different regions around the globe. Mobility between religions and non-religion is also related to various regions and global processes, such as, for example migration flows. That means that even though many people will be switching in, out and between religions up until 2050, the total number of religious adherents around the world will not be affected in a significant way. Switching out of a religion in favour of a non-religious position also seems to be more prevalent in the US and Europe than other parts of the world (see also the prognosis made by Stolz et al. 2016). The decrease of Christian population in the Western countries is also, in part, related to a question of declining role of family in cultural transmission of religion. Social factors are important in both staying in and leaving religion. However, this and other factors, such as, for example, pedophilia scandals in the Catholic church, can also result in leaving religious institutions or declining attendance rather than religiosity in general.

However, in more recent times, new theoretical and methodological approaches have emerged and there is a growing interest in deconversion and various forms of leaving religion studies, but still we think that it is difficult to get a comprehensive introduction and overview to these studies. For example, in so-called cult studies, the main definition of leaving religion has been apostasy (Bromley 1998). Other definitions of exits, or people exiting, concentrate usually on describing the exit process or deconversion. Whilst the term apostasy (Greek: apo stenai – to stand away of something) can be viewed negatively, at least as an invective used by a religious groups or individuals to define a defector, it has also been used in research to characterise people who leave religion and then become a part of

the critique directed towards the same religion, or simply be understood as any position outside the religious group of origin. There are, according to John D. Barbour, four basic characteristics of deconversion autobiographies. "Deconversion encompasses," Barbour writes, "intellectual doubt, moral criticism, emotional suffering, and disaffiliation from a community". Not all of these aspects are expressed in every deconversion narrative, and the emphasis can also be put in various ways. On the basis of previous research, Phil Zuckerman stipulate three dimensions of apostasy, that is "early/late, shallow/deep, mild/transformational [that] manifest themselves in various combinations." In addition, studies on leaving religion have also been examining the motifs and reasons, the processes and consequences of leaving religion.

Although one could argue that the study of leaving religion is a neglected topic in the academic study of religions it is hard to define what "leaving" entails. While the study of conversion is a relatively well researched topic, surprisingly few studies have put focus on the fact that conversion implies that the individual moves from or leaves one position – say a Christian identification to another religion – but what the process of leaving entails is often hard to isolate or reduce to one factor. For example, even after a formal divorce a person still holds (good, bad, painful, happy or indifferent) memories of his or her former spouse. It is likely that this observation also holds true for many individuals who have decided to leave a religious belonging or other social formations (for example political parties, gangs, an addictive lifestyle, etcetera). Behaviours rooted in moral codes and religious teachings (especially if they have been adopted at a young age) tend to colour the life of the individual even though he or she has taken a new path. Sometimes the former belonging can be a source of anger and it can provoke a strong need to demonstrate that the earlier life was wrong (see, for example, Larsson 2016). For example, the change to something new can be expressed by the help of a novel vocabulary, but also by putting on "different" clothes (for example the veil, or by growing a beard, or by shaving), adopting new behaviours and to take up another sexual identity. Food, clothing and sexual orientations seems to be strong markers of identity and they are often used for expressing one's attitude towards the society and one's religious belonging. In a sense we are all coloured by our former belongings, identities and experiences, if we are to believe Helen Ebaugh's analysis in *Becoming an Ex: The Process of Role Exit* (1988).

Since the World War II and the adoption of the Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations, individuals in most parts of the world have been given the possibility and freedom to change and abandon a religious life. This is stipulated in Article 18:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

This right is, however, not always respected and to leave a religious life can often be associated with social costs (exclusion), personal grief (the loss of friends and relatives) or even personal risk and threats. That so-called apostates – that is those who have actively left a religious tradition by embracing a new religion, or lifestyle, or those who have been accused of apostasy because of their lifestyle, or interpretations of a specific religious tradition – can put themselves in a dangerous position in many countries outside of Europe, North America and Australia is evident. That individuals who leave Islam are more likely to suffer from persecutions and threats than individuals who leave many other religious

traditions today is well-documented and many countries dominated by Muslim traditions are also prone to execute so-called apostates (for example Iran, Sudan and Saudi Arabia). However, it is inaccurate to argue that the question of leaving religion is only a matter that concerns Islamic traditions and Muslims theologians, on the contrary. As this handbook sets out to explore, the question of leaving a religious tradition is a common question and a potential problem within all religious traditions in both past and present. To draw up a line between insiders and outsiders and to argue that one's interpretation of the religious tradition is right and that one's opponents are wrong (for example by calling the other group heretics, or apostates) is therefore a general pattern that is found in all social formations that make use of a religious vocabulary. This is, for example, the case in the bloody wars in present day Syria and Iraq. Whilst the Islamic State (ISIS) argues that their opponents – may they be Shia Muslims, non-Muslims, atheists or just Sunni Muslims who do not follow or accept the claims made by the Islamic State – are labelled as apostates, the critics argue that it is the followers of the Islamic State who are the evildoers and by their thoughts and actions they “prove” that they are not proper or “true” Muslims. The proclivity to make up real or imagined boundaries between insiders and outsiders, or so-called heretics and orthodox, is well-documented in the history of religions. However, in earlier studies these processes and tendencies are rarely studied as part and parcel of conversion, deconversion, leaving religion, and apostasy. The change of a religious orientation is also closely related to the question of who has the power and authority over religious interpretations, and the possibility for the individual to break free from established norms and values.

Whereas the right to change one's attitude towards a specific religious tradition and switch to a new belonging or a novel lifestyle is an individual freedom and legal right in Europe, this is not always the case in non-western countries. Because of political and economic structures (that is weak states that do not provide equal opportunities for all citizens), the possibility of changing one's religious belonging is often closely related to matters such as family, class, gender and tribe. To change religion or to abandon a religious lifestyle could therefore be linked to material and legal aspects and not only philosophical or dogmatic questions. However, over the last decades, the question of freedom of religion has also been put under much pressure in Northern and Western Europe and the right to change religion is often met with critique and strong reactions. This reality is often experienced by individuals who convert to Islam, but also by individuals who leave Islam after they have migrated to Europe and gained a new citizenship. Both those who leave and those who enter a religious tradition are therefore likely to be in a vulnerable position and indications of hate crimes and discrimination are sometimes reported in relation to conversion processes. However, the data for these types of crimes are difficult to estimate, and it is likely that these types of crimes are underreported, and that hate and discrimination is more common than we think. This is a topic for future research. While the large majority of individuals who attain a new attitude and lose interest in their former religious tradition, it is also likely that some individuals can join or be used by those who are interested in criticising a specific religious group. Thus, it is not unusual to find former ex-Muslims among those who are strong critiques of Islam, but former members in so-called religious sects or new religious movements are often recruited by the so-called anti-cult movement. While an individual could have suffered from and experienced physical or psychological violence when they belonged to a specific religious group, it is not hard to understand that an individual also could have good reasons to criticise one's former belonging. For example, in order to make a rational explanation for earlier behaviours and belongings it is also necessary to distance



oneself from the ex-position and one way to do so is to publicly frown upon one's former religion. A new identity is constructed also by how a person relates to their past.

As fieldwork and interviews with, for example, ex-Muslims have shown it is common to seek other ways out from a religious tradition. Losing and gaining new interests and to fade out from a religious life seems to be a common way out. Compared to the public critiques this group of ex-members seldom feel that they have a need for criticising their former belonging. For example, as shown by Enstedt, it is clear that many ex-Muslims are still coloured by their former religious identity, not the least when it comes to difficult questions such as drinking alcohol or eating pork. Even after they have distanced themselves from their Islamic identity, they can feel uneasy when they eat pork or drink alcohol after they have embraced a non-Muslim identity. The endurance of some cultural habits is strong especially if they have a positive effect in coping difficult situations, such as joining new groups or facing stress, bringing safe structure in transition. For example, an ex-Pentecostal might start speaking in tongues even when they do not believe in such ritual anymore, when confronted with a stressful situation.

As this handbook tries to demonstrate it is important to address the obvious fact that theologians (no matter of religious tradition) have never had one single and unanimous understanding of how to define apostasy, orthodoxy or heresy, and this is also often true when it comes to the question of leaving. To put it differently, what does it entail to leave a religion? Should the "heretic" or apostate be defined by his actions or his thoughts, is it necessary to publicly denounce a religious tradition to be looked upon as a defector, or is it enough that a theologian defines an individual as an apostate to make him or her an outsider? Furthermore, how should an apostate, or an individual who leaves a religious tradition, be looked upon by his or her co-religionists and even more importantly, how should he or she be treated? Should such an individual be punished by the believers, or is the punishment up to God? Should the punishment be earthly or is it expected to happen in the next life? Does a change of religion have an impact on the individual's social status and legal rights? For example, what happens if the apostate is married and has children? These and other questions are often related to religious dogmas, but also to practical and legal matters as illustrated in several chapters included in this handbook.

## Disposition

The following handbook on leaving religion consists of three parts covering: (1) Major debates about leaving religion; (2) Case studies and empirical insights; and, finally, (3) Theoretical and methodological approaches. Part 1 in the handbook deals mainly with the so-called World Religions and the aim is to provide the reader with an introduction to key terms, historical developments, major controversies and significant cases within Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Part 2 includes case studies that illustrates various processes of leaving religion from different perspectives, and the ambition is that each chapter should provide new empirical insights. The chapters in this part contains a background, an overview to previous research, a description of the available material and the goal is to present new results within this field of study. Contrary to the first part of the handbook, the case studies in Part 2 are contemporary and the large majority are based on original fieldwork. Compared to this part, Part 3 discuss, present and encourage new approaches to the study of leaving religion by bringing in theoretical and methodological viewpoints. Thus, each chapter introduces theoretical and methodological perspectives as

well as new findings, and objectives are to suggest how leaving religion can be studied in the future.

To make the handbook as user-friendly as possible we have used the same subheadings for all chapters included in Parts 1 and 3. However, in Part 2 the structure is less fixed and because of this there are some variations in the organisation of the chapters in this part of the handbook. The length of the chapters has been restricted in order to make the book a user-friendly and easy reference tool to use when reading upon the subject of leaving religion or for planning research on this or related topics.

As the readers of the handbook will notice there is a fair amount of research on the questions of apostasy and heresy in Islamic and Christian traditions as well as on leaving various new religious traditions in contemporary times, but similar data for Hinduism and Buddhism and ancient times are generally much more meagre. This should not be read as an indication that these traditions or time periods had no individuals who left or stepped outside of their religious traditions. On the contrary, it rather suggests that researchers have not paid enough interest to traditions like Hinduism and Buddhism or ancient times. A related issue is that scholars of religion often approach their subject through their (Western) cultural lenses, when determining who is religious and affiliated with a religious tradition. This can lead to challenges of detecting and understanding leaving Religion when there is no resignation or clear distinction between social belongings. One overarching goal of the handbook on leaving religion is to remedy this problem of limited scope and as editors we hope that our compilation of texts will stimulate future research, not the least when it comes to other traditions than Christianity and Islam. <>

## **A ŚABDA READER: LANGUAGE IN CLASSICAL INDIAN THOUGHT** translated and edited by Johannes Bronkhorst [Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought, Columbia University Press, 9780231189408]

### **Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought**

**The Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought** series provides text-based introductions to the most important forms of classical Indian thought, from epistemology, rhetoric, and hermeneutics to astral science, yoga, and medicine. Each volume offers fresh translations of key works, headnotes that orient the reader to the selections, a comprehensive introduction analyzing the major lines of development of the discipline, and exegetical and text-critical endnotes as well as extensive bibliography. A unique feature, the reconstruction of the principal intellectual debates in the given discipline, clarifies the arguments and captures the dynamism that marked classical thought. Designed to be fully accessible to comparativists and interested general readers, the Historical Sourcebooks also offer authoritative commentary for advanced students and scholars.

Language (*śabda*) occupied a central yet often unacknowledged place in classical Indian philosophical thought. Foundational thinkers considered topics such as the nature of language, its relationship to reality, the nature and existence of linguistic units and their capacity to convey meaning, and the role of language in the interpretation of sacred

writings. The first reader on language in—and the language of—classical Indian philosophy, **A ŚABDA READER** offers a comprehensive and pedagogically valuable treatment of this topic and its importance to Indian philosophical thought.

**A ŚABDA READER** brings together newly translated passages by authors from a variety of traditions—Brahmin, Buddhist, Jaina—representing a number of schools of thought. It illuminates issues such as how Brahmanical thinkers understood the Veda and conceived of Sanskrit; how Buddhist thinkers came to assign importance to language's link to phenomenal reality; how Jains saw language as strictly material; the possibility of self-contradictory sentences; and how words affect thought. Throughout, the volume shows that linguistic presuppositions and implicit notions about language often play as significant a role as explicit ideas and formal theories. Including an introduction that places the texts and ideas in their historical and cultural context, **A ŚABDA READER** sheds light on a crucial aspect of classical Indian thought and in so doing deepens our understanding of the philosophy of language.

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Excerpt: While I was preparing this book, it soon became clear that much of what should be covered by the subtitle *Language in Classical Indian Thought* does not easily lend itself to presentation in the format of a reader. Too many topics in this area have been understudied and are far from being correctly understood by modern scholarship. The texts are often technical and obscure, and they frequently create more confusion than understanding at a first reading. Even longtime study does not always guarantee a full grasp of these texts.

I try to resolve this difficulty in the following manner. A number of topics that are crucial for an understanding of the historical role of language in Indian thought can only be hinted at in this reader (mainly in the introduction). Some of these have received fuller treatment in my book *How the Brahmins Won*. Readers who look for fuller documentation are advised to refer to that publication.

In the present volume, the sections of the introduction (part I) correspond by and large to the sections of the reader (part II), in the sense that, for example, section I.1 and II.1 deal, on the whole, with the same or similar topics. This correspondence is not, however, perfect. An example is section I.3, which deals with the grammarian Patanjali, whereas section II.3 presents passages from both Patanjali's work and more recent texts that deal with the same or similar issues.

Readers may further keep in mind that in this volume I have tried to resist the temptation of cherry-picking, i.e., of choosing topics on the basis of their similarity to or relevance for modern language philosophy. On the contrary, I have tried to bring out the importance that language has in Indian thought in many or most of its forms, irrespective of whether the Indian notions might or should interest a modern philosopher.

The most serious mistake a modern reader can make is to assume that Indian philosophers were just like modern philosophers, the main difference being that they lived many centuries ago, in India, and expressed themselves in different languages, mainly Sanskrit. This would be overlooking the fact that most human activities, including philosophizing, are profoundly embedded in the beliefs, presuppositions, and expectations that characterize the culture and the period in which they take place. The French historian Lucien Febvre used in this connection the expression *outillage mental*, "mental equipment," different for people living in different ages. Atheism in the modern sense of the term, Febvre points out in his book *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, was simply unthinkable in sixteenth-century Europe: people did not have the mental equipment to conceive of it.

Quite independently of the question whether Febvre's claim is correct in its full generality, this example should discourage us from entering too easily into a discussion with Indian thinkers on our terms. Like the Europeans of the sixteenth century, they had many beliefs, presuppositions, and expectations of which they were perhaps not or only partly aware, and for them too there may have been ideas they could not conceive of. More precisely perhaps, they might have understood those new ideas if someone had presented them, but since this did not happen, the ideas never crossed their minds.



Febvre's observation concerns a belief that seemed essential to thinkers of sixteenth-century Europe: the existence of (a) God. Thinkers of classical India were less convinced that there is only one possible position on this particular issue; many of them felt quite comfortable with the idea of a world without creator God. Among their presuppositions we rather find the deep conviction that language and reality are deeply intertwined. Language is for them rarely, if ever, a marginal philosophical issue. Quite the contrary: more often than not, ideas about language are the very basis of their philosophies. The remainder of this book will illustrate this.

This takes us back to the relation between classical Indian and modern philosophers, and to the rather obvious observation that a discussion with a philosopher who lived many centuries ago is bound to be a one-sided affair. The ancient philosopher may have had all the intelligence needed to come to terms with ideas that a modern philosopher might propose to him, but alas, he is dead. The modern scholar is in a more advantageous position: he can learn to understand the ancient thinkers on their own terms, if only he is open to it and willing to make the effort. This too will be attempted in this book.

Philosophy in India, then, was not carried out by philosophers who had no prior concern with language. Most of the participants were either Brahmins or Buddhists. (The Jainas, who will also figure in this book, played a relatively minor and sometimes intermediary role.) Neither Brahmins nor Buddhists were independent observers where language was concerned. Both approached this field with strong, though different, convictions.

Consider first the Brahmins. In their own self-understanding, these men (women were not expected to recite the Veda) owed their Brahminical status to the fact that they knew part of the Veda by heart and recited it at appropriate occasions. The Veda is a corpus of texts, portions of which were meant to be recited at ritual occasions. This recitation was, and to some extent still is, believed to contribute to the efficacy of the ritual concerned. In other words, Brahmins believed that they possessed verbal utterances that had an effect in the world. At first sight this is not particularly surprising. All language users utter words and sentences with the expectation that this may have an effect in the world. But for most language users, this effect comes about through the intermediary of those who hear and understand their words and sentences. We can order or request others to do something, or influence others to act and behave in accordance with our wishes by means of other verbal messages.

This was not the way Brahmins believed their sacred formulas affected the world. Sacred formulas, called mantras in the Indian context, were believed to affect the world without the intermediary of other beings, whether human or nonhuman. Mantras work directly, on condition that they are correctly pronounced (in the right circumstances, of course). This efficacy is at least in part due to their language, the one that came to be called Sanskrit, but which early Brahminical users and thinkers merely considered the correct use of words. Underlying the Brahmins' ritual activity is the conviction that Sanskrit can have a direct effect on the world, because Sanskrit and reality are related in ways other languages (considered "incorrect use of words") are not. Brahminical myths even explain that the world was created in accordance with the words of the Veda.

The Veda, then, is a corpus of texts containing mantras that have an effect on the world without the intermediary of a hearer. For many Brahmins, the Vedic mantras, and more generally the whole Veda, have no initial speaker either. The Veda has no author, and is

therefore pure, self-existent speech. Having no author implies that it has no beginning in time. It is therefore beginningless, eternal speech. Being pure speech, not soiled by the interference of an author (who may conceivably be ill informed, or ill intentioned), the statements and injunctions of the Veda cannot but be reliable, if only we can interpret them objectively. This belief is behind the need felt to develop a method to find an objective interpretation of the Veda. Reflections about the interpretation of Sanskrit sentences in general did not lag behind, and continued until recent times.

Let us return for a moment to the centrality of Sanskrit in Brahmanical linguistic thought. This belief is so fundamental that it is easily overlooked in modern scholarship. It influenced all Brahmanical thought about language, and about much else. As a matter of fact, languages other than Sanskrit were rarely, if ever, taken into consideration by Brahmanical thinkers. Their linguistic thought concerned a privileged language, from their point of view the only correct one, the only language also that has a natural and intimate link with reality. One exaggerates but little when stating that much of Brahmanical thought is an inquiry into the consequences of this belief.

Unlike Brahmanism, Buddhism did not start out with any identifiable implicit or explicit convictions about language. The message of the Buddha was spread in local languages, being adjusted or translated where necessary. Language did come to play an important role in Buddhist thought, but not until a few centuries after the death of the Buddha, and initially in a region far removed from where he had preached. Gandhāra, a region in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent (in present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan), witnessed a thorough rethinking of Buddhist teaching. The philosophy there created saw the world as essentially atomic and momentary in nature, as made up of ultimate momentary constituents called dharmas. To be more precise, these momentary dharmas occur in sequences, in which each succeeding dharma is determined by the immediately preceding one. This is also true of mental processes, which are thought of in the same unilinear fashion. Thinkers went one step further and looked upon these dharmas as the only really existing things. Things made up of dharmas—which includes all things we are acquainted with, such as chariots, houses, etc.—not being dharmas themselves, did not really exist.

So far language plays no role in the philosophical vision elaborated by the Buddhist scholiasts of northwestern India. It does play a role in explaining that we believe we live in a world of chariots, houses, and much else that does not really exist; only dharmas exist. All these ultimately nonexistent "things" are nothing but words. Stated differently, we are tricked by language into thinking that we live in a world populated by objects that do not really exist.

The Buddhist philosophy of northwestern India spread in subsequent centuries all over the subcontinent and beyond, and underwent many developments. However, the conviction that we live in an unreal world, and that this unreal world has a close link with language, remained a characteristic of Buddhist thought.

It follows from the above that Brahmanical and Buddhist thinkers, though starting from altogether different positions and without influencing each other during the early period, arrived at very similar conclusions. Both now believed that there was an intimate link between the world of our experience and language. Both accepted, each in their own way, that our common-sense world has been created by language.

There were important differences, of course. Brahmanical thinkers thought that language was close to the real world; Buddhists thought that it was close to the ultimately unreal, imaginary, world of our experience. Brahmins did not talk about language in general, only about Sanskrit, for them the only real language; Buddhist thinkers did not privilege one language, at least not initially.

Brahmanical and Buddhist thinkers came to interact in subsequent centuries. This led to a refinement of their positions, and sometimes to large-scale borrowing. The Buddhist notion of the unreality of our common-sense world did not initially agree with Brahmanical conceptions of the world. However, roughly from the middle of the first millennium CE onward this notion found favor with at least some Brahmanical thinkers, who adjusted it to their needs. In doing so, they also reserved a place for language (the Sanskrit language, of course), which had to play a role, here too, to explain our common-sense world.

But Brahmanical thought had already much earlier borrowed a notion of linguistic philosophy from Buddhism. The Buddhist philosophy created in northwestern India had put much emphasis on ontology: what exists and what does not exist? It had come to the conclusion that, apart from dharmas, nothing exists at all. For reasons that can only be conjectured, these Buddhists had not been happy to draw the seemingly inevitable conclusion that words and other linguistic units do not really exist, the way chariots and houses do not really exist. To avoid this, they had introduced three (or perhaps originally two; the earliest sources are not clear) dharmas that stood for linguistic units: speech sounds, words, and sentences. Words and other linguistic units therefore really exist, even in the reductionist ontology of early Buddhist scholasticism. This idea was not without appeal to certain Brahmanical thinkers. In their discussions of words and the like they were confronted with some fundamental questions: If words are no more than successions of sounds that do not coexist simultaneously, then whole words do not exist. Similar considerations apply to speech sounds and sentences. A number of Brahmanical thinkers adopted the Buddhist solution by postulating that beside the sequence of succeeding speech sounds there was another existing entity, the word. In this way Brahmanism came into the possession of what they called the *spṛṣṭa*, probably the best-known notion from grammatical philosophy. <>

## **THE PRINCIPAL UPANISADS** edited with Introduction, Text, Translation And Notes By S. Radhakrishnan [The Muirhead Library of Philosophy, Routledge, 004294046X]

Basic philosophical texts of Hinduism, representing the height of Vedic philosophy.

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Excerpt: Human nature is not altogether unchanging but it does remain sufficiently constant to justify the study of ancient classics. The problems of human life and destiny have not been superseded by the striking achievements of science and technology. The solutions offered, though conditioned in their modes of expression by their time and environment, have not been seriously affected by the march of scientific knowledge and criticism. The responsibility laid on man as a rational being, to integrate himself, to relate the present to the past and the future, to live in time as well as in eternity, has become acute and urgent. The Upanishads, though remote in time from us, are not remote in thought. They disclose the working of the primal impulses of the human soul which rise above the differences of race and of geographical position. At the core of all historical religions there are fundamental types of spiritual experience though they are expressed with different degrees of clarity. The Upanishads illustrate and illuminate these primary experiences.

'These are really the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands; they are not original with me. If they are not yours as much as mine, they are nothing or next to nothing,' said Walt Whitman. The Upanishads deal with questions which arise when men begin to reflect seriously and attempt answers to them which are not very different, except in their approach and emphasis from what we are now inclined to accept. This does not mean that the message of the Upanishads, which is as true today as ever, commits us to the different hypotheses about the structure of the world and the physiology of man. We must make a distinction between the message of the Upanishads and their mythology. The latter is liable to correction by advances in science. Even this mythology becomes intelligible if we place ourselves as far as possible at the viewpoint of those who conceived it. Those parts of the Upanishads which seem to us today to be trivial, tedious and almost unmeaning, should have had value and significance at the time they were composed.

Anyone who reads the in Upanishads the original Sanskrit will be caught up and carried away by the elevation, the poetry, the compelling fascination of the many utterances through which they lay bare the secret and sacred relations of the human soul and the Ultimate Reality. When we read them, we cannot help being impressed by the exceptional ability, earnestness and ripeness of mind of those who wrestled with these ultimate questions. These souls who tackled these problems remain still and will remain for all time in essential harmony with the highest ideals of civilisation.

The Upanishads are the foundations on which the beliefs of millions of human beings, who were not much inferior to ourselves, are based. Nothing is more sacred to man than his own history. At least as memorials of the past, the Upanishads are worth our attention.

A proper knowledge of the texts is an indispensable aid to the understanding of the Upanishads. There are parts of the Upanishads which repel us by their repetitiveness and irrelevance to our needs, philosophical and religious. But if we are to understand their ideas, we must know the atmosphere in which they worked. We must not judge ancient writings from our standards. We need not condemn our fathers for having been what they were or ourselves for being somewhat different from them. It is our task to relate them to their environment, to bridge distances of time and space and separate the transitory from the permanent. There is a danger in giving only carefully chosen extracts.

We are likely to give what is easy to read and omit what is difficult, or give what is agreeable to our views and omit what is disagreeable. It is wise to study the Upanishads as a whole, their striking insights as well as their commonplace assumptions. Only such a study will be historically valuable. I have therefore given in full the classical Upanishads, those commented on or mentioned by Samkara. The other Upanishads are of a later date and are sectarian in character. They represent the popular gods, Siva, Visnu, Sakti, as manifestations of the Supreme Reality. They are not parts of the original Veda, are of much later origin and are not therefore as authoritative as the classical Upanishads. If they are all to be included, it would be difficult to find a Publisher for so immense a work. I have therefore selected a few other Upanishads, some of those to which references are made by the great teachers, Samkara and Rāmānuja.

In the matter of translation and interpretation, I owe a heavy debt, directly and indirectly, not only to the classical commentators but also to the modern writers who have worked on the subject. I have profited by their tireless labours. The careful reader will find, I hope, that



a small advance in a few places at least has been made in this translation towards a better understanding of the texts.

Passages in verse are not translated into rhyme as the padding and inversion necessary for observing a metrical pattern take away a great deal from the dignity and conciseness of the original.

It is not easy to render Sanskrit religious and philosophical classics into English for each language has its own characteristic genius. Language conveys thought as well as feeling. It falls short of its full power and purpose, if it fails to communicate the emotion as fully as it conveys the idea. Words convey ideas but they do not always express moods. In the Upanishads we find harmonies of speech which excite the emotions and stir the soul. I am afraid that it has not been possible for me to produce in the English translation the richness of melody, the warmth of spirit, the power of enchantment that appeals to the ear, heart and mind. I have tried to be faithful to the originals, sometimes even at the cost of elegance. I have given the texts with all their nobility of sound and the feeling of the numinous.

For the classical Upanishads the text followed is that commented on by Samkara. A multitude of variant readings of the texts exist, some of them to be found in the famous commentaries, others in more out of the way versions. The chief variant readings are mentioned in the notes. As my interest is philosophical rather than linguistic, I have not discussed them. In the translation, words which are omitted or understood in Sanskrit or are essential to complete the grammatical structure are inserted in brackets.

We cannot bring to the study of the Upanishads virgin minds which are untouched by the views of the many generations of scholars who have gone before us. Their influence may work either directly or indirectly. To be aware of this limitation, to estimate it correctly is of great importance in the study of ancient texts. The classical commentators represent in their works the great oral traditions of interpretation which have been current in their time. Centuries of careful thought lie behind the exegetical traditions as they finally took shape. It would be futile to neglect the work of the commentators as there are words and passages in the Upanishads of which we could make little sense without the help of the commentators.

We do not have in the Upanishads a single well-articulated system of thought. We find in them a number of different strands which could be woven together in a single whole by sympathetic interpretation. Such an account involves the expression of opinions which can always be questioned. Impartiality does not consist in a refusal to form opinions or in a futile attempt to conceal them. It consists in rethinking the thoughts of the past, in understanding their environment, and in relating them to the intellectual and spiritual needs of our own time. While we should avoid the attempt to read into the terms of the past the meanings of the present, we cannot overlook the fact that certain problems are the same in all ages. We must keep in mind the Buddhist saying: 'Whatever is not adapted to such and such persons as are to be taught cannot be called a teaching.' We must remain sensitive to the prevailing currents of thought and be prepared, as far as we are able, to translate the universal truth into terms intelligible to our audience, without distorting their meaning. It would scarcely be possible to exaggerate the difficulty of such a task, but it has to be undertaken. If we are able to make the seeming abstractions of the Upanishads flame anew with their ancient colour and depth, if we can make them pulsate with their old meaning,

they will not appear to be altogether irrelevant to our needs, intellectual and spiritual. The notes are framed in this spirit.

The Upanishads which base their affirmations on spiritual experience are invaluable for us, as the traditional props of faith, the infallible scripture, miracle and prophecy are no longer available. The irreligion of our times is largely the product of the supremacy of religious technique over spiritual life. The study of the Upanishads may 'help to restore to fundamental things of religion that reality without which they seem to be meaningless.

Besides, at a time when moral aggression is compelling people to capitulate to queer ways of life, when vast experiments in social structure and political organisation are being made at enormous cost of life and suffering, when we stand perplexed and confused before the future with no clear light to guide our way, the power of the human soul is the only refuge. If we resolve to be governed by it, our civilisation may enter upon its most glorious epoch. There are many 'dis-satisfied children of the spirit of the west,' to use Romain Rolland's phrase, who are oppressed that the universality of her great thoughts has been defamed for ends of violent action, that they are trapped in a blind alley and are savagely crushing each other out of existence. When an old binding culture is being broken, when ethical standards are dissolving, when we are being aroused out of apathy or awakened out of unconsciousness, when there is in the air general ferment, inward stirring, cultural crisis, then a high tide of spiritual agitation sweeps over peoples and we sense in the horizon something novel, something unprecedented, the beginnings of a spiritual renaissance. We are living in a world of freer cultural intercourse and wider world sympathies. No one can ignore his neighbour who is also groping in this world of sense for the world unseen. The task set to our generation is to reconcile the varying ideals of the converging cultural patterns and help them to sustain and support rather than combat and destroy one another. By this process they are transformed from within and the forms that separate them will lose their exclusivist meaning and signify only that unity with their own origins and inspirations.

The study of the sacred books of religions other than one's own is essential for speeding up this process. Students of Christian religion and theology, especially those who wish to make Indian Christian thought not merely 'geographically' but 'organically' Indian, should understand their great heritage which is contained in the Upanishads.

For us Indians, a study of the Upanishads is essential, if we are to preserve our national being and character. To discover the main lines of our traditional life, we must turn to our classics, the Vedas and the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-gīta and the Dhamma-pada. They have done more to colour our minds than we generally acknowledge. They not only thought many of our thoughts but coined hundreds of the words that we use in daily life. There is much in our past that is degrading and deficient but there is also much that is life-giving and elevating. If the past is to serve as an inspiration for the future, we have to study it with discrimination and sympathy. Again, the highest achievements of the human mind and spirit are not limited to the past. The gates of the future are wide open. While the fundamental motives, the governing ideas which constitute the essential spirit of our culture are a part of our very being, they should receive changing expression according to the needs and conditions of our time.

There is no more inspiring task for the student of Indian thought than to set forth some phases of its spiritual wisdom and bring them to bear on our own life. Let us, in the words

of Socrates, 'turn over together the treasures that wise men have left us, glad if in so doing we make friends with one another.'

The two essays written for the Philosophy of the Upanishads (1924), which is a reprint of chapter IV from my Indian Philosophy, Volume I, by Rabindranath Tagore and Edmond Holmes, are to be found in the Appendices A and B respectively.

I am greatly indebted to my distinguished and generous friends Professors Suniti Kumar Chatterji, and Siddhesvar Bhattacharya for their great kindness in reading the proofs and making many valuable suggestions. <>

## **ILLUSIONS OF EMANCIPATION: THE PURSUIT OF FREEDOM AND EQUALITY IN THE TWILIGHT OF SLAVERY** by Joseph P. Reidy [Littlefield History of the Civil War Era, University of North Carolina Press, 9781469648361]

As students of the Civil War have long known, emancipation was not merely a product of Lincoln's proclamation or of Confederate defeat in April 1865. It was a process that required more than legal or military action. With enslaved people fully engaged as actors, emancipation necessitated a fundamental reordering of a way of life whose implications stretched well beyond the former slave states. Slavery did not die quietly or quickly, nor did freedom fulfill every dream of the enslaved or their allies. The process unfolded unevenly.

In this sweeping reappraisal of slavery's end during the Civil War era, Joseph P. Reidy employs the lenses of time, space, and individuals' sense of personal and social belonging to understand how participants and witnesses coped with drastic change, its erratic pace, and its unforeseeable consequences. Emancipation disrupted everyday habits, causing sensations of disorientation that sometimes intensified the experience of reality and sometimes muddled it. While these illusions of emancipation often mixed disappointment with hope, through periods of even intense frustration they sustained the promise that the struggle for freedom would result in victory.

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## Phantoms of Freedom

On December 18, 1940, the distinguished Howard University historian Charles H. Wesley delivered a lecture commemorating the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This was seventy-five years to the day after Secretary of State William H. Seward announced that slavery was officially abolished. Wesley spoke at the newly opened Founders Library, named in honor of the thirteen men responsible for establishing the university, which Congress had chartered in 1867. That same year, the institution's namesake, Oliver Otis Howard, the Civil War hero and commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau who was often referred to as the "Christian General," purchased the land where the campus stood from John A. Smith, a prominent resident of the District of Columbia. Five years earlier Smith had received \$5,146.50 in compensation from the federal government for fourteen enslaved persons under the act that abolished slavery in the District of Columbia. Smith's 150-acre farm, "The Hill," was located slightly more than one mile north of the White House, the Washington Monument, and the U.S. Capitol building, just beyond Boundary Street, which separated rural Washington County from the city of Washington. Several blocks east of the Capitol in Lincoln Park stood Freedom's Memorial, the noted sculptor Thomas Ball's famous work commemorating Abraham Lincoln as emancipator? Wesley referenced the memorial in his remarks.

Wesley focused particularly on the stylized portrayals of Lincoln and the black man who also occupied the pedestal. He noted that Ball's original design, sculpted shortly after the president's assassination, depicted the freedman "kneeling in a completely passive manner, receiving his freedom at the hands of Lincoln, his liberator." In response to criticism, Wesley explained, Ball altered the model "so that the slave, although kneeling, is represented as exerting his own strength to break his chains." "Nearer to historical truth" than the original, the final version of the statue nonetheless still failed to represent accurately the enslaved people's role in emancipation. In the spirit of the day they commemorated, Wesley invited his audience to imagine the influence that black freedom seekers had on Lincoln and on the development of emancipation policy more generally.

One of the persons most responsible for Freedom's Memorial, William Greenleaf Eliot, a prominent St. Louis minister and foe of slavery who helped found the Western Sanitary Commission during the Civil War, offered reflections similar to Wesley's more than fifty years earlier. Acknowledging that the figures portrayed "President Lincoln in the act of emancipating a negro slave, who kneels at his feet to receive the benediction," Eliot observed that the slave's "hand has grasped the chain as if in the act of breaking it," suggesting "that the slaves took active part in their own deliverance." Eliot's comments reflected an insider's knowledge; in fact, he had convinced Ball to use the "likeness, both face and figure," of Archer Alexander as the model for the freedman. Alexander had escaped from slavery in 1863, and Eliot offered him shelter and employment and even helped thwart an attempt to reenslave him. Eliot published an account of Alexander's life in 1885.

The African American artist Edmonia Lewis also portrayed emancipation through design elements and classical motifs similar to Ball's in her 1867 sculpture *Forever Free* (see figure 1.2). Like Ball, Lewis employed two figures, one standing and the other crouching, and the freedman depicted in both wore clothing only around his waist. The similarities in composition ended there. Whereas Ball's second figure was Lincoln, dressed in a suit, standing above the kneeling freedman with arm outstretched symbolically freeing him, Lewis's second figure was a woman, clothed in a dress but, like the man, wearing broken shackles. It was she who knelt and he stood next to her, his right hand resting on her shoulder and his left arm raised in triumph. Both gaze skyward. Although critics have variously interpreted Lewis's symbolism, none has doubted her intention to depict freedom as the product of struggle and to suggest that escaping slavery constituted only its initial phase.

Wesley, too, rejected the notion that freed people were passive recipients of freedom at Lincoln's hand. To make the case, he drew on Frederick Douglass's remarks at the dedication of Freedom's Memorial on April 14, 1876. The veteran abolitionist strained to rebalance not just the images that Ball's statue conveyed of Lincoln (the liberator) and Alexander (the liberated) but also the broadly popular stereotype that the artist had tapped into for his initial inspiration. Douglass spoke against a backdrop of the increasingly fragile Republican governments in the former Confederate states and the increasingly brazen violence against freed people everywhere. The audience included the sitting president, Ulysses S. Grant, and a host of other government officials and dignitaries as well as a number of the most distinguished black leaders in the land. The front of the memorial bore a plaque with the caption "Freedom's Memorial in Grateful Memory of Abraham Lincoln," which acknowledged that the freedwoman Charlotte Scott's initial contribution of five dollars, "her first earnings in freedom," had set the project in motion. Tellingly, the commemorative program altered the inscription on the plaque to read "the Freedmen's Memorial to Abraham Lincoln."

An earlier elision transformed the nature of the occasion itself. In March, when John Mercer Langston, the renowned abolitionist and attorney, and his fellow members of the national committee on arrangements petitioned Congress to declare the day "a general holiday" for all government employees in the city, they recommended holding the event on April 14 in honor of two anniversaries. Besides Lincoln's assassination, they wished to mark "the emancipation of the slaves in the District of Columbia" on April 16, 1862. The newspaper report that ran in the *Washington Republican* and that was reprinted in the commemorative pamphlet referenced only "the eleventh anniversary of the death of Abraham Lincoln." This effectively separated Lincoln the martyr from the broader struggle for freedom, which long predated his birth, much less his assassination.

Fully aware of the delicacy of the situation, Douglass nonetheless recast the history of the struggle against slavery in terms that acknowledged Lincoln but placed his contributions within the context of the social movement. Douglass surely turned the heads of listeners when he observed that Lincoln was "pre-eminently the white man's President, entirely devoted to the welfare of white men" and that black Americans were "at best only his stepchildren, children by adoption, children by force of circumstances and necessity." He frankly admitted that many of Lincoln's early actions left black Americans "stunned, grieved and greatly bewildered; but our hearts believed while they ached and bled." "Despite the mist and the haze that surrounded him; despite the tumult, the hurry and confusion of the



hour," Douglass explained, "we saw him, measured him, and estimated him," concluding "that the hour and the man of our redemption had met in the person of Abraham Lincoln."

After Lincoln's announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, Douglass elaborated, "we were thenceforth willing to allow the President all the latitude of time" necessary to achieve "liberty and progress." The process was bound to be convoluted and perhaps halting as well. When "viewed from the genuine abolition ground," he concluded, "Mr. Lincoln seemed tardy, cold, dull, and indifferent; but measuring him by the sentiment of his country, a sentiment he was bound as a statesman to consult, he was swift, zealous, radical and determined." Arguing that "few great public men have ever been the victims of fiercer denunciation" than was Lincoln, Douglass predicted that "the silent judgment of time" would vindicate the sixteenth president: "Whatever else in this world maybe partial, unjust and uncertain, time! time! is impartial, just and certain in its actions," Douglass insisted. Wesley followed suit, quoting the abolitionist: "No one can tell the day of the month, or the month of the year, upon which slavery was abolished in the United States"; rather, "the chains of slavery were loosened by degrees." Indeed, in a summary assessment of the "results of emancipation" two years after the close of the war, Salmon P. Chase, Oliver Otis Howard, and other members of the American Freedman's Union Commission observed that "emancipation in the United States was a growth rather than an enactment. The first act of war gave new vigor to the already strong anti-slavery sentiment of the North."

Casting emancipation in these terms served a twofold purpose. First, it acknowledged the antislavery struggle that abolitionists and enslaved people had waged for decades. Second, it debunked the common myth that President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, abolished slavery in a single stroke. Wesley theorized emancipation from the enslaved people's perspective. He characterized as "voluntary" those actions "in which the enslaved, working within their own framework of activity, sought freedom for themselves." "Involuntary" actions featured "individuals and social forces from without [that] operated to advance the cause of freedom." He parodied the conventional language that speakers and writers employed when addressing the subject—"When Abraham Lincoln struck the shackles from the slaves", or "Seventy-five years ago, when the Thirteenth Amendment brought freedom to the Negro"—labeling such formulations as "oratorical outbursts" rather than statements of truth. He also dismissed "the stereotype of the suppliant slave who did not desire freedom and who would not strike a blow for his freedom" as an outdated approach to "writing the history of the Negro people."

Most historical writing during the early decades of the twentieth century, in fact, gave short shrift to the notion that African Americans, whether enslaved or free, influenced the course of the nation's development as self-conscious and principled actors. A wave of recent interest in the phenomenon of historical memory has revealed how the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century proponents of sectional reconciliation aimed to erase the importance of slavery in the events leading up to secession and war and of emancipation as one of the most significant results of the contest. Instead, these partisans depicted the loss of more than 600,000 lives as the product of a lamentable misunderstanding between Northerners and Southerners—white men, that is—that could best be remediated by nostalgic appeals to shared trials on the battlefield and a commitment to let bygones be bygones. Lurking just beneath the veneer of this reunited brotherhood was the nation's recent armed incursions onto the world stage that, among other things, resulted in the annexation of the Philippines and Puerto Rico after the Spanish-American War. Children of abolitionists joined forces with

black and white anti-imperialists to protest American expansionism, elements of which looked strikingly similar to the imposition of racial segregation and disfranchisement in the American South. But for the advocates of sectional reconciliation, the apparent relationship was far from coincidental: many viewed empire and segregation as two sides of the same coin, a compromise in which the once-warring sections might reconcile. Then, as earlier, oppressed groups of persons with dark complexions at home and abroad became pawns in larger geopolitical schemes played by white men in the United States and Europe.

During the Civil War, as enslaved people began asserting freedom and influencing the course of development of the Union's evolving emancipation policy, commentators from varying backgrounds and with varying motives explored the root causes of slavery's downfall. Then, as later, most showed little interest in understanding how enslaved and free African Americans contributed as historical actors in their own right rather than as passive objects of other people's actions. The wartime debate is instructive. Then, as later, a growing chorus of observers, who included clergymen, editors, elected officials, and political activists, black and white, credited President Lincoln with abolishing slavery. In April 1862, for instance, Illinois representative Owen Lovejoy spoke in favor of the revised Confiscation Act that was then under review. "If Abraham Lincoln pursues the path evidently pointed out for him in the providence of God," Lovejoy declared, he will become "the emancipator, the liberator" and thus commend himself to lasting fame on earth and in heaven. The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) minister Henry McNeal Turner, like many other black leaders, also lauded Lincoln's role in charting slavery's course to extinction. From the time of the preliminary emancipation proclamation, Turner was convinced that Lincoln intended "to wage the war in favour of freedom, till the last groan of the anguished ... slave shall be hushed."

With due deference to Lincoln, a number of his contemporaries hoped that history would also acknowledge their parts in dismantling slavery, perhaps none more so than the prominent congressional Republicans who helped clear the path toward emancipation. Chief among them was Massachusetts senator Henry Wilson, a strong abolitionist known as the "Natick Cobbler" for his earlier stint in the shoemaking trade. Wilson published *History of the Antislavery Measures of the Thirty-Seventh and Thirty-Eighth United-States Congresses* in 1864, with an updated edition in 1865. Practically a day-by-day digest of debates over such key measures as the Confiscation Acts, the bill ending slavery in the District of Columbia, and the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, Wilson's compilation explained what Republican lawmakers did to destroy slavery during the Civil War. Henry Wilson created one of the first chronologies of emancipation.

Given its origins and purpose, Wilson's account placed Congress rather than the president in the leading legislative role in abolishing slavery. To be sure, Wilson quoted liberally from the testimonials to Lincoln's leadership that his Republican colleagues delivered from the floors of Congress. Wilson also delighted in hoisting by their own petard congressional conservatives, particularly the senators and representatives from the Border Slave States that had remained within the Union (Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri), who worked so cunningly to protect slavery from criticism much less from any adverse legislation. Yet for all its value as a chronological record of official government actions, Wilson's account was a largely self-contained story of what happened within the Capitol, with only passing hints at the role of constituents' opinions in the stances congressmen and senators took on these pressing issues. *History of the Antislavery Measures* said nothing of

African American influence on the legislative process, not even by such prominent activists as Frederick Douglass and other black abolitionists. It did not even reference the "Memorial Discourse" that the noted abolitionist and Presbyterian minister Henry Highland Garnet delivered before Congress in February 1865 the first such appearance by an African American speaker since the founding of the nation.

Union generals extolled their roles in destroying slavery. For years after the war, General Benjamin F. Butler defended his "authorship" of the concept scholarship inspired by the Civil Rights Movement was busy reaffirming. The work of the FSSP has inspired hundreds of publications that stretch interpretive boundaries surrounding the collapse of slavery in directions that could hardly have been predicted forty years ago. And the work continues to inspire.

My analysis begins with the simple assertion that emancipation was a complex and uneven process rather than a specific event, and that it drew into its vortex as historical actors from all regions of the country and backgrounds, most significantly enslaved Southerners and free African Americans in the North as well as the South. Although the appearance of the early volumes of *Freedom* understandably prompted a foray into clarifying "who freed the slaves," this preoccupation has not fully spent itself despite having reached the point of diminishing returns exactly where Charles Wesley summarized the case in 1940. Finding meaning in what individuals and groups did in the midst of these unsettling changes requires an appreciation of contingency in the human experience and the imperfect reliability of individual and collective memory.

Attempts to describe the process may benefit from a conventional chronological approach that identifies signs of change over time and then seeks to understand the explanatory causes. As recent work on emancipation demonstrates, there is still much to learn this way. But some promising recent scholarship has departed fruitfully from those strictures. By crossing traditional boundaries chronologically, geographically, or conceptually, this work—which includes important contributions by veterans of the FSSP—has produced new levels of understanding with regard to the war and its consequences and the role of African Americans' political action in influencing the course of their own history and that of the entire nation. Even such a niche area as the black military and naval experience has proved a fertile source of new approaches and conclusions.

I remain fascinated with the comparative study of emancipation, which continues to yield the rich insights that it has since the debut of the journal *Slavery & Abolition* in 1980. An intriguing array of comparative models that scholars have recently devised offers new ways to conceptualize events throughout the North American continent during the Civil War era. On the one hand are those that examine communities on either side of the boundary lines dividing the United States from the Confederate States, and on the other hand are those that compare developments on the Great Plains and in the far West with the those within the conventional framework of the Northern Union and the Southern Confederacy. These works not only require reassessing the meanings of emancipation in light of the experiences of Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Chinese immigrants in the territory between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean but also call for a fresh look at the process of national consolidation following the Civil War. Recent works on the literature and imagery of war also provide fascinating insights into the period and the overriding issues, as have

recent examinations of such iconic events as Lee's surrender at Appomattox and Lincoln's assassination.

The recent scholarship most relevant to the perspective I have adopted here stretches beyond, while not necessarily abandoning, the FS SP's concentration on the breakdown of slavery and the development of compensated labor. The prevalence of disease and death offers one such window, as does the focus on time, personal mobility, the physical and environmental destruction wrought by the war, the legacy of violence that derived from slavery and emancipation, and risk. Some of the most fascinating examples of this work address emancipation from oblique angles as represented, for instance, by collections of essays on "weirding the war" and "disrupting the history of emancipation."

For twenty-first-century observers, understanding the customs and habits from iso years ago requires suspending conventional beliefs, particularly with regard to appreciating the depth and breadth of slavery's influence in the nation at that time. In the slaveholding states, apologists for the institution included enslavers, factors, politicians, scholars, editors, and ministers, most of whom stoutly defended it as a positive good and not simply a necessary evil. Even non-slaveholding whites had long since dulled their senses to the sights and sounds of human bondage. Slavery, after all, was a given feature of the world into which they had been born and socialized. Northern visitors to any one of the slave states might have encountered slavery on full, even violent, display. Residents of various places in the Northern states, including the border cities of Philadelphia and Cincinnati, and visitors to the resorts and military installations that dotted the region from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi valley heartland and beyond might have observed enslaved servants attending to their owners on business or on vacation. Yet for most white Northerners, slavery remained an abstraction, at least until Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which portrayed the institution in terms that resonated as real. Its appearance in serial form in 1851 and in book form the following year created a sensation. Stowe brilliantly captured the growing sense of discomfort with slavery that many white Northerners had begun to experience for reasons that ranged from the religious to the political.

Despite the growing polarization between the two sections, neither the outbreak of war nor the destruction of slavery was its preordained outcome. Events unfolded within parameters shaped by existing circumstances, which in their constant changes presented new opportunities and constraints. Had the Confederacy succeeded in fighting to a standstill, or had the 1864 Democratic candidate for president, George B. McClellan, defeated Lincoln, slavery would likely have persisted for years, maybe decades, beyond 1865 within an independent Confederacy or a reconciled Union. And the questions that began to arise in 1863 regarding "a new birth of freedom" and the prospects of black citizenship would have generated very different answers.

It is sobering to recall that more than two-thirds of the 4 million enslaved persons in 1860 remained unfree at war's end. Of the one-third who had escaped slavery, perhaps 1.1 million enjoyed direct federal protection: nearly 400,000 persons (including soldiers) in Union-held areas of the rebel states, another 500,000 in the Border States, Tennessee, and southern Louisiana where they had gained legal freedom late in the war; and perhaps 200,000 as servants and laborers with armies in the field. It is likely that at least another 200,000 enslaved persons died during the war. The estimated 2.6 million still in bondage constituted 66 percent of all enslaved persons in 1860 and more than 80 percent of the 3.5

million in the states that left the Union. Moreover, slaveholders in out-of-the-way places often succeeded in keeping their laborers in slave-like conditions for months thereafter until federal authorities succeeded in rooting out the last surviving pockets of the old order. Some of these persons had interacted with federal armed forces during the war, perhaps even tasting freedom for a time. But even those who never laid eyes on the Yankees understood that a Northern victory would mean drastic changes in their lives. In any case, they had little practical experience with freedom before the collapse of the Confederacy. They began to acclimate themselves to changes with which their counterparts in the Union-occupied portions of the Confederacy had grappled for several years to various ends. In that process, they, too, learned how decisively local conditions shaped the encounters between the past and the future.

The effort to extract patterns and to assign meaning must be sensitive to the fact that the several million enslaved persons who gained freedom in the process of emancipation each had a story. At the same time, the full picture was more than just the sum of the parts. Secession and the ensuing rebellion set loose a many-sided struggle in which all participants hoped to achieve objectives that, whether they coincided or clashed, remained in flux. In pursuing their goals, historical actors often risked their lives and, indeed, hundreds of thousands lost theirs, not all on the fields of battle.

In the pages that follow, I propose three overlapping frameworks whereby members of the Civil War generation attempted both to understand and to help chart a way through the extraordinary events that swirled around them daily. The first two were time and space, which historians no less than historical actors routinely employ for interpretive purposes. Mid-nineteenth century Americans—like human populations everywhere—observed and recorded the passage of time in several ways. They relied on the ancient technique of noting the movements of celestial bodies by day and by night and from one day to the next. They also used modern devices such as clocks and calendars. They understood that events in the world around them followed an inexorable chronology, which mimicked the linear trajectory of living things from birth to death and, for Christians, the history of salvation from Adam and Eve to the anticipated second coming of Christ. But time might also be tracked cyclically—by the succession of seasons that accompanied the earth's annual revolution around the sun—rather than linearly. Time could even behave erratically, appearing to slow down, speed up, and even stop. War and social revolution proved to be the nurseries of erratic time.

Mid-nineteenth-century Americans oriented themselves spatially in multiple ways as well. First, they relied on known features of the natural and built environments. That approach worked best in their local communities and in adjacent regions with which they were familiar. Beyond such comfort zones, they had to rely on more generic markers such as the position of objects in the night sky, the lay of the land, patterns of natural and cultivated vegetation, and such human modifications to the landscape as turnpikes and railroads. Literate persons might also resort to maps. Yet in the context of war, even the most familiar spaces from which persons may not have wandered often took on new meaning and significance, fraught with peril and promise. Effective navigation of open spaces relied implicitly on knowledge of the social environments that coexisted with the physical ones. Nowhere was this clearer than in the second variety of spatial awareness—that which concerned the restricted spaces in which enslaved persons interacted with the persons who claimed them as property. In the planter's big house, the small farmer's cabin, the



merchant's stock room, or the artisan's workshop, masters and mistresses exercised close oversight, and both short-term and long-term interests of the enslaved people required a nimble awareness of the changing dynamics. Finally, like time, space might possess malleable properties that the war exposed and that emancipation magnified. A specific parcel of land might be a scene of oppression, liberation, or death based on which party exerted armed jurisdiction over it. Bodies of water assumed new significance as gateways or barriers to freedom.

The third strategic framework or reference point was home, which teemed with literal and figurative meanings. The concept of home promised a sense of familiarity and stability to counterbalance the swirling sensations of time and place set loose by the war. Through the interpretive lens of home, historical actors could view their actions within contexts that radiated throughout society: from the individual and family, through the neighborhood, to the social and political institutions that constituted the national fabric. The term "home" had particular relevance for enslaved people. Prior to the war, it consisted of the land and the buildings in the possession of the "master" as well as the patriarchal household that was the social foundation of the masterslave relationship. The antebellum home might also refer to a dwelling, which, however spartan in its construction and appurtenances, might still offer some respite from the oppression of the surrounding world. Home might also signify memories of childhood or of loved ones left behind in Maryland, Virginia, or the Carolinas. But, like time and space, home could also prove to be an insecure mooring. As wartime circumstances threatened homes in both literal and figurative senses, opportunities to seek a new home presented themselves, but rarely without associated challenges. Breaking free of slavery's chains required fending for oneself (and perhaps for other family members as well) without the "master's" protection. It meant venturing into unknown and potentially dangerous space.

In communities throughout the South, residents knew of individual cases and sometimes entire families that had made the transition from slavery to freedom.<sup>44</sup> Local lore also recorded the names of persons who had freed themselves and followed the North Star to the North or Canada. With the start of the war, advancing armed forces of the United States presented the possibility for an entirely new conception of home, one that combined personal freedom, compensated labor, and, with that, the chance to achieve self-sufficiency. Even without a clear pathway to full citizenship, the prospects of federal protection alone redefined the relationship of black persons to the national government. The United States might yet prove to be a national home instead of simply a site for the continuing oppression of its residents of African descent.

After the war, the South's antebellum ruling elite refused to abandon the goal of confining African Americans to the status of perpetually subordinate laborers—its vision of an ideal home that secession aimed to realize. When former slaveholders did not actively resist the effort of federal authorities to establish a system of compensated labor and to secure life and property and protect the citizenship rights of the freed people, they bided their time for what they confidently predicted would be the Yankees' return to the North.

Often assuming the posture of prodigal sons and daughters they feigned contrition and regained much of their prewar property (particularly the land) and many of their prewar prerogatives. Long before the end of Reconstruction and the cessation of federal oversight, they set about devising new methods of exploitation and oppression. As a result, most freed

people and their descendants remained propertyless laborers whose quest for economic independence, political influence commensurate with their share of the population, and an equal chance in the race of life faced an uphill battle at best. This "counter-revolution of property," as Du Bois characterized the post-Reconstruction compromise, re-created a culture of exploitation and oppression that has dogged African Americans in the states of the former Confederacy and in the Northern and Western states to which they relocated during the great migrations of the twentieth century. It has exerted a racially inspired, deeply conservative influence on local and national politics for the 150 years since the end of slavery."

Given the emphasis I place on the testimony of formerly enslaved people in understanding wartime emancipation, a few words of explanation about some of its forms are warranted here. The documents produced by the federal government (particularly those of the armed forces and administrative agencies that operated in the Confederacy and the Loyal Border States during and immediately after the war) contain a treasure trove of information about black Southerners. In addition to their sheer volume, their proximity to the events they describe, and their wealth of personal information, these records also possess another virtue. When taking testimony from African American informants, many bearing the fresh marks of slavery, agents of the federal government generally rendered the transcriptions using standard grammar, syntax, spelling, and punctuation without any embellishments designed to portray Southern black dialect.

Such transcriptions contrast sharply with those of contemporary newspaper reporters,, who, like antebellum visitors to the South, frequently employed the stylized conventions of nonstandard English, with which the popular press and minstrel shows had lampooned African Americans for generations. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Federal Writers Project breathed new life into those conventions in its typed transcriptions of conversations with thousands of formerly enslaved people. All but a handful of the writers and editors used contrived spellings ("wuz" for "was," to cite a common example) and other such devices to create a visual image of inferior speech that the spoken words themselves did not convey. In quoting from such documents, I have at times made slight alterations to minimize the possibility of distracting from the larger value of the observation, in which case I describe the change in the corresponding note. For most such quotations, I have left the grammar and spelling that appears in the source document unchanged.

Documents produced by literate black correspondents present a related but not identical challenge. Although almost always employing conventional forms to open and close their letters ("I seat myself and take my pen in hand to drop you a few lines ..." and "Your most humble and obedient servant ..."), the writers often used nonstandard spelling and punctuation that suggests their newness to communicating via the written word. If at times the words appear strange to the modern eye, reading them aloud adds the reinforcement of the voice and the ear to get the gist of the writer's intention, an exercise that rarely goes unrewarded. The combined senses of eyes, voice, and ears also reveal the cadence of mid-nineteenth-century speech and the similes and metaphors that speakers routinely employed. I draw liberally from such documents, and particularly those published in the Freedom volumes, following the editorial conventions regarding spelling and punctuation that guided the preparation of the original manuscripts for publication. Note here, too, my dependence on certain individuals for consistently insightful observations on the rapidly changing world around them. Especially notable in this regard are Edward L. Pierce, the young Boston

attorney who figured prominently in the early experiments in compensated labor that federal authorities undertook at Fort Monroe, Virginia, beginning in the summer of 1861 and at Port Royal, South Carolina, beginning in the fall of 1861, and the Reverend Henry McNeal Turner, a freeborn South Carolinian who affiliated with the AME Church during the 1850s and who served as chaplain of the First U.S. Colored Infantry from its organization in 1863 through its demobilization two years later. Throughout his long career, Turner stood as one of the nation's most outspoken advocates for African American rights. Two formerly enslaved persons who left postwar memoirs also provide key insights into emancipation's complexity and uncertainty. The first is Louis Hughes, a Virginia-born man who was sold to a Mississippi planter when a young adult; and the second is Mattie J. Jackson, who at the start of the war was an enslaved teenager in St. Louis. Both of these narrators left detailed, often heart-stopping, accounts of their struggles to become free amid the dangers and uncertainties of war. The experiences of Turner, Hughes, and Jackson provide checkpoints and counterpoints to the linear chronology of emancipation depicted by official government actions.

I also return for various interpretive purposes to several key areas of the Union-occupied Confederacy that presented different ideological and operational challenges to the federal program of revamping the slave South and that have long served scholars who wish to understand the associated historical processes. Besides the small enclaves of Fort Monroe and Port Royal, the vast expanse of the Mississippi valley between Memphis and New Orleans also figures prominently. Not coincidentally, the region drew the special attention of members of the AFIC. The rich documentary evidence from all the regions under U.S. administrative authority invites analysis from various perspectives; imagining it as the multicolored pieces inside a kaleidoscope, I explore the different interpretive possibilities that result from a simple turn of the wrist. Twisting further, I also peer into what enslaved people experienced in areas under Confederate authority where the old order continued to function, even if not strictly according to prewar conventions.

Longtime participants in the antislavery struggle knew that perseverance required faith. After all, the struggle for freedom, as John Hope Franklin noted in a related context, could produce "illusions of equality." Only in retrospect from the day that Charles Wesley commemorated—December 18, 1865—did a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery throughout the nation appear to be the outcome of what began at Fort Sumter four years earlier. In between, participants may or may not have witnessed what looked like the end of slavery. If they did, the collapse did not necessarily occur in one fell swoop but in a series of incremental movements, backward as well as forward, some more fleeting than others. Few, if any, pointed unmistakably to the Thirteenth Amendment's declaration that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." Staring into the future from December 18, 1865, presented equal uncertainty: the challenge of implementing the freedom that the amendment referenced only indirectly as the presumed antithesis of "slavery" and "involuntary servitude." This book examines the collapse of slavery through the sometimes clear and sometimes foggy lenses with which contemporaries saw their world. It explores the illusory aspects of emancipation that often perplexed participants and witnesses at the time and later observers alike.

As years passed and the Civil War generation reflected back on events of that time, their memories often left them confused at how the nominal victors so quickly shied away from

the implications of the victory and their obligations to the hundreds of thousands of black warriors whose loyalty helped ensure that outcome. Persons born after the war, who did not experience the long-repressed joy and seemingly endless promise associated with the dawn of freedom, had to rely on the memories of prior generations. Collectively they strove to see through the distortions of segregation and disfranchisement to preserve awareness of the time when the federal government stood as the champion of freedom and equality and not just an idle spectator to lynching and other unspeakable acts of injustice. Those who had not witnessed the early fruits of emancipation might well have presumed that a regime of violent oppression over millions of nominal citizens had been present for all time, a seamless continuation between nineteenth-century slavery and twentieth century segregation. Little wonder that the question repeatedly arose whether the Union's victory over the Confederacy left any lasting accomplishments or whether it, too, was an illusion.

As to whether the Civil War destroyed slavery, the following pages will show that the answer is a qualified yes. The defeat of the rebellion abolished slavery but neither exploitation nor discrimination based on race. By the same token, Radical Reconstruction achieved some notable success in guaranteeing the political rights of all citizens, but not, as events soon showed, in placing them beyond assault. And the revolutionary momentum stopped well short of redressing the unequal distribution of wealth between black and white Americans that began with slavery and continues to this day. As a result, the expectations associated with what freedom meant in principle and what it constituted in practice gave rise to a recurring cycle of hope and frustration. The gains that were achieved and then lost, the promises that were made and then broken, and the pleasant dreams that devolved into nightmares could appear as surreal. These were the phantoms of freedom, the illusions of emancipation. <>

## UPHEAVAL: TURNING POINTS FOR NATIONS IN CRISIS

by Jared Diamond [Little, Brown and Company,  
9780316409131]

A "riveting and illuminating" Bill Gates Summer Reading pick about how and why some nations recover from trauma and others don't (Yuval Noah Harari), by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the landmark bestseller *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.

In his international bestsellers *Guns, Germs and Steel* and *Collapse*, Jared Diamond transformed our understanding of what makes civilizations rise and fall. Now, in his third book in this monumental trilogy, he reveals how successful nations recover from crises while adopting selective changes -- a coping mechanism more commonly associated with individuals recovering from personal crises.

Diamond compares how six countries have survived recent upheavals -- ranging from the forced opening of Japan by U.S. Commodore Perry's fleet, to the Soviet Union's attack on Finland, to a murderous coup or countercoup in Chile and Indonesia, to the transformations of Germany and Austria after World War Two. Because Diamond has lived and spoken the language in five of these six countries, he can present gut-wrenching histories experienced firsthand. These nations coped, to varying degrees, through mechanisms such as acknowledgment of responsibility, painfully honest self-appraisal, and learning from models of other nations. Looking to the future, Diamond examines whether the United States,

Japan, and the whole world are successfully coping with the grave crises they currently face. Can we learn from lessons of the past?

Adding a psychological dimension to the in-depth history, geography, biology, and anthropology that mark all of Diamond's books, *Upheaval* reveals factors influencing how both whole nations and individual people can respond to big challenges. The result is a book epic in scope, but also his most personal yet.

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About the Author

This is not a magazine article about current affairs, intended to be read for a few weeks after its publication, and then to fall out-of-date. Instead, this is a book expected to remain in print for many decades. I state that obvious fact just to explain why you might otherwise be astonished to find nothing whatsoever in this book about the specific policies of the current Trump administration in the U.S., nor about President Trump's leadership, nor about the current Brexit negotiations in Britain. Anything that I could write today about those fast-moving issues would become embarrassingly superseded by the time that this book is published, and would be useless a few decades from now. Readers interested in President Trump, his policies, and Brexit will find abundant published discussions elsewhere. But my Chapters 9 and 10 do have a lot to say about major U.S. issues that have been operating for the past two decades, that are now claiming even more attention under the current administration, and that are likely to continue to operate for at least the next decade.

Now, here is a road-map to my book itself. In my first chapter I shall discuss personal crises, before devoting the rest of this book to national crises. We've all seen, by living through our own crises and witnessing the crises of our relatives and friends, that there is much variation among crisis outcomes. In the best cases, people

Finland's crisis (Chapter 2) exploded with the Soviet Union's massive attack upon Finland on November 30, 1939. In the resulting Winter War, Finland was virtually abandoned by all of its potential allies and sustained heavy losses, but nevertheless succeeded in preserving its independence against the Soviet Union, whose population outnumbered Finland's by 40 to 1. I spent a summer in Finland 20 years later, hosted by veterans and widows and orphans of the Winter War. The war's legacy was conspicuous selective change that made Finland an unprecedented mosaic, a mixture of contrasting elements: an affluent small liberal democracy, pursuing a foreign policy of doing everything possible to earn the trust of the impoverished giant reactionary Soviet dictatorship. That policy was considered shameful and denounced as "Finlandization" by many non-Finns who failed to understand the historical reasons for its adoption. One of the most intense moments of my summer in Finland unfolded when I ignorantly expressed similar views to a Winter War veteran, who replied by politely explaining to me the bitter lessons that Finns had learned from being denied help by other nations.

The other of the two crises provoked by an external shock involved Japan, whose long-held policy of isolation from the outside world was ended on July 8, 1853, when a fleet of American warships sailed into Tokyo Bay's entrance, demanding a treaty and rights for U.S. ships and sailors (Chapter 3). The eventual result was the overthrow of Japan's previous system of government, a consciously adopted program of drastic wide-ranging change, and an equally conscious program of retention of many traditional features that leave Japan

today as the world's most distinctive rich industrialized nation. Japan's transformation during the decades following the U.S. fleet's arrival, the so-called Meiji Era, strikingly illustrates at the national level many of the factors influencing personal crises. The decision-making processes and resulting military successes of Meiji Japan help us by contrast to understand why Japan made different decisions in the 1930's, leading to its crushing military defeat in World War Two.

Chapter 4 concerns Chile, the first of the pair of countries whose crises were internal explosions resulting from a breakdown of political compromise among their citizens. On September 11, 1973, after years of political stalemate, Chile's democratically elected government under President Allende was overturned by a military coup whose leader, General Pinochet, remained in power for almost 17 years. Neither the coup itself, nor the world records for sadistic tortures smashed by Pinochet's government, had been foreseen by my Chilean friends while I was living in Chile several years before the coup. In fact, they had proudly explained to me Chile's long democratic traditions, so unlike those of other South American countries. Today, Chile is once again a democratic outlier in South America, but selectively changed, incorporating parts of Allende's and parts of Pinochet's models. To U.S. friends who commented on my book manuscript, this Chilean chapter was the most frightening chapter of my book, because of the speed and completeness with which a democracy turned into a sadistic dictatorship.

Paired with that chapter on Chile is Chapter 5 on Indonesia, whose breakdown of political compromise among its citizens also resulted in the internal explosion of a coup attempt, in this case on October 1, 1965. The coup's outcome was opposite to that of Chile's coup: a counter-coup led to genocidal elimination of the faction presumed to have supported the coup attempt. Indonesia stands in further contrast to all of the other nations discussed in this book: it is the poorest, least industrialized, and least Westernized of my seven nations; and it has the youngest national identity, cemented only during the 40 years that I have been working there.

The next two chapters (Chapters 6 and 7) discuss German and Australian national crises that seemingly unfolded gradually instead of exploding with a bang. Some readers may hesitate to apply the term "crisis" or "upheaval" to such gradual developments. But even if one prefers to apply a different term to them, I have still found it useful to view them within the same framework that I use to discuss more abrupt transitions, because they pose the same questions of selective change and illustrate the same factors influencing outcomes. In addition, the difference between "explosive crises" and "gradual change" is arbitrary rather than sharp: they grade into each other. Even in the cases of apparently abrupt transitions, such as Chile's coup, decades of gradually growing tension led to the coup, and decades of gradual changes followed it. I describe the crises of Chapters 6 and 7 as only "seemingly" unfolding gradually, because in fact post-war Germany's crisis began with the most traumatic devastation experienced by any of the countries discussed in this book: Germany's ruined condition as of the date of its surrender in World War Two on May 8, 1945. Similarly, while post-war Australia's crisis unfolded gradually, it began with three shocking military defeats within the space of less than three months.

The first of my two nations illustrating non-explosive crises is post—World War Two Germany (Chapter 6), which was simultaneously confronted with the issues of its Nazi-era legacies, of disagreements about its society's hierarchal organization, and of the trauma of

political division between West and East Germany. Within my comparative framework, distinctive features of crisis resolution in post-war Germany include exceptionally violent clashes between generations, strong geopolitical constraints, and the process of reconciliation with nations that had been victims of German wartime atrocities.

My other example of non-explosive crises is Australia (Chapter 7), which has remodeled its national identity during the 55 years that I have been visiting it. When I first arrived in 1964, Australia seemed like a remote British outpost in the Pacific Ocean, still looking to Britain for its identity, and still practicing a White Australia policy that limited or excluded non-European immigrants. But Australia was facing an identity crisis, because that white and British identity conflicted increasingly with Australia's geographic location, foreign policy needs, defense strategy, economy, and population make-up. Today, Australia's trade and politics are oriented towards Asia, Australian city streets and university campuses are crowded with Asians, and Australian voters only narrowly defeated a referendum to remove the Queen of England as Australia's head of state. However, as in Meiji Japan and Finland, those changes have been selective: Australia is still a parliamentary democracy, its national language is still English, and a large majority of Australians are still British by ancestry.

All of these national crises discussed so far are well recognized, and have been resolved (or at least resolutions are already long underway), with the result that we can evaluate their outcomes. The last four chapters describe present and future crises, whose outcomes are still unknown. I begin this section with Japan (Chapter 8), already the subject of Chapter 3. Japan today faces numerous fundamental problems, some of which are widely recognized and acknowledged by the Japanese people and government, while others are not recognized or even are widely denied by the Japanese. At present, these problems are not clearly moving towards solution; Japan's future is truly up for grabs, in the hands of its own people. Will the memories of how Meiji Japan courageously and successfully overcame its crisis help modern Japan to succeed?

The next two chapters (Chapters 9 and 10) concern my own country, the United States. I identify four growing crises that hold the potential to undermine American democracy and American strength within the next decade, as already happened in Chile. Of course, these are not discoveries of mine: there is open discussion of all four among many Americans, and a sense of crisis is widespread in the U.S. today. It appears to me that all four problems are not currently moving towards solution, but are instead getting worse. Yet the U.S., like Meiji Japan, has its own memories of overcoming crises, notably our long and lacerating Civil War, and our suddenly being dragged out of political isolation into World War Two. Will those memories now help my country to succeed?

Finally comes the whole world (Chapter 11). While one could assemble an infinite list of problems facing the world, I focus on four for which it seems to me that trends already underway will, if they continue, undermine living standards worldwide within the next several decades. Unlike Japan and the U.S., both of which have long histories of national identity, self-government, and memories of successful collective action, the whole world lacks such a history. Without such memories to inspire us, will the world succeed, now that for the first time in history we are confronted with problems that are potentially fatal worldwide?

This book concludes with an epilogue that examines our studies of seven nations and of the world, in the light of our dozen factors. I ask whether nations require crises to galvanize

them into undertaking big changes. It required the shock of the Cocoanut Grove fire to transform short-term psychotherapy: can nations decide to transform themselves without the shock of a Cocoanut Grove? I consider whether leaders have decisive effects on history; I propose directions for future studies; and I suggest types of lessons that might realistically be gained from examining history. If people, or even just their leaders, choose to reflect on past crises, then understanding of the past might help us to resolve our present and future crises. <>

## **THE MEN AND THE MOMENT: THE ELECTION OF 1968 AND THE RISE OF PARTISAN POLITICS IN AMERICA** by Aram Goudsouzian [University of North Carolina Press, 9781469651095]

The presidential election of 1968 forever changed American politics. In this character-driven narrative history, Aram Goudsouzian portrays the key transformations that played out over that dramatic year. It was the last "Old Politics" campaign, where political machines and party bosses determined the major nominees, even as the "New Politics" of grassroots participation powered primary elections. It was an election that showed how candidates from both the Left and Right could seize on "hot-button" issues to alter the larger political dynamic. It showcased the power of television to "package" politicians and political ideas, and it played out against an extraordinary dramatic global tableau of chaos and conflict. More than anything else, it was a moment decided by a contest of political personalities, as a group of men battled for the presidency, with momentous implications for the nation's future.

Well-paced, accessible, and engagingly written, Goudsouzian's book chronicles anew the characters and events of the 1968 campaign as an essential moment in American history, one with clear resonance in our contemporary political moment.

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1968 Election Timeline

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Throughout the presidential election of 1968, the backdrop was chaos. In February of that year, communist forces launched the Tet Offensive, intensifying questions about the U.S. role in the Vietnam War. In April, Martin Luther King was assassinated, triggering fury and

angst among African Americans as well as terrible riots in inner cities. Later that month, the nation's cultural divide sharpened when radical students occupied buildings at Columbia University and the police brutally removed them. That summer, the Cold War hardened with the Soviet Union's ruthless invasion of Czechoslovakia. On the streets outside the Democratic National Convention, the Chicago police attacked peace activists, and the nation appeared to descend into political pandemonium. By Election Day that November, many Americans were questioning the basic stability of their core institutions.

That anxiety helps explain voters' choices. The 1968 election shaped the identities of our two major political parties. It signaled the end of a long liberal era in American politics that began with the New Deal of the 1930s. The Democratic coalition—which included the urban working class, African Americans, intellectuals, and white southerners—met its demise. The party has since struggled to advocate progressive policies while capturing the political center. Just as important, the election mobilized the conservative forces that dominated the era to come. The Republican Party resonated with the comfortable-yet-nervous middle class, spreading into the growing suburbs and the emerging South, while learning to absorb an emerging populist conservatism.

The presidential campaign of 1968 was a last hurrah for the "Old Politics," in which political machines and party leaders determined the major nominees. It also highlighted a "New Politics," in which candidates took their cases right to the people, through party primaries and modern technology. On both the Left and Right, candidates seized hot-button issues to alter the larger political dynamic. And more than any previous campaign, it showcased the transformative power of television to "package" candidates.

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The candidates were extraordinary personalities. The Democrats battled for the soul of their party. Like a cunning, tortured king out of Shakespeare, Lyndon Johnson presided over the action, even after his shocking decision not to seek reelection. Eugene McCarthy was the rallying figure for a remarkable grassroots campaign rooted in opposition to the Vietnam War, even as he sabotaged his prospects through his diffidence. Bobby Kennedy, both adored and despised, was evolving from his brother's prickly lieutenant into a charismatic hero of common folk, only to die at the hands of an assassin. Hubert Humphrey, bullied into servility as Johnson's vice president, needed an independent strategy on the Vietnam War to finally become his "own man."

On the Republican side, the magnetic figures of Nelson Rockefeller and Ronald Reagan pulled on the left and right wings, respectively, of the party. Meanwhile, the fiery George Wallace almost toppled the two-party system with his aggressive politics of reactionary resentment. But it was Richard Nixon who found the language of the Republican resurgence: "law and order" to contain urban violence, patriotic vagueness on Vietnam, and appeals to "forgotten Americans" who resented the Great Society's devotion of resources to the poor, oppressed, and black. By winning the presidency, Nixon completed the greatest comeback in modern American political history. Only Nixon committed to running throughout the election cycle. Only Nixon calculated an approach of pragmatism over principle. Only Nixon exploited all the tools available to him—from slick television ads to diplomatic deception. His narrow victory, accomplished by dubious means, laid the foundation for the crisis that ultimately befell him.



As you might imagine, many books describe the presidential election of 1968. In its immediate aftermath, journalists from the United States and Great Britain wrote long, detailed, insightful accounts. Popular writers have described the election alongside trends in American culture and developments around the globe. Excellent biographies, enhanced by archival research and personal interviews, depict all the major candidates. Political scientists have analyzed electoral strategies and party processes. Academic historians have contextualized the election through studies of grassroots politics.

This book seeks to pull together these strands into a short, engaging narrative. It relies on the research and insights of many authors, along with the profuse output of political journalists during that hectic year.

Each of the first eight chapters centers upon a single candidate, and the chapters toggle back and forth between Democrats and Republicans (until the chapter on George Wallace, who ran under the banner of the American Independent Party). Though the book moves forward through 1968, the chapters often cover overlapping developments. A timeline of major events, found in the appendix, can help keep the story straight.

The echoes of 1968 reverberate in our contemporary politics. We again have flamboyant demagogues who conjure fears of elite conspiracies, righteous progressives who seek to reclaim the ideals of the Democratic Party, liberal centrists who fail to summon a unifying message, and accusations of foreign interference in our democratic process. My hope is that readers can draw those parallels, yet understand the election of 1968 within its special context—particularly through the personal experiences of each candidate. These were all elite, influential white men in late adulthood. At times, they were put to the test. As the book and chapter titles illustrate, their notions of manhood shaped their political identities—sometimes in overt ways and at other times more subtly. But gender roles and expectations, on their own, cannot explain the presidential election of 1968. Each candidate was responding to the swirling forces of that tumultuous year, acting in a specific historical moment. Their critical decisions, which altered the nation's destiny, were shaped by their personal backstories, their public images, and their political odysseys. <>

## **SØREN KIERKEGAARD: DISCOURSES AND WRITINGS ON SPIRITUALITY** Introduced and translated by Christopher B. Barnett [Classics of Western Spirituality, Paulist Press, 9780809106486]

The first volume of sources and commentary devoted exclusively to Kierkegaard's spirituality. Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) is primarily known as a philosopher, even though much of his writing was explicitly dedicated to spiritual growth (what he called "upbuilding"). This volume redresses this situation by demonstrating not only that Kierkegaard was a spiritual author, but also how he brings out the beauty and diversity of the Christian spiritual life. Particular attention is given to his writings on God, creation, humanity, and Jesus Christ. A general introduction helps orient the reader to Kierkegaard's life and thought, while brief introductions to each selected reading deepen the reader's acquaintance with the Danish thinker's oeuvre. **SØREN KIERKEGAARD: DISCOURSES AND WRITINGS ON SPIRITUALITY** provides an indispensable introduction to this crucial aspect of his thought.

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Excerpt: The great Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) once remarked to a friend, "Kierkegaard was by far the most profound thinker of the last century. Kierkegaard was a saint." Just what Wittgenstein meant by this statement is unclear. After all, there is not a direct correlation between intellectual accomplishment and holiness. We do not say a thinker is excellent on account of holiness, nor do we understand holiness as a guarantee of intellectual excellence. When the two do seem to coincide—as in the case of a Thomas Aquinas or an Edith Stein—we may very well appreciate the concurrence. And yet, Thomas's *Summa Theologica* remains widely read today not due to the saint's religious virtue but, rather, to his philosophical and theological insight.

How, then, should Wittgenstein's claim about Kierkegaard be taken? Perhaps the juxtaposition of "thinker" and "saint" is instructive enough, for, as this volume will demonstrate, Kierkegaard was a thinker deeply concerned with the problem of being a saint—that is to say, with the problem of holiness.

What is holiness? Is holiness possible for human beings? If so, what are its characteristics? What implications does it have for one's social life? Both in his published and unpublished writings, these are questions to which Kierkegaard directly and indirectly returned. Moreover, he dedicated a significant portion of his authorship to fostering holiness, though, as will be seen, he preferred the term upbuilding. Thus it appears that Wittgenstein actually gets to the heart of the matter: Kierkegaard's holiness, however it be construed, cannot be separated from his willingness to think about and think through holiness.

The purpose of this volume is to acquaint readers with this fundamental aspect of Kierkegaard's thought. Included here are some of Kierkegaard's most important spiritual writings, ranging from his early "upbuilding discourses," which gently encourage the reader to consider a life lived in and for God, to his late broadsides against the Danish state church, which shock in their condemnation of bourgeois Christianity. In between are a variety of pieces that see Kierkegaard develop his spiritual insights and methods. His discourses on the lilies of the field and the birds of the air are lyrical parables that treat the natural world as an image of the human being's spiritual condition. His analysis of the human self in *The Sickness unto Death* uses philosophical language in order to make a spiritual point—namely, that happiness stems from the self's willingness to find "rest" in God. In every case, Kierkegaard establishes himself as one of the key figures in modern Christian spirituality.

### Kierkegaard's Place in The History of Christian Spirituality

Spirituality has been defined as the pursuit of "life integration" by way of a process of "self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives." Thus particular doctrines underlie every spirituality—for they articulate the "ultimate value" in question—but spirituality itself is not a mere set of doctrines or rules. Rather, it involves the existential application of such principles, whether they concern "the Transcendent, the flourishing of humanity, or some other value."

With this in mind, "Christian spirituality" refers to that spirituality whose "horizon of ultimate value is the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ and communicated through his Holy Spirit, and the project of self-transcendence is the living of the paschal mystery within the context of the church community." The person concerned with Christian spirituality, then, will have certain presuppositions about who God is. Her task, however, will not be to elucidate and to expand on those presuppositions—as it is in theology—but to relate them to who she is and to what she wants in life. On this understanding, Christianity is always already more than a cognitive assent or an interior "feeling." It is a *mode de vie*, which involves political, sexual, social, and spiritual matrices.

As a thinker, Kierkegaard has often been labeled as an "existentialist" or, more forcefully, as the "father of existentialism." As Robert Solomon explains, "It is generally acknowledged that if existentialism is a 'movement' at all, Kierkegaard is its prime mover."

Identifying Kierkegaard with "existentialism," then, is hardly a straightforward matter. It may be that the very themes that Kierkegaard bequeathed to existentialism are better understood in light of Christian spirituality, since a number of Kierkegaard's most cherished ideas and motifs follow the "contours of Christian spirituality." Lawrence S. Cunningham and Keith J. Egan maintain that "any authentic Christian spirituality" must possess each of these general features: (1) an emphasis on Christianity as a "way of life," rather than "an abstract philosophy or a code of beliefs"; (2) a thematization of the Christian way of life as discipleship, understood, in particular, as the following of Jesus Christ; (3) a recognition that discipleship is not purely an individual matter, but also entails interpersonal involvement; (4) a stress on the reception of the Eucharist; (5) a sensitivity to the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of discipleship; and (6) an openness to the world, rather than a longing for a "shield from the exigent realities around us." Kierkegaard's authorship displays each of these qualities. The upbuilding writings, in particular,

might be taken as manifestly spiritual. And yet, even Kierkegaard's more philosophical works, many of which are seen as existentialism's loci classici, either highlight or, at least, hint at the contours of Christian spirituality. Hence, rather than portion out a "philosophical" and a "religious" Kierkegaard, it is better to view his authorship as a whole, which, at any juncture, is capable of moving from irony to upbuilding.

Whatever the case, the persistence of spiritual themes in Kierkegaard's authorship raises the question, Where do they come from? In other words, if thinkers such as Kant and Hegel form the background of Kierkegaard's philosophical output, who are the key sources behind Kierkegaard's spiritual writings? Answering this question will not only better situate Kierkegaard in the history of Christian spirituality, but, eventually, will also bring his own contribution to Christian spirituality into sharper relief.

In closing, it seems appropriate (if also ironic) to register Kierkegaard's disdain for the kind of material presented here. He writes in an 1848 journal entry,

What I have to say may not be taught; by being taught it turns into something entirely different. What I need is a man who does not gesticulate with his arms up in a pulpit or with his fingers upon a podium, but a person who gesticulates with his entire personal existence [Existents], with the willingness in every danger to will to express in action precisely what he teaches....Precisely this is the profound untruth in all modern teaching, that there is no notion at all of how thought is influenced by the fact that the one presenting it does not dare to express it in action, that in this very way the flower of the thought or the heart of the thought vanishes and the power of the thought disappears.

Scholars often ascribe such complaints to Kierkegaard's opposition to the Hegelian system and its concomitant model of philosophy as objective science—an interpretation that is not without merit. And yet, to prioritize this reading is to suggest that Kierkegaard is best defined by what he is against rather than what he is for. It is to treat him as a detractor rather than as an advocate.

Gradually, however, the notion that Kierkegaard is a mere voice of existentialist angst and protest is fading. Since the 1980s, increasing attention has been paid to Kierkegaard's category of *opbyggelse*, and there has been a resurgence of interest in Kierkegaard's mysticalcum-Pietist sources and their influence on his thinking. To say the least, then, Kierkegaard's connection to and treatment of Christian spirituality is a live issue in the scholarly world, and the upshot is a fuller understanding of the Dane's work.

I hope this book will contribute to this ongoing development, demonstrating that Kierkegaard wants to provoke existential transformation and to foster Christian holiness. Moreover, in devising and effecting such a project, Kierkegaard finds himself not at the margins of Western thought but, rather, as part of an intellectual tradition that stretches back to antiquity, finds its full flowering in the Christian era, and remains prominent to this day. This is the tradition of spiritual writing, and it boasts some of the most important thinkers in Western history, from Plato and Augustine to Meister Eckhart and Teresa of Avila. To the extent that this volume encourages one to situate Kierkegaard among their kind, it will have met its aim. <>

# PHILOSOPHERS AND THEIR POETS: REFLECTIONS ON THE POETIC TURN IN PHILOSOPHY SINCE KANT

edited by Charles Bambach and Theodore George [SUNY State University of New York Press, 9781438477039]

Examines the role that poets and the poetic word play in the formation of philosophical thinking in the modern German tradition.

Several of the most celebrated philosophers in the German tradition since Kant afford to poetry an all but unprecedented status in Western thought. Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Gadamer argue that the scope, limits, and possibilities of philosophy are intimately intertwined with those of poetry. For them, poetic thinking itself is understood as intrinsic to the kind of thinking that defines philosophical inquiry and the philosophical life, and they developed their views through extensive and sustained considerations of specific poets, as well as specific poetic figures and images. This book offers essays by leading scholars that address each of the major figures of this tradition and the respective poets they engage, including Schiller, Archilochus, Pindar, Hölderlin, Eliot, and Celan, while also discussing the poets' contemporary relevance to philosophy in the continental tradition.

Above all, the book explores an approach to language that rethinks its role as a mere tool for communication or for the dissemination of knowledge. Here language will be understood as an essential event that opens up the world in a primordial sense whereby poetry comes to have a deeply ethical significance for human beings. In this way, the volume positions ethics at the center of continental discourse, even as it engages philosophy itself as a discourse about language attuned to the rigor of what poetry ultimately expresses.

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In **PHILOSOPHERS AND THEIR POETS**, we have sought to bring together a wide range of essays that address the diverse concerns of several German philosophers from Fichte to Gadamer concerning the relation of poetic language to philosophy. In gathering these essays we have sought to explore different possibilities of an ethical relation to language opened up by poets, one that challenges any notion of ethics as residing in subjective volition or the behavior of an autonomous agent. Rather, by pursuing the strange and uncanny conversation between philosophers and their poets, we have attempted to raise the question of the ethicality of language itself. In Celan's understanding of language as ethos, in Hölderlin's poetizing of homecoming as a way of safeguarding the mystery, in Heidegger's thinking of ethos as poetic dwelling, and in Gadamer's grasp of poetry and hermeneutic philosophy as "both pursuing an interpretation (Deut) that points (deutet) into the open," we find ways of opening toward the silent, concealed force of language that challenges us to rethink our sense of the ethical.

Yet there is an inevitable tension in the way poetic verse speaks to and from the ethos of language and its ethicality. Like an ancient oracle, the poet's riddling, enigmatic inflections come to us as a call and a provocation. Sometimes the call is direct. One thinks here of Rilke's bold, unequivocal entreaty from "Archaic Torso of Apollo" where, from out of its gleaming marble surface, the headless stone

bursts forth through its confines

like a star . . .

and announces: "You must change your life." At other times, however, the poetic call itself becomes oracular—sent like a "message in a bottle" (Flaschenpost) to a future, nameless addressee "in the—not always greatly hopeful—belief that somewhere and sometime it could wash up on land." Theodor Adorno famously proclaimed: "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." But he also proposed an ethical response to such a condition:

A new categorical imperative has been imposed by Hitler on unfree humankind: to arrange their thoughts and actions so that Auschwitz will not repeat itself, so that nothing similar will happen.

Yet Celan confronted Adorno's challenge by writing poetry ever mindful of the very barbarism that sought to silence it. And he did so through his understanding of language as the ethos from which any possible response could be made. In the face of the banality of "ethical" language during the Third Reich and against its tragic inadequacy to address the enormity of its failure, Celan proffered his own verse as a poetic ethos of language. He called for a "Breathturn" that would put into question the tradition of aesthetics that he believed had transmogrified poetic language by detaching it from ethical life. Nonetheless, Celan refrained from offering any ethical pronouncements of his own, given how devastatingly inadequate the "ethical" blatherings of postwar German meaculpas had proved to be. And yet his poetry speaks deeply to a hope that might emerge on the other side of history—in what Heidegger called "an other beginning." Such a beginning could only

emerge, Celan seems to tell us, if we come to cast our hopes for what is to come in nets that are weighted down by the burden of a remembrance. Only in this way, attuned to the pain of those whose suffering can never be aufgehoben in the unfolding of history, can we ever begin to imagine what the future might hold. Addressing this hope in the ethicality of a language tinged with the sense of the uncanniness/ Unheimlichkeit of speech, Celan sends out his "message in a bottle" that offers its own poetic measure for what cannot be said in the language of the concept:

Into rivers north of the future  
I cast out the net, which you  
hesitantly weight  
with stone-engraved  
shadows.

The essays in this volume all address the power of poetic language in its conversation with German philosophy.

The collection begins with a focus on contributions made by German philosophers from the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Perhaps appropriately, Chapter 1 presents a late-eighteenth-century contribution to what, in Plato's time, was already considered an old "quarrel between philosophy and poetry." In her "On the Poetical Nature of Philosophical Writings: A Controversy over Style between Schiller and Fichte," Maria del Rosario Acosta López takes up a debate between Friedrich Schiller and Johann Gottlieb Fichte about the character, relation, and difference of poetical and philosophical writing that arose in correspondence between the two when Schiller rejected a piece by Fichte for Schiller's journal, *die Horen*. Fichte, according to Acosta, believed that Schiller's rationale for rejection was simply a matter of the style (*Manier*) of his exposition. While Schiller's criticism of Fichte did, indeed, pertain to style, for Schiller this is no superficial matter. Quite to the contrary, Schiller's criticism turns on a disagreement with Fichte about nothing less than the vocation of the human being (*Mensch*). Whereas Fichte believes that the vocation of the human being culminates in a moral autonomy of reason free of the sensible, Schiller, by contrast, argues that the vocation of the human being, while moral, culminates in the reciprocal action of reason and sensibility. "To Schiller," Acosta explains, "true moral freedom is aesthetic freedom, that is, one in which a reciprocal action between both aspects of human nature has been achieved and secured." Schiller's criticism is, moreover, closely related to the matter of philosophical style. For Schiller, as Acosta argues, the vocation of philosophy is not achieved by abstract conceptuality that is purified of all sensible images—work that may be performed by what Schiller calls the "Brotgelehrte," academics in it for the pay and, by implication, more so than for the advancement of knowledge. Rather, philosophy is achieved in what he calls presentative (*darstellende*) writing, a form of writing in which concept and image are in reciprocal relation that achieves an organic whole and, thus, is able to address the reader as a whole person.

This volume includes, as a companion to Acosta's contribution, chapter 2, an original translation by Christopher Turner of the very correspondence between Fichte and Schiller at issue. The remarkable correspondence begins with a letter from Fichte to Schiller that enclosed the piece he intended to contribute to Schiller's journal, *die Horen*, from June 21, 1795. The first lines of Schiller's letter to Fichte in response from June 24, 1795, are the ones that set the exchange in motion:

As much as the sight of your manuscript pleased me, dear friend, and as loathe as am I to do without a contribution that was already entirely and confidently counted on for the next installment of *die Horen*, I nevertheless find myself compelled to send it back.

Fichte, as one might imagine, was not entirely pleased.

Chapter 3 focuses on Hegel's contributions to the relation of poetic language to philosophy. In his "Hegel, Romantic Art, and the Unfinished Task of the Poetic Word," Theodore George challenges the common view of Hegel's so-called end of art thesis. On this common view, Hegel holds that although both art and philosophy share in the speculative vocation to present truth, philosophy supersedes art in European modernity, so that the forms of art achieved in European modernity (Hegel refers to them collectively as "Romantic" art) are left with no real speculative significance. George argues that this common view of Hegel's "end of art" thesis fails to appreciate the nuance and richness of Hegel's approach to Romantic art. Hegel believes that Romantic art comes to present truth in a novel manner, thanks, in particular, to the role played by language in Romantic art. For Hegel, all art, regardless of form, is constituted as a "work of language." Whereas Hegel believes classical art to have been a work of language that founds (stiftet) ancient society, Romantic art, by contrast, is a work that provides only a supplement to any possible foundation. As such a supplement, Romantic art presents truth always only incompletely, in deferral. Yet, as George understands Hegel, this limitation is not a deficiency, but, on the contrary, precisely brings into focus the relevance of Romantic art, and, with this, important ethical dimensions of this relevance. George writes that Romantic art, "allows us to examine the possibilities for our inner lives and the dehiscence we experience in this interiority within modern society."

The next two chapters of the volume concern important but still too little understood aspects of Nietzsche's considerations of poetic language and its relation to philosophy. In chapter 4, Babette Babich turns to Nietzsche's treatment of the ancient Greek lyric poet Archilochus. In this chapter, entitled "Who Is Nietzsche's Archilochus? Rhythm and the Problem of the Subject," Babich observes that Nietzsche has often been associated with poetry but that Nietzsche's relation to the tradition of lyric poetry is complex. While Nietzsche has been taken up in reference to poets as diverse as Pindar, Schiller, and Emerson, his considerations of Archilochus has received less attention. In this chapter, Babich focuses on Nietzsche's approach to Archilochus in the *Birth of Tragedy*. Her examination brings into focus the theme of the lyric subject, and, importantly, the relation of word and music as Nietzsche treats it under the auspices of what he calls quantifying rhythm.

In chapter 5, "Untimely Meditations on Nietzsche's Poet-Heroes," Kalliopi Nikolopoulou examines the role played in Nietzsche's philosophy by a poetic motif, which she refers to as a Homeric heroic ideal. Nikolopoulou recognizes that her treatment of Nietzsche's stress on this poetic motif is what Nietzsche himself might have referred to as "untimely." While much of the reception of Nietzsche in postmodernity has been laudatory, his stress on the ideal of heroism has been widely questioned, criticized, and disavowed. Yet, as Nikolopoulou argues, Nietzsche's invocation of this heroic ideal comprises a decisive feature of Nietzsche's efforts to make an untimely intervention against what he perceived as the nihilism of his times. Nikolopoulou begins with an overview of the aesthetics of heroism in Homer and the legacy of this aesthetics in Plato and Aristotle. Here, heroism is a matter of beautiful death, which, as Nikolopoulou argues, may be grasped as an experience of untimeliness. Turning to

Nietzsche, Nikolopoulou traces Nietzsche's debts to this Homeric aesthetics of heroism in *The Birth of Tragedy* in his characterization of Apollo (and the art impulse he names for the Greek God). She argues, in turn, that the Homeric aesthetics of heroism also plays a role in Nietzsche's association of poets, such as Aeschylus, Archilochus, and Pindar, with a sense of vocation that joins them to something greater than themselves. Nikolopoulou concludes her considerations of the role played by an aesthetics of heroism in *The Birth of Tragedy* in reference to Nietzsche's portrait of Euripides as an ambivalent figure, and, indeed, one whose ambivalence may be reflected in Nietzsche's own relation to ancient Greek tragedy.

These essays on late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century German philosophers are followed by three chapters on Heidegger's pathbreaking contributions to questions about the relation of poetic language and philosophy. In chapter 6, "Heidegger's Ister Lectures: Ethical Dwelling in the (Foreign) Homeland," Charles Bambach explores the relationship between language and ethics in Heidegger by offering a reading of the SS 1942 lecture course "Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister.'" Drawing on Hölderlin's Böhlendorff letter from 1801 and its telling distinction between the native/foreign, Heidegger explores the Hölderlinian topos of homecoming as "the future of the historical essence of the German Volk." For Heidegger, "poetry is the fundamental event of being as such"; it opens human beings to the possibility of a historical homecoming. Bambach explores this Heideggerian topos of homecoming by situating it against the work of two poets whom Heidegger privileges above all others—Sophocles and Hölderlin. What Heidegger takes up in the Ister lectures is the question concerning the possibility of authentic poetic dwelling, a question he addresses by examining the tragic tension within Sophocles's *Antigone*. In the uncanny fate of *Antigone*, Heidegger finds the poetic grammar for embracing the paradox that marks the human sojourn upon the earth. As Bambach argues, in *Antigone*'s decision to expose herself knowingly to the uncanny strangeness at the heart of existence, she risks losing her sense of home. Yet, paradoxically, it is precisely this risk of losing the home that enables a more authentic form of poetic homecoming, one that connects her to hearth and earth. In risking her home in this way, *Antigone* offers a model for Hölderlin's own sense of poetic homecoming. On Heidegger's reading, it is this opening up to the uncanny/unhomely that offers a possible pathway for a futural German homecoming. Hence, for Heidegger, in her character as that singular figure who becomes homely in becoming unhomely, *Antigone* poetizes the very possibility of poetry, which decides on "the potential of human beings for being homely" (HHI: 121/ GA 53:151). In exploring the tension between these oppositional forces in Greek tragedy—precisely by way of an interpretation of Hölderlin—Bambach's essay situates such thinking in terms of the foreign/native dyad as one that both shapes and haunts Heidegger's notion of ethical dwelling.

In chapter 7, "Remains: Heidegger and Hölderlin amid the Ruins of Time," William McNeill examines the significance of Heidegger's celebrated encounter with Hölderlin for Heidegger's elucidation of the relation of language and time. McNeill takes his point of departure from the observation that, for Hölderlin, the essence of time is that it tears: time tears us from the present, opening up a relation both to what exceeds the mortal and to a properly mortal relation to the dead in remembrance. Focused first on Heidegger's 1936 "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry," McNeill argues that on Heidegger's elucidation of Hölderlin, poetizing is an event of commemorative remembrance that names what remains in the tears of time. Here, however, poetizing does not name something that is already present but, instead, comprises the event that first institutes or founds the world it commemorates. As McNeill

argues, Heidegger's engagement with Hölderlin thus points to a shift in his earlier view of the relation of language and time. In the earlier *Being and Time*, Heidegger holds that *Dasein* is the disclosedness, on the basis of which language is possible. Now, with his engagement with Hölderlin, Heidegger suggests that language, as poetizing, is what allows for disclosedness in the first place. McNeill takes up Heidegger's 1941-42 interpretative engagement with Hölderlin's hymn "Remembrance" to argue, in turn, that for Heidegger remembrance is futural. For Heidegger, remembrance is a greeting, a thoughtful turn to what is greeted, that allows it to appear in its own being as what it is. When remembrance accomplishes such a greeting, however, what is greeted is no longer simply something worn out or finished, but comes into focus as a "buried treasure" indexed to the future.

Chapter 8, "The Poietic Momentum of Thought: Heidegger and Poetry," by Krzysztof Ziarek, shifts focus from Heidegger's intensive encounter with Hölderlin's poetry to the significance of Heidegger's encounters with poetic texts and artworks taken on the whole. Ziarek argues that Heidegger's interpretive engagements with poetic texts and artworks are to be grasped as so many attempts to enact a certain experience of language—a more original, nonmetaphysical language of what Heidegger calls "thinking," rather than as readings or interpretations. Ziarek, following Heidegger, argues that this experience of language may be grasped as a matter of the poietic (or, as this translates Heidegger's German, *dichterisch*) word. With this, the word is to be taken not as a sign that refers to or signifies something, but, more originally, as a momentum, a movement of the openness, which first grants being to what the word names, and which thus allows what the word names to appear as what it is. While Heidegger believes this poietic possibility to belong to language as such, he holds that this possibility is epitomized by both poetizing and thinking. Whereas, in poetry, the poietic momentum of language remains bound to an image, however, in thinking this momentum is released without bounds onto the openness that first grants being to what is named. Based on this, as Ziarek argues, the task of thinking requires that we extend beyond the norms of philosophy that focus on calculative rationality—propositions, arguments, proofs—turning our focus, instead, to a textuality of language that opens onto what cannot be conceived in advance. Ziarek recommends, finally, that such thinking is also precisely what is called for in our encounters with Heidegger.

The final three essays of the volume draw attention to important further twentieth-century contributions to questions of the relation of poetic language and philosophy. In chapter 9, "Learning from Poetry: On Philosophy, Poetry, and T. S. Eliot's *Burnt Norton*," Günter Figal returns to the "old quarrel between philosophy and poetry" that opens the volume in reference to a close reading of the first poem in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* mentioned in Figal's title. Figal reminds us that, beginning with Plato, philosophers in the Western tradition have held that only philosophers, and not poets, seek to learn how things truly are. If this pretense has been brought into doubt since Nietzsche, Figal argues that philosophers such as Heidegger and Gadamer uphold (in different ways) the validity of the philosophical claim to truth but concede that the pursuit of this claim must be "delegated to poetry."" Figal, for his part, proposes to inquire whether poetry is true, not through a conceptual elucidation of truth, but, instead, through an attentive reading of a specific poem, *Burnt Norton*, to see whether and, if so, how truth is thereby disclosed. Figal contends that although Eliot's poem appears to refer to something (a manor house in Southwest England), the poem rather seeks to give voice to a world—Eliot calls it a "first world"—that is present through the "grace of sense" alone, freed from our practical interests. Figal argues that the



poem allows the world to appear as it would if the tension between past and future that animates practical life were suspended. From this, Figal concludes that the poem is not deceiving, as Plato claims, but is nevertheless beyond truth—if truth is taken, either theoretically or practically, to refer to a factual or possible world as it were outside the poem. Instead, the poem stands as an "objectification" of sense itself, one whose order is discernable but always indeterminate, always allowing (and requiring) further interpretation to be brought, each time only partially, into focus.

In chapter 10, "An 'Almost Imperceptible Breathturn': Gadamer on Celan," Gert-Jan van der Heiden takes up Hans-Georg Gadamer's celebrated (and also sometimes criticized) interpretive engagement with the poet Paul Celan. Van der Heiden maintains that Gadamer's encounter with Celan may be grasped as a "dialogue between philosophy and poetry," in which our understanding of basic tenets of philosophical hermeneutics is brought into question and even transformed by Celan. As van der Heiden argues, the lines of this transformation may be drawn in reference to three keywords of Gadamer's approach to Celan: moment, reserve, and hope. Van der Heiden observes that Gadamer, in his philosophical hermeneutics, introduces the keyword moment to describe the completion of the enactment of an interpretation, the moment as the moment when our efforts allow the text to speak to us as a "you." Yet, Celan suggests that his poetry remains marked by a radical incapacity that brings Gadamer's conception into question: for Celan, the possibility that interpretation will lead a poem to speak as a "you" is not a given; it remains possible that such a possibility is not possible after all. Accordingly, as van der Heiden argues, the aim of Celan's poetry is not to illuminate such a "you" in the light of the public sphere, but, instead, to hold back in reserve, to speak with discretion so that this other remains in secret, retains privacy and the possibility of intimacy. And, in turn, Celan's poetry is oriented not so much by the trust that an interpretation will or even can allow this other to become familiar, but, much more tentatively, by the mere hope that the other can take place there at all. For Celan, as van der Heiden concludes, poetry is thus a breathturn, grasped as an inspiration that breaths into this other and, at the same time, depends on this other for its breath.

Chapter 11, the final chapter of volume, is comprised of an original translation of Max Kommerell, "Hölderlin's Empedocles Poems," by Margot Wiegus and Christopher Merwin. Perhaps more widely recognized in German scholarly quarters than in the Anglophone context, Max Kommerell (1902-1944) was a German poet, essayist, and critic. The reception of Kommerell is made complicated, first, by his participation in the circle of Stefan George in the 1920s, with which he broke in 1930; and, second, by dubious political commitments during the National Socialist period. Yet, Kommerell is an influential figure of the interwar period, known not only for his early association with the George circle, but also in connection with Walter Benjamin's critique of his *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik* [The Poet as Leader in the German Classical Age] and, later, Celan's interest in Benjamin's critique of this work. Finally, Kommerell is also remembered for his opposition to Heidegger's approach to Hölderlin. Presented here is Kommerell's important essay on Hölderlin's fragments of a drama, *The Death of Empedocles*, published as the final chapter in Kommerell's *Geist und Buchstabe der Dichtung* [The Spirit and Letter of Poetry] (1939).

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## REDEEMING ANTHROPOLOGY: A THEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF A MODERN SCIENCE Khaled Furani [Oxford University Press, 9780198796435]

Anthropologists have invariably engaged in their discipline as a form of redemption, whether to escape from social restriction, nourish their souls, reform their home polities, or vindicate "the natives." **REDEEMING ANTHROPOLOGY** explores how in pursuit of a secular science sired by the Enlightenment, adherents to a "faith in mankind" have vacillated between rejecting and embracing theology, albeit in concealed and contradictory ways. Mining the biographical registers of the American, British, and French anthropological traditions, Khaled Furani argues that despite all efforts to the contrary, theological sediments remain in this disciplining discipline. Rather than continuing to forget, deny, and sequester it, theology can serve as a mirror for introspection, as a source of critique offering invaluable tools for revitalization: for thinking anew not only anthropology's study of others' cultures, but also its very own reason.

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### Theology Revitalizing Anthropology

Recall that in this book's opening, I ask you to join me in an experiment. Now, approaching its close, I cannot be sure as to its success or failure. At least, perhaps it identifies pathways toward unfearful thinking about multiplicity in the modern secular university. This book attends to a set of relations that the sovereign, secular, specialized, and fragmentary academic discipline of anthropology has had with its disreputable homologue, vastly banished from the modern research university: theology. It argues that by its pursuit of citizenship in the Enlightenment project, of which it is critical but to which it also conforms, anthropology has been constituted as anthropodom—a domain wherein secular reason is exercised as sovereign over anthropological thought—while notably obtaining a complex and potentially vital relation with theology.

In three "ethnographic" chapters, each one focusing on a "master," as it were, that anthropodom has been serving, I explore anthropology's past, present, and possible future relation to theology. I heuristically invoke these three "masters"—Thoth, Eucharist, and Hubal—as paradigms for signaling and examining particular powers governing various relations anthropology has or could have with theology. We now arrive at these conclusions, where I speculate in the most preliminary of ways on what a revitalization of anthropology through engaging with the theosphere might be able to do.

As expected of all "mature" (secular and autonomous) pursuers of a legitimate place in the Enlightenment project, anthropology has constructed a proverbial "dome" insulating its "rational" knowledge from theology. The ways in which anthropologists have built this

protective edifice form the focus of the first "ethnographic" chapter, "Thoth." An ancient Egyptian god charged with science, writing, crafts, and measurement, among other domains, here he paradigmatically evokes the powers culled by anthropology in constructing anthropodom and a proverbial "dome" for hermetically sealing away theology.

It is thus with "thothic" architectural powers that anthropologists have laid various kinds of "panes" in constructing their dome's surface, made of layers of "optical coatings" to render it impervious to the "theosphere," an exteriority banished from and by their forms of reasoning. This chapter examines five "theosealing" panes. As a complex structure regulating reasoning, anthropology's dome does not simply keep the theosphere at bay, as typically desired by any secular enterprise. It also variously simulates, dissimulates, and even allows the theosphere to seep back inside. Thus, what anthropologists have built with their thothic powers, in a drive to hermetically sever their secular discipline from theology, they simultaneously undermine in preserving some form of contact with the theosphere.

The second ethnographic chapter, "Eucharist," explores the forms this preservation takes, whereby anthropologists breach the dome they erected. Naming a chief logic underlying a particular truth formation, Eucharist offers a paradigm for arranging a subject's relation to truth predicated on immersion of the knower in the knowable in contrast to Kant-demanded separation.

While succeeding in reflecting away some theospheric wavelengths, anthropology's dome refracts others. Through three admitting types of breaches—proverbial, genealogical, and chiefly, analogical—theospheric light manages to arrive at the dome's interior. More than through the theistic metaphors they proverbially invoke, beyond the theologically and genealogically rooted intellectual formations they assume or explicitly employ, anthropologists analogically preserve contact with the theosphere when committing themselves to ethnographic immersion.

I evoke the sacrament of the Eucharist as analogous to this immersion because it indicates a coveted communion between the knower—who in this logic of truth formation becomes a "receiver" rather than merely an "acquirer" of knowledge—and the known, the sought object of knowledge. Thus, if anthropologists retain a certain fidelity to the Enlightenment in its founding concepts as objects of scientific inquiry, they nonetheless betray it via their incarnate practice of ethnographic immersion, which, counter to Enlightenment postulates, defies the requirement that they separate themselves as knowers from that which they seek to know. This betrayal by anthropology provides a welcome example of how truth-seeking can be untethered from the sovereignty paradigm.'

While the first two ethnographic chapters focus on anthropology's relation to theology with a view from within anthropology's dome, the third approaches this relation from outside it, from a position in the theospheric exteriority. If the first two chapters examine the dome's reflection and refraction of theology, the final one draws direct sustenance from theistic reason. Critical faculties belonging to the theosphere here furnish tools for undertaking an initial critique of anthropology.

Regarding anthropology as a particular performance in idolatry, I identify it with an ancient illocutionary name, that of the god Hubal. Summoned from Arabian, pre-Islamic antiquity, Hubal here stands for acts of idolatry constituted as ethico-epistemic confusions arising out of misplaced trust in sovereignty as an idol. Focusing primarily on anthropology's idolatrous

relation with the concept of culture, I argue that an anthropology confused about its other and its own sense of wonder cedes epistemic authority to powerful assumptions espoused by sovereignty regimes—which take on a multitude of forms in a vast sovereignscape—and entangles itself within the epistemic intestines of the modern state.

Authority so ceded allows for excisions, contractions, and compartmentalizations in constituting anthropologists' prevailing sense of the other (at times "cultural" at others "social"). This sense proceeds with an enduring language of triumph about the discipline's discovery of that other. All the wonder that remains then in a secular world is one emanating from a finite other legitimated by and legible to optics of sovereignty pursuits. In other words, the bar for the discipline's sense of wonder (*thaumazein*) remains fixed by dictates of its sovereignty quests. But my disquiet lies not in enchantment's absence nor its attempted reenactment, but in discernment about what counts as accomplishment, defeat, or both. As the critical category of idolatry assists in clarifying such discernment, it can further revitalize anthropology by helping to clarify other confusions within its inquiry into multiplicity.

Assuming that revitalizing anthropology by theological means can take many forms, in these conclusions I propose one example of an effort at such critical clarification. In the vastly incomplete propaedeutic reflections that follow, I ponder the estrangement of anthropological reason from its theistic other, namely, from revelation, and the prospect that such reconciliation might untether the scope and content of anthropological reason so that it could face puzzles, confusions, and wonder to extents greater than sovereignty pursuits permit.

## Modern Reason Reconciling with Revelation Toward Anthropological Revitalization

In Chapter 3, I state an intent that bears repeating here: I employ idolatry in this book as a critical, not a condemnatory, tool. Its purpose as critique is, therefore, to revitalize and not denounce anthropology. This aim leads me to here continue speculating about what a theistically driven revitalization for and in anthropology might do. By speculating on theology as a reviving rival of modern anthropology's critical capacities, I am assuming that this domain can furnish far more than mere items in a catalogue of researchable phenomenon, as instances of native forms of thought to interrogate, or as conversation partners on certain topics, such as religious beliefs. Rather, theology offers a promise of transforming anthropology, much the same way as an ethnographer is transformed through immersion in the field. Perhaps one way to realize this promise is for anthropology to become hospitable to revelation as viable to its reasoning, not simply about others, but about reason itself and about the stakes of rethinking its relation to forms, for example, of community and fragility.

Of course, suggesting that theology can offer tools for revitalizing anthropology presupposes that anthropology is in need of revitalization. I am not alone in assuming that it does. Hardly a year has passed without an anthropologist somewhere, somehow decrying the discipline's fragmentation or disorientation.<sup>1</sup> In each generation, the response comes invariably in the form of apprehension about, indifference to, or endorsement of a perennial disciplinary incoherence. However, the perpetual anthropological concern over what kind of other to study and how has not yet aroused attention to the condition wrought by theology's "mutilation" within anthropodom.

This mutilated condition permits anthropological reason to dance only to its own tune, vastly deaf to any sort of difference outside "the cultural" and deaf, of course, to variations of reason itself. Because as instances of sovereign secular reasoning, anthropological forms of thought want nothing to do with revelation, except in instances when revelation belongs to a cultural other subject to anthropological interrogation. Yet revelation is "a gift" that theology can offer to anthropology, not simply to vindicate the reasoning of investigated others, but to awaken a critical curiosity about possibilities within its own.

Those who accept my argument that theistic reason has been severed from its secular counterpart may still question this reason's utility for revitalizing anthropology. Given theology's diminished conditions in modernity and its own disciplinary entrapments irrespective of modernity, what grounds remain for maintaining that it possesses a potential capacity to deliver vitality to anthropological, or for that matter to any intellectual, labor?' I maintain that even in its enfeebled state, theology still embodies two essential traits useful to this undertaking. First, theology has been in the business of studying difference for far longer than has anthropology and—when in good standing—has managed to avail to itself truth belonging to orders of reality far wider and more radical than that mere segment bounded by the "cultural." Second, theology generally lives as an other to the whole of anthropology, not merely to an individual anthropologist or society here or there. Their own disciplinary predispositions should thus lead anthropologists to appreciate the revitalizing potential of an encounter with theology. It is indeed through anthropology encountering theology as a self may encounter another that gives this relation potency for teaching anthropology about its actualities and potentialities. Should anthropology aspire to one of these potentialities, the atheistic for example, it could learn to be curious about reconciling reason and revelation, not just among peoples it studies, but significantly in the house of its own academic form of reasoning.

Theology further offers potency for revitalizing anthropology to the extent that it retains power to both integrate and disintegrate. So long as theistic intelligence remains capable of accessing a divine time and builds a discipline for the endeavor of understanding the divine, theology integrates, or at least is traditionally expected to integrate, knowledge, politics, and ethics. Given theology's insistence on the inherent unity of ultimate truths, it pursues an integrative vision in ways that have been nearly impossible for anthropology as an academic discipline compartmentalized, like any other, inside the modern research university.

I do not intend to claim that anthropology lacks or has lacked integrative powers as a modern kind of inquiry, rather its powers for integrating inquiry have been limited due to their profound subservience to the paradigm of sovereignty. These powers have been made to conform to sovereignty's grammar, even when conducting criticism of it (such as with anthropology's long-standing critique of state power). Just as theology is particularly apt for uncovering the falsehood of sovereignty applied to any earthly being or ideal, it may also be particularly apt for revitalizing an integrative grammar for anthropology. Anthropology may be able to learn from theology's capacity to integrate human faculties for the truthful, the good, and the beautiful, mustered for the study, experience, and encounter with an Other unlike all others, God for monotheists, gods for polytheists, and the divine for all.

For the very reasons that theology integrates the truthful, the good, and the beautiful in the pursuit of knowledge about God, it also disintegrates. For an intellect moved to know God, theology disintegrates ramparts, borders, fences, walls, and any form of fortification that



balkanizes knowing, the very forms of fortification to which reason clings in advancing its claims to sovereignty. Indeed, theology provides a groundwork for gainsaying these claims, for none of them can be endured by a theology prepared to consider the Infinite.

Theology could further offer orders of truth it both presupposes and excogitates. Revelation is one such order of truth, which I here evoke temperately as a class of events delivering, slowly or suddenly, signs from divine time into reason's regular exercise. Theology offers revelation as a chief means for averting confusion as to where sovereignty justifiably belongs, for precluding it from realms where all is finite and transient, where none can ultimately be self-sufficient. I see revelation as a possible resource in revitalizing anthropology's forms of reasoning, by helping it first to recognize and then retrace its steps, this time away from sovereignty's stalemates and degrading entrapments, where all that is asked is only what—in sovereignscape—can safely be answered.

Another potential theology-based anti-corrosive tool for undermining sovereignty claims is the concept of tradition so famously denigrated in Enlightenment thought. While affinities between revelation and tradition run deep, in modern thought tradition has been largely consigned to desuetude (although signs exist toward its rehabilitation),<sup>1</sup> whereas revelation remains more decidedly recognizable as theological and thus also more menacing to reason's independence aspirations. To the extent that Antigone's encounter with Creon may here be instructive, revelation appears to threaten reason's sovereignty and challenge its tyranny in ways the tradition concept does not.

The category of revelation can thus remind anthropology to apply to the largely self-evident secular reason it shares with other disciplines within the modern research university what it already applies in studying multiplicity: see oddity in the familiar and familiarity in the odd. Differently put, anthropology has sought to comprehend the ways the self (personal or collective) inhabits an other and an other inhabits the self, how a self can also become its alternatives.<sup>2</sup> Estrangement between self and other is not a necessary given, but rather an assumption. As for reason and revelation, theology can help remind anthropology that these domains need not inherently be estranged from one another. Revelation might then help reason recognize its own self-alienation. Thus, theology could provoke and enable anthropology to interrogate the boundary-making reason conducts in order to dwell safely inside its sovereign realms, modern anthropology among them.

To risk redundancy, for its revitalization anthropology must turn beyond taking revelation as a serious subject for analysis to regard it as a serious and useful mirror and companion to its very own reason. Anthropology would do well to extend its commitment to fairly adjudicating the contents of revelation to learning to live well with it, not merely off it, parasitically as it were. More than adding revelation to anthropology's catalogue of thought items, revelation betokens the catalogue itself to becoming a relentlessly revisable question. Anthropology could perhaps thereby activate its atheistic potential and allow itself to be provoked, as fearlessly as possible, by revelation as an order of reality, rather than subsume it within the dominion of the insensate, omnivorous, behemoth of secular reason. This aim ought to belong to an anthropology truly bent on interrogating reason's multiplicity to its furthest edges, far beyond those mandated by the modern powers we allow to lord over our finitude.

Anthropology revitalized as proposed here means its reason awakened to revelatory thinking, wherein neither reason nor reasoner are easily seduced nor sedated into regarding

themselves as self-sufficient, independent, autonomous, in a word, sovereign. Recognizing the fragility of both reason and reasoner would permit anthropology to not conflate secular reason with all reason and even to become curious about reason's fear of its ostensible other (revelation) and essentially of fragility, including its own. Such an anthropology could take up the vital question of estrangement between reason and revelation, recognizing the enmity between them as humanly contingent rather than trans-humanly constant. When anthropological reason no longer fears disrobing before revelation—husking its panoply of sovereignty—and becomes equipped with the bare power that facing its own fragility can bestow, then we know it has begun caressing its way toward a new vitality.

Because a courtship with revelation potentially entails sovereign reason's transvaluation, transforming it into revelatory thinking, that is, participating in (not just representing) an Other's self-disclosure and the un-concealment of its truths, an anthropological rapprochement with theology may raise the question as to where revelatory thinking can viably dwell. Clearly, this question is about a home, even an institution. For the question about what forms of thought deserve our allegiance inevitably relates to the question about what institutions can best serve them, can enable their flourishing.

Here then lies another value in anthropology not sufficing with adding revelation to its catalogue of subjects, nor in sufficing with simply "rearranging its furniture" so as to more fully accommodate religious forms of thought, say by treating sacred texts as conversation partners. Rather, to be revitalized by theology, to tap the discipline's antheistic potential, anthropology must also re-evaluate the architecture in whose cultural patterns we predominantly practice our discipline. In other words, with theology truly by its side, anthropology should be able to ask how might the modern research university justifiably and effectively be entrusted with knowledge unfearful of revelation, especially at the current stage of mammon's evolution?

For example, in what ways does the modern university as we know it, from Humboldt to audit crescendos, from the Romantic to the neo-liberal era, compound reason's troubles with its own set of "home-grown" dangers, insofar as the university provides it a home? Just exactly how endangerment to thinking may arise "at home"—and not simply or solely in the provinces of diverse publics external to it (such as may occur with professional politicians)—could be yet another crucial task for revelatory thinking, by inducing further probing of the reasons for anthropological reason's estrangement from revelation, and in the process, allow us to recollect reason's fragility, to see through the deceits of disciplines existing in fraudulently ascetic conditions as compartmentalized professions.

Perhaps anthropology attuned to its antheistic potential may also become equipped at recognizing the ways the pursuit of truth, abandoned to professional speakers (academics, as distinct from, say, artists), and the pursuit of politics, abandoned to professional practitioners (politicians, as distinct from, say, "ordinary citizens"), follows from an impoverished comprehension of and alienation from both truth and politics. In learning from the sphere of intelligence that can integrate knowledges in a more awakened way that is theology, which both predates and predicates the modern university, perhaps even the whole of the academy could begin to recover from the desiccation of knowledges that has occurred under the guises of specialization, professionalization, and expertise.

Anthropology so attuned might also become equipped to avow the insufficiency of all questions, and hence uphold their inherent connectivity and relatedness, therewith imploring

its fellow disciplines to end their acting as gods lording over truth-fiefdoms. Among theology's enduring lessons as a professional discipline (and, of course, one is not to suppose that all its lessons merit heeding) is that nothing and no one in this world, not even this world itself, exists as self-sufficient, impervious to all fragility. That this finite and fragile condition has been increasingly difficult to acknowledge since the singular ascendancy of the West with Columbus's ships and the singular ascendancy of the sovereign individual conscience with Martin Luther's hammer does not mean that it has become decreasingly real.

An anthropology revitalized by theology, by revelatory thinking guiding knowledges' reintegration, dismantling interstitial ramparts among the faculties, awake to all fragility, and awakened finally, to its antheistic potential, could further aid reason's empowerment in any endeavor. Fragility—inevitably inscribed in our human efforts to be and in our human efforts to know—can empower through its ability to ensure that anthropology's questions and even aporias never coincide with sovereignty quests dedicated to founding reason's autonomy.

This is to say that anthropology could perhaps cease allowing its questions and the ways it asks them to dwindle down to the measures of leviathans no matter their guises: epistemic or political, modern or ancient, spatial or temporal. Perhaps then anthropology could regain an essentially ethical capacity to wonder, even if terrified, not only about what is different, but more fundamentally, about what is. Perhaps vigilant wonder about existence could preempt lassitude in wondering about difference, since both kinds of wondering are intimately bound to one another. Perhaps then trusts, doubts, puzzlements, fears, confusions, and wonderments may summon integrated faculties to venture beyond apparent rivalries between "Athens" (reason) and "Jerusalem" (revelation) to consider vaster multiplicity within seas and deserts, bodily flesh and fluids, the glistening dew drop and the stars twinkling in galaxies above them all, especially in today's world whose darkness, as usual, intends for us, despite the planet's bleeding precariousness, to go on sleeping. <>

## **AQUINAS'S NEOPLATONISM IN THE SUMMA THEOLOGIAE ON GOD: A SHORT INTRODUCTION by Wayne J. Hankey [St. Augustines Press, 9781587310201]**

This book rises out of Dr. Wayne Hankey's 2015 Aquinas Lecture at the University of Dallas. It explains the Neoplatonic structure and doctrine of St. Thomas's treatment of God in the Summa theologiae with the aim of showing that his doctrine of being is at root both Trinitarian and incarnational.

By moving step by step through the questions on God in Himself in the Summa, Hankey demonstrates the circular structures of the Summa theologiae. The meeting of two motions, one descending from God by the light of revelation, the other rising from creatures by the light of natural reason, create these. Because Being Itself is self-related and self-affecting in an internal dynamic of self-differentiation, remaining, going out, and return are established as the universal governing structure, within and without. Being generates and includes its own othering. When Thomas's treatment of God in Himself is completed in the Trinity of circularly self-giving infinite subsistences, true being is known as the real giving and receiving of the infinite fullness of reality from itself to itself. This giving

and receiving shows Himself open to being touched by us and makes understandable the ceaselessly generous emanation of finite beings, creation.

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Thomas Aquinas thinks and teaches sapientially; he thinks and teaches, that is, from and toward wisdom. A prudent steward of the tradition, he draws from its treasury things both old and new, putting them in such an order (as befits the sapiens) as to enable those who study his works to grow in truth—which is, Aquinas maintains, the ultimate end of the

universe. In the following short but dense book, as he did in the 2015 Aquinas Lecture at the University of Dallas, Professor Wayne J. Hankey highlights Thomas's sapiential thinking and teaching, especially in the highly metaphysical treatment of God in the First Part of the *Summa theologiae*. Through deep familiarity with Thomas's works and sources as well as with the scholarship of the last century, Professor Hankey shows how Thomas draws discernfully from the Neoplatonic tradition in giving an account of God and creation, and how Thomas gives that account according to a recognizably Neoplatonic order whereby one winds up, as it were, right where one began—though enriched, of course, with greater insight and deeper love of our creative Source and beatifying End.

During his lecture, Professor Hankey briefly compared the *Summa theologiae* to the cathedrals of Europe constructed during the Middle Ages. As Professor Hankey himself noted, this is not a novel comparison, although it is one worth returning to; for it provides an imaginative basis for considering the "craftsmanship" that entered into Thomas's "construction" of the *Summa theologiae*. Those medieval cathedrals are huge, cavernous, awe-inspiring; their architects dreamed large. At the same time those cathedrals evidence effective engineering, meticulous workmanship, and attentive artistry, all the way down to the tiniest of details. The *Summa theologiae* bears the same features. Its task is grand—indeed, no less than to lead us to share as much as we can in via in the vision of the blessed. Yet the work manifests Thomas's scrupulous attention to every distinction, term, and logical move. Moreover, as Professor Hankey hints at it in this book, it is not unfitting to identify Thomas's construction of the *Summa theologiae* as fundamentally religious in character, insofar as it involved acts of *devotio* and *oratio* whereby Thomas elevates his own will and intellect (and ours as well) in just measure toward an immeasurable God. Indeed, to see the *Summa theologiae* in a religious light like this not only enhances the comparison of it to those cathedrals in which the God-man is made sacramentally present, but also aligns Thomas's thinking with numerous Neoplatonists who regarded their philosophical endeavors to be essentially religious in character, inasmuch as their contemplation of reality was meant to be dispositive toward theurgical action.

Professor Hankey notes in his preface that he has been consoled "to have spent so much time in theological contemplation through Thomas's inexhaustible text." It is evident from his scholarly work, though, that Professor Hankey appreciates not only the truth of Thomas's contemplation of God delineated in the *Summa theologiae*, but also its beauty. It is beautiful to behold, Professor Hankey shows, how Thomas harmonizes so many major voices in the tradition. As the first few chapters of this book evidence, the Neoplatonists are clearly among those voices, providing more of an undertone for Thomas's thinking than is usually acknowledged. We should be grateful to Professor Hankey for having the ears to hear the Neoplatonic reverberations in Thomas's writings, a perceptivity he has achieved owing to countless hours of historical, philosophical, and theological research. Professor Hankey's willingness to share his erudition regarding Thomas's works helps us to value even more the inimitable synthesizing mind of the Doctor communis.

It is also beautiful to behold, Professor Hankey shows, just how masterfully Thomas crafts the *Summa theologiae* according to embedded encirclings of thought. Professor Hankey brings to light a fractal-like structure in the *Summa theologiae*, that is, smaller circles of thought enveloped by larger ones, which in turn are enveloped by even larger ones. These encirclings may be likened to those ripples of concentric waves that swell outward when one tosses a small stone into a large pond. The stone tossed into the depths of Thomas's mind



was not so small, however; it was no less than the great "I am who am" spoken by the person of God to Moses after Moses had beheld that wondrous sign on Sinai, a bush burning but not consumed. God as ipsum esse per se subsistens, existence itself subsisting in its own right, the most really real reality there can be—this was the great metaphysical stone tossed into Thomas's mind, and in the second half of this book Professor Hankey maps out the rippling waves that flow outward from it into the whole of the *Summa theologiae*.

Now, when we draw a circle, what do we do? We pick some point of origin, proceed curvingly away from it, and then make our way back to the original point. There is something captivately simple about a circle and the motion that brings it about. This struck me recently when I was watching two of my daughters as they spun a top on our living room table. Once they got the hang of it, they were able to watch the top spin for upwards of a minute. During these successful spins, they were transfixed, as was I; a well-spun top can be transfixing. We beheld in childlike amazement the top's active persistence in its speedy, spinning stability, and meanwhile we lost track of time and our surroundings. A top captivates us by its dynamic restfulness, its seemingly motionless motion, which hints that somehow its circular motion is able to harness the infinite. A circle brings that which is endless into a manageable intelligibility, albeit one that escapes full rational articulation. Indeed, formulas describing circles introduce that strange number, pi—a number symbolized by a Greek letter—which reminds us that calculating reason is inadequate to the full truth of a circle.

I don't know if Thomas ever played with tops as a young boy. I do know, however, thanks in large part to Professor Hankey's scholarly work, that Thomas was indebted to the Neoplatonists, who preserved in their works the spirit of the original Greek philosophers, an aspect of which was a love of circles. Indeed, in various ways circularity informs the Greek philosophical understanding of reality.

Recall Parmenides' desire to learn "the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth"; or Plato's inward-bending theory of recollection, imaged in the *Phaedrus* by a circular journey around the heavens; or Aristotle's Prime Mover, "Thought Thinking Thought," giving rise through self-reflexive activity to the circular motions that govern the physical cosmos. Such examples highlighting circularity abound among Greek thinkers, including Euclid's beautiful geometrical construction at the outset of the *Elements*, where the coupling of two circles begets an equilateral triangle—thereby suggesting that circularity, so mysterious in its simplicity, so hard to pin down rationally, nonetheless underlies the rectilinear figures whose intelligibility we have an easier time articulating with exactness.

As Professor Hankey presents the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas too sees that the circular often underlies the rational. Thomas sees, one might say, that in order to think straight, one may have to think circularly. This is true even—or, perhaps, especially—when attending to the highest reality that one can think, namely, God himself as pure existence. Thus, as Professor Hankey points out, Thomas's account of God progresses circularly according to a dynamic of remaining—going-out—returning. In particular, Professor Hankey emphasizes the circle of Trinitarian life, because this circular communion of Persons stands at the beginning and end of reality and, therefore, at the beginning and end of our apprehending the truth of reality: the Father, eternally giving existence; the Son, eternally accepting existence from the Father; the Spirit, eternally connecting Father and Son as the ecstatic reciprocal love between them.

But isn't circular motion pointless? Doesn't one simply end up where one began? In fact, logically speaking, we often refer to "vicious circles," those self-defeating lines of argument in which one presumes precisely what one is trying to prove. Professor Hankey makes it clear, though, how Thomas progresses in his account of God in the *Summa theologiae*. Thomas's encirclings, in other words, are not of a logically vicious sort; they are, rather, of a methodologically virtuous sort. They map out a contemplatively fruitful *methodos*, a profitable way of traveling along a path. And when it comes to understanding reality in an ultimate sense, the path begins, goes forth, and ends in God's pure *esse*, and along the way progress is made insofar as the pure existence of God is made more real to us and, little by little, more thinkable and speakable by us. Hence, as we move through the First Part of the *Summa theologiae*, we begin to appropriate in a human way the full ramifications of the great "I am who am" who is also Trinity.

It may be helpful to think of Thomas's circular *methodos* in the *Summa theologiae* as something like simply going for a walk. My wife and I like to go for walks whenever we find the time to get away. Sometimes when we do so one of our young daughters stands at the front door and asks, "Where are you going?" "We're going for a walk," I usually respond, which inexplicably settles the question. Would a truer answer be: "We're going home, right where we're starting from"? For that is "where" we go: beginning from home, we circle around the neighborhood and end up just where we began. What a waste of time! Yet this seemingly non-progressive progression from home to home provides a context within which my wife and I truly do progress, deliberating about this or that child of ours, figuring out plans for the weekend, or (most preferably) simply getting to know each other better. Moreover, to return to the religious character of the *Summa theologiae*, there is something ritualistic about these walks, as there is, I think, in Thomas's work. The regularity, predictability, and enclosing finiteness of both a walk and the circular *methodos* of the *Summa theologiae* provide a framework for mindful attentiveness. The ritualistic character of the walks I take with my wife allows us to focus on one another and on whatever issues require our deliberation. And it is my experience that the ritualistic character of the *Summa theologiae*, in an almost liturgical manner, allows one to focus on reality in a manner that enables reason to achieve those penetrating insights into reality and God of which, girded by faith, it is truly capable.

In the First Part of the *Summa theologiae*, then, by thinking in, through, and around God as pure existence, Thomas gradually hones in on the center of the truth of all reality. As Professor Hankey shows, Thomas slowly unfolds the truth about God in a pedagogically appropriate manner: a simple God, who is pure existence, is also good and one. This one God both knows and loves himself. And this one, self-knowing, self-loving God is three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, who in turn lovingly and freely chooses to create. With each circular turn, Thomas unveils a little more the inexhaustible truth of a God who identified himself as "I am who am." And it turns out, wonder of wonders, that *ipsum esse per se subsistens* is Trinity, giving—accepting—connecting. *Esse* in its purity is a circle of Persons containing inwardly all the perfections of each and every creature to which it outwardly gives existence. It is this wonder to which Professor Hankey draws our attention in this book, and he shows that by understanding the Neoplatonic influence on Thomas's thinking, we are more apt to recognize the artistry of Thomas's thoroughgoing account of God and creation in the *Summa theologiae*.

"From Impassibility to Self-Affectivity: The Trinitarian Metaphysics of Esse in St. Thomas's *Summa theologiae*": this was the title of the lecture Professor Hankey delivered at the University of Dallas, and it is the title of chapter four of this book. According to Thomas, as pure existence, God is "impassible." Pure existence is pure act, the act of all acts, and thus is not capable of being changed or modified by something. As pure esse, God has no "passive potency"; hence, properly speaking, God is not open to receiving anything from some other reality. Indeed, as Thomas sometimes says—thinking along Neoplatonic lines, as Professor Hankey points out—God's uniqueness as a reality consists precisely in his pure goodness, which entails that divine esse is of such a sort that nothing can be added to it. The full perfection and completeness of existence already belongs to God, and an aspect of that perfection and completeness is what Professor Hankey calls "self-affectivity," an internal relationality within God that we begin to grasp, at least a little bit, when we hold firmly that the Father is eternally giving existence to the Son while the Son is eternally accepting existence from the Father. At the very heart of all existence,

in the perfect and complete existence that God is, there is eternal giving to and accepting from another. The Father generously gives; the Son graciously accepts; and between them arises the ecstatic, unifying love that is the Spirit. What Professor Hankey's reading of the *Summa theologiae* brings out, then, is that joy-filled generosity and hospitality are etched into esse itself in its most complete, uncreated occurrence. Importantly, then, we ourselves obtain a share in this completeness of existence not merely by existing, but also by thoughtfully willing to exist in relation to others in a manner marked by joy-filled generosity and hospitality. In fact, much of the *Summa theologiae* after the First Part may be seen as trying to describe this manner of truly virtuous human living (Second Part), which is made possible for us by the paradigmatic generosity of the Word-becoming-flesh and the hospitality of his Church, offering sacraments for us who require such remedies (Third Part).

Such is the vision of the *Summa theologiae* to which Professor Hankey's interpretive insights in this book can give rise. By calling attention to the Neoplatonic influences on Thomas's thinking, Professor Hankey allows us to experience in our reading of the *Summa theologiae* that feature of reality so dear to the heart of a Neoplatonist, namely, beauty. For opening our eyes to this aspect of Thomas's thought, especially in the *Summa theologiae*, I am grateful to Professor Hankey, as I hope you too will be upon completing this book. It is also my hope that Professor Hankey will continue to share his work as a scholar, philosopher, and theologian with us for many years to come, thereby opening our eyes even more widely to the beauty of existence encountered through the seemingly inexhaustible texts of Thomas Aquinas. —Matthew D. Walz, Philosophy Department, University of Dallas

## **THE HEAVENLY COUNTRY: AN ANTHOLOGY OF PRIMARY SOURCES, POETRY, AND CRITICAL ESSAYS ON SOPHIOLOGY** edited by Michael Martin [Angelico Press/Sophia Perennis, 9781621381754]

Sophiology--the philosophical and theological notion of a transcendent splendor becoming immanent in the world, through nature, liturgy, prayer, and the arts--is just now coming into its own as an important area of study. This revolutionary casebook brings together primary source documents, poetry, and critical articles written by a group of exemplary scholars

working in theology, philosophy, literary studies, psychology, and poetics. Contributors include Bruce Foltz, Gregory Glazov, Jennifer Newsome Martin, Michael Martin, Aaron Riches, Brent Dean Robbins, Artur Sebastian Rosman, Fr. Robert Slesinski, and Arthur Versluis.

"In making available in one place a range of texts from the history of Christian meditation on Wisdom--from Jacob Boehme to John Pordage, and then closer to our time, Goethe, Solov'yov and Bulgakov, among many others--this work already performs an important service. However, Michael Martin understands that these are not simply variously difficult or even eccentric historical documents, but are--like all worthwhile traditions--material for a Christian and human future. The book opens then into a wide-ranging selection of poetry, followed by a collection of essays which, in Martin's own summation, pass beyond this preliminary gathering of material to the vital work of assimilating the vision of Divine Wisdom into the life of Christians today and for the days to come."--BISHOP SERAPHIM J. SIGRIST

"Ever since Hans Urs von Balthasar's endorsement of Valentin Tomberg, theologians have increasingly begun to see that Christian esotericism is not necessarily heterodox or 'gnostic,' despite many ambiguities. To the contrary, the future of orthodoxy, its more radical cleaving to the biblical revelation, and above all its metaphysical coherence, may depend upon a new engagement with sophiology, theurgic Neoplatonism, and Hermeticism. But such a prospect can be hampered by the relative inaccessibility of crucial texts. This splendid collection and its lucid contextualizations go a considerable way toward remedying that situation."--JOHN MILBANK, author of *Theology and Social Theory* and *Beyond Secular Order*

"We should welcome this splendid book on the splendor and the gradual emergence of the sapiential paradigm. Pushkin in Boris Godunov identified inspired poets and clairvoyants with the prophets of the Bible. Before the First World War, Guillaume Apollinaire called all who perceive the shining upon the earth of the Wisdom of God as those who would renew the world. Vassily Kandinsky at the same time rejected the limits of the (Enlightened-Kantian) world to update Sophia in the genesis of color. That is, if beauty and truth are inseparable, then we must find a new language. All the theology, all the science, and all the philosophy of the 20th century were affected by this awareness, from Bulgakov to von Balthasar, from Teilhard de Chardin to Deane-Drummond, from Berdyaev to Milbank. Thanks go to Michael Martin and the authors brought together in this collection for their contribution to the flowering of publication on sophiology in the English-speaking world."--ANTOINE ARJAKOVSKY, Research Director, Collège des Bernardins, Paris

Poet, philosopher, and theologian Michael Martin is Assistant Professor of Philosophy and English at Marygrove College. He is the author of *The Submerged Reality: Sophiology and the Turn to a Poetic Metaphysics* (Angelico Press, 2015), *Literature and the Encounter with God in Post-Reformation England* (Ashgate, 2014), and a volume of poetry, *Meditations in Times of Wonder* (Angelico Press, 2014).

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## What is Sophiology?

Sophiology ("the logos of Wisdom") as it is understood in this book is the theological-philosophical apprehension and perception of grace as it discloses itself (or is disclosed) in the created world, in works of art, in liturgy, and in religious experience. It is most



commonly experienced as a beauty which opens the subject to transcendence, to goodness and truth. This beauty, however, does not reside in objects themselves, nor does it reside in the perceiving subject. Rather, this beauty is that which shines through phenomena, revealing what Hans Urs von Balthasar has called "splendor." By analogy, we could say that this splendor is synonymous with the light of the first day in contrast to the light of the fourth (Genesis 1:3-5; 14-19). Wisdom, furthermore, is that which God "created ... in the Holy Ghost, and saw her, and numbered her, and measured her. And he poured her out upon all his works, and upon all flesh according to his gift, and hath given her to them that love him" (Sirach 1:9-10). Wisdom, then, according to scripture is a property of the Creation, the conduit for the Creation's participation in God and that which brings God's presence into sensory perception, a profound affirmation of an incarnational, immanent, and profoundly sacramental theology. In addition, for some, Sophia—as the passage from Sirach suggests—is a unique divine person, created, to be sure, but no less divine. Indeed, a number of sophianic mystics—the 17th-century English Protestant visionary Jane Lead, the German Romantic poet Novalis, and the 19th-century Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovyov, to name just three—experienced Sophia as just such an individuality.

Not surprisingly, then, the identification of Sophia as a divine person has proved problematic for not a few theologians. Sergei Bulgakov, a priest and arguably one of the most important Eastern Orthodox theologians of the 20th century, was officially censured for his teaching regarding Sophia, as has been typical for theologians within the Christian mainstream. And for good reason: the introduction of Sophia into the theological landscape complicates traditional understandings of the Trinity, for one, though it could also be argued that it enriches Marian theology to a significant degree. Unfortunately, the appropriation of Sophia by religious thinkers outside of the orthodox fold (whether Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, or Catholic) has often served to justify the suspicions of mainstream theologians, as the proliferation of self-styled "goddess worship," neo-paganism, and neo-gnosticism invoking the name of Sophia in recent decades has proved only so well. But such extravagances may indeed justify the serious consideration of Sophia and sophiology in the illuminating light of the Church in order for us to see what truly lives in sophiology and to cleanse it of the dross of imaginative and luciferic excess.

### Why this book?

The idea for a book such as this arose out of my earlier study, *The Submerged Reality: Sophiology and the Turn to a Poetic Metaphysics*, and the realization that a sophiology casebook could provide scholars, students, and others interested in the subject with a deeper, experiential introduction to sophiology by engagement with primary texts and accompanying critical discussion. Furthermore, the inclusion of a section of poetry in the book seemed to me to be imperative. As with all of the fine, performing, and practical arts, poetry is often disclosive of God's Wisdom, even though the artist in question may never have heard of Sophia—or may not even be interested in "being religious." Poetry, as Martin Heidegger has observed, is the paradigmatic site for such a disclosure and including poetry in this volume became rather an obligation, the answer to a call. One might say, then, that the sophiology of the primary texts is illustrative, the sophiology discussed in the critical studies is explanatory, but the sophiology of the poetry is (or can be) experiential. The sophiology engaged in this book, furthermore, is broadly conceived. It is not a theory superadded to an extant corpus of writings; rather, it is a property of Things disclosed

phenomenologically. As a property God "poured ... out upon all his works," Sophia is —more properly understood as less a theologoumena than a law of the universe.

This book, however, is not intended to be the last word on sophiology. I have not included, for example, readings from Gnosticism, from Hinduism or Buddhism, or from the manifold appropriations of Sophia from feminist theologians or New Age innovators. Neither have I included some important early modern and Romantic German religious thinkers preoccupied with Sophia such as Gottfried Arnold, Johann Georg Gichtel, or Franz von Baader, deserving as they are. My intention here, as in *The Submerged Reality*, is to trace the genealogy of sophiology from the Bible to the Protestant Reformation, to the Russian religious renaissance, to contemporary Catholic theology in order to show that sophiology is not, in fact, an innovation, but something implicit to a Christian, sacramental worldview that recognizes the cosmos, scripture, art, and liturgy as integrally united, a worldview that can heal the ontological, teleological, and epistemological wounds from which our age so deeply suffers.

To that end, the collection of essays which round out this volume likewise trace the genealogy of sophiology from the Bible to the postmodern moment. In "Theotokos: Sophiology and Christological Over-determination of the Secula," Aaron Riches anchors postmodern sophiology in its biblical and Russian antecedents while contributing to a vocabulary for speaking Sophia to our own times. Gregory Glazov's "On Understanding, Wisdom, and the Son of Man" excavates Old Testament, Pseudopigraphic, and Apocryphal notions of Sophia inspired by the contemplative insights of the Third Order Carmelite hermit Brother Anthony Opisso. In "John Pordage and Sophianic Mysticism," Arthur Versluis investigates the sophiology of the 17th-century Anglican priest John Pordage and its greater religious implications. Brent Dean Robbins's "New Organs of Perception: Goethean Science as a Cultural Therapeutics" traces the timely significance of Goethean phenomenology, a method of investigation with sophiological overtones, while in his article Bruce V. Foltz, somewhat uncomfortable with the terminology of sophiology, nevertheless finds the Glory of the Lord implicit in the natural world. In their articles, Fr. Robert Slesinski examines Russian sophiology and its applications and Jennifer Newsome Martin considers the sophiological underpinnings of the thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar. Finally, Artur Sebastian Rosman and I in our respective articles consider the sophiology of the poetic moment and the simultaneous immanence and transcendence of the poetic encounter.

The presence of God's Wisdom in creation—especially after Descartes, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, the so-called "death of metaphysics" and its accompanying "death of God," not to mention a totalizing secularism—has been almost entirely disregarded, even in religious contexts. Nevertheless, Sophia maintains a presence in the world, even if that presence, like the taking on of form in quantum mechanics, only manifests through being observed or (to speak the language of phenomenology) in response to intentionality. In this, we surely pay witness to a quality of Sophia much overlooked, even by sophiology's enthusiasts: Sophia's humility. *Ecce ancilla domini*. Sophiology, as this book illustrates, clearly deserves a deeper and wider consideration than it has heretofore been allotted. <>

## THE SUBMERGED REALITY: SOPHIOLOGY AND THE TURN TO A POETIC METAPHYSICS by Michael Martin, Foreword by Adrian Pabst [Angelico Press, 9781621381150]

In **THE SUBMERGED REALITY: SOPHIOLOGY AND THE TURN TO A POETIC METAPHYSICS**, Michael Martin challenges us to reimagine theology, philosophy, and poetics through the lens of sophiology. Sophiology, as this book shows, is not a rogue theology, but a way of perceiving that which shines through the cosmos: a way that can return metaphysics to postmodern thought and facilitate a (re)union of religion, science, and art.

"This is a brave, powerful, and intensely fascinating book that will certainly prove controversial. The notion of the divine Wisdom, Sophia, has always proved contentious in theology, but has remained persistent. For Michael Martin, it is essentially a poetic intuition, challenging our ways of perception and understanding. Exploring writers left in the shadows by conventional theology, he taps sources from which theology and the life of the Church could find renewal."--ANDREW LOUTH

"In *The Submerged Reality*, Michael Martin suggests why a radicalized orthodoxy in the future will need more to 'walk on the wild side' and appropriate what is best in the esoteric, occult, and even gnostic traditions. He intimates that the past failure to do this is linked to a one-sidedly masculine theology, downgrading the sacrality of life, immanence, fertility, and the 'active receptivity' of the feminine. The consequence of this has been the perverse liberal attempt to distill 'order out of disorder,' or the denial of real essences, relations, gender difference, and the objective existence of all things as beautiful. Finally, Martin argues that such a genuinely feminist theology would also be concerned with a space between the openly empirical observation of nature on the one hand, and the reflective exposition of divine historical revelation on the other. In this space, continuously new poetic realities are shaped and emerge under the guidance of holy inspiring wisdom."--JOHN MILBANK

"This is a very clearly written and lively work of Catholic apologetics. Professors would be well advised to assign it as a text for undergraduate courses in theology. *The Submerged Reality* could win the hearts and minds of contemporary young people for Christian belief."--FRANCESCA ARAN MURPHY

"Sophiology is best understood, not as a 'doctrine,' but as a way of seeing and feeling the deepest mystery of reality. In this wide-ranging and exhilarating book, Michael Martin gives us the most important theological apologia for the contemplation of divine Sophia since the great Russian Sophiologists of the last century. Drawing on the Russian genius of Vladimir Soloviev and Sergius Bulgakov, Martin's meditation on Sophia ranges across the contributions of figures such as Jacob Boehme and Rudolf Steiner, Edith Stein and Pavel Florensky, Hans Urs von Balthasar and John Milbank. In so doing, he weaves a rich tapestry that illumines how a deeper gaze toward the feminine figure of Sophia begins to yield a more adequate response to the crisis of post-modern secular culture."--AARON RICHES

MICHAEL MARTIN is Assistant Professor of English and Philosophy at Marygrove College. He is the author of *Literature and the Encounter with God in Post-Reformation England* (Ashgate, 2014), a work of literary criticism, and a volume of poetry, *Meditations in Times of Wonder* (Angelico Press, 2014).

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Conclusion: Towards a Poetic Metaphysics

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Michael Martin's **THE SUBMERGED REALITY: SOPHIOLOGY AND THE TURN TO A POETIC METAPHYSICS** is a narrative about fall and redemption. It links the crisis of contemporary culture to the nominalist divide—between immanent nature and the transcendent supernatural—upon which modernity rests. It also charts an alternative modernity stretching from late medieval realism—via the Renaissance, Protestant mysticism, and Romanticism—to the sophiology of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Linking these strands is the notion that nature is dynamic and that our human embeddedness in a creative cosmos discloses the presence of God in the world, this presence being revealed most of all in God's kenotic self-giving. The one triune God gives Himself absolutely and without reserve, and the radical simplicity of divine essence is paradoxically reflected in the diversity of creation. God's essence is both incommunicable and self-sharing—a paradox that finds its supreme expression in the mystery of divine Wisdom. As Martin's book shows perhaps more clearly than other contemporary works on sophiology, wisdom is at once creative and created, divine and human. It is the "relational between" (or *metaxu*) of Creator and creation that draws fallen humanity into union with God. Thus the shape of God's unreserved gift of participation in the divine is sophianic.

This narrative shows in novel ways why the modern shift toward the individual knowing subject and the primacy of epistemology (exemplified by the work of Descartes and Kant) was neither necessary nor normative, and how the underlying theology of nominalism and voluntarism has ended up de-naturalizing humanity and de-humanizing culture. By

sundering reason from faith, nominalist theologians such as Roscelin and Occam separated philosophy from theology, and knowledge from wisdom. In turn, these divisions go back to the double denial that universals are in real things and that intellect is more primary than the will in ordering human desire in the direction of the supernatural Good in God. Without universals that bind all beings together and intellectually directed desire, the self turns inward and fideistically views its own isolated individuality as an unmediated mirror of divine simplicity. In the words of Martin, "thus, at least at a conceptual level, the microcosm of the mind (or the soul) had been cut off from an integral, cosmological, and spiritual reality, at least as far as medieval epistemology was concerned". Over time, nominalist and voluntarist theology operated a rupture with cosmic, sacramental, and corporeal mediation that fostered a growing pessimism underpinning Cartesian rationalism, Baconian empiricism, and Hobbesian realism about God's remoteness or even absence from the world. With deep roots in the perverted theology of Jansenist Augustinians who were convinced of man's near or total depravity, this pessimistic outlook led to a new exaltation of human self-determination that left humans disconnected from the cosmos and reduced culture to the artifice of human will.

Crucially, Martin's work shows how the alternative modernity of poetic metaphysics can renew both cosmos and culture, and also begin to redeem our fallen nature in this life. Wisdom governs the metaxological realm between Creation and creation that not only binds reason to faith but also connects both with intuition, feeling, habit, and poesis. Accordingly, all human faculties are more fully integrated with one another and the universe we inhabit. In this manner, theology retains its status as queen of sciences precisely because it is not limited to some logicized ontology or epistemology (as in much of modern thought) but rather combines metaphysical speculation with cosmic contemplation—including mystical experience and artistic activity. Building on *nouvelle théologie* and Radical Orthodoxy, this account rejects the mind-world dualism that characterizes Cartesian and Kantian philosophy in favor of the analogical participation of the human soul in the divine intellect that defines the participatory metaphysics of both realism and intellectualism in the Christian Neo-Platonist tradition.

The significance of Martin's contribution is to outline more precisely than hitherto the centrality of Sophia in seemingly disparate strands of modern Christian theology, thereby developing the idea of an alternative modernity that outflanks the shared pessimism of the rationalist and empiricist Enlightenment. At the heart of this re-reading of the Western tradition lies the notion that God's wisdom is at the same time the creative source of nature and all souls therein and also the created nature or world-soul. As such, Sophia discloses the irreducible relationality of natural immanence to supernatural transcendence—not a separate pole in space, but instead the "mediate immediacy" of God's presence in the world. And in the giving, receiving, and returning of the gift of divine wisdom, God's ecstatic self-donation deifies creation and unites us ever-more closely to the Creator.

More specifically, Martin traces this alternative modernity to the work of the Silesian Lutheran mystic Jacob Boehme, whose writings exalt intuition and feeling beyond the limitations of blind faith and formal reason. Reinforced by his religious experience, Boehme's philosophical speculation led him to describe divine wisdom as a cosmological force and as a sense of being that is open to the reception of grace. In and through His infinite wisdom God creates man according to his image and likeness. For this reason, "the human soul's desire for Sophia is correlative to Sophia's desire for the human soul. Nowhere is this



reciprocity more evident than in Boehme's considerations of the Incarnation of Christ" (p.49). The coincidence of divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ is reciprocated by Mary's union with Sophia, and thereby creates the condition of possibility for theosis. With extraordinary concision and clarity, Martin also shows how Boehme's metaphysical mysticism connects late medieval realism to the Romantics, including German and English Romanticism. What emerges from his synthetic reading of this tradition is the sense that divine wisdom is the supreme cosmic power—a personal agent that mediates grace and helps each creature fulfill its being. Instead of lapsing into pantheism or panentheism, Romantic sophiology articulates the analogical co-inherence of Creator and creation whereby the invisible, mysteriously appearing through the visible, discloses God's presence in the world.

By contrast with this enchanted and sacramental theology, modern materialism—whether in Descartes' rationalist or Bacon's empiricist philosophy—coincided with a growing disenchantment of the world, as Charles Taylor has argued in his seminal book *A Secular Age*. Martin links this process of theological secularization to a fundamental change in outlook—treating the Fall as absolute, inevitable, and therefore more real than God's creative activity. Connected with this is human self-assertion over against the receiving and returning of the gift of wisdom. What underpins both is the nominalist negation of God's mediated self-revelation in the world. Here the notion of "reverence" in the writings of Goethe is key, as it describes the paradoxical coincidence of passive reception and active agency involved in cosmic contemplation, and an openness to divine beauty that shines forth through the harmonious ordering of the universe. In this manner, reverence is more empiricist than what Goethe described as Newtonian science's "gloomy empirical-mechanical-dogmatic torture chamber" because the latter locks theology into an iron cage of abstract, general categories.

Far from focusing on a vague, irrational feeling of the whole, sophiological Romanticism shifts the emphasis away from formal laws and impersonal forces toward the embodied and the particular in an attempt to perceive the imperceptible and feel the impalpable. By contrast with the Gnostic claim of pre-existing matter, Martin seeks to recover the theological poesis articulated by the early German Romantics, above all Novalis:

Novalis's perception is sophianic; that is, he sees the world of the senses in participation with the divine reality undergirding it, a reality he attempts to disclose in his poetry. This participation rises to awareness only in the act of imagination, but it is not, therefore, only an imaginative act, an act of phantasy. Imagination, rather, is an interactive perception in Novalis, what he called "romanticizing," a commerce, a congress at the highest level with the things of this world. "The world must be romanticized," he writes. "Then one will again find the original sense. Romanticizing is nothing more than a qualitative involution".

The theme that runs through Martin's meditations on Romanticism is the mutually augmenting role of faith and art in articulating a vision that captures Sophia's living dynamic between nature and the supernatural.

Most importantly of all, wisdom is neither a *tertium quid* nor a fourth divine person, but rather the very middle between divine transcendence and created immanence—as the Russian tradition of sophiology teaches. For nothing can subsist outside God, whether between humanity and God, or between God who was made man and mankind that is destined to be deified. Likewise, Sophia is no third term between the three divine persons or

between the essence of the Godhead and the persons of the Trinity—for otherwise persons, relations, and essences would be specific instances of something more general and fundamental than God.

At the same time, there is a middle or *metaxu* (the term used by Sergei Bulgakov), because without mediation the relations within the Trinitarian Godhead would dissolve either into independent univocal substances or into a self-founded equivocal monism. Moreover, mediation cannot be an endless dialectical oscillation, either between such substances or within a monistic ground of being, for dialectics would then be reducible to the opposing poles or an ontological extra that too remains unexplained. Therefore, sophianic mediation is best understood as something that is coextensive with the divine essence, the persons and their substantive relations—an ineffable communication between them that exceeds the grasp of human cognition and is accessed experientially.

According to Vladimir Solovyov, Sophia describes the "panunity" that envelops the whole of creation and reunites it to God—the process of deification through which humanity can perfect its God-given form. Unlike the formal identification of God with nature that would warrant the charge of pantheism, Russian sophiology—like Boehme's mysticism and early German Romanticism—draws our attention to divine self-revelation through the natural world. For wisdom is both the energy that enables the internal and intentional act of perception, and the essence of that which is perceived. Similarly, Bulgakov's work overcomes modern dualism and monism, as well as post-modern pluralism, in the direction of "integralism"—the idea that there is an underlying unity that binds creation to its Creator. This unity neither stands apart from God nor is identical with God, but rather springs forth from God as the shaping power of wisdom, or the manifesting power of the divine super-abundant light of glory. To receive and return the gift of divine wisdom is to realize our God-given being and uplift creation to an ever-closer union with the Creator, so that "we evermore dwell in him and he in us" (1 John 4:12-13).

Martin's masterly book makes a vital contribution to sophiology as the fusion of metaphysics with mysticism that avoids the separation of nature from the supernatural, such has characterized modern philosophy, politics, and culture. Metaphysical speculation combined with cosmic contemplation can help to reimagine theology and renew humanity's quest for its transcendent telos. <>

## **THE ART OF DREAMS: REFLECTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS EDITED BY Barbara Hahn and Meike G. Werner [Paradigms, de Gruyter, 9783110437515]**

We all dream; we all share these strange experiences that infuse our nights. But we only know of those nightly adventures when we decide to represent them. In the long history of coming to terms with dreams there seem to be two different ways of delineating our forays into the world of the unconscious: One is the attempt of interpreting, of unveiling the hidden meaning of dreams. The other one is not so much concerned with the relation of dream and meaning, of dream and reality, it rather concentrates on trying to find means of representation for this extremely productive force that determines our sleep. The essays collected in this book explore both attempts. They follow debates in philosophy and psychoanalysis and they study literature, theatre, dance, film, and photography.

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## The Art of Dreams: An Introduction

We all dream; we all share these strange experiences that infuse our nights. Manifold are the means of representing those nightly adventures: Songs and poems, paintings and films, dance and drama, novels and short stories. In all these different kinds of art, "dream" seems to be a name for experiences that need to be conveyed to our fellow humans. In the long history of coming to terms with dreams two different ways of delineating our forays into this nocturnal world prevail. One way is the attempt to interpret, to unveil a hidden meaning within dreams. The other way is to use the extraordinarily productive force to experiment with and test all the various representational means for our oneiric experiences.

Most of the essays collected in this book are of the latter sort. In the spring of 2006, scholars from a wide range of disciplines gathered at Vanderbilt University's Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities in order to explore representations of dreams in different arts. While most of the essays concentrate on the twentieth century, which could be called the century of dreams, we have also tried to assemble texts that reflect upon the question of how a history of the representation of dreams might be conceived.

It is surprising how little we know about this history, though dreams are so prominent in the realm of each and every art. It is difficult to find a great twentieth-century novel, one that will survive, in which dreams do not play a role; it is just as hard to find letters or diaries that do not include dreams. So many painters experimented with dreams; for some, like Joseph Cornell or Carlfriedrich Claus, dwelling in this world determined their work.' The same holds true for films. From the very beginning, directors tried to find means of representing dreams. Georg Wilhelm Pabst in his *Geheimnisse einer Seele* (Secrets of a Soul, 1926) was one of the first; Alfred Hitchcock asked Salvador Dali to stage a dream for his film *Spellbound* (1945); Ingmar Bergman found frightening images to open his *Smultronstället* (Wild Strawberries, 1957), such as a clock without hands or an open coffin in which the dreamer sees himself; Akira Kurosawa composed his *Yume* (Dreams, 1990) as a sequence of eight dreams. Federico Fellini probably was not the only director to keep a dream diary — most of the inspirations for his films seem to stem from dreams.

Surprising too, how little we know once we decide to leave one particular art behind and explore representations of dreams in a variety of arts. Very few books published over the last decades have tried to cross the boundaries between art and scholarship, between art and science. One that has, *Dreams 1900-2000: Science, Art, and the Unconscious Mind*,

presents a stunning collection of visual representations of dreams, framed by a couple of excellent essays. The book accompanied an exhibition, mounted in New York, Binghamton, Vienna, and Paris, "in commemoration of the centennial of the publication of Sigmund Freud's *Die Traumdeutung* (The Interpretation of Dreams) in 1900." Freud's magisterial study, so the thesis of the book, marks a threshold in our understanding of dreams. But how, so the question, are art and science related if we assume Freud's theory of the unconscious? "Any reduction of psychology to physiology does not account for the life of the mind as experienced by human beings," writes Lynn Gamwell, the editor of the book. This means that for Gamwell, neuroscience, which has so often lately been taken as the new royal road into the world of dreams, is not the only road into this world. Her essay sees in a neuroscientific perspective on the unconscious only the latest of four different stages of theoretical exploration of the concept. Three of these stages were developed by psychoanalysts, namely Sigmund Freud, C. G. Jung, and Jacques Lacan. The fourth stage seems to relocate our knowledge of dreams in a different scientific paradigm, neuroscience. All these stages have influenced the visual artifacts presented in the book — drawings, paintings, and photographs of installations, film stills. Yet for all its breadth, Gamwell's construction remains somewhat questionable. If we accept this schema, then art never "knows" more than theoretical concepts have already discovered; artists seem to be influenced by theories. But certainly the inverse is just as plausible: art can be read as an archive of kinds of "knowledge" that theoretical thinking has not yet reached. So many of the artworks presented in this wonderful collection ask for closer readings than Gamwell's orientation allows.'

The precarious relation between artistic representations of dreams and theoretical approaches points to a deeper problem. Dreams dwell in two realms: they are part of the world of language as well as of the world of images, of imagination. Michel Foucault, in his introduction to Ludwig Binswanger's **TRAUM UND EXISTENZ** (Dream and Existence), argued that psychoanalysis grasps the linguistic aspect but neglects the imagistic by translating everything into language; it only notices what can be rendered in words. Phenomenology, born contemporaneously with psychoanalysis, registers the imagistic but leaves it mute.' In Foucault's essay, written in 1952, reading dreams is still a task for which we seem to lack the appropriate theoretical tools.

Not much has changed since that essay was published. Most of the collective attempts at creating a history of dreaming concentrate on written testimonies without paying much attention to the imaginary dimension of dreams. **DREAM CULTURES: EXPLORATIONS IN THE COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF DREAMING** (1999), for instance, claims to be a "cross-cultural history of dreams," as the editors David Shulman and Guy Stroumsa say in their introduction. The volume offers a collection of essays that trace "cultural traditions and religious attitudes" as they tint and determine dreams.' The collection is impressive, starting in ancient China and India, moving to native North America, then to early Jewish and Christian texts, until it ends with a reading of the dreams of Adam and Eve in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The only essay to touch upon contemporary study considers Sigmund Freud's *Traumdeutung*. In this collection only written traces are the subject of critical approaches, and dreaming is taken to be an activity with a long tradition but not many connections to contemporary cultures.

*Dreams and History*, a more recent essay collection, presents a history of interpretation of dreams "from ancient Greece to modern Psychoanalysis': "How far need we — can we —

think our way back to other ways of being and thinking, other forms of consciousness about consciousness, other cultural accounts of the meaning of waking or sleeping, dreaming or not-dreaming? And anyway, is it helpful to view dream discourse in these 'before' and 'after' terms — the history of our most intimately private life periodized around the imaginary year zero around 1900?,"\$ so Daniel Pick and Lyndal Roper, the editors, in their introduction. These questions remain open; such established historical periods as Antiquity, the Middle Ages, or Modernity seem to lose most of their relevance when it comes to constructing a history of dreaming.

A last example. **DREAMS AND MODERNITY: A CULTURAL HISTORY**, coauthored by Natalya Lusty and Helen Groth, opens with English literature at the beginning of the nineteenth century, moves on to psychology, Freud, surrealism, Walter Benjamin's *Das Passagen-Werk* (The Arcades Project), and finally to an English archive of "mass observation." The book concludes — as do most contemporary attempts to reflect on dreams — with references to studies of brain activity. Again, neuroscience offers itself as a contemporary royal road to the interpretation of dreams. But even if we know how we dream, what we dream needs to be represented; it needs to be translated into one of the many arts human beings have created. For to dream, as Friedrich Nietzsche reminds us, is already to be engaged in artistic creativity. Dreams "paraphrase our experiences or expectations or circumstances with such poetic boldness and definiteness that in the morning we are always astonished at ourselves when we recall our dreams. In dreaming we use up too much of our artistic capacity — and therefore often have too little of it during the day."

As all of these collections with their strengths and limitations confirm, it is unlikely that any approach will prove to be a royal road to the unconscious, and awakened historical discourse must strive mightily to match the inventiveness and power of the oneiric awareness that punctuates traditions of representation. Hence our own collection of essays can only claim to make a modest contribution to the perennial challenge of understanding written, danced, sung, filmed, painted dreams. <>

## **ANIMALKIND: REMARKABLE DISCOVERIES ABOUT ANIMALS AND REVOLUTIONARY NEW WAYS TO SHOW THEM COMPASSION** by Ingrid Newkirk, Gene Stone, Foreword by Mayim Bialik [Simon & Schuster, 9781501198540]

*The founder and president of PETA, Ingrid Newkirk, and bestselling author Gene Stone explore the wonders of animal life and offer tools for living more kindly toward them.*

In the last few decades, a wealth of new information has emerged about who animals are—intelligent, aware, and empathetic. Studies show that animals are astounding beings with intelligence, emotions, intricate communications networks, and myriad abilities. In **ANIMALKIND**, Ingrid Newkirk and Gene Stone present these findings in a concise and awe-inspiring way, detailing a range of surprising discoveries: that geese fall in love and stay



with a partner for life, that fish “sing” underwater, and that elephants use their trunks to send subsonic signals, alerting other herds to danger miles away.

Newkirk and Stone pair their tour of the astounding lives of animals with a guide to the exciting new tools that allow humans to avoid using or abusing animals as we once did. They show readers what they can do in their everyday lives to ensure that the animal world is protected from needless harm. Whether it’s medicine, product testing, entertainment, clothing, or food, there are now better options to all the uses animals once served in human life. We can substitute warmer, lighter faux fleece for wool, choose vegan versions of everything from shrimp to sausage and milk to marshmallows, reap the benefits of medical research that no longer requires monkeys to be caged in laboratories, and scrap captive orca exhibits and elephant rides for virtual reality and animatronics.

**ANIMALKIND** is a fascinating study of why our fellow living beings deserve our respect, and moreover, the steps every reader can take to put this new understanding into action.

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Researchers at Germany's Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology were dumbfounded. The excitement wasn't over a new fossil, or the discovery of a previously unknown human ancestor. It was over Rico, a border collie. In experiments conducted in 2004, the very normal-seeming, ten-year-old canine had learned to fetch more than two hundred objects on command—and moreover, remember them all a month later.

Determined to discover the limits of Rico's abilities, the research team subjected him to a battery of cognitive tests that revealed astounding problem-solving abilities. Rico could easily retrieve from another room items he was familiar with, but when told to retrieve a new item—one he had never heard before—Rico correctly deduced that the unknown name must correspond with an unknown object and correctly retrieved it. The border collie's cognitive abilities were consequently compared to that of apes, dolphins, parrots, and, eventually, human children.

Researchers often end up comparing their animal subjects' intelligence to humans. But is intelligence truly easy to compare, animal to human, or even animal to animal? If Rico could

use the process of elimination to correctly fetch a tennis ball, does that make him smarter than an arctic tern who journeys forty-four thousand miles each year between the north and south poles? Is a piano-playing cat more intelligent than a chimpanzee, who shares nearly 99 percent of her DNA with humans and can learn sign language?

Comparing the intelligence of animals is, in fact, no easier than comparing the intelligence of humans. Who's smarter: Aristotle or Plato? Newton or Einstein? Monet or Manet? The red-lipped batfish or Chinese giant salamanders? The Indian elephant or the African elephant? In the end, ranking the relative intelligence of animals is a futile exercise. What's more, a recent study found that less than 15 percent of the estimated nine million species on Earth have been discovered. Who knows what fantastical creatures reside at our oceans' crushing depths, soar high in the stratosphere, or creep deep in the densest jungles? What fantastic intelligence do they display? Or more so, what fantastic intelligence we can't even comprehend?

We often consider intelligence as the only factor in determining which animals deserve compassion and which don't. Yet we're still so limited in our understanding of human intelligence that it makes little sense to calibrate our animal brethren based on how similar their brains are to ours. Or, perhaps you could say, it's simply not an intelligent way to determine importance.

The goal in this book is not to merely question that superiority, or to show how animals think and act like us; it's also to show how they do not, and to honor those differences. How can anyone compare the mental faculties of a gibbon vaulting through the forest with a giant blue whale singing through the deepest oceans? Different animals excel at different actions. As we'll see in this book, animals think, navigate, communicate, love, and play in extraordinarily unique ways.

However, for many years scientists believed that intelligence was, indeed, all that mattered when it came to animals, and that intelligence consisted of a continuum, with humans at the most developed end. Every other species could fit neatly into that spectrum—a concept heralded by the great naturalist Charles Darwin, who wrote in his 1871 book, *The Descent of Man*, that "the difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, certainly is one of degree and not of kind." In essence, Darwin meant that because all animals share a common ancestor, they also share the same toolkit of mental abilities, but at different levels.

Not a new idea. Twenty-four hundred years ago, Aristotle presented his idea of a "Natural Ladder," or *Scala Naturae*. Like Darwin, Aristotle advanced that all life could be conveniently ranked, with "lesser" animals like worms on one end, "intermediate" animals like dogs and cats in the middle, and "higher" animals such as monkeys and humans at the far end. During the Middle Ages, Christian theologians expanded on Aristotle's teachings with the "great chain of being," a hierarchical scale that began with God at the very top followed by angels, humans, other animals, plants, and then minerals. Each layer of the chain also had its own hierarchy. Among humans, for instance, kings, aristocrats, and other noblemen sat at the top while peasants were relegated to the bottom. The highest-ranking animals were large carnivores like lions and tigers, who were untrainable and therefore seen as superior to docile animals like dogs and horses. Even insects were subdivided, with honey-producing bees ranked higher than mosquitos and plant-eating beetles. Finally, at the very bottom sat snakes—their lowly station a result of the serpent's deception in the Garden of Eden.

Even throughout the twentieth century, scientists clung to the notion that animals can be neatly ranked by their human intelligence. Scientists devised increasingly cruel experiments that could serve as universal tests for animal cognition, many of them led by University of Wisconsin—Madison psychologist Harry Harlow. Previously, Harlow was best known for a series of experiments from the 1950s, in which he removed infant rhesus monkeys from their mothers and provided them surrogate mothers made from wire. The traumatized monkeys' desperate attempts to be caressed by their inanimate mothers during times of stress became the basis for research into maternal separation, dependency needs, and social isolation. (Many historians cite Harlow as a factor in the rise of subsequent animal liberation movements.) Later, Harlow developed experiments called "learning sets," which effectively tested how well a subject could learn. For instance, an animal would be presented with two doors, one containing food. The test would be repeated until the animal learned the correct door. Much like Aristotle's *Scala Naturae*, by devising experiments like these scientists created their own interspecies "IQ test" to rank the world's animals.

At first the tests seemed to support traditional beliefs about brain size. In learning sets, humans outperformed chimpanzees, who outperformed gorillas, who outperformed ferrets, who outperformed skunks, who outperformed squirrels, and so on. But the more animals that were tested, the less neatly everything seemed to fit. Then scientists studied blue jays and other birds, who performed better than half the mammals tested. As one researcher said, "Pigeons can blow the doors off monkeys in some tasks." Soon, scientists realized that the animal kingdom is far too complex to rank animals. Eventually, more of these experiments, many of which were physically and emotionally traumatizing for the animals, were halted. As one 1969 paper concluded, "The concept that all living animals can be arranged along a continuous 'phylogenetic scale' with man at the top is inconsistent with contemporary views of animal evolution.... The widespread failure of comparative psychologists to take into account the zoological model of animal evolution when selecting animals for study and when interpreting behavioral similarities and differences has greatly hampered the development of generalizations with any predictive value."

Animal intelligence can only be understood, or at least studied, in the context of a particular species' evolutionary path. It's not just our upright posture and large brains that make us who we are; it's our sense of individuality, our art, our music. Our inventiveness allowed us to discover language, fire, and cooking. As we'll see in this book, however, many animals possess these skills too. And others rely on a far different set of traits that we cannot even comprehend.

Ants have evolved over more than 140 million years by honing their collective instincts. Have you ever watched time-lapse footage of an ant colony? Each ant has a specific role within a group, and each group has a distinct purpose. Anyone who has witnessed a session of Congress on CSPAN knows how easily communication between humans can devolve into a playground shouting match. Yet ant colonies can grow to hundreds of millions of ants, all working seamlessly together toward a collective good. Our six-legged insect friends may not be able to communicate with spoken words like humans do, but they coordinate reproduction, construction, resource gathering, and even war using a complex language of scent, touch, and sound. Who is to say the collective intelligence of an ant colony is any less profound than human individuality?

Even brain size is not a good indicator of intelligence. Humans' brains rank fourth in size, behind sperm whales, elephants, and dolphins. As for our brain-to-body mass ratio, we're a distant fifth behind ants, tree shrews, small birds, and mice. There is no obvious anatomical indicator to predict which animals are "smarter" than other ones—and if there is, there are far too many variables to study. It turns out that even with their relatively small brains, nerve cells, and neural connections, birds' mental abilities are mighty impressive.

Some of the greatest abilities come from the most surprising creatures. Slime molds, for instance, might not be the first creature that comes to mind when you think "smart." Not plants, not animals, and not fungi, slime molds are soil-dwelling amoebas containing a single cell. (For reference, the human body has an estimated thirty-seven trillion cells.) Slime molds can form exotic colors and shapes that resemble honeycomb lattices and rainbow popsicles, often growing into bulbous masses as long as ten feet. Then there's a charmingly named slime mold called "dog vomit," which, as you can guess, looks like its namesake. More than nine hundred species of slime mold exist on every continent, and scientists cannot stop studying them. (Says Frederick Spiegel, a biology professor at the University of Arkansas and a slime mold expert: "I thought they were the most beautiful, sublime things I'd ever seen.")<sup>3</sup> Scientists have identified specimens in New Zealand genetically identical to those in the United States, meaning they traveled, somehow, halfway across the world without wings, paws, or feet. Even if they are ripped in half, slime molds can continue to grow and reproduce unabated. And, as one fascinating study revealed, slime molds can even solve mazes.

Mazes are often used by researchers to determine the cognitive abilities of various animals, as they require significant memory and problem-solving skills to complete. In particular, mazes test the hippocampus, which is located in one of the most evolutionarily ancient regions of the vertebrate brain and plays an important role in the consolidation of information from short-term to long-term memory as well as spatial awareness, used for navigation. The development of a species' hippocampus is often considered a bellwether for its overall intelligence, and mazes are the easiest way to test this. Smidgens of slime mold at one end of a maze can actually reproduce and grow toward food placed at the other end. When the mold reaches a dead end, it retracts its branches, retraces its steps, and tries another way. Within hours, a slime mold can find the shortest possible path to its prize. In a later study, University of Sydney researchers found that slime molds even possess spatial memory, able to leave behind a trail of translucent slime so it can identify places it has already traveled. Who needs a brain when you have slime?

Slime molds may not be able to create art or fall in love (as far as we know), but their curious existence does make us reconsider the definition of intelligence. By calling certain animals "smart," we are implying that there are "stupid" animals without bothering to understand their particular evolutionary path. For an animal to be alive today, her ancestors endured suffering far beyond our comprehension, surviving against all the odds to pass on their DNA to the next generation. Like slime molds, jellyfish may not seem to be highly intelligent beings, but they have traveled the seas for over five hundred million years, long before fins evolved into feet and before the continents separated, surviving everything from extreme ice ages to massive volcanic eruptions that obliterated 96 percent of marine life. The next time you see an ant crawling in your pantry, a pig in a factory farm, or even bacteria under a microscope, you might be looking at the smartest organisms who have ever roamed the Earth, just for the simple reason that they have endured and prospered.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the British psychologist C. Lloyd Morgan stated, "In no case is an animal activity to be interpreted in terms of higher psychological processes if it can be fairly interpreted in terms of processes which stand lower in the scale of psychological evolution and development." This declaration, known as Morgan's Canon, meant that anthropomorphizing animal behavior—that is, attributing human emotions and intentions to animals—was counterproductive when determining the relative intelligence of Earth's creatures. A human's mind is different than a dolphin's mind, which is different than a mouse's—trying to compare them is fruitless because their habitats and lives are so different.

Even comparing the cognition of animals within the same family can be difficult. For instance, take gibbons: Small, slender creatures with powerful tree-swinging arms, gibbons were for years considered mentally inferior to other primates. In studies, chimps could learn to distinguish between various tools and quickly learn simple tasks, while gibbons appeared clueless. It wasn't until the 1960s that the American primatologist Benjamin Beck, a researcher who helped tamarin monkeys prepare for release from zoos into nature, discovered why gibbons tested so poorly compared to their fellow apes. Unlike chimps, gibbons dwell exclusively in the trees. From their long, muscular arms to their hook-like hands meant to grasp branches, gibbons bear little physical resemblance to apes who live on the ground. The original set of experiments involved placing gibbons in cages and having them manipulate objects lying on a flat surface. Gibbons, with their hooked thumbs, were physically unable to pick anything up—behavior that scientists mistook for a lack of intelligence. When Beck repeated the experiment with the tools placed at shoulder height instead of the ground, the gibbons performed just as well as other apes.

As the physicist Werner Heisenberg wrote in his 1958 book, *Physics and Philosophy*, "We have to remember that what we observe is not nature herself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning." Heisenberg was referring to measuring atoms in the field of quantum mechanics, but the principle can be applied to the study of animals as well. We are doomed to compare the behaviors of mice to rats, of albatrosses to gulls, of cats to dogs—and, ultimately, of all animals to ourselves. In this book, we do something different. We believe that the navigational abilities of the blind mole rat—a furry species who lacks eyes and gets around by parsing the Earth's magnetic field—is every bit as amazing as the arctic tern who migrates more than forty thousand miles every year. The Adélie penguin dad who guards and keeps his unborn chick warm through the fiercest Antarctic weather is just as loving as a brown bear determined to protect her cubs at any cost.

In the following chapters we will explore the amazing, mysterious, and often incomprehensible ways that animals fly, crawl, slither, hop, swim, love, chat, and romp ... in other words, how they live.

First we will take a look at the amazing ways animals navigate the world. Like humans, many animals use the sun and the stars to find their way, but they also rely on methods that humans are biologically incapable of using, from olfactory maps to internal compasses to echolocation.

Next we will explore the world of animal communication. Chirping birds, screeching owls, singing whales, burping frogs—this is the language of the animal kingdom. The latest science shows that what may appear to be a cacophony of random noise is actually an incredibly intricate system of communication.



We next dive into life's most powerful and mysterious emotion: love. While we can never hope to truly understand how animals love and care for each other, we can record the ways they cuddle, court, mate, and protect each other.

Finally, we'll examine perhaps the most universal activity on the planet: play. Like humans, animals love to play. From play-fighting to just a quick dip in the water, play transcends the species barrier in ways that scientists still cannot understand.

By learning about how animals move, chat, love, and romp, we learn more about who animals are—their many talents, languages, and fascinating cultures—and how we humans can benefit from our greater understanding of what makes animals tick. <>

## **ALL GOD'S ANIMALS: A CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANIMAL ETHICS** by Christopher Steck, SJ [Georgetown University Press, Moral Traditions, 9781626167148]

The book is the first of its kind to draw together in conversation the views of the early Church, contemporary biblical and theological scholarship, and post-conciliar teachings. Steck develops a comprehensive, Catholic theology of animals based on an in-depth exploration of Catholicism's fundamental doctrines — trinitarian theology, Christology, pneumatology, eschatology, and soteriology.

**ALL GOD'S ANIMALS** makes two central claims. First, we can hope that God will include animals of the present age in the kingdom inaugurated by Christ. Second, because of this inclusion, our responses to animals should be guided by the values of the kingdom.

As Christians await the final liberation of all creation, they are to be witnesses to God's kingdom by embodying its ideals in their relations with animal life. Because the kingdom's fullness is yet to come and because our world remains marked by the wounds of sin, however, Christian treatment of animals will at times require acts that are at odds with the kingdom's ideals (for example, those causing suffering and death). Steck examines each of these ideas and explores all of their complexities.

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## Animals as Fellow Creatures of the Covenant

*Creation looks toward the covenant, but the covenant completes creation.* —Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

The initial idea for this book began to germinate when I was rereading a section of Lisa Sowle Cahill's work on the pacifist and just war traditions, which she examines in the context of the kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup> The kingdom of God has been inaugurated in Jesus's life, and the Christian is now called to witness to it through practices that reflect its ideals. I believe that what has come to be termed the "already / not yet" of the kingdom (i.e., the idea that the kingdom has already begun in Jesus Christ but its fulfillment is yet to come) is a valuable framework for Christian ethics. It gives Christianity its peculiar stereoscopic vision: looking to a future that is already in-breaking within the present order, even if obscured by it. Though the Christian community cannot hope to do more than offer an imaginative portrayal of that transformed future, it believes that Christ has revealed the fundamental values that will animate it. Witnessing to these values (e.g., peacemaking, forgiveness, justice, liberation) is the responsibility of all Christians, a task that will sometimes require a countercultural response at odds with more prudential judgments about what is "realistic." The kingdom disrupts conventional ethics. Yet, because the kingdom is not here in its fullness, our moral lives will often, sometimes unavoidably so, fall short of the kingdom's ideals.

Much of the literature on the connection between Christian ethics and the kingdom focuses on a set of similar themes, which are all related to the renewal of social harmony in a broken world. But I began to wonder how the task of witnessing to the kingdom might relate to nonhuman creatures. What would ethical care for animals look like if framed by the already / not yet of the kingdom? If animals are to share in the eschaton with us, must our treatment of them, like all acts prescribed by Christian ethics, be attentive to the ideals of the kingdom?

My initial attempt to write on this topic led me in an unexpected direction: to speak about a "kingdom ethics" for animals requires that they somehow be part of that kingdom. That is, I felt that I first needed to defend including animals in the eschaton before I could argue that they deserved to be treated, in the present age, as co-sharers in it. Developing a case for their inclusion led me more deeply into contemporary theological debates about the eschaton, evolution, the environment, and Christian views of creation. These conversations have progressed substantially over the last several decades and are now quite developed in their scope, perspectives, and interdisciplinarity. Nonetheless, what is missing from them, I came to believe, is a comprehensive, Catholic theology of animals that brings together in a systematic form recent magisterial teachings and the insights of contemporary theology.

The result is this book. The first four chapters develop a theology of animals, with the aim of making the case that at least some of them share in an eschatological destiny. The final chapter, the aim of my original endeavor, explores the ethical implications of this theology. Though I believe much of what I develop in this book can be applied to other non-human creatures, my focus is on animals, specifically those creatures that are cognitively sophisticated enough to have something like a sense of self that endures across time (and

perhaps also have other qualities, such as a sense of the past and future as their past and future, a capacity for having affection for one another, empathy, a conscious awareness of themselves and the world around them, and a rudimentary capacity to reason). In the pages that follow, I argue that these qualities are central to God's goal in creating and redeeming, and thus we can hope that animals endowed with some or all such qualities will also be included in God's renewal of the world.

My use of the term "animal" is intentionally fluid and includes more than land-based creatures (e.g., birds and sea creatures). I do not use it to delineate a clear boundary between creatures, but only as a designation for a domain of creatures that, I believe, provides the best case for developing Catholic thought with regard to nonhuman life, the eschaton, and ethics. My argument is intentionally restricted in order to critique the view that, to use colloquial language, "animals don't go to heaven" by arguing that at least some do, and thus I focus on the most likely candidates for such a redemptive embrace. Again, however, my argument is not meant to preclude the possibility that other (or even all) creatures will also be welcomed into the age to come.

Chapter 1 explores how historical Catholic attitudes toward animals were shaped by what I call the "Thomistic framework." It comprises three commitments: animals have no rights, animals are meant to serve humanity, and cruelty to animals is wrong, not because it does them an injustice but because it adversely affects the human agent's character. Since Vatican II, these views have been modified if not discarded. Still, I examine the history of Catholic views on animals, especially as it has unfolded in the last several centuries, because we need to learn from it. Specifically, this history suggests that Catholic attitudes toward animals have too often been distorted by a complacent unwillingness to attend to them and genuinely perceive them for what they are: creatures loved by God, with their own distinctive subjectivities, emotions, and abilities to experience joy and sorrow. I conclude by raising a concern that this historical resistance to "seeing" animals is not just a deficiency of our past but also a failure in the present.

Chapter 2 begins the case for a theological reinterpretation of animals. Among the current pressures urging us to revise our views of animals are the claims of contemporary science (especially evolution and animal studies) and the shift in interpretations of the theological themes found in the first chapters of Genesis—most importantly, the dominion mandate, the fall, and humanity as the *imago Dei*. The chapter argues that the goal of God's creative act is to establish a covenant with all creation, not just humankind. I suggest this while also supporting a tempered claim for human uniqueness, what I call a broken, covenantal anthropocentrism.

Chapter 3 argues that we have sound theological reasons for believing that the generosity and power of God displayed in Christ's life and death—the divine *magis*, as I refer to it is also directed to redeeming nonhuman animals. I open by exploring some of the basic Catholic commitments regarding human nature and Christ's redemption of it (e.g., God preserves human nature even as it is elevated in Christ). I briefly examine biblical, patristic, and contemporary theologies to highlight support for nonhuman redemption, and I begin to make a case for it by appealing to the theology of creation found in the thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar. Balthasar believed that all creation will be redeemed, but to my knowledge he never explored how such a redemption occurs. Nonetheless, his view that every creaturely existence has been endowed with a dialogical inclination provides a ground for

such a creaturely inclusive redemption. All creatures can be embraced within a covenantal relationship with the Father because they are all able to respond; even the trees and mountains give God praise. These earthly natures are, in Catholic idiom, preserved and elevated in Christ.

I employ Balthasar's concept of "theo-drama" to propose a way of understanding nonhuman redemption. For Balthasar, the salvific narrative leading up to the paschal mystery is the drama that explains and gives meaning to every other drama in creation. Every creature's life unfolds dramatically, and these dramas must ultimately be interpreted in light of the salvific drama revealed in Christ. In Christ, God has made it so that there is no longer a fundamental antagonism between the life of the Godhead and that of creaturely existence. Because of this alignment between God and creation, each creature can be embraced by the triune God without losing its innate, relative meaning or threatening God's absolute unity.

In chapter 4, I develop the redemptive inclusion of animals (what I call their "sanctification") by incorporating the work of the Holy Spirit. The first part of the chapter depends significantly on Balthasar's trinitarian theology. Within the processions of the triune Persons, the Spirit is both co-subject of the love between the Father and the Son and the objective expression of the bond between them. Building on this, we can suggest that in God's labor for the world, the Spirit acts as both co-subject with the animal creature and objective bond between it and the divine life. The Spirit is thus able to enfold into the drama of the triune life not only human existence but also the creaturely drama of animals. I pursue this trinitarian inclusion of the animal in two directions. First, I look at how the Spirit incorporates the life and drama of the individual animal, using the particularly difficult case of animal predation as an example. Second, I explore historical and contemporary teachings that base their soteriologies on the view that all creatures are bound together in a fundamental solidarity. The work of redeeming humanity, then, is always also the work of redeeming all creation. Through the gift of the Spirit, this work is ritualized and effected in the Eucharist.

Finally, chapter 5 examines the ethical implications of the framework developed in the preceding chapters. This framework is based on a number of theological claims—including the views that the suffering that marks the lives of animals in the present age is not desired by God; that animals have a purpose beyond serving humanity; that God delights in animals and cares for their well-being; and that God intends to enter into covenantal relationships with animals, in ways appropriate to each, and draw them together in Christ.

These theological commitments give rise to ethical ones. The eschatological destiny of animals should inform how we treat them. However, like other eschatological ideals (e.g., pacifism, hospitality toward the stranger, and communal sharing of one's goods), the ideals associated with animal life—as depicted, for example, in the peaceable kingdom of Isaiah 11:6-9—must be tempered by an eschatological reserve that acknowledges the brokenness of the world around us and the impossibility of simultaneously realizing all the important values at stake in our treatment of animals. Because the kingdom's fullness is still to come, this eschatological framework permits, at times, practices that are at odds with the values of the kingdom but are needed to protect other important values (e.g., we will sometimes need to kill animals to preserve human life and health). In the world to come, no violence will be done to animals, but in this world such acts will be necessary.

Christian care for nonhuman creatures is an ecclesial and personal responsibility. God has given the Christian community the task of witnessing to the kingdom inaugurated in Christ, and this task includes care for animal life. The Church should work against instrumentalizing attitudes toward animals by fostering a worldview that sees them as sentient subjects and fellow creatures of the covenant, living in relationship with us and with God. As creatures of the covenant, they should receive the Church's prayers for their flourishing and its hope for their restoration. All Christians are called to follow universal norms regarding care for animals, but some will be called to a personal vocation that goes beyond what is strictly required. In such a calling, the person strives to regularly embody, sometimes with significant hardship, relationships with animals that reflect the ideals of the kingdom.

Even while advocating for a keener sense of our significant responsibilities toward animals, I also recognize that the needs of the human community are massive and grave. Given the injustice and oppression in our world, some might suggest that we have enough pressing issues to address without adding concerns for animals. In response, I offer two observations. First, the sufferings of the human community and those of animals are sometimes linked so addressing one can help us in addressing the other. Thus, for example, a reduction of meat consumption will not only lessen the amount of animal suffering but will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help us avoid the disastrous climate disruptions that disproportionately affect the world's poor. Also, reducing meat consumption should lead to shifts in food production that will better serve the world's hungry and malnourished. An "integral ecology," to use Pope Francis's term, requires that we pursue an integrated approach in addressing environmental issues and social justice.

However, second and more important, I believe that any adequate discernment of how to care for animals, in light of the many other demands we face, must begin with a basic recognition that animals are genuine objects of moral concern; this itself is a moral achievement. After first gaining this moral awareness, we can then move to the complicated task of discerning how to respond given the weighty problems faced by so many in our world. It would be a false strategy to preemptively reduce these enormous demands by dismissing any serious responsibility for animal well-being or closing our hearts to their claims on us. The consequence of recognizing honestly and openly that animals make claims on us will be a moral messiness, but we cannot avoid it. Even acknowledging, as I do, that human need has an ethical priority over that of animals does not eliminate this untidiness.

The attempt to develop a comprehensive theology of animals and a corresponding ethics of animal care requires that we cover a wide range of issues and discussions expeditiously. The risk in doing so is a brevity that overlooks significant complexities, distinctions, and voices in the debates. I hope to have avoided these offenses or at the very least to have mitigated their severity.

In closing, I offer a few miscellaneous notes for the reader. I use "covenant" to express the relationship that, I argue, God desires to have with all God's creatures. I understand this relationship in terms of qualities like companionship, care, communion, and interchange. My use of the term is grounded in a reading of the various covenant offerings recounted in the Old and New Testaments, but it is not intended as a technical development of any one of those accounts. In addition, because the new covenant established in Christ is eschatological, its fulfillment, as I understand it, is intertwined with the realization of God's kingdom.



On the term "animals": As I noted above, I use the term to mean more than mammals. Generally, it refers to any non-plant life, with a particular emphasis on those creatures that we can most easily imagine being recipients of God's gift of restoration. "Creatures," however, refers to all that is created—that is, all that is not God. This, of course, includes the human person. Often, I refer to all-except-human-creatures as "nonhuman creatures." I am aware that such phrasing is problematic because it seems to imply an absolute binary of "human" and "not-human," something this book challenges. Unfortunately, alternative phrasings are awkward (e.g., other-than-human-creatures), and do not entirely escape an implicit binary. I use the phrase for clarity and stylistic simplicity.

I use "ecotheologians" as an inclusive term of convenience to refer to theologians working in areas such as the environment, ecology, evolution, animal lives, and nonhuman lives. I do not mean to suggest that any scholar so designated is primarily working in one of these areas or identifies as an ecotheologian. <>

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## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Ibn Taymiyya and his Times** edited by Yossef Rapoport, Shahab Ahmed [Studies in Islamic Philosophy, Oxford University Press, 9780199402069]

Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) is one of the most controversial thinkers in Islamic history. Today he is revered by what is called the Wahhabi movement and championed by Salafi groups who demand a return to the pristine golden age of the Prophet. His writings have been a source of inspiration for radical groups to justify acts of violence and armed struggle.

**Ibn Taymiyya** by Jon Hoover [Makers of the Muslim World, Oneworld Academic, 9781786076892]

Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) of Damascus was one of the most prominent and controversial religious scholars of medieval Islam. He called for jihad against the Mongol invaders of Syria, appealed to the foundational sources of Islam for reform, and battled against religious innovation. Today, he inspires such diverse movements as Global Salafism, Islamic revivalism and modernism, and violent jihadism. This volume synthesizes the latest research, discusses many little-known aspects of Ibn Taymiyya's thought, and highlights the religious utilitarianism that pervades his activism, ethics, and theology.

**Ibn Taymiyya's Theological Ethics** by Sophia Vasalou [Oxford University Press, 9780199397839]

Icon of modern-day fundamentalist movements, firebrand religious purist, tireless polemicist against the intellectual schools of his time—the Ibn Taymiyya we know is a thinker we often associate with hard attitudes and dogmatic stances. Yet there is another Ibn Taymiyya that stands out from the pages of his work, the thinker who fashions himself as a master of the via media and as a defender of the harmony between human reason and the religious faith. The aim of this book is to shed fresh light on Ibn Taymiyya's intellectual identity by a close investigation of his ethical thought. Earlier Muslim thinkers debating ethical value had been exercised by a number of core questions. What makes actions right or wrong? How do human beings know it? And what is God's relationship to the evaluative standards discerned by the human mind? An investigation of Ibn Taymiyya's engagement

with such questions has much to teach us about his intellectual program and particularly about the role of reason and the linchpin concept of human nature (fitra) within this program. It also has much to teach us about Ibn Taymiyya's relationship to the intellectual landscape of his time, bringing us up against a rich tapestry of ethical discussions unfolding within theology, philosophy and legal theory in the classical period. At the same time, a close reading of Ibn Taymiyya's ethics invites us to confront not only the content of his thought but its form, and more particularly those features of his writing that fracture our efforts to unify his thought.

**Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation: A Study of Dar' ta' āruḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql** by Carl Sharif El-Tobgui [Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, Brill, hardcover: 978-90-04-41285-9, ebook: 978-90-04-41286-6] [Open Source](#)

In **Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation**, Carl Sharif El-Tobgui offers the first comprehensive study of Ibn Taymiyya's ten-volume magnum opus, Dar' ta' āruḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql. In his colossal riposte to the Muslim philosophers and rationalist theologians, the towering Ḥanbalī polymath rejects the call to prioritize reason over revelation in cases of alleged conflict, interrogating instead the very conception of rationality that classical Muslims had inherited from the Greeks. In its place, he endeavors to articulate a reconstituted "pure reason" that is both truly universal and in full harmony with authentic revelation. Based on a line-by-line reading of the entire Dar' ta' āruḍ, El-Tobgui's study carefully elucidates the "philosophy of Ibn Taymiyya" as it emerges from the multifaceted ontological, epistemological, and linguistic reforms that Ibn Taymiyya carries out in this pivotal work.

**Ibn Taymiyya Against the Greek Logicians** introduction and translated by Wael B. Hallaq [Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 9780198240433]

Ibn Taymiyya, one of the greatest and most prolific thinkers of medieval Islam, held Greek logic responsible for the "heretical" metaphysical conclusions reached by Islamic philosophers, theologians, mystics, and others. Unlike Ghazali, who rejected philosophical metaphysics but embraced logic, Ibn Taymiyya considered the two inextricably connected. He therefore set out to refute philosophical logic, a task which culminated in one of the most devastating attacks ever levelled against the logical system upheld by the early Greeks, the later commentators, and their Muslim followers. His argument is grounded in an empirical approach that in many respects prefigures the philosophies of the British empiricists. Hallaq's translation, with a substantial introduction and extensive notes, makes available to a wider audience for the first time an important work that will be of interest to specialists in ancient and medieval philosophy and to historians of logic and empiricist philosophy, as well as to scholars of Islam and Middle Eastern thought.

**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? In **Islam and the Fate of Others**, Mohammad Hassan Khalil examines the writings of influential medieval and modern Muslim scholars on the controversial and consequential question of non-Muslim salvation.

This is an illuminating study of four of the most prominent figures in the history of Islam: Ghazali, Ibn 'Arabi, Ibn Taymiyya, and Rashid Rida. Khalil demonstrates that though these paradigmatic figures tended to affirm the superiority of the Islamic message, they also envisioned a God of mercy and justice and a Paradise populated by Muslims and non-Muslims.

**Ottoman Puritanism and its Discontents Ahmad al-Rumi al-Aqhisari and the Qadizadelis** by Mustapha Sheikh [Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs, Oxford University Press, 9780198790761]

This book is about the emergence of a new activist Sufism in the Muslim world from the sixteenth century onwards, which emphasised personal responsibility for putting God's guidance into practice. It focuses specifically on developments at the centre of the Ottoman Empire, but also considers both how they might have been influenced by the wider connections and engagements of learned and holy men and how their influence might have been spread from the Ottoman Empire to South Asia in particular. The immediate focus is on the Qāḍīzādeli movement which flourished in Istanbul from the 1620s to the 1680s and which inveighed against corrupt scholars and heterodox Sufis.

**Handbook of Leaving Religion** edited by Daniel Enstedt, Göran Larsson and Teemu T. Mantsinen [Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion, Brill, E-Book: 978-90-04-33147-1, Hardback: 978-90-04-33092-4] [open source](#)

**The Handbook of Leaving Religion** introduces a neglected field of research with the aim to outline previous and contemporary research, and suggest how the topic of leaving religion should be studied in the future. The handbook consists of three sections: 1) Major debates about leaving religion; 2) Case studies and empirical insights; and 3) Theoretical and methodological approaches. Section one provides the reader with an introduction to key terms, historical developments, major controversies and significant cases. Section two includes case studies that illustrate various processes of leaving religion from different perspectives, and each chapter provides new empirical insights. Section three discusses, presents and encourages new approaches to the study of leaving religion.

**A Śabda Reader: Language in Classical Indian Thought** translated and edited by Johannes Bronkhorst [Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought, Columbia University Press, 9780231189408]

**A Śabda Reader** brings together newly translated passages by authors from a variety of traditions—Brahmin, Buddhist, Jaina—representing a number of schools of thought. It illuminates issues such as how Brahmanical thinkers understood the Veda and conceived of Sanskrit; how Buddhist thinkers came to assign importance to language's link to phenomenal reality; how Jains saw language as strictly material; the possibility of self-contradictory sentences; and how words affect thought. Throughout, the volume shows that linguistic presuppositions and implicit notions about language often play as significant a role as explicit ideas and formal theories. Including an introduction that places the texts and ideas in their historical and cultural context, **A Śabda Reader** sheds light on a crucial aspect of classical Indian thought and in so doing deepens our understanding of the philosophy of language.

**The Principal Upanisads** edited with Introduction, Text, Translation And Notes By S. Radhakrishnan [The Muirhead Library of Philosophy, Routledge, 004294046X]

Basic philosophical texts of Hinduism, representing the height of Vedic philosophy.

**Illusions of Emancipation: The Pursuit of Freedom and Equality in the Twilight of Slavery** by Joseph P. Reidy [Littlefield History of the Civil War Era, University of North Carolina Press, 9781469648361]

As students of the Civil War have long known, emancipation was not merely a product of Lincoln's proclamation or of Confederate defeat in April 1865. It was a process that required more than legal or military action. With enslaved people fully engaged as actors, emancipation necessitated a fundamental reordering of a way of life whose implications stretched well beyond the former slave

states. Slavery did not die quietly or quickly, nor did freedom fulfill every dream of the enslaved or their allies. The process unfolded unevenly.

**Upheaval: Turning Points for Nations in Crisis** by Jared Diamond [Little, Brown and Company, 9780316409131]

A "riveting and illuminating" Bill Gates Summer Reading pick about how and why some nations recover from trauma and others don't (Yuval Noah Harari), by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the landmark bestseller *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.

In his international bestsellers *Guns, Germs and Steel* and *Collapse*, Jared Diamond transformed our understanding of what makes civilizations rise and fall. Now, in his third book in this monumental trilogy, he reveals how successful nations recover from crises while adopting selective changes -- a coping mechanism more commonly associated with individuals recovering from personal crises.

**The Men and the Moment: The Election of 1968 and the Rise of Partisan Politics in America** by Aram Goudsouzian [University of North Carolina Press, 9781469651095]

The presidential election of 1968 forever changed American politics. In this character-driven narrative history, Aram Goudsouzian portrays the key transformations that played out over that dramatic year. It was the last "Old Politics" campaign, where political machines and party bosses determined the major nominees, even as the "New Politics" of grassroots participation powered primary elections. It was an election that showed how candidates from both the Left and Right could seize on "hot-button" issues to alter the larger political dynamic. It showcased the power of television to "package" politicians and political ideas, and it played out against an extraordinary dramatic global tableau of chaos and conflict. More than anything else, it was a moment decided by a contest of political personalities, as a group of men battled for the presidency, with momentous implications for the nation's future.

**Søren Kierkegaard: Discourses and Writings on Spirituality** Introduced and translated by Christopher B. Barnett [Classics of Western Spirituality, Paulist Press, 9780809106486]

The first volume of sources and commentary devoted exclusively to Kierkegaard's spirituality. Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) is primarily known as a philosopher, even though much of his writing was explicitly dedicated to spiritual growth (what he called "upbuilding"). This volume redresses this situation by demonstrating not only that Kierkegaard was a spiritual author, but also how he brings out the beauty and diversity of the Christian spiritual life. Particular attention is given to his writings on God, creation, humanity, and Jesus Christ. A general introduction helps orient the reader to Kierkegaard's life and thought, while brief introductions to each selected reading deepen the reader's acquaintance with the Danish thinker's oeuvre. **Søren Kierkegaard: Discourses and Writings on Spirituality** provides an indispensable introduction to this crucial aspect of his thought.

**Philosophers and Their Poets: Reflections on the Poetic Turn in Philosophy since Kant** edited by Charles Bambach and Theodore George [SUNY State University of New York Press, 9781438477039]

*Examines the role that poets and the poetic word play in the formation of philosophical thinking in the modern German tradition.*

Several of the most celebrated philosophers in the German tradition since Kant afford to poetry an all but unprecedented status in Western thought. Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Gadamer argue that the scope, limits, and possibilities of philosophy are intimately intertwined with those of poetry. For them, poetic thinking itself is understood as intrinsic to the kind of thinking that defines philosophical inquiry and the philosophical life, and they developed their views through extensive and

sustained considerations of specific poets, as well as specific poetic figures and images. This book offers essays by leading scholars that address each of the major figures of this tradition and the respective poets they engage, including Schiller, Archilochus, Pindar, Hölderlin, Eliot, and Celan, while also discussing the poets' contemporary relevance to philosophy in the continental tradition.

**Redeeming Anthropology: A Theological Critique of a Modern Science** Khaled Furani [Oxford University Press, 9780198796435]

Anthropologists have invariably engaged in their discipline as a form of redemption, whether to escape from social restriction, nourish their souls, reform their home polities, or vindicate "the natives." **Redeeming Anthropology** explores how in pursuit of a secular science sired by the Enlightenment, adherents to a "faith in mankind" have vacillated between rejecting and embracing theology, albeit in concealed and contradictory ways. Mining the biographical registers of the American, British, and French anthropological traditions, Khaled Furani argues that despite all efforts to the contrary, theological sediments remain in this disciplining discipline. Rather than continuing to forget, deny, and sequester it, theology can serve as a mirror for introspection, as a source of critique offering invaluable tools for revitalization: for thinking anew not only anthropology's study of others' cultures, but also its very own reason.

**Aquinas's Neoplatonism in the Summa Theologiae on God: A Short Introduction** by Wayne J. Hankey [St. Augustines Press, 9781587310201]

This book rises out of Dr. Wayne Hankey's 2015 Aquinas Lecture at the University of Dallas. It explains the Neoplatonic structure and doctrine of St. Thomas's treatment of God in the Summa theologiae with the aim of showing that his doctrine of being is at root both Trinitarian and incarnational.

**The Heavenly Country: An Anthology of Primary Sources, Poetry, and Critical Essays on Sophiology** edited by Michael Martin [Angelico Press/Sophia Perennis, 9781621381754]

Sophiology--the philosophical and theological notion of a transcendent splendor becoming immanent in the world, through nature, liturgy, prayer, and the arts--is just now coming into its own as an important area of study. This revolutionary casebook brings together primary source documents, poetry, and critical articles written by a group of exemplary scholars working in theology, philosophy, literary studies, psychology, and poetics. Contributors include Bruce Foltz, Gregory Glazov, Jennifer Newsome Martin, Michael Martin, Aaron Riches, Brent Dean Robbins, Artur Sebastian Rosman, Fr. Robert Slesinski, and Arthur Versluis.

**The Submerged Reality: Sophiology and the Turn to a Poetic Metaphysics** by Michael Martin, Foreword by Adrian Pabst [Angelico Press, 9781621381150]

In **The Submerged Reality: Sophiology and the Turn to a Poetic Metaphysics**, Michael Martin challenges us to reimagine theology, philosophy, and poetics through the lens of sophiology. Sophiology, as this book shows, is not a rogue theology, but a way of perceiving that which shines through the cosmos: a way that can return metaphysics to postmodern thought and facilitate a (re)union of religion, science, and art.

**The Art of Dreams: Reflections and Representations** edited by Barbara Hahn and Meike G. Werner [Paradigms, de Gruyter, 9783110437515]

We all dream; we all share these strange experiences that infuse our nights. But we only know of those nightly adventures when we decide to represent them. In the long history of coming to terms with dreams there seem to be two different ways of delineating our forays into the world of the unconscious: One is the attempt of interpreting, of unveiling the hidden meaning of dreams. The



other one is not so much concerned with the relation of dream and meaning, of dream and reality, it rather concentrates on trying to find means of representation for this extremely productive force that determines our sleep. The essays collected in this book explore both attempts. They follow debates in philosophy and psychoanalysis and they study literature, theatre, dance, film, and photography.

**Animalkind: Remarkable Discoveries About Animals and Revolutionary New Ways to Show Them Compassion** by Ingrid Newkirk, Gene Stone, Foreword by Mayim Bialik [Simon & Schuster, 9781501198540]

*The founder and president of PETA, Ingrid Newkirk, and bestselling author Gene Stone explore the wonders of animal life and offer tools for living more kindly toward them.*

In the last few decades, a wealth of new information has emerged about who animals are—intelligent, aware, and empathetic. Studies show that animals are astounding beings with intelligence, emotions, intricate communications networks, and myriad abilities. In **Animalkind**, Ingrid Newkirk and Gene Stone present these findings in a concise and awe-inspiring way, detailing a range of surprising discoveries: that geese fall in love and stay with a partner for life, that fish “sing” underwater, and that elephants use their trunks to send subsonic signals, alerting other herds to danger miles away.

**All God's Animals: A Catholic Theological Framework for Animal Ethics** by Christopher Steck, SJ [Georgetown University Press, Moral Traditions, 9781626167148]

The book is the first of its kind to draw together in conversation the views of the early Church, contemporary biblical and theological scholarship, and post-conciliar teachings. Steck develops a comprehensive, Catholic theology of animals based on an in-depth exploration of Catholicism's fundamental doctrines — trinitarian theology, Christology, pneumatology, eschatology, and soteriology.

**All God's Animals** makes two central claims. First, we can hope that God will include animals of the present age in the kingdom inaugurated by Christ. Second, because of this inclusion, our responses to animals should be guided by the values of the kingdom. <>