"Learning How to See Again": Recovering a Place for Intellectual Vision in Philosophy

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Abstract

Man's ability to see is in decline, says Josef Pieper. The essence of philosophy has been traditionally conceived as a synoptic enterprise – an effort to see how things hang together in the broadest possible sense; yet that sense of philosophy has ceased to be the predominant one in contemporary universities. With the loss of the synoptic conception of philosophy, we have also lost the idea that the most central and valuable aspect of philosophy is *theoria* – a kind of adoration in which one's loving *gaze* is turned outwards to what exists outside oneself. What has been put in its place is a fragmented activity of questionable value. But the recovery of this older conception of philosophy - the recovery of our ability to see - is not so easily brought about insofar as its loss was not merely a unintentional lapse. Rather, such a recovery faces institutionalized moral opposition. In what follows, I first describe how the loss of the synoptic conception of philosophy, and its negative effects, is driven by a certain insular conception of institutionalized intellectual specialization. Second, by juxtaposing the pre-modern conception of philosophical activity with its modern alternative, I hope to make manifest the superior value of the former. Third, I seek to expose the often unstated moral objections that prevent the recovery of the traditional conception of philosophy, and, by bringing these moral objections to light, openly to confront them with alternatives. The language of vision is the thread that leads one through these three parts, and it is emphasized at every turn that seeing is a thoroughgoingly moral activity.

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Acknowledgements

The autodidact, according to W. H. Auden, exhibits a peculiar "crankiness and egoism" as well as an "uncertainty of taste." Auden was referring specifically to poets, but I think that the remark applies to philosophers like myself as well. The reason Auden says that the modern poet is an autodidact is because he believes good poets must educate themselves, insofar as even the best institutions of education only provide them with an appropriate education by accident and not by design. The crankiness thus results, in part, from having to do oneself what one hoped others would help one to do ("Then I'll do it myself," said the Little Red Hen). I feel that something similar can be said about a proper philosophical education. In what follows in the body text I am very critical about the nature of the discipline of philosophy, both in its research, and in its pedagogy. I am come very near to affirming MacIntyre's remark that liberal education today is, for many, "as much a process of deprivation as of enrichment." This being the case, I find it both necessary and difficult to make acknowledgements to those who have helped me thus far: necessary insofar some act of *pietas* seems due to one's intellectual parents, in particular, to the Alma Mater in whose arms one was nurtured, and to the subsequent university of one's continuing graduate education; difficult insofar as I feel that I was at times neglected or mistreated by both of the same. A certain remark of G. K. Chesterton's here comes to mind: "My country, right or wrong,' is a thing that no patriot would think of saying. It is like saying, 'My mother, drunk or sober.'"

That said, however, I wish to extend my appreciation to two of Virginia's finest universities: the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia. My study of philosophy and classical philology began at the former, and continued at the latter. The former was Thomas Jefferson's *Alma Mater* and the nurse of his intellect, and the latter was the child of his thought. Especially with regard to the second, I think that a certain phrase, put to use elsewhere in a slightly different context, is particularly apt, namely, when it comes to the University of Virginia, its framer "built better than he knew." I say this because while Jefferson's enlightenment-inspired philosophical principles are in many ways part of the target of my criticisms, his University itself seems to contribute mightily to what Plato takes to be the supreme object of education: to teach us to love what is beautiful. I can honestly say that there was hardly a day I spent at The University – among "the purple shadows of the lawn" and "the

majesty of the colonnades" – that a certain passage of Plato's *Republic* did not run through my thoughts:

Let our artists rather be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful and graceful; then will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the good in everything; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear, like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason.

Something similar could be said for the College of William and Mary – for her venerable bricks, her warm lights, and her quiet winding paths. I wish therefore, once again, to extend my appreciation to both these institutions, but especially to the University of Virginia, insofar as the financial support given by the Corcoran Department of Philosophy allowed the thoughts of one of Virginia's sons to be further nurtured by that fair place beyond what his own means would allow.

When it comes to those who have had a more intimate influence on my writing and thought, I must chiefly thank my advisor Tal Brewer. It is said that the fingerprints of one's mentors can be found in one's work, and this is certainly true in the case of Tal. You will not find Tal's work directly cited in the dissertation; and this is because so much of his thinking has been assimilated into my own thought that it is difficult to tell what was his and what is now my own. Not only his writing, but also his mini-lectures in seminars, have been very formative for the evolution of my philosophical outlook. I would also like to thank Dan Devereux for patiently leading me through many texts of Plato and Aristotle. And when it comes to my interest in Ancient Greek Philosophy I cannot help but extend my appreciation to Noah Lemos at the College of William and Mary. Lemos always exhibited a certain subtle smile when reading and discussing certain passages of Aristotle in particular; and he also exhibited a subtle yet memorable expression – an expression that could best be described as a combination between an exasperated sigh and wince of pain - when inevitably students would level simplistic materialistic or hedonistic objections towards Aristotle. It was these gestures that seem to have confirmed my already latent intuition that there was something noble and worthy of study in Aristotle, and in Plato, that so many modern thinkers were quick to overlook. I also thank the members of my committee - Cora Diamond, Jorge Secada, and Chad Wellmon- for reading such a tome, and for giving me such insightful feedback.

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A great debt of gratitude is owed to my family for supporting me through the completion of this project. While I suspect that the nature and value of philosophy is at times opaque to my parents, my sister, and my in-laws, they have all unflaggingly supported me in my work at every step of the way. I especially thank my mother-in-law, Ellen, and my wife, Amy, for spending so much time with my daughter, Iris, especially during the final months of the dissertation process. And, finally, I wish to single out my wife Amy. Very few persons are so blessed as to have a single person who is able to play so many roles: editor, friend, philosophical interlocutor, lover, and ever a vehicle of grace. Much, if anything, that is good in what follows is likely due, in part, to her, and much that is not is probably due to my stubbornly refusing to acknowledge when I know that she is right. "I suppose they try and make you believe an awful lot of nonsense?"

"Is it nonsense? I wish it were. It sometimes sounds terribly sensible to me."

"But my dear Sebastian, you can't seriously *believe* it all." "Can't I?"

"I mean about Christmas and the star and the three kings and the ox and the ass."

"Oh, yes, I believe that. It's a lovely idea."

"But you can't *believe* things because they're a lovely idea."

"But I do. That's how I believe."

- Evelyn Waugh¹

One day I heard someone reading, as he said, from book of Anaxagoras, and saying that it is Mind that directs and is the cause of everything. I was delighted with this cause and it seemed to me good, in a way, that Mind should be the cause of all. I thought that if this were so, the directing Mind would direct everything and arrange each thing in the way that was best. If then one wished to know the cause of each thing, why it comes to be or perishes or exists, one had to find what was the best way for it to be, or to be acted upon, or to act. On these premises then it befitted a man to investigate only, about this and other things, what is best...As I reflected on this subject I was glad to think that I had found in Anaxagoras a teacher about the cause of things after my own heart, and that he would tell me, first, whether the earth is flat or round, and then would explain why it is so of necessity, saying which is better, and that it was better to be so. If he said it was in the middle of the universe, he would go on to show me that it was better for it to be in the middle, and if he showed me those things I should be prepared never to desire any other kind of cause.

- Plato²

...it is more important to have beauty in one's equations than to have them fit experiment...It seems that if one is working from the point of view of getting beauty in one's equations, and if one has really a sound insight, one is on a sure line of progress.

- Paul Dirac³

¹ Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited, 65.

² Plato, *Phaedo* 97c-98a.

³ Paul Dirac, "The Evolution of the Physicist's Picture of Nature," 47

Preface

I originally set out to write a dissertation on the topic of political philosophy. My intention was to articulate a criticism of what we might call "neutralitarian" liberalism – a brand of liberalism, which finds its most thorough articulation in the work of John Rawls, and which aims to define a notion of justice that is antecedent to and independent of any comprehensive conception of the human good. Yet the more I worked on the project, the more I began to dislike the tone and manner of my writing. I felt that, in aiming to meet the arguments in the terms in which they were presented, I was beginning to sound just like many of the writers I was arguing against. It is often assumed that the proper manner of argument is to accept arguendo as many of the premises of one's interlocutor as is needed to show that one's interlocutor has made some sort of logical error –that there is some implicit contradiction in what he says. Or if not that, then the proper manner of argument is to show that one's interlocutor's commitment to some premise or other implies that he is committed to some further premise of which he was unaware – this logical connection is something by which one's interlocutor is supposed to be surprised, and it is meant to drive him to rethink his original commitment. Yet the number of argunedo's that I needed to work with in order to operate in this manner was stifling. This led me to believe that the basis of my disagreement with my intellectual interlocutors lay much deeper. We disagreed not only about the explicit matter at hand – the matter of whether principles of political justice could be formulated without reference to comprehensive conception of the good, or whether such principles would be advisable even if they could be so formulated - but also about the very nature of philosophy itself, and about the deep, ramified, arborescent conceptual, or dare I say, metaphysical, assumptions that seem to undergird our thought. My current project is an attempt to clarify this deeper disagreement. And since I suspect there is a deep disagreement between many of my interlocutors and me about the nature of philosophy, its subject, and its methods, I feel a need to begin with some remarks about what I take myself to be doing, and about what I think philosophers ought to be doing.

William Wordsworth, in the preface he appended to the 1802 edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, declined to give a systematic defense of the theory upon which his poems were written saying "I was unwilling to undertake the task, because I knew that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally

influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of *reasoning* him into an approbation of these particular Poems."⁴ Surely any comparison of my work to that of Wordsworth will raise some hackles; if I am not going to *reason* you into believing or into approving what I am saying, then surely this is not philosophy at all. Yet, again, Wordsworth said something similar. In his original preface of 1798, he predicted that his readers "will look round for poetry, and will be induced to enquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title."⁵ I likewise predict that some readers accustomed to the argumentative style of much contemporary analytical philosophy – the argumentative style I described above – will similarly enquire as to my warrant for claiming to do philosophy. And so while I have declined to give a systematic defense of the theory that guides my writing style in this preface, I, like Wordsworth, "am sensible, that there would be some impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon [my philosophical readers], without a few words of introduction, [writing] so materially different from [that], upon which general approbation is at present bestowed."⁶

I contend that, in academic philosophy, the writing upon which general approbation is at present bestowed, is generally intent upon achieving a fictitious neutrality by means of an overemphasis upon discursive argument and quasi-scientific rigor. The reasons for this overemphasis, so I will suggest, are both institutional and straightforwardly moral – with the latter serving to buttress the former. This overemphasis, I contend, causes us to be blind towards what I shall call the non-discursive aspects of cognition, or, if I may be permitted the expression, intellectual vision. It is my aim not only to give vindication to the use and development of our powers of intellectual vision, but to also show that appeal to insight should be permitted a place *alongside* discursive argument in philosophical writing and discourse.

If there is such a thing as intellectual vision or intellectual perception, then it would not be surprising if appeals to such insights within philosophical discourse would, in many ways, resemble the ways in which critics in aesthetics appeal to insight in trying to help others see their way into the beauty of some aesthetic object. And if there is such a thing as intellectual vision, or non-discursive cognition, then it *would* be surprising if one were able to give a wholly discursive account of it. It thus follows that much of what I shall be doing will being trying to

⁴ William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads: 1798 and 1802*, ed. Fiona Stafford (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 95.

⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁶ Ibid., 96.

back up a certain kind of recommendation: "see it like this." As Frank Sibley says, when describing the practices of aesthetic critics:

Repetition and reiteration often play an important role. When we are in front of a canvas we may come back time and time again to the same points, drawing attention to the same lines and shapes, repeating the same words...as if time and familiarity, looking harder, listening more carefully, paying closer attention may help. So again with variation; it often helps to talk round what we have said, to build up, supplement with more talk of the same kind...as though, failing to score a direct hit, we may succeed with a barrage of near synonyms.⁷

We may also, he says, make use of metaphors, comparisons, reminiscences etc. As a philosopher, I take myself to be a kind of aesthetic critic who stands before the canvas of the world. This aesthetic analogy is all the more apt insofar as one of the underlying aims of the dissertation is to wear down the moral and institutional entrenchment of what we might call the "fact/value divide." And if we think that all philosophy is conducted in the light of the good, and of the beautiful, then it seems that the term 'analogy' is too weak anyway. In light of this understanding, while I will make arguments, I do not intend merely to *reason* anyone into believing what I say. Changed perception is my goal. I am aiming to bring about a fundamental alteration of the analytic *Gestalt*. Given this goal, you will find many of the stylistic elements that Sibley suggests to the critic in play. There will be a great deal of repetition. I will make use of metaphors, comparisons, and reminiscences, and, as often as not, I will borrow the metaphors, comparisons, and reminiscences of others whom I will often quote at length. I suggest that it is only through use of such techniques that we can reach our deepest assumptions and learn how to see anew.

⁷ Frank Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts," in *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*, ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008), 504-505.

Part I. 'The Iron Cage': How University Specialization Prevents Synoptic Thought

Section 1. Philosophy as Synoptic Thought

It is therefore, the 'eye on the whole' which distinguishes the philosophical enterprise...a philosopher could scarcely be said to have his eye on the whole in the relevant sense, unless he has reflected on the nature of philosophical thinking...and in the absence of this critical reflection on the philosophical enterprise, one is at best but a potential philosopher.

- Wilfred Sellars⁸

In his inaugural address to the Aristotelian Society in 1945 H. H. Price addressed a concern that had manifested itself during inter-war period – the concern that "during the twenty years between the two wars Philosophy had somehow taken the wrong turning."⁹ The complaints, he continues, can be generally summed up under the heading "Clarity is not enough."¹⁰ The worry is that philosophers are simply causing muddles by analyses of language and then setting about to solve the very problems that they create. In particular, Price seems to think that the complaint is addressed to philosophers, not necessarily *qua* philosophers, but *qua* teachers of philosophy:

As pure philosophers, we may think about whatever we like, and nobody has the right to stop us, or to tell us that we ought to think about something else instead. But as teachers of Philosophy, we have a duty to the community.¹¹

What is this duty? He speaks of "the needs of the educated public which reads philosophical books...and sends its sons and daughters to philosophical lectures at universities."¹² The philosopher is supposed to provide some intellectual good to these persons – these philosophical consumers. Now, I believe that the Price's language of producer and consumer is somewhat off key. While philosophers do write books and articles, I do not think that philosophers are

⁸ Wilfrid Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1963), 3.

⁹ H. H. Price, "The Inaugural Address: Clarity Is Not Enough," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 19 (1945): 1.

¹⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹¹ Ibid., 2.

¹² Ibid., 22.

primarily persons who make things – commodities – to be sold.¹³ But there is still something worth preserving in Price's remark. And perhaps if we think more in terms of an intellectual "service" we will get closer to the mark. Socrates historically thought of the philosopher's "service" as like unto that of a midwife. The philosopher was supposed to help his interlocutors to bring forth or give birth to their own ideas. And while this may be one role of the philosopher, it seems that we might also compare his role to that of the cartographer. It is this latter role that Price thinks is being neglected.

Price says that, in addition to analytical clarity, what the educated public demands of the philosopher is "metaphysics"¹⁴ – "*speculative* Metaphysics, the construction of metaphysical systems: what has been called 'Philosophy in the grand manner'." What such a "philosophical consumer" needs from speculative metaphysics is:

a *Weltanschaunng*, a unified outlook on the world. This is what he is asking for when he asks the philosopher for wisdom or guidance, or a clue to 'the meaning of the Universe'; and this is particularly what the analytic philosophers are failing to give him.¹⁵

And Price's following remark is particularly apt to understanding my concern about the manner of argument that is to convey such an outlook. Price says, of our philosophical consumer, that

I am afraid he is not particularly interested in the arguments by which this or that worldoutlook is recommended; at any rate not in the detail of them. But he is not wholly disinterested in them either. For the outlook which he demands has to be a *reasoned* outlook...it is [not] at all necessary that any of his arguments should be completely demonstrative. His conclusions must be recommended by reasoning; but they need not be strictly proved, in a way which would satisfy a professor of Formal Logic.¹⁶

What Price is driving at is that the philosophical consumer is not merely interested in particular arguments of a narrow and analytical sort, but is trying to understand how things "in the broadest

¹³ Hunter Rawlings writes: "most everyone now evaluates college in purely economic terms, thus reducing it to a commodity like a car or a house...If we are going to treat college as a commodity, and an expensive one at that, we should at least grasp the essence of its economic nature. Unlike a car, college requires the "buyer" to do most of the work to obtain its value. The value of a degree depends more on the student's input than on the college's curriculum...A college education, then, *if it is* a commodity, is no car...Yet most public discussion of higher ed today pretends that students simply *receive* their education from colleges the way a person walks out of Best Buy with a television. / The results of this kind of thinking are pernicious." Hunter Rawlings, "College is not a Commodity. Stop Treating it Like One," *The Washington Post*, June 9, 2015.

¹⁴ Ibid., 21.

¹⁵ Ibid., 24.

¹⁶ Ibid., 24.

possible sense of the term" – to borrow a phrase from Wilfred Sellars – "hang together".¹⁷ The various analytical arguments, if they are to serve much good, must be aimed at bringing a unified outlook on the world into view. To borrow another phrase from Sellars, we might say that the philosophical consumer wants to "know his way around"¹⁸ the intellectual landscape. And if this is true, then we might think that the philosopher is supposed to provide a kind of map for helping people to navigate the intellectual landscape.

Price recognizes that, although the public seems to demand speculative metaphysical systems from philosophers, many philosophers simply believe that the demand cannot be met. Yet Price attempts to smooth some raised hackles over the prospect of recommending a return to the construction of metaphysical systems. The Hackles are raised, in part, by suspicions that the statements of many such traditional metaphysical systems are purportedly meaningless insofar as they cannot be verified by appeal to any empirical "facts." But Price notes that we should not understand speculative metaphysics as the building up of systems *a priori*, or the construction of systems out of "pure thought." Perhaps these notions of speculative metaphysics are rightly worrisome. Price suggests, with some qualification, that perhaps we should understand the desire for speculative metaphysical systems as a desire for "a kind of explanatory hypothesis, capable of accounting for all the main types of facts which are empirically known to us."¹⁹ His qualification, however, is that "hypothesis" cannot mean what it means to the historian or the empirical scientist, insofar as we are looking for something more comprehensive. The word 'theory', he notes, is also not helpful insofar as it has also come to have a certain meaning among the sciences - theories "explain" or "account for" things in terms of causal explanations and inductively established statistical regularities. The speculative metaphysician, on the other hand, is seeking to give something more like a "unifying conception", a "point of view", or "an outlook." And this is where Price suggests the analogy of a map or chart as a way of smoothing the hackles of the objectors to speculative metaphysics.

According to Price we might regard speculative metaphysical systems as "alternate modes of conceptual arrangement by which the body of empirical data is systematically ordered."²⁰ In this sense, we might think that Wittgenstein's dictum that philosophy "leaves

¹⁷ Sellars, "Scientific Image", 1.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1.

¹⁹ Price, "Clarity if Not Enough", 24.

²⁰ Ibid., 26.

everything as it is" holds up.²¹ The speculative metaphysician does not deny empirical data, but neither is his system a *mere* summary of it either. The conceptual arrangement has content that is not merely a sum of its parts, and thus speculative metaphysical systems are generally not refuted by empirical data – at least not in a particularly straightforward sense. Thus the evaluation of such systems is not the simple bivalence – true or false – of simple sentences or statements of fact:

...though we may discover defects ...in a particular metaphysical system, we ought not say on that account that it was wrong, or false, or that it has been refuted...We ought rather to say, and indeed we often do say, that it is inadequate or unsatisfactory in this or that respect, though perhaps satisfactory in others; which is much like what we say of Mercator's map of Greenland. And we shall then look about for another metaphysical system which is more illuminating. But in the meantime we shall not just throw the old one into the waste-paper basket, on the ground that it has been "refuted," for the notion of refutation does apply in this case. On the contrary, we shall continue to study it carefully, in order to get all the illumination out of it that we can; only, we shall hope to invent another (or rediscover an ancient one) which will illuminate more comprehensively.²²

Price's use of the Mercator projection as an example is particularly helpful insofar as Gerardus Mercator explicitly indicated that his map was *ad Usum Navigantium Emendata* ("corrected for the use of sailors"). In other words, Mercator may have even been aware of the fact that, while his map of the world was particularly useful for the purposes of maritime navigation – it was easier to maintain a straight course by reference to it – it was somewhat misleading as a tool for general reference – it leads one to think that Greenland is larger than Africa. So while we do not "trash" Mercator's map, we are still interested in "inventing another" map or "rediscovering an ancient one" that might be equally comprehensive yet less deceptive for general reference.

It is the comprehensiveness of speculative metaphysical views that is important, and that distinguishes them from other kinds of explanatory systems. This comprehensiveness is what "the ordinary educated man" means when he speaks of "a philosophy", and it is this kind of comprehensive view that constitutes the particular "need" of the ordinary educated man or the philosophical consumer:

He needs, as it were, a map of the universe so far as our empirical information has disclosed it; and not a map of the physical world only, but one which makes room for all the known aspects of the universe, physical, spiritual, and whatever others there may be.

²¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 2nd ed., trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1958) I §124, p.49e.

²² Price, "Clarity is Not Enough", 27.

He needs it nowadays more than ever, since for good reasons or bad the Christian metaphysical scheme has lost its hold over him; and Science does not give him what he wants either, since he feels (in my opinion rightly) that there are a number of very important questions on which Science has nothing to say. And he complains that just when his need is greatest, the philosophers are refusing to satisfy it. The prevalence of the purely clarificatory conception of Philosophy prevents them from even making the attempt. They will not even discuss and expound for his benefit the speculative systems of the past, so that he may avail himself of such illumination and guidance as these old fashioned "maps of the universe" have to offer.²³

And if the philosopher, when engaged in speculative metaphysics, is, in this way, like a mapmaker, then it may still be that he is offering a kind of clarity, but not the kind of analytical clarity that the accusation "clarity is not enough" condemns. Rather, the cartographer and the speculative metaphysician offer something like "synoptic clarity" as opposed to analytical clarity.²⁴ The speculative metaphysician provides a kind of "map of the universe" that helps one to see how things relate or hang together, and thus helps one come to know one's way around the intellectual landscape. And we might think that it is implied from Price's description that what is given by the Christian metaphysical system, and is lacking in the scientific one, is the ethical or evaluative dimension. And we might even think that the waning of the Christian metaphysical system and the waxing of the scientific conception of reality are not mere coincidence. I'll have more to say about this particular matter later on, but for the time being, it seems that we have an unsatisfactory set of insufficiently coherent conceptual maps, and that philosophers have not seen solving this problem as among their primary tasks.

What is implied at many points in Price's essay has become clearer to certain philosophers writing more recently – namely, that the various comprehensive "maps of the universe" traditionally provided by philosophy were supposed to provide ethical guidance. John Cottingham, for example, observes that

Among the educated citizens of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, many found it natural to turn to philosophy for guidance; as for the philosophers themselves, though few were prepared to offer instant solutions, most saw it as a main part of the purpose of philosophizing to reach a view on how to achieve fulfillment in life.²⁵

Yet Cottingham notes that philosophers in the 20th century have mostly shrunken away from "the

²³ Ibid., 27-28.

²⁴ Ibid., 29.

²⁵ John Cottingham, *Philosophy and the Good Life: Reason and the Passions in Greek, Cartesian and Psychoanalytic Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

old aspiration of philosophy to help humans lead happy and worthwhile lives."²⁶ Cottingham sets out to discuss the nature of contemporary philosophy as a propaedeutic to his discussion of Descartes' ethics. Before his intended discussion of the ethics of Descartes, Cottingham finds it necessary to discuss the boundaries and the aims of philosophy, as they are conceived in the 20th century, as opposed to how they were traditionally conceived. This is because most people today, even those professional philosophers who study philosophical ethics, would not think of Descartes as an ethicists at all. Yet the reason for this misperception, Cottingham argues, is in part due to "the collapse of the 'synoptic' conception of philosophy as a comprehensive system of thought encompassing all aspects of human understanding, including the ethical."²⁷

In order to buttress Cottingham's concerns about philosophers not taking Descartes to be an ethicist, consider the following example. In an entry on seventeenth-century moral philosophy in *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Ethics*, Aarron Garrett notes that, judging by the nature of the other entries in that textbook, contemporary moral philosophers do not seem to be interested in early modern philosophy before the eighteenth century. This is because

when compared with Hume's incisive discussions of whether moral distinctions are derived from reason, many of the best-known works by seventeenth-century moral philosophers read like self-help manuals buttressed with psychology, speculative law, and religion. Much that is recognizably philosophy appears not to be moral philosophy but metaphysics, scientific methodology, and the theory of knowledge.²⁸

Garrett argues that "self-help was a (or even *the*) central issue for a lot of early modern moral philosophy and self-help was connected with arguments in areas of philosophy we do not think of as relevant to moral philosophy."²⁹ 'Self-help' here involves "transforming how readers understood what they were fundamentally and by extension transforming how they understood what sort of life they should lead."³⁰ According to such "metaphysically informed" moral philosophy it followed that

the breadth of moral philosophy was far greater, and not clearly differentiated from politics, or the cultivation of intellectual virtues and attitudes crucial to discovering what

²⁶ Ibid., 1.

²⁷ Ibid., 2.

²⁸ Aaron Garrett, "Seventeenth-Century Moral Philosophy: Self Help, Self-Knowledge, and the Devil's Mountain," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics*, ed. by Roger Crisp (Oxford University Press, 2013), 229-230.

²⁹ Ibid., 230.

³⁰ Ibid., 230.

one truly was and serving as guides for practical reason (as well as for politics), or even from metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, and scientific methodology and practice.³¹

The boundaries of moral philosophy were cast so much more widely by these philosophers because they believed that one had to understand what kind of thing the human person is in order to understand what human fulfillment was, and subsequently to understand how one should act. The point here is that, like Cottingham, Garrett feels a need to introduce his overview of seventeenth-century moral philosophy with a kind of preface, without which he fears the majority of his twentieth-century analytical philosophical readers will simply not recognize what he is discussing as moral philosophy at all. They will not recognize much of what was written in the seventeenth century as moral philosophy because the seventeenth-century philosophers took moral philosophy to be a more synoptic enterprise.

But what accounts for the apparent collapse of synoptic ethics in the twentieth century? Cottingham suggests two broad influences. First, since the explosion of scientific knowledge in the seventeenth century, some have taken the task of creating a unified system, or a universal template for knowledge, to be hopelessly ambitious. Take, for example, a comment from Edward Dougherty, a professor of electrical and computer engineering, who says that:

The situation for today's...philosopher is far worse than it was in the eighteenth century, when Voltaire could retire to his home to study physics or conduct experiments without having to first spend years studying stochastic processes and mathematical statistics or building a contemporary microbiology laboratory complete with DNA sequencing, microarray technology, and high- performance computers.³²

The concern here is that it was more plausible that a single individual could achieve competence in multiple intellectual disciplines in earlier periods of history, but no longer. But while these concerns are real, Cottingham does not think that the traditional synoptic conception of philosophy need be damned by these kinds of concerns. This is because we need not think of a philosopher as having to master all of the finer details of, say, the various specialized branches of the natural sciences. In order to be capable of relating a "map of the universe" to the pursuance of the human good, we only need something more schematic and general. Aristotle makes this point at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics* when he is discussing the methodology appropriate to enquiring about ethical subjects:

³¹ Ibid., 230.

³² Edward R. Dougherty, "Unintelligibility: The Starting Point for Discussing the Science-Humanities Relationship", *Public Discourse*, May 15, 2014.

Our discussion will be adequate if it has as much clearness as the subject-matter admits of, for precision is not to be sought for alike in all discussions, any more than in all the products of the crafts...We must be content, then, in speaking of such subjects and with such premisses to indicate the truth roughly and in outline...for it is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits; it is evidently equally foolish to accept probable reasoning from a mathematician and to demand from a rhetorician scientific proofs.³³

Aristotle reiterates this methodological point immediately after the famous "function argument" in which he gives an account of the function of a human being in order to understand what the human end or the human good is:

Let this serve as an outline of the good; for we must presumably first sketch it roughly, and then later fill in the details. But it would seem that any one is capable of carrying on and articulating what has once been well outlined...And we must also remember what has been said before, and not look for precision in all things alike, but in each class of things such precision as accords with the subject-matter, and so much as is appropriate to the inquiry...We must act in the same way, then, in all other matters as well, that our main task may not be subordinated to minor questions.³⁴

We do not need to master all of the "minor questions" that are the specific domain of the specialized scientists in order to have a template or an outline of the human good. In Cottingham's words, such an outline or a sketch would require at least three things:

(1) a cosmology (a broad outline conception of the physical universe; (2) a considered overview about the kind of thing a human being is (for example, whether our essential nature is fundamentally continuous with or discontinuous with, the rest of the physical world); and (3) a set of systematic reflections on the capacities and dispositions of human beings, and how these capacities can be utilized in the construction of a rationally articulated plan for the conduct of life.³⁵

And it is presumably on account of the Aristotelian reasons about exactness and precision that Cottingham concludes that "the explosive growth in science and the consequent difficulty of articulating a 'universal system' of knowledge seems inadequate to fully explain...or to justify"³⁶ the retreat from the synoptic conception of philosophy.

A deeper reason for this retreat, Cottingham suggests, is that philosophers began to adapt their own methods of inquiry to the model of institutionalized specialization that has come to

³³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), I.3, 1094b12-28.

³⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (trans. Ross), I.7, 1098a20-34.

³⁵ Cottingham, *Philosophy and the Good Life*, 15-16.

³⁶ Ibid., 15.

define the natural sciences. Indeed, we might even think that this model of institutionalized specialization is what gives teeth to the initial worry of seeing the task of sketching a synoptic philosophical "map" as impossible. Cottingham suggests that the symbolic logic of Frege and Russell, and the heavy emphasis on "pure analysis" that characterized predominate stands of twentieth century philosophical thought were seen as ways to establish philosophy as a specialized and rigorous academic department alongside the various specialized natural sciences – philosophers, as members of the institutionalized academy, began to see themselves as specialized professionals who needed "to defend their professional patch." Thus there was a kind of "professional retreat" from the synoptic conception of philosophy, and especially from synoptic ethics, or what Garret calls "metaphysically informed philosophical ethics." This professional retreat was driven by a "professional caution" that dictated the limits of what a philosopher could say *qua* specialist, as opposed to those areas in which he had no more authority to speak than anyone else. According to Cottingham:

Such protectionism still survives today in the kind of response sometimes heard from professional academic philosophers when faced by questions form 'lay' audiences such as: 'And what is your philosophy?' or 'And tell me, have your studies led you to your own *philosophy of life*?' The typical answer may be an embarrassed (or supercilious) smile, and a smooth explanation that *that* sense of philosophy has nothing much to do with the modern academic subject...For a philosopher to give forth pronouncements on the place of man in the universe, or a recipe for a worthwhile life, would have been seen, for the most part, as an improper excursion beyond the boundaries of the clear, precise and comfortably legitimized activity of linguistic mapping and conceptual clarification. The drive towards professionalism seems to have exerted a strong pressure here. The special expertise of the philosopher could carve out a professionally respected role when it came to carefully sifting the nuances of linguistic usage, but to pronounce on the meaning of life, or the route to human fulfillment, was seen as an imprudent voyage outside the harbor of safe professionalism...we can help you clear up some conceptual confusions, the academic teachers of the subject seemed to be saying to their pupils, but if you hanker for actual guidance on how to live, you should (perhaps, if your are *really* that way inclined) go to the preacher, or the guru, or the psychoanalyst.³⁷

When the philosopher reaches the extent of what he, as a professional, is entitled to say, he then simply discharges the responsibility of what to believe to his students or his readers, as individuals, to decide.

David Lewis articulates this professionalized conception of philosophy in some remarks about philosophical method following a fictitious dialogue between Argle and Bargle:

³⁷ Ibid., 17-18.

Philosophical theories are never refuted conclusively...The theory survives its refutation – at a price. Argle has said what we accomplish in philosophical argument: we measure the price. Perhaps that is something we can settle more or less conclusively. But when all is said and done, and all the tricky arguments and distinctions and counterexamples have been discovered, presumably we will still face the question which prices are worth paying, which theories are on balance credible, which are the unacceptably counterintuitive ones...Our "intuitions" are simply opinions; our philosophical theories are the same...Once the menu of well-worked-out theories is before us, philosophy is a matter of opinion...³⁸

What Lewis is saying here is that the philosopher discharges his professional duty in pointing out the internal logical coherence or incoherence of different kinds of philosophical views. What this leaves is simply a map of the implications that stem from more basic substantive commitments – what Lewis calls "opinions." Lewis is not committing himself to the earlier views of philosophers like A. J. Ayer, who said that "the propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character...they express definitions, or the formal consequences of definitions."³⁹ On the contrary, Lewis says:

Is that to say that there is no truth to be had? Or that the truth is of our own making, and different ones of us can make it differently? Not at all!⁴⁰

When we disagree, Lewis says that

it may be that neither of us is making any mistake of method. We may each be bringing our opinions to equilibrium in the most careful possible way, taking account of all the arguments, distinctions, and counterexamples. But one of us, at least, is making a mistake of fact. Which one is wrong depends on what there is.⁴¹

But what Lewis does seem to be saying makes his view seem practically indistinguishable from Ayer's remark that "We may say that philosophy is a department of logic."⁴² This is because while Lewis concedes that our metaphysical claims are about the world, and that the nature of things is what makes them true or false, we are still left with a kind of underdetermined choice as to what to believe. Philosophy, Lewis seems to imply, exclusively deals with logical arguments and distinctions, and once the prices are determined, we are still left to choose. And the choice that is left over after is not a properly philosophical one.

³⁸ David K. Lewis, *Philosophical Papers: Volume I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), x-xi.

³⁹ Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*. 2nd ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1952), 57.

⁴⁰ Lewis, *Philosophical Papers*, xi.

⁴¹ Ibid., xi.

⁴² Ayer, *Language Truth, and Logic*, 57. For discussion, see Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, (New York: Penguin, 1993), 42.

Alasdair MacIntyre rightly finds this view unsatisfying:

The metaphor of "price" which Lewis uses is apt. We are provided with no philosophical standard of value in light of which we can discover whether the cost of a particular commitment is too high relative to the philosophical benefits which it confers. For this reason we have to fall back upon the deliverances of prephilosophical opinion and to acknowledge that this kind of philosophy is, when conducted in self-aware fashion, what some of its most acute exponents always said that it was, a way of clarifying issues and alternatives but not of providing grounds for conviction on matters of any substance.⁴³

MacIntyre hints at what is missing in cases such as the one Lewis describes. He notes that:

observance of the laws of logic is only a necessary and not a sufficient condition for rationality, whether theoretical or practical. It is on what has to be added to observance of the laws of logic to justify ascriptions of rationality...that disagreement arises concerning the fundamental nature of rationality.⁴⁴

MacIntyre argues that in the Aristotelian tradition – both in Aristotle and in St. Thomas Aquinas – there is, in addition to logical deductive reasoning, a kind of inductive reasoning by which we arrive at first principles – first principles that are then fit to serve in deductive reasoning. First principles may be reached through induction (*epagoge*) from perception, according to Aristotle, or we might also arrive at first principles through dialectical reasoning. But either way, the first principles are not reached by simple discursive inference from the data of perception, or from dialectical premises. Rather, the movement from perception to first principles, or from dialectical premises to first principles, is a movement that must traverse a gap. According to MacIntyre:

something other than logical acumen is required to complete that move successfully, something which provides a grasp of the relevant first principle and which is a "seeing that," something to be named "intuition" perhaps or "insight."⁴⁵

MacIntyre is quick to note that such insight is not warranted apart from the previous dialectical arguments (and we might add in the case of perception that, according to Aristotle, it is also unwarranted without experience (*empeiria*)). Yet it is this notion of insight, something achieved by means of what Aristotle calls *nous*, and what Aquinas calls *intellectus*, that seems to be missing from the modern accounts. MacIntyre notes that even in the later medieval period, after

⁴³ Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 335.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 224.

St. Thomas Aquinas, this inseparable blending of deductive or logical reasoning with dialectical reasoning and insight, begins to be lost.

While MacIntyre mentions that "[t]here is a history, as yet only written in part, of the stages which had set the scene for Aquinas's enterprise"⁴⁶ I am more interested in the history that helps us to understand why the richer notion of rationality that included "insight" as well as discursive thought was subsequently lost. I think that the idea of philosophy as a specialized discipline had much to do with the loss of the kind of non-discursive cognition that MacIntyre rightly notes was a integral part of the Aristotelian understanding of knowledge acquisition. And the notion of philosophy as a specialized discipline did not arise solely due to the scientific revolution in the early modern period and the subsequent institutionalized specialization of natural sciences alongside philosophy in the universities; rather, the notion of philosophy as a specialized discipline actually took hold in the medieval period around the time of Aquinas's writing, and the specialization continued even after his death. It is this emergence of the conception of philosophy as a specialized discipline in the medieval period – contemporary with, and especially subsequent to St. Thomas – that had already pushed the idea of *nous* or *intellectus* out of view. The subsequent scientific revolution simply accelerated the tendency for something like *nous* to slip through he departmental cracks of the university. I think that a brief historical excursus can show that this is true.

Section 2. The Emergence of the University and Its Effect on Philosophical Thought

Joseph Pieper's essay, "Leisure and the Basis of Culture", is probably the *locus classicus* for the recognition by any modern scholar of the implications of the failure to recognize the nondiscursive element of human knowing. Pieper describes the ancient distinction between discursive and non-discursive cognition thus:

The medievals distinguished between the intellect as *ratio* and the intellect as *intellectus*. *Ratio* is the power of discursive thought, of searching and re-searching, abstracting, refining, and concluding [cf. Latin *dis-currere*, "to run to and fro"], whereas *intellectus* refers to the ability of "simply looking" (*simplex intuitus*), to which the truth presents itself as a landscape presents itself to the eye. The spiritual knowing power of the human mind, as the ancients understood it, is really two things in one: *ratio* and *intellectus*: all

⁴⁶ Ibid., 205-206

knowing involves both. The path of discursive reasoning is accompanied and penetrated by the *intellectus*' untiring vision, which is not active but passive, or better, *receptive* – a receptively operating power of the intellect.⁴⁷

Pieper contrasts this twofold conception of man's knowing power as a combination of discursive and non-discursive operations, which was common to ancient and medieval philosophers, to the explicit denial of this view by Kant and other modern philosophers. Pieper then relates this psychological distinction between non-discursive and discursive cognitive operations to opposing conceptions the philosophical act, namely, of philosophy conceived of as contemplation or as intellectual labor. I will have more to say about Pieper's distinction below. Yet while Pieper is certainly right to see a certain contrast between thinkers like St. Thomas and Kant, it is too easy to simply claim Aquinas's view as *the* medieval view, or Kant's as *the* modern view. Just as scholars frequently refer to the views of Greek philosophers, while clearing meaning the views specifically of Plato and Aristotle, so scholars frequently refer to medieval views, often referring specifically to the views of St. Thomas Aquinas. This is surely justified insofar as these figures were the towering figures of philosophical thought in their respective eras. Just like Kant, they were "voices of their age." But if we are to try to trace the reasons for the abandonment of the Thomistic distinction between *intellectus* and *ratio*, we must look at some of the medieval debates that were going on immediately subsequent to St. Thomas.

Denys Turner, a contemporary scholar in the history of theology, confirms with regard to Anglophone theological scholars what Pieper had noted of his fellow German philosophical scholars, namely, the detrimental neglect of *intellectus* or non-discursive cognition:

We are witness in our times and culture, particularly within the English context, to a failure of intellectual nerve. I refer to an intellectual timidity and not moral, or rather, I refer to that form of moral timidity which is primarily intellectual in character. But I refer to 'intellect' here in a rather special sense, which will be familiar to those who are students of the great patristic and medieval theological traditions but has otherwise been very nearly completely lost within our own. For us today, the word 'intellect' has become so narrowed in meaning – reduced to a capacity for those attenuated forms of ratiocination whose paradigms are those of mathematical argument, or else of empirical justification – that we are scarcely able to read about intellect or reason in our own earlier traditions of theology without misreading them.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Josef Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), 11-12.

⁴⁸ Denys Turner, Faith, Reason and the Existence of God (Cambridge University Press, 2004), xiv-xv. Also see Louis Groarke, An Aristotelian Account of Induction: Creating Something from Nothing

Turner's work is particularly valuable because he focuses particularly on the history of the loss of *intellectus* in the medieval tradition – a loss which he believes is still felt today. Turner argues that much of the criticism of St. Thomas by later medieval thinkers was in some sense confused insofar as later medieval thinkers simply came to reduce all uses of *'intellectus'* to what St. Thomas meant by the word *'ratio.'* In other words, these later thinkers came to think of all cognitive activity as discursive activity. Any psychologically non-discursive activity was then deemed to be an operation of *'affectus'* rather than *'intellectus'*, where *affectus* is understood as something like 'want' or 'desire' or 'love.'⁴⁹ And most importantly, the conative *affectus* was understood by these later medieval thinkers to be opposed to the cognitive *intellectus*. There was no longer any conceptual space left for a non-discursive cognitive mental operation.

Recall that MacIntyre had argued that, unlike demonstrative arguments, dialectical reasoning leaves a gap between the dialectical premises and the conclusion – a gap that is only bridged by something like *intellectus* or "insight". MacIntyre notes that the scholastics in the later medieval academy, however, continued to absorb the study of this dialectical reasoning into more straightforward, logical, discursive, demonstrative reasoning or *consequentiae*. Yet MacIntrye does not speculate as to why this trend came about. But Turner gives us the clue. Turner hypothesizes that this change in how philosophers came to conceive of the psychology of human knowing was initiated and supported by the manner in which philosophical inquiry had come to be practiced in the institutionalized setting of the university:

It is in the fourteenth century at least, if not earlier, that *intellectus* (in the sense of the power of 'understanding') comes close to being indentified with *ratio* (in the sense of the power of 'ratiocination'), that is to say, of philosophical argument.

It is safe to say that this conceptual revision of an 'intellect' cut back to 'reasoning power' is driven by wider institutional forces... in consort with the conceptual revision there is a tendency to identify 'intellect' with the sort of reasoning which was thought to go on within the universities, whether in the faculties of Arts or Divinity, and so to associate both 'intellect' and 'reason' with the dry impotence of the 'academic.'⁵⁰

⁽Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), Ch. 7. Groarke helpfully situates the view of Aristotle regarding "intuitive induction" within the history of philosophy.

⁴⁹ Turner thinks that 'love' might be the best translation of the medieval notion of *affectus*. See Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 187 note 5.

⁵⁰ Turner, *Existence of God*, 77.

Namely, we ought not see it as accidental that this period in medieval history was one of increasing institutionalized specialization within the academy.

Other scholars have noted the institutional and cultural changes that marked this period. Steven Marrone, in his introduction to Scholastic thought found in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, argues that a major transformation took place between the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries in Latin speaking intellectual culture. He notes that the 12th century is now seen by many Western medievalists as a period of Renaissance, and as an era that might rightfully be thought of as containing the origins of "Europe." He notes three cultural events whose unfolding during these centuries brought about the transformation. The first of which, namely, the re-introduction of Latin translation of many of works of Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew texts, less directly concerns our present inquiry. But the other two do. The first which concerns us is what Marrone calls "a rapid evolution of educational institutions and the consequent proliferation of new institutional forms."⁵¹ And the second is what he describes as "the construction of a social context, at once economic and political, that fostered what can only be called an incipient "professionalism."⁵² These are obviously related.

The increasing need for specialists was an economic and political phenomenon that was not limited to the confines of the academy. Marrone cites various political developments that called for an increase in formal written documents, which in turn called for an increase in professionally trained lawyers. Likewise, more wealthy clients were beginning to demand academically trained healers or medical doctors. And the need for an increasingly large number of specialists increased the need for academic institutions to train such persons. This historical period saw the birth universities as more formally ordered education institutions than the previous *ad hoc* educational establishments that arose around particular educators and around the cathedral schools. According to Marrone:

To enter into society as a lawyer, a physician, a magistrate, a royal clerk, a tax collector, a professor, or a theologian meant spending years in training, formally acquiring the habits of mind necessary to be awarded the proper authority. In what was an increasingly "rationalized" world, all such tasks were delivered in the hands of professionals. And universities provided the setting *par excellence* where professional training was done and from which certification was procured. They had become a cultural *sine qua non*.⁵³

 ⁵¹ Steven P. Marrone, "The Rise of Universities," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, Vol.1, ed. Robert Pasnau and Christina Van Dyke (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 51.
 ⁵² Ibid., 51.

⁵³ Ibid., 57.

In order for an educational institution to count as a "university", such an institution had to contain more than one faculty of study. In addition to the basic "faculty of arts" – roughly equivalent to a modern liberal arts undergraduate education – universities came to have additional distinct faculties associated with the "higher" disciplines that corresponded with various technical professions: law, medicine, and theology (here conceived as a technical profession!). Persons who were, by profession, theologians, were responsible for much of what we would deem "philosophical" thought that comes out of this period. And those in the departments of theology were beginning to feel institutional pressures to distinguish their own faculty of theology from that of the other higher faculties. According to Marrone:

...if theology were to maintain its prestige among its sister faculties [i.e. law and medicine, as well as the faculty of arts] at the university, it would have to be especially scrupulous about its arguments and careful to show how their conclusions were consistent with knowledge in other fields.⁵⁴

By cleaving as closely to logic and discursive reasoning as possible, theologians would be capable to giving evidence of their own rigor and professional standards to their sister faculties.

And since discursive reason came to be the professional mark of a theologian-cumphilosopher, it came to follow that discursive reason became exclusively associated with the name of *intellectus*, a name which for St. Thomas, in a an earlier period, would have referred to the faculty of the human mind only synecdochically. And so, the distinction which Pieper notes in St. Thomas, and the distinction which Pieper accuses Kant and later philosophers of neglecting, is already being neglected in the later medieval period. As Turner notes:

...as fourteenth- and fifteenth-century theologians read him, Thomas was a radical 'intellectualist'. This 'intellectualism', however, does not entail anything much which could be derived from any understanding of the word 'intellect' current today, and certainly has little to do with what is exclusively confined to academics. For us, as for the medieval 'affectivist', 'intellect' is a discursive power. It is what we use in calculations, whether of a theoretical kind, such as in numerical, logical or empirical reasoning, or a practical kind, such as in the devising of means to the ends of action. By contrast, for Thomas, *intellectus* has a twofold meaning, one of which is general, and is inclusive of all human rational powers together with all that those rational powers depend upon for their exercise; but the other is more narrowly and specifically conceived, as that 'higher' than rational power itself on which our rational powers depend. In this narrower sense, *intellectus* is a mental activity distinct from our 'ratiocination'; it is precisely not the discursive activity of arguing on what grounds something might be true, or a

⁵⁴ Ibid., 61.

calculating how something might be got, but is rather the non-discursive act of seeing a truth as such or the desirability of some good. 'Reasoning is an activity of step-by-step argument to a truth; 'intellectual' seeing is a form of contemplative resting in a truth, and is a higher form of knowing than any achieved by reasoning, for it is typically exercised in the knowledge of those truths on which any power of reasoning itself depends, whether theoretical or practical.⁵⁵

And Turner is right to note that, according to Thomas (and, as I shall argue, according to Aristotle) all discursive reasoning must begin and end with an act of *intellectus*. To echo Pieper – "the path of discursive reasoning is accompanied and penetrated by the *intellectus*' untiring vision."⁵⁶

Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas recognize that discursive reason both begins and ends in acts of non-discursive cognition or intuitive understanding. In other words, not only are *ratio* and *intellectus* distinct, but they are, at least for human beings, inter-dependent. According to Aristotle:

intuitive reason [*nous*] is concerned with the ultimates in both directions; for both the first terms and the last are objects of intuitive reason [*nous*] and not of argument [*logos*], and the intuitive reason which is presupposed by demonstrations grasps the unchangeable and first terms, while the intuitive reason involved in practical reasonings grasps the last and variable fact, i.e. the minor premiss. For these variable facts are the starting-points for the apprehension of the end, since the universals are reached from the particulars; of these therefore we must have perception [*aisthesis*], and this perception is intuitive reason [*nous*]...Hence intuitive reason is both beginning and end; for demonstrations are from these and about these.⁵⁷

St. Thomas concurs with Aristotle here when he writes:

The discourse of reason [*discursus rationis*] always begins from an understanding [*ab intelectu*] and ends at an understanding [*ad intellectum*]; because we reason by proceeding from certain understood principles, and the discourse of reason is perfected when we come to understand what hitherto we ignored. Hence the act of reasoning proceeds from something previously understood.⁵⁸

And Aquinas compares the difference between discursive cognition and non-discursive cognition to the difference between motion and rest:

⁵⁵ Turner, *Existence of God*, 80.

⁵⁶ Pieper, "Leisure", 11.

⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (trans. Ross), VI.11, 1143a35ff.

⁵⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 2nd and Rev. Ed., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Online Edition Copyright by Kevin Knight, 2008), II-II, Q.8, Art.1, Ad2. Also see Groarke, *Aristotelian Induction*, 303.

For to understand [*intelligere*] is simply to apprehend intelligible truth: and to reason [*ratiocinari*] is to advance from one thing understood to another [*de uno intellecto ad aliud*], so as to know an intelligible truth. And therefore angels, who according to their nature, possess perfect knowledge of intelligible truth, have no need to advance from one thing to another; but apprehend the truth simply and without mental discussion...But man arrives at the knowledge of intelligible truth by advancing from one thing to another; and therefore he is called rational. Reasoning [*ratiocinari*], therefore, is compared to understanding [*intelligere*], as movement is to rest, or acquisition to possession; of which one belongs to the perfect, the other to the imperfect. And since movement always proceeds from something immovable, and ends in something at rest; hence it is that human reasoning, by way of inquiry and discovery, advances from certain things simply understood – namely, the first principles; and, again, by way of judgment returns by analysis to first principles, in the light of which it examines what it has found.⁵⁹

It is the discursive element of human knowing that Aquinas thinks is the peculiar distinguishing mark of the human being. But the human being does still, according to Aquinas, share in a kind of intellection or intuitive understanding - a kind of non-discursive knowing that is shared by humans and angels.

Aquinas does indeed engage in some theology, then, we he discusses the knowing powers

of human beings – he equates the non-discursive cognition of human beings with that of angels:

In man, however, there is found first a sensitive nature, in which he is like the brutes; then practical reason, which is proper to man according to his level; and speculative intellect, which is not found in man as perfectly as it is in the angels, but as a kind of participation on the part of the soul. Therefore, the contemplative life is not properly human but superhuman; the life of pleasure, however, by which one adheres to sensible goods, is not human but bestial.⁶⁰

But this only counts as theology insofar as it makes reference to angelic beings and attempts to situate human beings within a *scala natura* or within "the great chain of being."

Thus are we are able to contemplate [*considerari*] the marvelous connection of things [*mirabilis rerum connexio*]. For it is always found that the lowest in the higher genus touches the highest of the lower species. Some of the lowest members of the animal kingdom, for instance, enjoy a form of life scarcely superior to that of plants; oysters, which are motionless, have only the sense of touch and are fixed to the earth like plants. That is why Blessed Dionysius says in his work *On the Divine Names* that "divine wisdom has united the ends of higher things with the beginnings of the lower." We have, therefore, to consider the existence of something supreme in the genus of bodies, namely,

⁵⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q. 79, Art. 8. co. For a helpful discussion of Thomas's distinction between *ratio* and *intellectus*, see, Rik van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to Medieval Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 201-202.

⁶⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Question on the Cardinal Virtues*, trans. Ralph McInerny, in *Disputed Questions on Virtue* (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augstine's Press, 1999), Art.1, co.

the human body harmoniously tempered, which is in contact with the lowest of the higher genus, namely, the human soul, which holds the lowest rank in the genus of intellectual substances, as can be seen from its mode of understanding; so that the intellectual soul is said to be on the horizon and confines of things corporeal and incorporeal, in that it is an incorporeal substance and yet the form of a body.⁶¹

But Aquinas does not justify his belief that we share our capacity for non-discursive cognition by direct appeal to the revelation of holy scripture. This "contemplation" of "the marvelous connection of things" seems like an activity that is just as reasonably classified as philosophy as theology. It is a kind of synoptic contemplation. If this is best considered theology, then it cannot be the peculiar province of Christian theology, since Aristotle too engages in theology when he describes human knowing. Aristotle too thinks that our use of *nous* or intuitive intellect is an exercise of some "divine element in us", and that the act of contemplation is, in some way, more than a human act. He describes the act of contemplation, which is a non-discursive act involving *nous*, in the following terms:

firstly, this activity is the best (since not only is reason the best thing in us, but the objects of reason are the best of knowable objects); and secondly, it is the most continuous, since we can contemplate truth more continuously than we can do anything. And we think happiness has pleasure mingled with it, but the activity of philosophic wisdom is admittedly the pleasantest of virtuous activities; at all events the pursuit of it is thought to offer pleasures marvellous for their purity and their enduringness, and it is to be expected that those who know will pass their time more pleasantly than those who inquire...And this activity alone would seem to be loved for its own sake; for nothing arises from it apart from the contemplating, while from practical activities we gain more or less apart from the action. And happiness is thought to depend on leisure; for we are busy that we may have leisure, and make war that we may live in peace...but the activity of reason, which is contemplative, seems both to be superior in serious worth and to aim at no end beyond itself, and to have its pleasure proper to itself (and this augments the activity), and the self-sufficiency, leisureliness, unweariedness (so far as this is possible for man), and all the other attributes ascribed to the supremely happy man are evidently those connected with this activity, it follows that this will be the complete happiness of man, if it be allowed a complete term of life (for none of the attributes of happiness is incomplete).

But such a life would be too high for man; for it is not in so far as he is man that he will live so, but in so far as something divine is present in him; and by so much as this is superior to our composite nature is its activity superior to that which is the exercise of the other kind of virtue. If reason is divine, then, in comparison with man, the life according to it is divine in comparison with human life. But we must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and, being mortal, of mortal things,

⁶¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Book Two: Creation*, trans. James F. Anderson, in *Contra Gentiles*, ed. Joseph Kenny, O.P. (New York: Hanover House, 1955-57), Bk.II, 68.6.

but must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything.⁶²

Here it is clear that Aristotle's purportedly philosophical inquiry into the nature of the good life extends into what we would hasten to call 'theology' insofar Aristotle, like Aquinas, compares *nous* – our capacity for non-discursive knowledge – to something divine in us: our divine spark we might say.⁶³ And not only does Aristotle's inquiry into the good life lead to an epsitemologcial-cum-psyhcological account that likens our mental faculties to things that are superior to human beings, but he also thinks that the objects of our acts of contemplation are also the best of knowable objects. Aristotle indeed distinguishes wisdom from practical wisdom in part by its objects:

Therefore wisdom must be intuitive reason combined with scientific knowledge – scientific knowledge of the highest objects which has received as it were its proper completion. Of the highest objects, we say; for it would be strange to think that the art of politics, or practical wisdom, is the best knowledge, since man is not the best thing in the world.⁶⁴

Yet the relation between contemplative wisdom and practical wisdom is a close one when we consider, on the one hand, that contemplation is purportedly constitutive of the best life for a human being, and, on the other hand, knowing what is the best for oneself is the subject matter of practical reason.

It is clear that at least up to the time of St. Thomas, the centrality and importance of *intellectus* or non-discursive cognition, was generally affirmed. But around the time of St. Thomas and immediately afterwards, the professionalization of philosophical and theological inquiry directed focus away from *intellectus*, and towards exclusively discursive thought. Given this conceptual revision, i.e. the reduction of *intellectus* to an exclusively discursive power, St. Thomas's claims about the manner in which we acquire knowledge begin to look more radical and less plausible – especially his claims about the nature of our knowledge of God. Thomas claims that we can come to know God by means of *intellectus*, yet if *'intellectus*' comes to mean

⁶² Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics (trans. Ross), X.7, 1177a20-1178a1.

⁶³ For the idea of "divine spark" see Plato, *Letter VII*, trans. Glenn R. Morrow, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 1997), 341c-d. And also the discussion in Mika Ojakangas, *The Voice of Conscience: A Political Genealogy of Western Ethical Experience* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 45-46.

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (trans. Ross), VI.7, 1141a17-22.

merely discursive or logical reasoning, then this "intellectualist" claim seems less plausible. Surely it is not through calculation alone that we come to know divine things. As Turner notes:

in late medieval polemic against the intellectuals unfavorable contrasts are made with ever greater frequency between the sterile theological practices of 'school' theology and those of practical piety; between what is known theologically by the academics exercising their 'intellects' and what is known by the 'knowledge' of love – unfavorably, that is to say, of course, to the former.⁶⁵

This is because the later medieval "affectivists" made sharp distinctions between knowledge and love, and between intellect and will. For Thomas, the will simply was a species of appetite or desire, i.e. rational desire. This rational desire or love was obviously made "rational", or perhaps better, cognitive, by its close relation to *intellectus*, where *intellectus* is understood as a kind of non-discursive cognitive apprehension. For Thomas, love and understanding walk hand in hand, whereas, for the later medieval affectivists, especially when they are discussing the knowledge of God, love was thought to dismiss intellect and to run ahead of it. This affectivist distinction between intellect and will, between cognitive and conative, and between knowledge and love also drives a wedge between the "mystical darkness" of the theologian and the natural cognitive power of the philosopher, and thus drives a wedge between theology and philosophy, as well as between faith and reason.

Yet the idea that love and understanding accompany one another is not particularly strange. Nor is it peculiarly Christian. As a start, we might consider a passage from a 20th century novel that casts this thought in a plain folk dialect:

Granma's name was Bonnie Bee. I knew that when I heard [Granpa] late at night say, "I kin ye, Bonnie Bee," he was saying, "I love ye," for the feeling was in the words.

And when they would be talking and Granma would say, "Do ye kin me, Wales?" and he would answer, "I kin ye," it meant, "I understand ye." To them, love and understanding was the same thing. Granma said you couldn't love something you didn't understand; nor could you love people, nor God, if you didn't understand the people and God.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Turner, *Existence of God*, 77.

⁶⁶ Forrest Carter, *The Education of Little Tree* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), 38. This section continues: "Granpa said back before his time "kinfolks" meant any folks that you understood and had an understanding with, so it meant "loved folks." But people got selfish, and brought it down to mean just blood relatives; but that actually it was never meant to mean that." This passage is all the more intriguing when one considers that the author of this best-selling young adult novel had earlier been a Klansman and defender of segregation in the Southern states. Here, in his old age, he seems to acknowledge, through the mouthpiece of one of the characters in his novel, a subtler relation between 'kin', 'kith', and 'ken', i.e. between shared biological relations of race, shared cultural and traditional ties

But the idea also features centrally in the Western philosophical tradition. And one important way in which the affective and cognitive capacities of the human person have been traditionally linked is through the experience of beauty.

Plato famously describes the ascent to the apprehension of the Form of Beauty in the *Symposium* as originating and ending in both vision and love:

This is what it is to go aright, or be lead by another, into the mystery of Love: one goes always upwards for the sake of this Beauty, starting out from beautiful things and using them like rising stairs: from one body to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, then from beautiful bodies to beautiful customs, and from customs to learning beautiful things, and from these lessons he arrives in the end at this lesson, which is learning of this very Beauty, so that in the end he comes to know just what it is to be beautiful...Do you think it would be a poor life for a human being to look there and to behold it by that which he ought, and to be with it?...in that life alone, when he looks at Beauty in the only way that Beauty can be seen – only then will it become possible for him to give birth not to images of virtue (because he's in touch with no images), but to true virtue (because he is in touch with true Beauty).⁶⁷

The cognitive language of learning and knowing and the conative language of striving and loving are blended without tension. Plato uses the same kinds of language in the *Republic*:

...it is the nature of the real lover of learning to struggle toward what is, not to remain with any of the many things that are believed to be, that, as he moves on, he neither loses nor lessens his erotic love until he grasp the being of each nature itself with the part of his soul that is fitted to grasp it, because of its kinship with it, and that, once getting near what really is and having intercourse (*migeis*) with it and having begotten (*gennesas*) understanding and truth, he knows, truly lives, is nourished, and – at that point, but not before – is relieved from the pains of giving birth.⁶⁸

It is clear from these passages that Plato thought of the drive towards philosophical inquiry as being initiated by a non-discursive, vision-like glimpse of something – some particular beautiful thing. Subsequent inquiries lead one to arrive eventually at an equally non-discursive and vision-like experience of something else – beauty itself. Such non-discursive states of knowing were tightly connected with more conative states of desire or love. There is no tension between

of geographical place, and shared understanding. He almost seems to admit that his earlier racism was based on a less subtle equating of 'ken' and 'kin' – of only being able to love and understand those who shared one's blood.

⁶⁷ Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 1997), 211b-212a.

⁶⁸ Plato, *Republic*, trans. G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 1997), 490a-b.

loving and understanding insofar as love begins from a kind of inchoate understanding. Love drives one to seek a deeper understanding of the beloved, and ultimately, one's love is deepened by the resulting understanding, and one's understanding is deepened through love.

Elsewhere, in the *Phaedrus*, it seems that the experience of Beauty not only unites the conative and cognitive elements of human psychology, but also unites what Plato understands as the material and immaterial aspects of human knowing:

Now Beauty, as I said, was radiant among the other objects; and now that we have come down here we grasp it sparkling through the clearest of our senses. Vision, of course, is the sharpest of our bodily senses...beauty has this privilege, to be the most clearly visible and the most loved.⁶⁹

Here Plato notes that beauty is the only Form that we see when embodied. In this way, although it is better to say that we see it *using* our eyes, or that we see it *through* our eyes as opposed to *with* our eyes, we can see that the material and non-material elements of human psychology are united.⁷⁰

Passages of this nature have lead W. Temple, to remark that "[i]n the Ideal Theory we have a doctrine to which I believe that logic and intuition have both contributed."⁷¹ Temple compares Plato to Goethe in that both men seemed to have gifts for art and for philosophy.

⁶⁹ Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 1997), 250d.

⁷⁰ Plato, *Theaetetus*, in *The Theaetetus of Plato*, trans. M. J. Levett, rev. Myles Burnyeat (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 1990), 184c.

⁷¹ W. Temple, "Plato's Vision of the Ideas," *Mind*, New Series, 17, no. 68 (October 1, 1908): 503. In an earlier draft, I had introduced Temple as "an insightful modern commentator on Plato's works." Cora Diamond made what I thought, at first, was an odd comment on this phrase. She said that this way of introducing him made it seem as if I did not know who he was. Well, I did not. I had simply come upon Temple's article by following a train of citations from various sources (I believe that Jerome Schneewind had cited some early twentieth century articles in Mind by M. B. Foster, who had in turn cited Temple). I introduced him as I did so that my readers would recognize him as a modern rather than an ancient scholar of Plato, although he is a generation or two removed from present scholars. Looking into Temple further had two pleasant results. First, it caused me to reflect on why I tend to engage with such slightly dated scholarship. The reason, I posit, is that such figures are far less likely to share the liberal-inspired, overly-specialized bent which I critique throughout the dissertation. Thus, they can often serve as helpful interlocutors when attempting to articulate the type of insight for which I argue. Secondly, upon seeking out his identity, I was pleased to discover that W. Temple was not only a scholar, but also served as the Archbishop of Canterbury. Further, and most fortuitously, Temple's interest in Plato led him to engage specifically with the theological implications of the "process theology" that was inspired by the works of Alfred North Whitehead, whose writings play a somewhat significant role in the latter parts of the disseration. Thus, I thank Cora Diamond for prompting me to dig deeper.

When it came to Plato's theory of Ideas, Temple notes that "it was no logic alone that created the theory."⁷² Rather, Plato's

logical inquiries and his artistic intuitions acted upon each other; that in most arguments we have logic alone; that in the myths we have intuition alone; but that in the Ideal Theory we have the product of their interaction.⁷³

Temple even suggests, more strongly, that, for Plato

the conviction of the beauty and glory of the Ideal World is prior to all argumentation about the Ideas; the argument moves within the limits of that firm conviction."⁷⁴

And Temple seems to think that this firm conviction derives from something like a vision of Beauty, something that is non-discursive, yet it still a kind of knowing - a kind of knowing which is both the beginning and end of discursive thought.

That Plato, like Goethe, was both a philosopher and an artist is what allows Plato to communicate the non-discursive aspects of his thought. Sometimes we can appeal to various beliefs that persons already have, and show how other beliefs might be reached by discursive inference from the beliefs they already have. In other words, we meet people where they are. Other times, we must get people to see things that they have not yet seen. There need not always be a logical or discursive route from some belief that a person holds to such a truth. Yet that is not to say that there is nothing to be said about such non-discursive apprehension. The instruction to "see it like this" is often aided by the indirect communication of art. And we might think that the Platonic dialogue does exactly this.

⁷² Ibid., 514.

⁷³ Ibid., 503.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 516. David A. White argues that we should interpret the siginificance of Socrates's dream in the *Phaedo* – the dream that encouraged Socrates to "practice and cultivate the arts [mousike]" (*Phaedo* 60e) – as implying that "philosophy can and perhaps must be complemented by myth." David A. White, *Myth* and Metaphysics in Plato's Phaedo (Susquehanna University Press, 1989), 31. And White later notes that, if the myths Socrates tells are "based on a vision of the good", then it mght follow that "the arguments will then be more likely to be persuasive…than if they remained unadorned in their original prosaic setting." (238). White suggests that it may be Socrates's position that the purely discursive, philosophical arguments given for the existence of the Forms, and for the immortality of the soul "require some other form of discourse to fill the gap left by the argument to supply the needed conviction conern the result of the inquiry" (138). In short, White's interpretation of the myth's in the Phaedo would seem to support Temple's idea that something like a vision of the good is required, in addition to the purely discursive philosophical arguments, to account for 'the Ideal Theory.' I will return to discuss Nietzsche's interpretation of Socrates dream later.

But the focus on the exclusively discursive aspects of reason that accompanied the professionalization of philosophy and theology essentially lost sight not only of non-discursive cognition or intellection, but also ceased to pay attention to emotions or love, which we also think of as non-discursive psychological pheonomena. In summary, in order to return to our contemporary predicament, we can say that at least by the 13th century, then, we see not only a professionalization of theology, but a separation of philosophy from theology. The professionalization of theology made a distinction between, on the one hand, "school theology", which involved applying conceptual tools from philosophy to theological topics, and, on the other hand, "spiritual theology", which involved preaching and the more practical and pastoral aspects of spiritual formation. It also happened that, for the first time in history, philosophy and theology become distinct intellectual disciplines populated by distinct professional practitioners. Yet the distinction of philosophy from theology meant that the philosophers were only supposed to engage in philosophy and the theologians were only supposed to engage in theology. Philosophy was no longer seen to be the synoptic understanding of reality that it was in the ancient world, but the ancilla to theology. And theologians, by profession, were supposed to restrict their concerns to sacred matters, and to apply the conceptual tools acquired from philosophy. But the organic unity that defined the synoptic approach to reality was fragmented.

Petrarch, in the fourteenth century, as an early renaissance humanist, scathingly criticized the "school philosophy" for being incapable of leading anyone to love virtue, and for simply deriving pleasure from contention and quarrelling, instead of aiming to find the truth.⁷⁵ By the

⁷⁵ Regarding dialecticians, or those whose practice it is to engage in dialectical argument, Petrarch writes: "They get the greatest pleasure out of strife and set out not to find truth but to quarrel. As Varro's saying goes, 'the truth is lost in expressive disputation.' [...] 'So,' they say, 'you condemn dialectic?' Certainly not! ... I know that it is one of the liberal arts and a step forward for those who are striving for the heights and not a useless armor for those stepping into the thorny way of the philosophers. It rouses the intellect, marks a way of truth, teaches the deceits to be shunned. In short, if nothing else it makes men resolute and very keen. I do not deny that all this is true. But a place we pass through once and enjoy is not a place where we can justifiably linger; just as indeed it is insane for a pilgrim to forget the goal of his journey because of the pleasantness of the road. It is to the credit of the pilgrim to find quickly the proper limit, and never linger beyond it. And who among us is not a pilgrim? We all are on a long and difficult journey in a period of time as brief and difficult as a rainy winter's day. Dialectic can be a part of the journey; but it is certainly not its goal." Francesco Petrarca, Letters on Familiar Matters (Rerum Familiarium Libri): Vol. 1: Books I-VIII, trans. Aldo S. Bernardo (New York: Italica Press, 2005), 37, 39. I.7 "To Tommaso da Messina, against aged dialecticians." Here it is clear that Petrarch beleieves that something else is needed, in addition to dialectic or discursive reason, in order to reach our goal, or in order to reach truth. Eleswhere, Petrarch describes what this additional thing may be. Regarding Aristotle – and particularly Aristotle as he is filtered through his late medieveal scholastic exegetes and

time of the Protestant reformation in the sixteenth century Luther conceives of theology as nonphilosophy, and something that cannot even be considered a *scientia* – where *scientia* is a rigorous branch of inquiry of a university – but only a practical science.⁷⁶ Luther was, we might think rightly, unsatisfied with the nature of the theology and philosophy being taught in the schools in his own day.

By the early modern period, even though many philosophers desired to separate themselves from what was left of the Aristotelian natural philosophy of the schools, many of them still retained the conceptual shift that tended to reduce all of our cognition to exclusively discursive cognition. Consider the following passage from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*:

When a man *Reasoneth*, hee does nothing else but conceive a summe totall, from *Addition* of parcels; or conceive a Remainder, from *Substraction* of one summe from another...These operations are not incident to Numbers onely, but to all manner of things that can be added together, and taken one out of another. For as Arithmeticians teach to adde and substract in *numbers*; so the Geometricians teach the same in *lines, figures*...The Logicians teach the same in *Consequences of words*...Writers of Politiques, adde together *Pactions*, to find mens *duties*; and Lawyers, *Lawes*, and *facts*, to find what is *right* and *wrong* in the actions of private men. In summe, in what matter soever there is place for *addition* and *substraction*, there also is place for *Reason*; and where these have no place, there *Reason* has nothing at all to do. Out of all which we may define, (that is to say determine,) what that is, which is meant by this word *Reason*, when wee reckon it amongst the Faculties of the mind. For Reason, in this sense, is nothing but *Reckoning*.⁷⁷

Here it seems that the English 'reason', which still bears the etymological marks of the Latin 'ratio', is now starting to take over as the sole cognitive function. The non-discursive

translators – Petrarch writes: "I don't deny that he teaches us the nature of virtue. But reading him offers us none of those exhortations [verborum faces], or only a very few, that goad and inflame our mind to love virtue and hate vice." On the contary, Petrarch recommends the more eloquent and rhetorical prose style of Latin authors like Cicero, Seneca, and Horace. Of these, he writes: "they touch and pierce our vitals with the sharp, burning barbs of their eloquence. By these, the sluggish are aroused, the frigid are inflamed, the drowsy are awakened, the weak are strengthened, the prostrate are raised, and the earthbound are lifted up toward lofty thoughts and noble desires [altissimos cogitatus et honesta desideria]. Then earthly matters seem squalid, and the sight of vices inspires great loathing. Virtue in turn is revealed to our inner eyes [internis spectata oculis]; and its beauty and what Plato calls 'the visual aspect of the good' [formaque et 'tanquam honesti visa facies'] engender a wonderful love of both wisdom and virtue." Francesco Petrarca, Invectives (The I Tatti Renaissance Library), trans. David Marsh (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003), 315, 317. "On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others [De Sui Ipsius et Multorum Ignorantia]" paragraphs 108-109.

⁷⁶ Jean-Yves Lacoste, *From Theology to Theological Thinking*, trans. W. Chris Hackett (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 55.

⁷⁷ Thomas Hobbes, *Hobbes's Leviathan: Reprinted from the Edition of 1651 With an Essay by the Late W. G. Pogson Smith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 32-33. Part I, Ch.5, para.1-2.

apprehension of starting points of reasoning is relegated to the operation of sense alone -a purely passive process:

There are of Knowledge two kinds; whereof one is *Knowledge of Fact*: the other *Knowledge of the Consequence of one Affirmation to another*. The former is nothing else, but Sense and Memory, and is *Absolute Knowledge*; as when we see a Fact doing, or remember it done: And this is the Knowledge required in a Witnesse. The later is called *Science*; and is *Conditionall*; as when we know, that, *If the figure showne be a Circle, then any straight line through the Center shall divide it into two equall parts*. And this is the Knowledge required in a Philosopher; that is to say, of him that pretends to Reasoning.⁷⁸

Knowledge is either the passive reception of facts by the operations of sense perception, or it is discursive reason, which is conceived of as a kind of reckoning or inferential calculating. And this tendency to focus exclusively on discursive reason – a tendency born of the increased institutionalized specialization of philosophy within the university – remains a characteristic of much contemporary philosophy.

Section 3. The Lingering Marks of Decadent Scholasticism on Contemporary "Philosophy"

Returning to contemporary Anglophone philosophy, we can see that many of the aspects of decadent scholastic philosophy are still present. First, there is, according to Louis Groarke "a new rationalism that motivates and orients much of contemporary philosophical discourse." His use of the term "rationalism" is apt insofar as it hearkens etymologically to *'ratio'* as it was used by St. Thomas, namely, as a form of purely discursive reason:

This is not the old rationalism of innate ideas rejected by empiricists such as Locke. The new rationalism stridently champions discursive reasoning, reasoning by language and argument, and overlooks, understates, or eliminates the illuminative or heuristic aspects of cognition. It is not so much a point of view explicitly argued for a silent assumption, an underlying attitude pervading contemporary philosophical practice. It can lead to an almost exclusive focus in philosophy on constructing and evaluating arguments.⁷⁹

This "new rationalism" that motivates much contemporary philosophy implicitly denies the existence of non-discursive cognition - that which St. Thomas would have called *intellectus* as opposed to *ratio* – and tends to focus exclusively on discursive or inferential reason.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 64. Part I, Ch.9, para. 1.

⁷⁹ Groarke, Aristotelian Induction, 284.

Second, and related to the focus on purely discursive reason, the style of writing that prevails in contemporary Anglophone philosophy is a style that prevents the discussion of nondiscursive means of knowing. Neither intuitive insights nor emotional awareness can be conveyed by the kind of arid prose that characterizes much contemporary philosophical writing. Jean-Yves Lacoste observes a similar transition towards more arid prosaic styles beginning as early as the 12th century; such a shift, he notes, is correlated with the shift in focus away from non-discursive cognition and contemplation and towards discursive argument:

...if at the end of the twelfth century theology is provided with a new place of teaching [i.e. the university], we must also add that this provision is accompanied by the birth of a new tool for teaching, the "question", *quaestio*. The tool had to affect the content. Within the practice of the "question"...the confrontation and evaluation of theories did not make *theoria* disappear – it relegated it, if you like, to the background or to the level of the preliminary. The "question" was an instrument of powerful work...This instrument of work also mobilized a totally prosaic language that was almost ready-made for formalization...And whereas, in monastic milieu, theology ordinarily attempted to model its language on the language of scriptures upon which it commented, here the language and scriptural commentary are no longer present, for the one who comments on the Sentences or engages in a similar exercise does so under the form provided by the authorities invoked...So, a new place for theological teaching, a new division of tasks, and finally, a new language.

Martha Nussbaum makes a similar observation regarding the nature of contemporary Anglophone philosophical works, especially works in ethics. Nussbaum notes that, regardless of what topic was under discussion,

...the conventional style of Anglo-American prose usually prevailed: a style correct, scientific, abstract, hygienically pallid, a style that seemed to be regarded as a kind of all-purpose solvent in which philosophical issues of any kind at all could efficiently disentangled, any and all conclusions neatly disengaged.⁸¹

One of the contributing factors to this style is contemporary philosophy's emulation of rigor of the natural sciences and their quantitative, mathematical methodology. She says that the Anglophone style

owed much... – and one can hardly overestimate this – to the long-standing fascination of Western philosophers with the methods and the style of the natural science, which have at many times in history seemed to embody the only sort of rigor and precision worth cultivating, the only norm of rationality worth emulating, even in the ethical sphere...it is

⁸⁰ Lacoste, *Theological Thinking*, 49-50.

⁸¹ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 19.

certainly possible to make a substantial argument that the true nature of the ethical domain is such that it can best be conveyed in the style we usually associate with mathematics or natural science....But there is a mistake made, or at least a carelessness, when one takes a method and style that have proven fruitful for the investigation and description of certain truths – say those of natural science – and applies them without further reflection or argument to a very different sphere of human life that may have a different geography and demand a different sort of precision, a different norm of rationality.⁸²

And while the modern scientific revolution had not yet taken place in the scholastic period that I have been discussing, the general "conflict of the faculties", which occurs when multiple departments of intellectual specialists are brought under the institutional umbrella of a single university, and which causes one faculty to consider its own methodology and subject matter in light of the methodology and subject matter of others, is essentially the same. Just as scholastic theology was forced to re-think its subject matter and methods in light of the other higher faculties of medicine and law, as well as its newly severed offspring – the faculty of philosophy – so does contemporary philosophy, either consciously or unconsciously, re-think its subject matter and methods in light of the subject matter and methods of its sister faculties – the most influential of which might well be the faculties of the natural sciences. I suggest that the methods and writing style adopted by contemporary philosophers are often adopted somewhat unconsciously, and Nussbaum seems to observe something similar:

frequently stylistic choices appeared to be dictated not by any substantial conception at all, not even by the model of science, but by habit and the pressure of convention: by Anglo-American fastidiousness and emotional reticence, and above all by the academicization and professionalization of philosophy, which leads everyone to write like everyone else, in order to be respected and to be published in the usual journals.⁸³

And so just as there was a tendency in the scholastic period to distinguish "school" theology from the practical piety or "spiritual theology" that spoke to the concerns of ordinary persons, so there is a tendency for contemporary philosophers to ignore the concerns of "lay" persons who would look to philosophy for consolation or guidance. Again, Nussbaum notes that

Most professional philosophers did not I found, share the ancient conception of philosophy as discourse addressed to nonexpert readers of many kinds who would bring to the text their urgent concerns, questions, needs and whose souls might in that interaction be changed.⁸⁴

⁸² Ibid., 19.

⁸³ Ibid., 20.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 20.

Philosophy in our time has changed in much the same way that theology had changed in the scholastic period – adopting a style and method that results more from the effects of specialization and emulation of other university faculties than from its subject matter.

Third, the very subject matter of contemporary philosophy itself seems to have altered somewhat according to the "conflict of the faculties" that I mentioned above. Above I mentioned the stylistic and methodological effects on philosophy brought about by its contact with and emulation of the natural sciences. But here I must say something more about how philosophy has come to conceive of its very subject matter. The change in the purported subject matter of philosophy can be best grasped by comparing the retrenchment of philosophy with the retrenchment of theology.

I already mentioned that Martin Luther had tended to distance theology from philosophy, and this distancing implied that theology had a separate subject matter that could serve as an autonomous subject of inquiry apart from philosophy. This also means that theology was equally "immunized" from any developments of the "natural philosophy" which soon developed into the modern sciences as we now recognize them. According to Lacoste:

Theology, as Luther conceived it, is immunized in advance from any critique that the science going to be born could raise against it – there could be no conflict for the good reason that there was not, or ought not be, any border between them.⁸⁵

Lacoste notes that, in the early conflicts between pagan philosophy and Christian thought, there was no acknowledged distinction between "natural" and "supernatural" and therefore no "facile immunization strategy" that would preserve Christian theological thought and pagan philosophical thought in separate uninfluenced spheres.⁸⁶ Rather, the very idea that a conflict was perceived to exist between them implied that they each claimed to be comprehensive and synoptic, yet contradictory. Yet, in the later medieval period and early renaissance, a separate domain had been defined for philosophy apart from theology – each domain being less than comprehensive or less than fully synoptic – such that Luther's separation of theology from philosophy was perceived as a real possibility. In contemporary debates, this compartmentalizing, or, better, departmentalizing strategy is still in effect. Steven Jay Gould

⁸⁵ Lacoste, *Theological Thinking*, 56.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 13.

famously proposed a principle that he called the principle of "nonoverlapping magisteria" (NOMA), which he defined thus:

The net of science covers the empirical universe: what is it made of (fact) and why does it work this way (theory). The net of religion extends over questions of moral meaning and value. These two magisteria do not overlap, nor do they encompass all inquiry (consider, for starters, the magisterium of art and the meaning of beauty).⁸⁷

Notice that neither "magisteria" is said to be comprehensive, but neither is either supposed to overlap into the jurisdiction of the other. And the "magisteria" he describes here are theology and natural science. But, on Gould's picture, where does this leave philosophy?

A. J. Ayer essentially gave the same kind of departmentalizing answer to how we should understand the "magisteria" of philosophy much earlier in 1936, in his book *Language, Truth and Logic*. There Ayer says:

The propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character – that is, they do not describe the behavior of physical, or even mental, objects; they express definitions, or the formal consequences of definitions. Accordingly, we may say that philosophy is a department of logic. For we shall see that the characteristic mark of a purely logical enquiry is that it is concerned with the formal consequences of our definitions and not with questions of empirical fact. / It follows that philosophy does not in any way compete with science. The difference in type between philosophical and scientific propositions is such that they cannot conceivably contradict one another.⁸⁸

This is essentially identical to what Gould said about theology and natural science, only here it is applied to philosophy and science respectively. And notice that, unlike Gould's awarding some magisterial jurisdiction to theology when it comes to matters of moral value, Ayer concedes no such jurisdiction to philosophy. Philosophers since Ayer have slowly attempted to reclaim some of the domain of "moral value" to the "magesteria" of philosophy. J. L. Mackie argues that there are what we might call first order and what we might call second order moral views, where a first order view might be a question of taking a normative and practical stand on some particular issue concerning one's behavior, and a second order view concerns one's understanding of the nature of "valuing" and the place of "values" with respect to the "fabric of the world." Philosophers since Mackie have tended to call the first "normative" moral philosophy and the second "metaethics." Yet Mackie says that the two spheres are "not merely distinct but completely

⁸⁷ Stephen Jay Gould, "Nonoverlapping Magisteria," in *Leonardo's Mountain of Clams and the Diet of Worms: Essays on Natural History*, Reprint edition (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 274.

⁸⁸ Ayer, *Language Truth and Logic*, 57.

independent.⁹⁸⁹ Existentialists, for example, who feel an "extreme emotional reaction" at the purported realization that there is no objective basis in reality for moral claims are, according to Mackie, simply embroiled in a logical error. The conclusion that "life has lost its purpose" simply "does not follow" from the "denial of objective values.⁹⁰ The philosopher can offer the consolation that a subjective sense of purpose is not logically incompatible with a belief about the objective meaninglessness of reality – we might simply retain the sense of purpose anyway! But the implications for normative ethics are only accidentally philosophical. According to Michael Smith, "philosophers have surely been right to give meta-ethical questions a certain priority over questions in normative ethics."⁹¹ Namely, they have been right to keep philosophy as close to logical analysis as possible.

I have briefly indicated three aspects in which contemporary Anglophone philosophy resembles the developments of philosophical thought that emerged in scholastic philosophy: (1) the narrowed focus on exclusively discursive and logical reasoning; (2) the arid prose that fails to convey emotional apprehension or non-discursive insight; and (3) the compartmentalization of inquiry into different institutionally defined academic departments. Yet before I proceed, I would note that some philosophers recognize and endorse these trends.

Section 4. Problems with Championing the Decadent Scholastic Methodology

Brian Leiter, for example, who has been the long-time editor of the Philosophy Gourmet Report, gives an account of the discipline of Anglophone analytic philosophy intended to inform would-be graduate students of the nature of the kind of work and research that will expected of them. I think it is particularly appropriate to investigate what Leiter says here insofar as the Philosophy Gourmet influences many Anglophone students considering a graduate school education in philosophy. Leiter says that

⁸⁹ J. L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990), 16. ⁹⁰ Ibid., 34.

⁹¹ Michael Smith, *The Moral Problem* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1994), 2.

Analytic philosophers, crudely speaking, aim for argumentative clarity and precision; draw freely on the tools of logic; and often identify, professionally and intellectually, more closely with the sciences and mathematics, than with the humanities.⁹²

He says that

what distinguishes analytic philosophy even more than "style" is its adoption of the research paradigm common in the natural sciences, a paradigm in which numerous individual researchers make small contributions to the solution of a set of generally recognized problems.⁹³

He observes that

The best analytic philosophers are usually very smart (clever, quick, analytically acute), but less often deep.⁹⁴

And it therefore follows that

analytic philosophers generally become unbearably trite and superficial once they venture beyond the technical problems and methods to which their specialized training best suits them, and try to assume the mantle of "public intellectual" so often associated with figures on the Continent.⁹⁵

In summary, Anglophone analytic philosophers take up a methodology that is based on the rigor and research methods of the natural scientists – they focus narrowly on "generally recognized" issues, the solutions of which are presumably to be incorporated back into a general picture at some later time, and by some other person. The most successful of them are very "smart" "quick" or "clever", i.e. they excel in discursive reasoning, and they are less often deep, i.e. they lack training or aptitude in non-discursive apprehension or insight. Their style and narrowness of focus renders them mostly irrelevant when it comes to addressing pressing concerns outside of their technical disciplines.

Yet Leiter thinks that there is value in this kind of specialization. He quotes, approvingly, a certain passage from Nietzsche in which Nietzsche describes his preference for specialists over intellectual charlatans. Here is a further condensed version of the passage from Nietzsche:

... every specialist has his hunched back. Every scholarly book also mirrors a soul that

⁹² Brian Leiter, "'Analytic' and 'Continental' Philosophy," *The Philosophy Gourmet Report*, http://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/analytic.asp

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

has become crooked; every craft makes crooked....Nothing can be done about that...For having a specialty one pays by also being the victim of this specialty. But you would have it otherwise—cheaper and fairer and above all more comfortable—isn't that right, my dear contemporaries. Well then, but in that case you also immediately get something else: instead of the craftsman and master, the "man of letters," the dexterous, "polydexterous" man of letters who, to be sure, lacks the hunched back...the man of letters who really *is* nothing but "represents" almost everything, playing and "substituting" for the expert, and taking it upon himself in all modesty to get himself paid, honored, and celebrated in place of the expert. No, my scholarly friends, I bless you even for your hunched back. And for despising, as I do, the "men of letters" and culture parasites.⁹⁶

Leiter thinks that Nietzsche's warnings against the generalist, the so-called "man of letters", are particularly in need of remembrance today. This is because he generally believes, as the quote from Nietzsche seems to imply, that any generalist – anyone who tries to get a broader view of things, or who does not model his inquiries on the quantitative rigor and specialization of focus common to the natural sciences – could not be anything but an intellectual charlatan. Leiter thus criticizes the other "humanities" departments that seem to lie farther, methodologically speaking, from the natural sciences:

When compared to the sophomoric nonsense that passes for "philosophizing" in the broader academic culture—often in fields like English, Law, Political Science, and sometimes History—one can only have the highest respect for the intellectual rigor and specialization of analytic philosophers.⁹⁷

And Leiter believes that specialization within analytical philosophy not only distinguishes it favorably from other humanities, but that such specialized methodology also makes possible the ranking of departments of philosophy. This is because the focus on discursive thought, the arid lack of qualitative stylistic elements, and the narrowness of focus purportedly makes possible the straightforward evaluation of philosophical work.

It is also because analytic philosophy remains very much a *specialty* that it is possible to rank departments: the standards of success and accomplishment are relatively clear, maintained as they are by a large, dedicated scholarly community.⁹⁸

Yet I believe that there are problems with this view. There are at least two worries that pertain to the this institutionalized specialization. One is a worry about the nature of the individual who

⁹⁶ Leiter quotes from Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Arnold Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), § 366.

⁹⁷ Leiter, "Analytic' and 'Continental' Philosophy"

⁹⁸ Ibid.

specializes in such a way. Even Nietzsche admits that "every craft makes crooked" and he says that "nothing can be done about that." We might question whether either of these statements is true: whether every craft must make crooked the person who practices it and whether or not anything can be done about this. But the other is a worry about why we should thus submit ourselves to such specialized "crafts." What end serves to justify the sacrifice of the individual to this "crookedness"? Presumably the individual suffers for the sake of the advancement of "the discipline." But this assumes that the discipline is accomplishing something that cannot be accomplished by a single individual. And we must examine what must be the case in order for this to hold true.

A. Effects of Specialization on the Individual

Beginning with the first worry about the effects of specialization on the individual specialist, we might consider another passage from Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which was written shortly after the passage from the Gay Science that Leiter quotes with approval. Towards the end of the work, Nietzsche describes Zarathustra as having returned to the top of his mountain in hopes that the higher men or "overmen" would seek him out there. Zarathustra then encounters several persons, several potential overmen, who have scaled the mountain in search of him. Each person Zarathustra encounters, according to Walter Kaufmann, seems to "have accepted some part of his teaching without, however, embodying the type he envisions."99 Kaufmann goes so far as to say that "*[a]ll* of the characters are caricatures of Nietzsche.".¹⁰⁰ The character that most concerns the notion of specialization is the man we meet in the chapter entitled "The Leech." Here Zarathustra, in seeking for the source of a certain "cry of distress", runs right over top of a man lying prostrate on the floor of a swamp. Zarathustra is startled and, almost as if from some reflexive contempt, begins beating the man with his stick. Once they have each recovered from being startled, Zarathustra sees that the man had been using his own arm, which is now dripping with blood, to fish for leeches in the swamp. The man introduces himself to Zarathustra in the following exchange:

⁹⁹ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. Walter Arnold Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 232.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 233.

"I am the conscientious in spirit." Replied the man; "and in matters of the spirit there may well be none stricter, narrower, and harder than I, except he from whom I have learned it, Zarathustra himself.

"Rather know nothing than half-know much! Rather be a fool on one's own than a sage according to the opinion of others! I go to the ground – what does it matter whether it be great or small? Whether it be called swamp or sky? A hand's breadth of ground suffices me, provided it is really ground and foundation. A hand's breadth of ground – on that one can stand. In the conscience of science there is nothing great and nothing small"

"Then perhaps you are the man who knows the leech?" Zarathustra asked. "And do you pursue the leech to its ultimate grounds, my conscientious friend?"

"O Zarathustra," replied the man who had been stepped on, "that would be an immensity; how could I presume so much! That of which I am the master and expert is the *brain* of the leech: that is *my* world. And it really is a world too. Forgive me that here my pride speaks up, for I have no equal here. This is why I said, 'Here is my home.' How long have I been pursuing this one thing, the brain of the leech, lest the slippery truth slip away from me here again! Here is *my* realm. For its sake I have thrown away everything else; for its sake everything else has become indifferent to me; and close to my knowledge lies black ignorance.

"The conscience of my spirit demands of me that I know one thing and nothing else: I loath all the half in spirit, all the vaporous that hover and rave.

"Where my honesty ceases, I am blind and I also want to be blind. But where I want to know, I also want to be honest – that is, hard, strict, narrow, cruel, and inexorable.¹⁰¹

Zarathustra finally interrupts the man and responds: "O you strange fellow, how much I learn from what is apparent here, namely from you....".¹⁰² What Zarathustra apparently learns here, and what Nietzsche himself seems to concede, is that the drive to have a kind of specialized knowledge or mastery of something, which is entirely independent from the reliance on the opinions of others, results in a kind of lopsided caricature of the virtues that would comprise an "overman."

Later, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche contrasts philosophy with science, and he contrasts the philosopher with the scientist.¹⁰³ Just as philosophy declared itself free of theology,

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 250-251.

¹⁰² Ibid., 251.

¹⁰³ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), Part Six. Also see Paul J. M. Van Tongeren, "Nietzsche's Symptamatology of Skepticism" in *Nietzsche, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science: Nietzsche and the Scientists*, ed. Babette Babich, Robert S. Cohen (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 66-68. Tongeren notes the similarity between Nietzsche's discussion of scientific objectivity in *Beyond Good and Evil* and the "Leech" passage from *Zarathustra*. Nietzsche's word for science or 'scholarship' is '*Wissenschaft*' and his phrase for 'scholars' is '*Des*

so science is now attempting, according to Nietzsche, to declared itself free of philosophy. Yet Nietzsche says that "I insist that people should finally stop confusing philosophical laborers, and scientific men generally, with philosophers."¹⁰⁴ While Nietzsche admits that the drive to "objectivity" and "being scientific" is a refreshing alternative to a certain kind of subjectivity, as he seemed to imply in the passage Leiter quoted from the *Gay Science*, here he notes that the man who strives for such objectivity, the so-called "objective man"

is an instrument, something of a slave though certainly the most sublime type of slave, but in himself nothing – *presque rien*! The objective man is an instrument, a precious, easily injured and clouded instrument for measuring and, as an arrangement of mirrors, an artistic triumph that deserves care and honor; but he is no goal, no conclusion and sunrise, no complementary man in whom the rest of existence is justified, no termination...rather only a delicate, carefully dusted, fine mobile pot for forms that still has to wait for some content and substance in order to "shape" itself accordingly¹⁰⁵

Yet this desire to be "scientific" and "objective" and to acquire "pure knowledge free of will" is, according to Nietzsche, "merely dressed-up skepticism and paralysis of the will". Nietzsche says that this skepticism

is the most spiritual expression of a certain complex physiological condition that in ordinary language is called nervous exhaustion and sickliness; it always develops when races or classes that have long been separated are crossed suddenly and decisively. In the new generation that, as it were, has inherited in its blood diverse standards and values, everything is unrest, disturbance, doubt, attempt; the best forces have an inhibiting effect, the very virtues do not allow each other to grow and become strong; balance, a center of gravity, and perpendicular poise are lacking in body and soul.¹⁰⁶

He thinks that Europe has become this way in his own day. The "multiculturism" – to use an anachronistic term – of races and classes in Europe has produced a kind of value pluralism that

wissenschaftlichen Menschen.' The scholarly book (*gelehrten Buches*) referred to in *Gay Science* §366 might as well have been written by a *Wissenschaftler* as a *Gelehrte*. The fact that a single German word, '*Wissenschaft'*, which is often translated as 'science', could refer to all manner of scholarship and not just the natural sciences is itself evidence that 19th century German universities had assimilated just about all scholarship to the model of the natural sciences. I am sympathetic to this conceptual idea embedded in the German language insofar as it seems to imply that all manner of academic faculties can be grouped under and referred to by a single linguistic term insofar as they all share a common goal, namely, to pursue truth or the understanding of reality. In actual fact, however, it seems that the German term *Wissenschaft* really only refers to the various academic faculties synecdochically, i.e. it refers to all of the university faculties by reference to one of them, the faculty of natural science. In this sense, all faculties are seen to approach truth insofar as they are related, methodologically and otherwise, to the natural sciences.

¹⁰⁴ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, §211.

¹⁰⁵ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, §207.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., §208.

causes skepticism to take root in the very "blood" of the newer generations. They then seek solace and comfort by attempting to be "objective" in all of their scientific studies – studies which purportedly reveal no value or trace of the investigator's will. Such persons are then subject to "that great vampire, the spider of skepticism"¹⁰⁷ – just like "the conscientious in spirit" that we saw in *Zarathustra*. "The conscientious of spirit" fixes his mental gaze on his own intellectual "world", i.e. the brain of the leech, and he speaks approvingly of his "black ignorance" and "blindness" when comes to any other matters. It is no wonder that such a person would be incapable of making an evaluative judgment that carried any conviction. When it comes especially to evaluative matters, his conscience "bites" him and he is unable to say yes or no.¹⁰⁸

The philosopher, on the other hand, must not "allow himself to be detained somewhere to become a specialist – so he never attains his proper level, the height for a comprehensive look, for looking around, for looking *down*."¹⁰⁹ The philosopher must "be able to see with many different eyes and consciences, from a height and into every distance, from the depths into every height, fro a nook into every expanse."¹¹⁰ Nietzsche says that this perspective is a precondition for the philosopher's task. Yet here, when he describes the philosopher's task, he says that it is to "*create values*."¹¹¹ It is only here that Nietzsche diverges from that ancient tradition of philosophy; here enters his doctrine of the will to power. The ancient tradition would follow Nietzsche in his contempt of narrow or short-sighted specialization. But the ancient tradition simply believes that refusing specialization for a more comprehensive look is the pre-requisite for *discovering* values, not for *creating* them.

In a popular book from the mid-twentieth century Richard Weaver describes the traditional pride of place given to a broader intellectual perspective over a more specialized one, only he situates this prerequisite for a broader perspective in light of the ancient realist tradition, as opposed to Nietzsche's radical notion of the will to power (indeed, if one were simply going to legislate values for himself, why the need for such a comprehensive perspective?). Weaver notes that the best historical example of a socially realized version of such a person with a broad

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., §209.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., §208.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., §205.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., §211.

¹¹¹ Ibid., §211.

enough view to be able to bring about a kind of general synthesis was the medieval Philosophic or Theological doctor.¹¹² As the societal type of the philosophical doctor was lost to academic specialization, Weaver notes that the man of broad perspective was retained in the West, in a secularized expression, in the form of "the gentleman" or the "man of letters." According to Weaver

By far the most significant phase of the theory of the gentleman is its distrust of specialization. It is an ancient belief, going back to classical antiquity, that specialization of any kind is illiberal in a freeman. A man willing to bury himself in the details of some small endeavor has been considered lost to these larger considerations which must occupy the mind of a ruler.¹¹³

The idea the specialization makes one unfit to rule is a common fear running through Aristotle's *Politics*.¹¹⁴ Aristotle fears that certain kinds of specialized occupations would leave one incapable of the leisure necessary to develop the virtues. Virtue requires leisure and the ability to take up a broad perspective. Yet Weaver notes that "the specialist" has slowly usurped the place of the gentleman in contemporary society:

the former distrust of specialization has been supplanted by its opposite, a distrust of generalization. Not only has man become a specialist in practice, he is being taught that special facts represent the highest form of knowledge.¹¹⁵

Nietzsche articulates a similar worry when he suggests that the turn towards intellectually specialized scientific objectivity is a mask for skepticism, and that such skepticism leaves one incapable of making evaluative judgments. Nietzsche, recall, said that the skepticism brought on by cultural disturbance results in a situation in which "balance, a center of gravity, and perpendicular poise are lacking in body and soul." Weaver concurs. According to Weaver,

The modern knower may be compared to an inebriate who, as he senses his loss of balance, endeavors to save himself by fixing tenaciously upon certain details and thus affords the familiar exhibition of positiveness and arbitrariness. With the world around him beginning to heave, he grasps at something that will come within a limited perception. So the scientist, having lost hold on organic reality, clings the more firmly to his discovered facts, hoping that salvation lies in what can be objectively verified.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Richard M. Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 53.

¹¹³ Ibid., 56.

¹¹⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1277b3-6, 1319a26-28, 1328b40-1329a2, 1337b4-21.

¹¹⁵ Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences*, 59.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 57-58.

Weaver considers the modern tendency to gravitate towards specialized knowledge to be an obsession, i.e. a psychological instance of substituting an innocuous idea for a painful one. In Nietzsche's terminology, one irrationally fixates on "being scientific" as a way to mask the painful fact of one's general skepticism and loss of balance.

But Weaver at least hints at one reason that might potentiality justify the tendency towards specialization – a reason that is not a mere blind "obsession". He says that

The theory of empiricism is plausible because it assumes that accuracy about small matters prepares the way for valid judgment about larger ones. What happens, however, is that the judgments are never made. The pedantic empiricist, buried in his little province of phenomena, imagines that fidelity to it exempts him from concern with larger aspects of reality.¹¹⁷

In other words, the various specialists who labor in one minute area of the intellectual landscape without understanding the value of their labors might supply the raw material or data for some larger synthesis to be conducted by someone else. Weaver's worry, however, is that the synthesis is, in fact, never actually performed. A kind of fanaticism takes over insofar as one redoubles one's efforts to delve deeper into ever more narrow and specialized inquiries while losing sight of the original goal of such inquires in the first place: to provide more accurate small-scale data about the parts of something, which were originally intended to be integrated back into some intelligible whole. But does anything in principle prevent someone from undertaking such a synthesis? Again, Weaver hints at such a possibility, but he seems unwilling to take it seriously:

the specialist stands ever at the borderline of psychosis. It has been remarked that when one passes among the patients of a psychopathic ward, he encounters among the several sufferers every aspect of a normal personality in morbid exaggeration, so that it would be possible theoretically to put together a supermind by borrowing something from each. And as one passes through modern centers of enterprise and of higher learning, he is met with similar autonomies of development. Each would be admired for his little achievement of power and virtuosity; each is resentful of subordination because, for him, a specialty has become the world. The public, retaining a certain perspective by virtue of its naïve realism, calls them "lopsided."¹¹⁸

We might recall that Walter Kauffmann made the very same observation about the various persons that Zarathustra meets on his mountain top, namely, that each person seems to have accepted some part of Zarathustra's teaching about the nature of an overman, yet each seems to

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 60.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 62.

be an exaggerated caricature. Weaver thinks that the construction of something like a "supermind" from the various intellectual specialists of the academy would be implausible. He says that "[m]en so obsessed with fragments can no more be reasoned with than other psychotics" and furthermore that

People tend to trust the judgments of an integrated personality and will prefer them even to the official opinions of experts. They rightly suspect that *expertise* conceals some abnormality of viewpoint.¹¹⁹

Yet Leiter's claim that part of the value of analytical philosophy lay in its emulation of the "research paradigm" of the natural sciences: "a paradigm in which numerous individual researchers make small contributions to the solution of a set of generally recognized problems." Here we must examine the second worry: whether such a paradigm is plausible in the field of philosophy.

B. Effects of Specialization on the Corporate Pursuit of Knowledge

I believe that it is important to see the field of 20th and early 21st century analytical philosophy and its eponymous methodological proclivity for analysis in its historical context. Many thinkers in the eighteenth century were known to emphasize the analytic method. Since I am ultimately concerned with moral philosophy, perhaps the best example of the use of this analytical method in moral philosophy comes from David Hume. In a well-known letter written in 1739, Hume responds to a private correspondence from Francis Hutcheson, in which Hutcheson had made some comments on the as yet unpublished 3rd book of Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature*, i.e. the book concerned with Morals. Hume is most concerned to respond to Hutcheson's observation that "there wants a certain Warmth in the Cause of Virtue" in Hume's writing. Hume's response is that this was not accidental, but rather a foreseen consequence of adopting the analytical method. Hume responds with the following analogy:

There are different ways of examining the Mind as well as the Body. One may consider it either as an Anatomist or as a Painter; either to discover its most secret Springs & Principles or to describe the Grace & Beauty of its Actions. I imagine it impossible to conjoin these two Views. Where you pull off the Skin, & display all the minute Parts, there appears something trivial, even in the noblest Attitudes & most vigorous Actions:

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 62.

Nor can you ever render the Object graceful or engaging but by cloathing the Parts again with Skin & Flesh, & presenting only their bare Outside. An Anatomist, however, can give very good Advice to a Painter or Statuary: And in like manner, I am perswaded, that a Metaphysician may be very helpful to a Moralist; tho' I cannot easily conceive these two Characters united in the same Work. Any warm Sentiment of Morals, I am afraid, wou'd be esteem'd contrary to good Taste. And tho' I am much more ambitious of being esteem'd a Friend to Virtue, than a Writer of Tatse; yet I must always carry the latter in my Eye, otherwise I must despair of ever being serviceable to Virtue. I hope these Reasons will satisfy you; tho at the same time, I intend to make a new Tryal, if it be possible to make the Moralist & Metaphysician agree a little better.¹²⁰

When it comes to moral matters, Hume says, he has taken up the role of the anatomist. This is indicated in the very subtitle of the third book of the *Treatise*: "Being An Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning in Moral Subjects."¹²¹ It is thus the place, Hume says, of the scientist, i.e. the anatomist or the one who applies "the experimental method", to remain cold with respect to his investigations of human nature. Any warmth of sentiment towards morals, Hume says, would be "contrary to good taste." That is because the roles of anatomist and painter, and of metaphysician and moralist, are understood to be distinct. According to this distinction, one should only expect any "warmth" in the painter or the moralist. Such warmth in the anatomist or metaphysician, Hume implies, would be inappropriate, unprofessional, and in "bad taste." Yet Hume still seems to think that there is something in Hutcheson's criticism. While Hume says that he "cannot easily conceive these two Characters united in the same Work", he does say that he will endeavor to "make the Moralist & Metaphysician agree a little better." And, most importantly, Hume thinks that the work of the anatomist or the metaphysician is a kind of necessary propaeduetic to the work of the painter or the moralist.

Hume ultimately includes the analogy between the painter and the anatomist in the published form of the third book of the *Treatise*. In the published form, Hume seems more certain of the incompatibility of the two methodological approaches. And he is even clearer about the justification for engaging in the analytic method, namely, that such inquiries are justified insofar as they are necessary for the painter or the moralist:

The anatomist ought never to emulate the painter; nor in his accurate dissections and portraitures of the smaller parts of the human body, pretend to give his figures any

¹²⁰ David Hume, *The Letters of David Hume: Volume I (1727-1765)*, ed. J. Y. T. Greig (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 32-33.

¹²¹ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), reproduction of the title page after p.454.

graceful and engaging attitude or expression...An anatomist, however, is admirably fitted to give advice to a painter; and it is even impracticable to excel in the latter art, without the assistance of the former...And thus the most abstract speculations concerning human nature, however cold and unentertaining, become subservient to practical morality; and may render this latter science more correct in its precepts, and more persuasive in its exhortations.¹²²

Yet this leaves us with two problems. First, there is the worry that I have already mentioned, namely, that the anatomist does not necessarily see or understand the fruits of his own labor. Just as Marx claims that modern industrial laborers are alienated from the fruits of their labor, so we might think that the intellectual laborer is likewise alienated from the fruits of his labor. Those "anatomists" involved in the "cold and unentertaining" work need not ever see their work in use by the "painters." But it also leaves the difficulty that Hume acknowledged in the letter to Hutcheson, namely, the worry of getting the moralist and the metaphysician to agree. In other words, we might worry that the metaphysician and the moralist do not simply take up different perspectives and different subject matters, but that they actually disagree with one another with regard to the same subject matter.

By the end of the 18th century, Frederick Schiller, in his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, gives excellent expression to the first worry. Schiller worries that the work of the anatomist, i.e. the work of the specialized scientific man, has a detrimental effect on the anatomist as an individual. Yet Schiller still seems to acknowledge that this kind of sacrifice on the part of the specialist does at least bear fruit insofar as the various specialized insights can be combined. Schiller contrasts the modern specialized departments of inquiry and their accompanying requirement for their practitioners to develop exclusively only some of their various powers of mind with the wholeness that one seems to find in Greek thought:

At the period of Greek culture, which was an awakening of the powers of the mind, the senses and the spirit had no distinctly separated property; no division had yet torn them asunder, leading them to partition in a hostile attitude, and to mark off their limits with precision. Poetry had not yet become the adversary of wit, nor had speculation abused itself by passing into quibbling. In cases of necessity both poetry and wit could exchange parts, because they both honoured truth only in their special way. However high might be the flight of reason, it drew matter in a loving spirit after it, and, while sharply and stiffly defining it, never mutilated what it touched. It is true the Greek mind displaced humanity, and recast it on a magnified scale in the glorious circle of its gods; but it did this not by dissecting human nature, but by giving it fresh combinations, for the whole of human nature was represented in each of the gods. How different is the course followed by us

¹²² Hume, *Treatise*, 620-621.

moderns! We also displace and magnify individuals to form the image of the species, but we do this in a fragmentary way, not by altered combinations, so that it is necessary to gather up from different individuals the elements that form the species in its totality. It would almost appear as if the powers of mind express themselves with us in real life or empirically as separately as the psychologist distinguishes them in the representation. For we see not only individual subjects, but whole classes of men, uphold their capacities only in part, while the rest of their faculties scarcely show a germ of activity, as in the case of the stunted growth of plants.¹²³

Yet Schiller thinks that the holistic nature of Greek thought and of the individual Greek inquirer must be abandoned if our body of knowledge and understanding is to advance:

I will readily admit to you that, although this splitting up of their being was unfavourable for individuals, it was the only road open for the progress of the race. The point at which we see humanity arrived among the Greeks was undoubtedly a *maximum;* it could neither stop there nor rise higher. It could not stop there, for the sum of notions acquired forced infallibly the intelligence to break with feeling and intuition, and to lead to clearness of knowledge. Nor could it rise any higher; for it is only in a determinate measure that clearness can be reconciled with a certain degree of abundance and of warmth. The Greeks had attained this measure, and to continue their progress in culture, they, as we, were obliged to renounce the totality of their being, and to follow different and separate roads in order to seek after truth.¹²⁴

The idea that individuals suffer fragmentation of their understanding and "lopsided" development of their faculties is repeatedly mentioned as the price of the advancement of "the race", "the species" or "the totality of the world." The "warmth" that Hutcheson saw missing in Hume's writing, and for which Hume was rightfully concerned, simply cannot accompany the specialized use of analytical reason. Schiller somewhat grudgingly concedes that, in this, the modern period has some advantage over the ancient world, but this advantage, he notes, is only discernable when we compare modern society as a whole to ancient society as a whole. But when it comes to individuals, Schiller asks: "Who among the moderns could step forth, man against man, and strive with an Athenian for the prize of higher humanity?" Clearly, Schiller believes that the institutions of modernity do not allow for the cultivation of such persons.

¹²³ J. C. Friederich Von Schiller, *Letters Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man*, in Eliot, Charles William, ed. *The Harvard Classics Volume 32* (New York: P.F. Collier & son, 1910), Letter VI, paragraph 3, p. 220-221.

¹²⁴ Schiller, *Aesthetic Education*, Letter VI, p. 224-225.

Schiller ends with a kind hopeful appeal that we should be able to reconcile the need for specialization with a more holistic human development.¹²⁵

But the dawn of the 19th century, however, there arose an even greater worry. Schiller's worry about the sacrifice of the wholeness of individuals for the advancement of common knowledge still shared an assumption with Hume that these cold observations would prove of use, and could be reassembled by some other person or some later age. But in the nineteenth century there began to arise the worry that the act of dissection and minute focus that excluded all "warmth" actually distorted our understand of things in such a way that the anatomists' observations could not then be simply rejoined to the warmth of the painter. According to William Wordsworth, in 1798:

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings; Our meddling intellect Misshapes the beauteous forms of things; — We murder to dissect.¹²⁶

Here Wordsworth seems to worry that the very act of dissection "mis-shapes" things. G. W. F. Hegel gives philosophical expression to this same idea in the first part of his *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*. In keeping with Hume's metaphor of anatomical dissection, Hegel writes:

The limbs and organs, for instance, of an organic body, are not merely parts of it: it is only in their unity that they are what they are, and they are unquestionably affected by that unity, as they also in turn affect it. These limbs and organs become mere parts, only when they pass under the hands of an anatomist, whose occupations, be it remembered, are not with the living body but with the corpse. Not that we call dissection a mistake: we only mean that the external and mechanical relation of whole and parts is not sufficient for us, if we want to learn the truth of organic life. And if this be so in organic life, it is the case to a much greater extent when we apply this relation to the mind and the formations of the spiritual world. Psychologists may not expressly speak of parts of the soul or mind, but the mode in which this subject is treated by the analytic understanding shows traces of copying the pattern of this finite relation. At least that is so, when the different forms of mental activity are enumerated and described merely in their isolation

¹²⁵ "It must be false that the perfecting of particular faculties renders the sacrifice of their totality necessary; and even if the law of nature had imperiously this tendency, we must have the power to reform by a superior art this totality of our being, which art has destroyed." Schiller, *Aesthetic Education*, Letter VI, p.226.

¹²⁶ William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads 1798 Edited, with Introduction, Notes and Appendix Containing Wordsworth's Preface of 1800, ed.* Harold Littledale (London: Henry Frowde, 1911), 188. William Wordsworth, "The Tables Turned", lines 25-28.

one after another, as so-called special powers and faculties.¹²⁷

To insist, as Hegel does, that the parts of organic bodies, as well as the various mental powers that make up the human psychology, are not mere parts is to insist that we cannot understand the whole as mere additive sums of their parts, and that the parts themselves cannot be fully understood apart from the whole that they compose. Hegel is quick to note that this does not imply that every form of analytical dissection is inappropriate or mistaken. Rather, he simply holds that analysis, practiced in isolation from synthetic ideas about wholes, is often insufficient for knowledge. But this insufficiency, we might think, can be either benign or malignant. A benign insufficiency seems to be what is presupposed by those like Hume who think that the anatomist's art serves as ancilla to the painter's art. The painter must add something to the knowledge he gains from the anatomist, but the anatomist's work is, considered in itself, free from error. But there might be a kind of malignant insufficiency to the anatomists work insofar as the anatomist engages in his analytical work while all the while presupposing a kind of synthetic whole that is other than or contrary to what the painter presupposes. The purportedly benign analysis, we might think, is conceivable only on the assumption that a truly "neutral" analysis – one that does not presuppose any overriding synthetic presuppositions – is possible. And Hegel seems to imply that such truly neutral analysis is not possible: parts are unquestionably affected by the unity that they compose.

Indeed, Goethe, who was both a distinguished poet and scientist, wrote in his 1829 essay "Analysis and Synthesis" that "every analysis presupposes a synthesis."¹²⁸ Referring to the 18th century's focus on the analytic method, Goethe claims that

A century has taken the wrong turn if it applies itself exclusively to analysis while exhibiting an apparent fear of synthesis: the sciences come to life only when the two exist side by side like exhaling and inhaling.¹²⁹

Elsewhere, in his essay "The Influence of Modern Philosophy", Goethe wrote that

All my life, whether in poetry or research, I had alternated between a synthetic approach and an analytic one – to me these were the systole and diastole of the human mind, like a

¹²⁷ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Logic of Hegel: Translated from the Encyclopædia of the Philosophical Sciences with Prolegomena*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1874), 211-212.

 ¹²⁸ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe's Collected Works, Volume 12: Scientific studies*, ed. and trans.
 Douglas Miller (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 49.
 ¹²⁹ Ibid., 49.

second breathing, never separated, always pulsing.¹³⁰

According to Goethe,

the analytical thinker ought to begin by examining (or rather noting) whether he is really working with a hidden synthesis or only an aggregation, a juxtaposition, a composite, or something of the sort.¹³¹

Conducting an analysis while presuming a synthesis where there is none, as well as conducting an analysis while presuming there is no synthesis while there is one are both methodologically problematic ways of conducting an inquiry. Both are likely to lead to distortions. The saying that 'every analysis presupposes a synthesis' could then perhaps be more cautiously worded to say that every analysis presupposes a belief about whether the object of analysis compose some whole. Goethe believed that "dead" subjects (e.g. the subjects of mineralogy) do not in fact presuppose any synthesis insofar as they are not parts of any greater intelligible wholes; rather they are mere "aggregations." Thus, a presupposition about the wholes which they compose may distort one's inquiry regarding them. But living subjects (e.g. the various subjects of biology) do presuppose some synthesis insofar the parts of living things are parts of greater intelligible wholes. Thus, a presupposition that the parts of living things can be understood apart from any presuppositions about the whole which they compose is likely to distort one's inquiry regarding them. But, like Hegel, Goethe is clearly not dismissing analysis or dissection as unnecessary. Goethe wrote that "[o]bdurate pedantry of distinction and blurring mysticism both equally bring disaster."¹³² In other words, both analytical and synthetic methods can be detrimental when practiced in isolation from one another. But by saying that all analysis presupposes a synthesis Goethe seems to close off the possibility of a truly "neutral" analysis that merely awaits some later synthesis – at least in the case of biological subjects (Goethe's own research was primarily of a biological nature). That is, Goethe seems to imply that Hume's notion that the anatomist and painter, or the metaphysician and the moralist, are autonomous laborers, the one conducting a neutral analysis and the other assembling the pieces, is implausible.

This idea that (biological) parts are to some degree unintelligible without reference to the wholes of which they are parts was a common belief of many nineteenth century writers. We see

¹³⁰ Ibid., 29.

¹³¹ Ibid., "Analysis and Synthesis", 50.

¹³² Paul Bishop, Analytical Psychology and German Classical Aesthetics: Goethe, Schiller, and Jung, Volume 1: The Development of the Personality (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 49.

this idea expressed in a mystical manner by Alfred Lord Tennyson in this short poem, composed in 1863:

Flower in the crannied wall, I pluck you out of the crannies, I hold you here, root and all, in my hand, Little flower—but *if* I could understand What you are, root and all, and all in all, I should know what God and man is.¹³³

Tennyson implies that a complete knowledge of single flower would include knowledge of the nature of God and of man. This also seems to imply that any knowledge of the particular flower that lacked the knowledge of God and of man would be incomplete in some sense. This implication follows from a kind of implied presupposition that all things are in some sense related to one another. Recall that Hegel, in the passage that I quoted above, seemed to imply as much, at least with regard to the relation between organic bodies and their parts, when he said of such parts that "it is only in their unity that they are what they are." There was a neo-Hegelian movement in Britain towards the end of the 19th century that tended to affirm this "monism" or the idea that parts must be understood in terms of the wholes that they compose. For example, Edward Caird, a British Hegelian scholar, interprets Hegel thus:

...neither things nor thoughts can be treated as self-identical – as independent or atomic existences, which are related only to themselves. They are essentially parts of a whole, or stages in a process, and as such they carry us beyond themselves, the moment we clearly understand them.¹³⁴

Yet it is a reaction to this exact kind of thought that is arguably the impetus for the birth of what we call analytic philosophy.

Analytic philosophy is born out of Bertrand Russell's "logical atomism" and G. E. Moore's attack on "internal relations". Russell's logical atomism combines both a methodological view that places emphasis on analysis of wholes into their constituent parts, and a metaphysical view that understands everything that exists to be built up from independently existing objects that exhibit certain properties and stand in certain relations. In Russell's own words:

¹³³ William Harmon, ed., *The Top 500 Poems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 664.

¹³⁴ Caird, Edward, *Hegel* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1886), 137. Also see Jonathan Schaffer, "Monism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <u>http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/monism/</u>, Note 34.

It was towards the end of 1898 that Moore and I rebelled against both Kant and Hegel. Moore led the way, but I followed closely in his footsteps...Although we were in agreement, I think that we differed as to what most interested us in our new philosophy. I think that Moore was most concerned with the rejection of idealism, while I was most interested in the rejection of monism. The two were, however, closely connected. They were connected through the doctrine as to relations, which Bradley had distilled out of the philosophy of Hegel. I called this 'the doctrine of internal relations'.¹³⁵

Yet we might think that the reaction against this Hegelianism that emphasized synthetic thought

was indeed an overreaction. With regard to Moore, John Deigh remarks that:

as is common when a youth comes to doubt what he had once greatly admired, Moore's turn against Absolute Idealism was fierce. In a series of publications, beginning with his 1899 article in *Mind*, 'The Nature of Judgment', Moore attacked Absolute Idealism mercilessly.¹³⁶

We find Moore writing in *Principia Ethica* that "Philosophers, especially those who profess to have derived great benefit from the writings of Hegel, have lately made use of the terms 'organic whole.' 'organic unity,' 'organic relation.'"¹³⁷ And when it comes to one peculiar meaning of this term, Moore writes that

this very self-contradictory doctrine is the chief mark which shews the influence of Hegel upon modern philosophy – an influence which pervades almost the whole of orthodox philosophy. This is what is generally implied by the cry against falsification by abstraction: that a whole is always a part of its part! 'If you want to know the truth about a part,' we are told, 'you must consider not that part, but something else – namely the whole: nothing is true of the part, but only of the whole.'...This doctrine, therefore, that a part can have 'no meaning or significance apart from its whole' must be utterly rejected.¹³⁸

But while Moore may be right that there is some certain kind intelligibility that a part can have in abstraction from the whole of which it is a part, he is wrong to think that our consideration of some larger whole can never affect our judgment of a part. Moore suggests that

'To have meaning or significance' is commonly used in the sense of 'to have

¹³⁵ Bertrand Russell, *My Philosophical Development* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 42. Also see: Andrew David Irvine, "Bertrand Russell", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<u>http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/russell/</u>. Especially section 3 "Russell's Work in Analytic Philosophy."

¹³⁶ John Deigh, "Ethics in the Analytical Tradition," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 582.

¹³⁷ G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, ed.Thomas Baldwin (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Ch. I, §20, p.82.

¹³⁸ Ibid., Ch.1, §22, p.85.

importance'; and this again means 'to have value either as a means or as an end.'¹³⁹

And Moore wants to retain some notion of 'organic unity' in which some whole may have an intrinsic value different in amount from the sum of the value of its parts. Yet there is a different sense of 'meaning' or 'significance' that is more basic than this. Namely, sometimes we just want to understand what a thing is. And I believe that it is Hegel's claim (and Aristotle's) that when it comes to certain kinds of things – those which are parts of larger wholes – we simply cannot understand what they are without considering them in light of the wholes of which they are parts.

The kind of intelligibility that a part can have in abstraction from its whole, i.e. the kind of intelligibility that would likely make plausible Moore's claim to atomic intelligibility, is something like the mathematically describable intelligibility of the Galilean worldview. Galileo had said that the book nature was written in the language of mathematics.¹⁴⁰ And there is certainly some sense in which an organ, say, of an organically unified body, can be understood in terms of its quantitative, mathematical dimensions. And this intelligibility can be grasped in abstraction from the whole of which it is a part. And its mathematically described properties remain when we then re-conceive of it in relation to the whole. Yet there is still a tendency to think of all reality in these Galilean terms. Allan Gibbard, for example, speaks of a "Galilean core":

The Galilean core is our story of nature; it is our story of how, ultimately, a wide range of things are matters of fundamental physics.¹⁴¹

In other words, mathematical physics is the touchstone for the study of *phusis*, i.e. of nature. And it is arguable that mathematical physics does indeed proceed with a methodology that legitimates the kinds of logical atomism propounded by Moore and Russell. Namely, mathematical physics tries to explain much of our experience by appeal to its more basic

¹³⁹ Ibid., Ch. I, §22, 86.

¹⁴⁰ In *The Aassayer (Il Saggiatore)*, Galileo writes: "Philosophy is written in this grand book, the universe, which stands continually open to our gaze. But the book cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and read the letters in which it is composed. It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometric figures without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it; without these, one wanders about in a dark labyrinth." Galileo Galilei, *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*, trans. Stillman Drake (New York: Anchor Books, 1957), 237-238.

¹⁴¹ Allan Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings: A Theory of Normative Judgment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 123.

constituents – ultimately, we might think, from atomic predications of properties like 'charge' and 'spin' that are predicated of atomic entities. But Moore already saw some difficulty in how evaluative properties fit in to such a picture. This is why Moore spends so much time in *Principia Ethica* arguing that the property 'good' is not a 'natural' quality where 'natural' means "that which is the subject-matter of the natural sciences and also of psychology."¹⁴² I believe that Moore was correct that, say, mathematical physics has nothing to tell us about the property 'good.' Yet I think that Moore was wrong to concede the term 'natural' to the modern natural sciences. In doing so Moore also necessarily jettisons the idea that a "life according to nature" can be a reasonable ethical maxim.¹⁴³ To think this way, as Aristotle and the Stoics thought, Moore fears, would imply that we have replaced ethics with one of the natural sciences.¹⁴⁴ But I think that we should be able to agree with Moore that ethics and 'the good' are not "the subject-matter of the natural sciences", as they are currently practiced – according to the Galilean mathematical model – while still retaining that "a life according to nature" might be a reasonable ethical maxim.

By conceding the study of all that is "natural" to the so-called natural sciences Moore comes very close to implying that all that is there to be discovered is also covered by the domain of those same natural sciences; and surely one meaning of 'nature' is "that which is there anyway" or "that which is there to be discovered." Moore retains that idea that our ethical intuitions of the property 'good' do indeed disclose something there in the world to be discovered. Yet, in severing it utterly from our "scientific" investigations of the world, such intuitions are left in a precarious intellectual position. In articulating his naturalistic fallacy, Moore treats Ethics and Science as if they were volatile substances that would explode if they got near one another. I want to suggest that one of the motivating reasons for Moore's separation of Ethics from the natural sciences – one of the reasons for retaining the idea that once all the scientific facts are in, it is still an "open question" as to whether the quality 'good' is present or not – is that this separation preserves a tight boundary that delimits the subject-matters of the different academic faculties within the institution of the university. The separation of ethics and science delimits the boundaries, to recall Hume's analogy, between the profession of the anatomist and the painter. The separation secures some province of inquiry to the ethicists that

¹⁴² Moore, Principia Ethica, 92. Ch. II, §26.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 93. Ch. II, §27.

¹⁴⁴ See Ibid., 92, 94. Ch. II, §26, §27.

cannot simply be swallowed up by the natural sciences. It also maintains that no natural science, presumably not even biology, can concern itself with the property 'good.' I think this results in a distortion of both ethics and biology. As Lacoste says, in discussing the emergence of the institutionalized university in the medieval period, "the University is defined by its power to make long-range decisions about the topology of knowledge."¹⁴⁵

The distortions arise insofar as we begin to recognize a seemingly unbridgeable dualism between the pictures of reality that emerge from the natural sciences, on the one hand, and from the concerns of the ethicist on the other: between the world-as-experienced and the world-as-known-by-science. This problem is not new. Wilfred Sellars famously refers to the distinction in terms of the "manifest image" and the "scientific image." Yet Sellars agrees that we must try to see these things together. He uses a metaphor of stereoscopic vision. But Sellars, like Lieiter, says that "the task of 'seeing all things together' has itself been (paradoxically) broken down into specialties."¹⁴⁶ Recall that Leiter holds that, in philosophy, like in the natural sciences, numerous specialized, individual, academic researchers are supposed to make small contributions to the solution of a set of generally recognized problems. Likewise Sellars says that "the philosopher who specializes may derive much of his sense of the whole from the pre-reflective orientation which is our common heritage."¹⁴⁷ But do we have a common heritage, or a set of generally recognized problems when it comes to ethics? Michael Smith writes:

There are no dominant views. In their recent comprehensive review of a century of metaethics, Stephen Darwall, Alan Gibbard and Peter Railton remark that the 'scene is remarkably rich and diverse.' But even to the casual observer, this is surely an understatement. The scene is so diverse that we must wonder at the assumption that these theorists are all talking about the same thing.¹⁴⁸

How could we begin to fit together a picture of ethics with the pictures given by the natural sciences if there seems to be no agreement about what the generally recognized problems in ethics are?

This confusion among ethicists and other "non-scientists" easily leads one to believe that the "sciences" are in good order in a way that the "humanities" are not. And this, in turn, leads one to believe that one must begin with the picture given by the natural sciences and then

¹⁴⁵ Lacoste, *Theological Thinking*, 43.

¹⁴⁶ Sellars, "Scientific Image", 3.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 3.

¹⁴⁸ Smith, *Moral Problem*, 4.

subsequently try to fit ethics in somewhere. Yet I think that this approach is troubling. According to John McDowell:

Modern philosophy has taken itself to be called on to bridge dualistic gulfs...Ordinary modern philosophy addresses its derivative dualisms in a characteristic way. It takes its stand on one side of a gulf it aims to bridge, accepting without question the way its target dualism conceives the chosen side. Then it constructs something as close as possible to the conception of the other side that figured in the problems, out of materials that are unproblematically available where it has taken its stand. Of course there no longer seems to be a gulf, but the result is bound to look more or less revisionist.¹⁴⁹

Instead of trying to build bridges from competing conceptions of reality, it seems rather that, to resort back Lacoste's analogy, we should question the initial topology – the topology of knowledge as it is shaped by the university scheme of demarcating departments. But, in order to do this, i.e. in order to re-conceive the topology, one must understand not only one's own side of the gulf, but also one's interlocutor's side. To a certain degree I have expressed worries about specialization generally speaking. But in the case where conversations are particularly troubled – as in the case of contemporary meta-ethics (and perhaps contemporary normative ethics as well) – we might think that even if specialization was harmless in itself, it might be detrimental in times of greater fragmentation and confusion. For example, consider this remark from a preface of a book by Alva Noë:

I am not someone who disdains specialization and technical language. Science and philosophy are, if you like, conversations that have been going on for a long time. Of course, it will be hard for an outsider to sit down at the table and have a real sense of what is going on. And why should scientists be required to begin again anew each day so that the novice can understand what is under discussion? / The situation is different, however, if the conversation is, well, troubled. In my view, this is the case in contemporary cognitive science. The science of mind could benefit from interruption. It is time to slide our chairs back from the table and to invite intelligent latecomers to join our circle.¹⁵⁰

In this sense, we can see that the need for "generalists" as opposed to "specialists" may become even more pressing when conversations are not in good order. And this also explains why certain philosophers, like Alasdair MacIntyre, seem to have a particular aversion to specialization in philosophy. According to MacIntyre

¹⁴⁹ John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 93-94.

¹⁵⁰ Alva Noë, Out of Our Heads: Why You Are Not Your Brain, and Other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), xii-xiv.

the conception of philosophy as essentially a semitechnical, quasi-scientific, autonomous enquiry to be conducted by professionalized specialists is in the end barren.¹⁵¹

Yet we might think MacIntyre's harsh criticism of philosophical specialization is in part due to his - I believe rightful – observation that contemporary philosophical conversations about the nature of ethics are in a particularly bad state.

Section 5. Contemporary Attempts to Address These Effects

A. John McDowell

Analytical philosophy, according to Russell, was born out of opposition to "idealism" and "monism." Yet it seems that philosophers towards the end of the twentieth century have started to see that there is something important in these old "Hegelian" doctrines that is worthy of a kind of re-investigation. Nicholas H. Smith observes that John McDowell's *Mind and World*, a published version of his 1991 John Locke Lectures, "is already widely regarded as a classic." Smith says that

Perhaps no book written in the past decade or so has generated more interest among professional philosophers than John McDowell's *Mind and Word*...It has become...a key reference point in contemporary debates in epistemology, philosophy of mind, and meta-ethics.¹⁵²

I think that it is possible to distinguish between two important points in McDowell's lectures: one on the mind side of things, and another on the world side of things. These might be seen as roughly responding to Russell's rejection of idealism, on the one hand, and monism, on the other hand.

1. On the Mind side of Mind and World

On the mind side of things, McDowell tries to show the untenable nature of a common conception of philosophical empiricism that understands perceptual experience as a kind of

¹⁵¹ McIntyre, *Whose Justice*, x.

¹⁵² Nicholas Smith ed., *Reading McDowell: On Mind and World* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 1.

utterly passive impingement from outside ourselves; conceived in this way, perceptual experience cannot possibly be fit to do the kind of epistemic work that would make empiricism plausible. On the other hand, to renounce empiricism would be to lapse into a kind of idealism in which our experience is not answerable to an independent world. In McDowell's words, "to call a position "idealism" is to protest that it does not genuinely acknowledge how reality is independent of our thinking."¹⁵³ Yet McDowell does retain a kinds of ideal-*ist* element in his understanding of perceptual experience. He argues that "we need to recognize that experiences themselves are states or occurrences that inextricably combine receptivity and spontaneity"¹⁵⁴ and that "[t]his joint involvement of receptivity and spontaneity allows us to say that in experience one can take in how things are."¹⁵⁵ This understanding of perceptual experience is idealist in the sense that it allows that spontaneous conceptual capacities to shape our perceptual experiences, yet is not idealism in the objectionable sense insofar as it still allows that such spontaneous conceptual capacities are what allow us to be truly receptive and open to an independent reality. And, regarding the influences on his work, McDowell says that

I have described a philosophical project: to stand on the shoulders of the giant, Kant, and see our way to the supersession of traditional philosophy that he almost managed, though not quite. The philosopher whose achievement that description fits best is someone we take almost no notice of, in the philosophical tradition I was brought up in...namely, Hegel.¹⁵⁶

McDowell even goes so far as to say, of *Mind and World*, that "I would like to conceive this work is an a prolegomenon to a reading of the *Phenomenology*"¹⁵⁷

Yet McDowell sees his understanding of how our spontaneous conceptual capacities shape our experience as owing influence not just to Hegel, but also to Aristotle. McDowell asks us to "consider the notion of *second nature*."

The notion is all but explicit in Aristotle's account of how ethical character is formed. Since ethical character includes dispositions of the practical intellect, part of what happens when character is formed is that the practical intellect acquires a determinate shape. So practical wisdom is second nature to its possessors...This point is clearly not restricted to ethics...If we generalize the way Aristotle conceives the molding of ethical character, we arrive at the notion of having one's eyes opened to reasons at large by

¹⁵³ McDowell, *Mind and World*, 26.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 24.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 25.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 111.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., ix.

acquiring a second nature. I cannot think of a good short English expression for this, but it is what figures in German philosophy as *Bildung*.¹⁵⁸

This Aristotelian idea that practical reason involves a kind of habitual formation of our receptive cognitive powers that is conditioned by experience is also present in Thomistic thought. According to Daniel D. De Hann:

All knowledge begins in the senses, which is to say that all cognitional determinations initially come through acts of sensation, but we do not continue to sense, perceive, and understand the world afresh in every interaction we have with the world. We are only virgin knowers once; subsequent to our nascent encounter with reality we cease to be purely passive perceptual and intellectual agents...The world continues to fecundate our sensations, perceptions, and intellections, but it is no longer the only pole of determination for the vital acts of cognitive and appetitive powers.¹⁵⁹

The reason the world cases to be the only pole of determination for our experiences of the world is that

We do not perceive things in the world without bringing the treasury of our past experiences to bear upon the realities displayed for us here and now.¹⁶⁰

Yet De Hann is quick to note that "[i]t would be a naïve realism indeed that found these points to be suspiciously anti-realist."¹⁶¹ In other words, that fact that our conceptual capacities structure our experience is fully compatible with the thought that our experiences, albeit defeasible, are able to put us in touch with independent reality. What this means is that, from the perspective of our own subjectivity, we always cognize the particulars before us in light of our wider experiences, our built up knowledge of things, and our acquired conceptual capacities. The conclusion I have been driving at here is that the explanation which Moore puts into the mouth of the "Hegelian" -

'If you want to know the truth about a part,' we are told, 'you must consider not that part, but something else – namely the whole: nothing is true of the part, but only of the whole '¹⁶²

- seems very plausible when it comes to certain kinds of "meaning" or "significance." There are certain kinds of intelligibility, certain kinds of reasons, and certain kinds of meanings that are

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 84.

¹⁵⁹ Daniel D. De Haan, "Perception and the *Vis Cogitativa*: A Thomistic Analysis of Aspectual, Actional, and Affectional Percepts," American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly 88, no. 3 (2014): 408. ¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 415.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 415.

¹⁶² Moore, Principia Ethica, Ch.I, §22, p.85.

"there anyway, whether or not one's eyes are open to them"¹⁶³ But having our eyes opened to them requires us to bring our experience of a wider context to bear on the particular things before us. This makes the kind of atomic understanding of parts – the kind of understanding of a part that is reached, as Moore says, through "the method of absolute isolation"¹⁶⁴ of that part from the context of the wider whole – untenable in many kinds of cases.

2. On the World side of Mind and World

These consideration have been addressed to our understanding of our own cognitive capacities, and our understanding of our capacity for perceptual experience, i.e. they have dealt with the mind side of Mind and World. These considerations have been aimed at softening analytic philosophy's rejection of what Russell called "idealism." On the world side, McDowell has an equally important critique that is relevant to softening analytic philosophy's rejection of Russell called "monism." McDowell says that there is a "deep-rooted" yet "non-compulsory" influence on our thinking that largely leads us into the predicament that is the heart of McDowell's Mind and World lectures. The predicament, according to McDowell, is that we frequently find ourselves stuck in an "interminable oscillation" or a kind of "seesaw" between two unsatisfactory views of how it is that our perceptual experiences justify our beliefs. Either, on the one hand, we accept what he calls the Myth of the Given, in which we believe that our perceptual experiences are simply impingements from the outside world. The impingements come from outside our conceptual capacities and are properly described according the "logic of nature" as originated from "the realm of law." Yet the kinds of relations that constitute the "logical space" of nature do include relations such as something's being correct in the light of some other thing. This means it is unclear how such non-conceptualized impingements could serve as a tribunal to justify our conceptual beliefs. Or, on the other hand, if we recoil from the "bald naturalism" that generates "the myth of the Given" we find ourselves stuck immured within the "logical space of reasons" - a kind of internalism or coherentism that leaves us with something like a "frictionless spinning in a void" and a "craving for external friction."¹⁶⁵ Both of these options, McDowell thinks are untenable, and he believes that there is, to borrow a phrase

¹⁶³ McDowell, Mind and World, 91.

¹⁶⁴ Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. III, §55, 57; Ch. VI, §113.

¹⁶⁵ McDowell, Mind and World, 11.

from Wittgenstein, a kind of picture that holds us captive, and which leaves us unable to "dismount the seesaw" between these two unacceptable positions. The picture in question is: "the naturalism that leaves nature disenchanted."

The reason we are not able to entertain a picture of the kind of receptive spontaneity in which our receptive perceptual experience is permeated by conceptual spontaneity – the kind of receptive spontaneity that would help us dismount the seesaw – is that this view of the mind requires that the world be conceptually structured. It requires that our experiences themselves can be both conceptually structured and truly receptive, which in turn requires that we receive something conceptually structured from the world. This requires that "what we experience is not external to the realm of the kind of intelligibility that is proper to meaning."¹⁶⁶ We must not deny, as the natural sciences do, the "intelligibility of meaning" to nature. While there is a special kind of intelligibility that allows us to say that certain aspects of nature are still "rightly approached in the sort of way we approach a text or an utterance or some other kind of action."¹⁶⁷ And we cannot concede that "the logic of nature" or the "realm of law", which are the domain of the modern natural sciences, is completely coextensive with "the natural."

It is the conception of the kind of naturalism which leaves nature disenchanted, what McDowell sometimes calls "bald naturalism", which prevents us from understanding the possibility of our perceptual experiences being truly open to ad receptive of reality. McDowell is quick to note that we should not see him as denying that there was something admirable about the modern conception of nature, namely, a kind of intelligibility that was distinguished from the intelligibility that is proper to "meaning." And while McDowell thinks that Aristotle's ethics is a good model for coming to understand this kind of nature, he also thinks that Aristotle was, in some sense, innocent when it comes to the kind of power this disenchanted picture of nature holds over us. And McDowell thinks that reading Aristotle in light of our own picture of disenchanted nature tends to distort the Aristotelian project.

Modern readers often credit Aristotle with aiming to construct the requirements of ethics out of independent facts about human nature. This is to attribute to Aristotle a scheme for a naturalistic foundation for ethics, with nature playing an archaic version of the role played by disenchanted nature in modern naturalistic ethics....Read like this, Aristotle's

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 72.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 72.

picture of ethical understanding counts rather as a peculiar sort of bald naturalism. / But I think this kind of reading is a historical monstrosity.¹⁶⁸

McDowell has in mind here certain thinkers like Bernard Williams. But, as I noted above, part of G. E. Moore's worry about "naturalism" in ethics was founded on the belief that any kind of ethical naturalism would replace ethics with one of the natural sciences, i.e. it would allow one to simply arrive at ethical conclusions by means of purportedly neutral scientific means. But McDowell's point is that

In Aristotle's conception, the thought that the demands of ethics are real is not a projection from, or a construction out of, facts that could be in view independently of the viewer's participation in ethical life and thought, so that they would be available to a sideways-on investigation of how ethical life and thought are related to the natural context in which they take place.¹⁶⁹

The perspective by which one comes to view the natural (in the wider "enchanted" sense of 'natural') demands of ethics is both fully natural and irreducibly ethical or evaluative. And this requires that we admit a kind of intelligibility that is proper to nature but different from that kind of intelligibility that defines the methods and subject matter of the natural sciences (at least those natural sciences closest to mathematical physics). In McDowell's words:

I am not urging that we should try to regain Aristotle's innocence. It would be crazy to regret the idea that natural science reveals a special kind of intelligibility, to be distinguished from the kind that is proper to meaning...But instead of trying to integrate the intelligibility of meaning into the realm of law, we can aim at a postlapsarian or knowing counterpart of Aristotle's innocence. We can acknowledge the great step forward that human understanding took when our ancestors formed the idea of a domain of intelligibility, the realm of natural law, that is empty of meaning, but we can refuse to equate that domain of intelligibility with nature, let alone with what is real.¹⁷⁰

The relevance of this criticism of our understanding of nature to the monism that worries Russell and Moore comes in to view much more clearly as these ideas are developed by other contemporary thinkers that are sympathetic to McDowell's criticism of "bald naturalism."

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 79.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 83.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 109.

B. Michael Thompson

On such thinker is Michael Thompson. In his *Life and Action*, Thompson describes the study of life an action as a domain of inquiry in which Aristotle's manner of approaching the world should still strike us as illuminating. Thompson seems to envision something like McDowell's distinction between the kind of intelligibility that is proper to meaning, and the kind of intelligibility that is proper to the law-governed processes that are proper to mathematical physics. And while, as McDowell says, we ought not try to reclaim Aristotle's innocence with regards to the latter, Thompson still thinks that Aristotle's conception of intelligibility might still the best way to approach matter of life and action. And, Thompson sees the kind of intelligibility that is proper to the sphere of life and action to be a proper outlet for the Aristotelian/Hegelian kinds of insights that were the initial bugbear of early analytic philosophy. According to Thompson:

...Aristotle is a philosopher of the manifest image, or of 'the ordinary', or of the world of rustic common sense...Nature in general, we may say, he approaches with the categories derived from the representation of life and action. This is very bad news if you are envisioning, say, a mathematical physics. But if your topic is precisely life and action, and these as objects of philosophy, then things are evidently otherwise...It is in the sphere of action and life that we might find use for a conception of, say, a 'whole' or 'totality' that precedes its parts or phases; it is in the sphere of action and life that we might find use for a conception and life that we might find use for a conception of a special nexus of particular and general through which we might see the former as accounted for through the latter, or through something the latter contains.¹⁷¹

Thompson understands his work as bringing his thought within the Aristotelian tradition in philosophy and practical thought, about which he says

there is after all a genuine tradition: the antecedents to whom we must "look up with great awe"...would include not just Aristotle but also St. Thomas, Hegel, Marx, and even indeed Kant in certain respects.¹⁷²

And one common unifying factor that unites all of these thinkers is the fact that they are all generally accused by the analytic tradition of some sort of obscurantism or confusion. Thompson acknowledges the reputation of such thinkers, yet thinks that, nonetheless, the subject matter of life and action may require us to attempt such a holistic understanding:

¹⁷¹ Michael Thompson, *Life and Action: Elementary Structures of Practice and Practical Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 10.

¹⁷² Ibid., 11.

...in textbook accounts they are all inevitably accused of a dark holism or organicism, a doubtful essentialism, and a dubious use of teleological locutions. My thought, though, is that if our material is to be grasped, we must comprehend what it is in our most basic forms of thought that leads a thinker to propound propositions of the sorts that inevitably attract these dismissive epithets. We must, that is, ourselves risk attracting these epithets.¹⁷³

Yet Thompson thinks we might still rightly call his approach an "analytical" approach – not insofar as it adheres to the kind of method of analysis or the ontology of atomism, but insofar as he is trying to describe the logical form of a thought, a judgment, or a predication. The logical form of this particular judgment, which he sometimes calls a "natural-historical judgment" is mostly ignored by most philosophers within the analytical tradition insofar as it "cannot be shoehorned under any Fregean rubric."¹⁷⁴ Yet Thompson thinks that judgments with this particular logical form are necessary for any proper understanding of life and action.

Thompson says that

this text is always steering between a kind of atomism or individualism that rejects the element of a form or unity, on the one hand, and a kind of Platonism or Cartesiansim that puts this element at a distance from the things united.¹⁷⁵

Thompson's aim is thus to describe the logical nature of that "special nexus of particular and general" that characterizes natural-historical judgments. We might think that this special nexus of particular in general is particularly Aristotelian, and that it gets at what Aristotle is trying to say in enigmatic claims such as: "although you perceive particulars, perception is of universals, - e.g. of man, not of Callias the man."¹⁷⁶ In an attempt to understand the logical form of such thoughts, Thompson seizes upon a phrase that G. E. M. Ascombe uses, in passing, to describing our apprehension of the nature of living things. Anscombe says: "When we call something an acorn, we look to a wider context than can be seen in the acorn itself."¹⁷⁷ Yet Thompson says that Anscombe "promptly drops" the matter of a "wider context" and never explicitly describes what is involved in such a "look to a wider context." Thompson unpacks Anscombe's statement

¹⁷³ Ibid., 12.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 20.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 11.

¹⁷⁶ Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, trans. Jonathan Barnes, 2nd ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 100a16-b1.

¹⁷⁷ Thompson, *Life and Action*, 53-54.

by saying that the intelligibility of the vital operations of an organism are, in some sense, mediated or made intelligible by reference to this "wider context":

If a thing is alive, if it is an organism, then some particular vital operations and processes must go on in it from time to time...if any of these things is there, or is happening, then this is not something fixed or determined by anything in the organism considered in its particularity or as occupying a certain region of space. That they are there or happening, and thus that we have an organism at all, presupposes the existence of a certain 'wider context'; it is this that stamps these several characters onto things.¹⁷⁸

Thompson says that we might think of this wider context as the life-form, or species, or *psuche* of the particular thing.¹⁷⁹ And so while this Aristotelian view need not imply any maximal monism in which, say, all things must derive their intelligibility from something like a "world-soul", it does seem to imply that there is at least a kind of internal relation between the individual *hic et nunc* and the more general notion of its species or form.

The kind of intelligibility that Thompson is seeking here is similar to what McDowell calls "the intelligibility that is proper to meaning" as opposed to the intelligibility that is proper to a mathematical physics. Just as a closer inspection of the particular geometrically describable qualities of the ink marks on a piece of paper do not tell us whether the arithmetic formula they realize is true, so a closer inspection of the particular matter of an individual creature will not teach us the answer to the kinds of questions that are answered by natural-historical judgments.¹⁸⁰ Consider the following example from Thompson:

suppose we are dissecting a living frog and – scalpel aimed at the repulsive contractions of the heart – I ask, "What's going on? What's the point? Why?" If I am satisfied with the response, "It's the heart, of course, and by so beating it circulates the blood," then, after all, I think, it was not the individual movements here and now that interested me. I was not so much pointing into the individual, as pointing *into its form*. I do no anticipate a different reply at a different lab bench...¹⁸¹

If we ask "What's going on?" in the sense of the above example, it seems that although, in some sense, our question is about the particular before us here and now, it is also about something else. The kind of Hegelian statement that Moore thought was nonsensical –

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 56.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 62.

¹⁸⁰ See, ibid., 55. Thompson draws the example of the meaning of a formula from Frege.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 78.

'If you want to know the truth about a part,' we are told, 'you must consider not that part, but something else – namely the whole: nothing is true of the part, but only of the whole.'¹⁸²

- seems to be the exact sort of answer that Thompson is saying is appropriate when it comes to the intelligibility that is bestowed by grasping a natural historical judgment about an organism. But the form that is the object of the particular "why" question Thompson is describing is not something located, say, "to the right and left of" the particular frog, nor is "above" it.¹⁸³ This is why Thompson said we must be careful not to conceive of the form as something "at a distance from" the particular. This would involve a lapse into what McDowell might call a kind of "rampant Platonism."¹⁸⁴ But neither can we simply look at the particular with the kind of radical isolation that would limit us only to its mathematically quantifiable qualities.

The reason Thompson's discussion is relevant to practical reason is that it may be possible to understand a notion of flourishing or a notion of "natural defect" that can be grounded in the logical relation between a particular organism and its form. Thompson thinks that our normative notions of good, bad, pathology, defect etc. are grounded in our understanding of natural-historical judgments. In other words, we can only assign normative judgments to organisms if we understand what kind of thing they are, and what kinds of activities they engage in. Thompson notes that there is a temptation to think that natural historical judgments about organisms are explained or analyzed by appeal to a normative notion of form. But Thompson believes that "the explanation runs the other way"¹⁸⁵, or perhaps, even better, that "the reverse is closer to the truth."¹⁸⁶ The attempt to reduce or analyze the unique logic of a natural historical judgment (whatever we think that is!) and, on the other hand, an isolated or atomic normative judgment, is a "desperate" move that does violence to "the transparently 'factual' or 'positive' character" of natural historical judgments.¹⁸⁷ The reductive move is desperate, I think, because it tries to deny that something with the unique logic of natural historical judgments could be an equally basic

¹⁸² Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch.1, §22, p.85. As quoted above in Part I, Section 4.B.

¹⁸³ Thompson, Life and Action, 62.

¹⁸⁴ See: McDowell, *Mind and World*, 77, 78, 83, 85, 88, 92 note 7, 93, 110, 115, 176.

¹⁸⁵ Thompson, *Life and Action*, 80.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 74.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 75-76.

constituent of our experience. Equally basic, that is, when compared to the purportedly basic experiences that serve as the quantifiable data of the natural sciences.

A common thread running though the "Representation of Life" section of Thompson's book is the idea that the content of things like field guides and nature documentaries is both perfectly 'factual' or 'positive', and yet that is has a logical form that is not well understood. Thompson notes that the use of jargon to describe the logical nature of these judgments is likely to obscure the matter insofar as such judgments are among the most elementary forms of human thought.¹⁸⁸ Yet, at one point, he suggests something like "teleologically articulable non-Fregean generality"¹⁸⁹ as a description of the logical nature of the judgment he is trying to illuminate. But the teleological nature of the natural historical judgment is not reducible or analyzable in terms of the kind of conscious instrumental activities that we ascribe to individuals. Thompson gives the following example as a juxtaposition to the example of the frog dissection I mentioned earlier:

If a student moves behind a pillar and I ask, "What's going on? What's the point Why?" and an satisfied with the response "He's trying to avoid professor X; he owes her a term paper", then it is the movements *hic et nunc* and not elsewhere that form the object of my query.¹⁹⁰

Here we can describe the case in terms of a kind of "intention or psychical teleology." But the difference between these two types of "teleological generality" is that the kind of teleological generality invoked in technical and artificial kinds of cases requires or presupposes that the individual in question actually makes the judgment or the intention, whereas the natural historical judgment does not – in the case of the natural historical judgment, we might say that the teleological generalities are "there anyway" regardless of whether we recognize them. Thompson phrases this in terms of the following lyrical opposition: "An unrecognized technique or craft or artifact-type is after all a merely possible one" but "unrecognized life-forms are common."¹⁹¹ But it is this very idea that nature might often act "for and end" yet without consciousness that seems to be both common to ordinary experience and denied by the natural sciences (insofar as they operate with a methodology that denies "the intelligibility proper to meaning"). Some philosophers have found it a helpful correction to modern thinking to

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 11.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 79.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 78.

¹⁹¹ 80

distinguish between 'purpose' which refers to an agent's intentions, and 'end' which refers to something about non-conscious nature that is graspable in a natural historical judgment.¹⁹² In fact, this is why Aristotle claims that art imitates nature, as opposed to nature imitating art: he thinks that nature's ends are in some prior to our own purposes, and that the latter are best explained by reference to the former. And when it comes to the desperation I alluded to above, Etienne Gilson observes a general fact about Aristotle's conception of nature:

The notion of teleology without consciousness and immanent in nature remains mysterious to us. Aristotle does not think that this should be a reason to deny its existence. Mysterious or not, the fact is there.¹⁹³

And this is because

Aristotle had a clear consciousness of the difficulty, but, unlike certain of our contemporaries, a fact remained a fact for him even when he realized that he was incapable of explaining it.¹⁹⁴

I need to say something more about what accounts for this desperation that motivates one to deny certain basic aspects of experience. But as a segue to fulfilling this promissory note, I want to say a bit more about what happens to our understanding of the relation to between normative judgments and natural historical judgments.

Without the notion of a natural historical judgment and its particular logic – that particular nexus of general and particular – we tend to understand evaluative or normative notions either, on the one hand, as unique free-floating and shapeless atomic predicates that can be assigned to particulars understood in isolation, or, on the other hand, we tend to try to analyze them in terms of statistical classes built up from quantifiable instances of "natural" atomic predications. G. E. Moore saw the latter option as untenable and was unfortunately thrown over onto the first horn of this dilemma. He thought that the claim that "the natural is good" could very often be parsed as "the normal is good." And here it is clearly implied that Moore understands "the natural" as "the normal", and that "the normal" is understood as a statistical notion:

¹⁹² See Francis Slade, "On the Ontological Priority of Ends and Its Relation to the Narrative Arts" in *Beauty, Art and the Polis*, ed. Alice Ramos (Washington, D.C.: American Maritain Association, 2000), especially 58-59.

 ¹⁹³ Étienne Gilson, From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution, trans. John Lyon (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 13.
 ¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 11.

Was the excellence of Socrates or of Shakespeare normal? Was it not rather abnormal, extraordinary? It is, I think, obvious in the first place, that not all that is good is normal; that, on the contrary, the abnormal is often better than the normal: peculiar excellence, as well as peculiar viciousness, must obviously be not normal but abnormal.¹⁹⁵

And if this is conceded to be the common sense of 'natural', then it not only seems highly implausible that 'the good' has anything to do with 'the natural' but it also seems to generate Moore's other worry that ethics and ethical thought might be replaced by one of the sciences, i.e. that it might be replaced by something like mathematical calculation. We saw above that McDowell shared this worry - the worry that conclusions about ethics and the good might be constructed or built up from some perspective of inquiry that is utterly independent of the inquirers participation in ethical life and thought. But, of course, this is not how Thompson conceives of the natural historical judgment. To quote Philippa Foot, who tries to conceive of an ethics that is grounded in such natural historical judgments: "We start from the fact that there is a basis for the Aristotelian categorical that does not come from the counting of heads."¹⁹⁶ But since Moore was incapable of conceiving the possibility of the kind of natural judgment that Thompson is articulating, then it seems that he was pushed back onto the other horn of the dilemma: he was forced to claim that predications of good involved the apprehension of a nonnatural property that could not be grounded in any way upon natural properties. But this leaves the good as a kind of shapeless quality that is indefinable, and it leaves those who disagree about their apprehension or intuition of such a property utterly at loss.

This shapelessness of Moore's notion of good is perhaps best understood by a later criticism by Peter Geach that there is something confused in the thought that 'good' could be a predicative adjective like, say, 'spherical.' Geach's point is that 'good' is more like an attributive adjective that must travel together with some common noun in order to be intelligible. Philippa Foot expresses the point in an amusing anecdote:

I have sometimes secured instant recognition of this point by holding a small bit torn paper in front of an audience and asking them to say whether or not it is good. An offer to pass it around so that they can see it better gets a laugh that recognizes a logical – grammatical – absurdity.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. II, §27, pp.94-95. Also see Hume, *Treatise*, Bk. III, Part I, Section ii, p.474ff.

¹⁹⁶ Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 2001), 31.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 2, footnote 4.

Thompson's point is that good, understood in the sense of natural defect, is something that only makes sense when predicated of an individual, while at the same time being mediated by a reference to the "life-form" or general species term which defines that individual. And Foot notes that Thompson's understanding of the relation between these kinds of natural historical judgments or Aristoltelian categoricals, on the one hand, and evaluative assessments, on the other hand, is "very close indeed."¹⁹⁸ But the kind of intelligibility that defines such an Aristotelian categorical is not simply a "mere survey of the class" but rather a "understanding of the life-form." And this latter is something that cannot be calculated. The natural historical judgment "expresses one's *interpretation* or *understanding* of the life-form shared by the members of that class."¹⁹⁹ Here we are clearly talking about the intelligibility that is proper to meaning, and not the intelligibility commonly found in the natural sciences. Yet we are still talking about things that are "there anyway." Thompson's understanding of evaluative judgments:

The first application of concepts of good, bad, defect, and pathology is to the individual, and it consists in a certain sort of reference of the thing to its form or kind and the natural history that pertains to it...It is true that the judgment of natural defect, so explained, must in a sense reach beyond the 'facts' about an individual. It reaches beyond them, though, to what appear equally to be facts – namely, 'facts' about its species or life-form. What merely 'ought to be' in the individual really 'is' in its form. In another sense, though, the picture of a 'reach beyond' is absurd... A reference to the life-form is *already contained* in the thought of the individual and its vicissitudes. We thus go no farther for critique than we went for interpretation...A true judgment of natural defect thus supplies an 'immanent critique' of its subject.²⁰⁰

By trying to articulate the logical form of a specific kind of logical judgment, and by linking evaluative judgments of natural organisms to this kind of judgment so closely that the distinction between them nearly disappears, Thompson seems to be eroding what many have referred to as the distinction between facts and values. Thompson is arguing that our evaluative claims are no less natural than the kinds of claims we find in biological field guides and nature documentaries. Moore later admitted that "in *Principia*, I did not give any tenable explanation of what I meant

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 30.

¹⁹⁹ Thompson, *Life and Action*, 73.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 81.

by saying that "good" was not a natural property."²⁰¹ Yet Moore was right to say that good is not a natural property insofar as 'natural' simply refers to the subject matter of the natural sciences – specifically to sciences like mathematical physics. In this since, his negative account was correct, but he gave no positive account of what non-natural meant. And it was because of this lack of a positive account of what he meant by non-natural that Moore was, in his own admission, unable to respond to his emotivist critics.

The other problem associated with Moore's understanding of 'good' as a simple, indefinable, non-natural quality is that the lack of an account of what it means for good to be non-natural also extended to a lack of how we should understand or approach disagreements about the good. Alasdair MacIntyre made the very astute observation that many of the moral philosophers immediately after G. E. Moore, many of which who had been his pupils, began to articulate various forms of emotivism or non-cognitivism about ethics. According to MacIntyre this is because, while Moore himself and his immediate followers understood their differences to be grounded in some better or worse apprehension of an objective evaluative quality, his later students seemed to think that the behavior of Moore and his contemporaries was just as well explained by thinking of the parties to these purportedly objective disagreements as simply having differing attitudes towards the objects of their disagreements. Macintyre says that an emotivist moral philosopher in the generation immediately after G. E. Moore might have made some interpretation like the following:

these people take themselves to be identifying the presence of a non-natural property, which they call 'good'; but there is in fact no such property and they are doing no more and no other than expressing their feelings and attitudes, disguising the expression or preference and whim by an interpretation of their own utterance and behavior which confers upon it an objectivity that it does not in fact possess.²⁰²

I would suggest at least two reasons why the later emotivists re-interpreted the behavior surrounding evaluative disagreements among Moore and his followers. The first is that while Moore claimed that evaluative judgments picked out some non-natural property – 'good' – he later admits that he gave no plausible account of the nature of this property. Part of the appeal of

²⁰¹ Quoted in Copleston's discussion of Moore. See Frederick Charles Copleston, S. J., *A History of Philosophy. Volume VIII: Empiricism, Idealism, and Pragmatism in Britain and America* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 411.

²⁰² Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 17.

a non-cognitive ethical theory, then, is that it accounts for the behavior of evaluative disagreement without appeal to properties that J. L. Mackie would later describe as "queer."²⁰³ Recall that Mackie mentioned two dimensions of "queerness" that would have to accompany Moore's account: an epistemological account of how we came to apprehend the good, and a metaphysical account of how a property like 'good' would fit into our ontology. Both accounts, according to Mackie would be very queer. Yet I hope that it is obvious that the accounts of perception I have described in McDowell's Mind and World, and the kind of natural historical judgments described in Thompson's Life and Action go some way towards giving an account of what such epistemological and ontological accounts might look like. The second reason for why emotivism or non-cognitivism is appealing is that it finds support in the fact that there is more disagreement over evaluative matters, and less agreement even about how to go about resolving disagreement evaluative matters, than there is in non-evaluative matters. Even Mackie agrees that there is no direct inference from the fact of evaluative disagreement to the denial of realism about evaluative qualities. But combined with the purported lack of any plausible account for how evaluative qualities fit into our epistemological and metaphysical conceptions of things, the disagreement in evaluative matters becomes harder to defend. I think it is now time to say something about why these two worries tend to be reinforced by our educational practices; and this should bring what may have thus far seemed like a digression back around to the institutional and methodological concerns that have been the focus of this first Part of the dissertation.

Section 6. The Contemporary University's Disenchanted Conception of Nature

Running throughout McDowell's *Mind and World* lectures is the idea that there is some deep-rooted influence on our thinking that keeps us from being able to conceive of how perception might put us into contact with the world. McDowell says that this deep-rooted influence is our conception of a kind of naturalism that leaves nature disenchanted. McDowell frequently appeals to Aristotle as an alternative model of how we might come to know this nature

²⁰³ Mackie, *Ethics*, 38-42.

through perceptual experience. Yet McDowell argues that Aristotle was more "innocent" when it came to the kind of deep-rooted worries we have. Yet McDowell concedes that Aristotle did hold to his own philosophical views about nature and perception over against the views of various predecessors and contemporaries who denied these views. McDowell has in mind here the ancient atomists, who argue for a view of nature that is strikingly similar to the modern conception of a disenchanted nature. Yet McDowell suggests that even though Aristotle faced opposition to his view from contemporary philosophical sources, these opposing views did not hold him captive in the way that we often find ourselves held captive by a disenchanted conception of nature. According to McDowell:

in such ancient anticipations of the disenchanted conception of nature, the thesis that nature is empty of meaning and value lacks a certain status is has in modern thinking. It does not figure as another way to formulate a rightly entrenched view of the kind of understanding aimed at by properly scientific investigation: a view that is not open to dispute, but part of what one must take for granted if one is to count as an educated person.²⁰⁴

The point here is that the success of modern science, which treats nature as disenchanted, has a tendency to confirm the truth of this disenchanted conception of nature – success here being advances in predicative power and our ability to manipulate nature. Thus, for modern persons, the kind of intelligibility that is proper to such scientific investigation is given a certain confirmation by its expedience or usefulness: a confirmation that was lacking in ancient atomism. So what we have is "a conception of nature that can seem sheer common sense, though it was not always so." ²⁰⁵ In other words, we have a particularly modern conception of nature that seems to be common sense to us, but did not always seem to be common sense to persons before the scientific revolution. But McDowell's point is that this kind of "scientistic" naturalism or "bald naturalism" "tends to represent itself as educated common sense, but it is really only primitive metaphysics."²⁰⁶ While we cannot deny that modern science and the particularly kind of intelligibility that defines its methods have helped us to understand, predict, and control certain aspects of reality, we must also, however, admit that attempts to shoehorn all of reality into this kind of intelligibility cause serious distortions and blind-spots when it comes to, for example, life, action, perception, and the "logic of reasons."

²⁰⁴ McDowell, *Mind and World*, 181.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 70.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 82.

The kinds of distortions we find are frequently brought about in one of two ways. On the one hand, distortions are brought about by inappropriate incursions by the natural sciences into "non-scientific" disciplines: incursions which try to shoehorn aspects of reality that are best understood in terms of the intelligibility that is proper to meaning into the kind of intelligibility that is proper to something like mathematical physics. The result is a kind of reductive and revisionist product. The paradox of analysis tends to leave no trace of the phenomenon one sought to understand, and one is only left with a peculiar substitute that is built up from the materials of a "bald naturalism." On the other hand, distortions are brought about when "nonscientific" disciplines try to retreat from the natural sciences and from the methodology of the natural sciences for the sake of preserving their subject matter from, to use Wordsworth's phrase, the kind of dissection that murders. But instead of retreating to the realm of intelligibility that is proper to meaning, they frequently abandon entirely any claims to understand how things are. This is because they still carry the assumptions of bald naturalism, i.e. the assumption that the natural is co-extensive with the realm of intelligibility proper to a mathematical physics. The result is then a revisionist product that is strangely isolated from reality, and something that is easily trivialized. McDowell is certainly right that both of these tendencies seem to stem from a "scientisitc" picture of reality that can easily pass for educated common sense. Yet the very discovery of the kind of intelligibility that structures the methods and conclusions of the natural sciences is not enough to explain the effect that such a picture of reality has on our thinking.

The problem is not just the emergence and institutional support of a certain kind of mathematical intelligibility that defines the core methodology of the natural sciences. The problem also involves the diminishment of the perceived tenability of any other kind of intelligibility, such as the intelligibility proper to meaning, which McDowell describes. I wish to quote at length a description by Alasdair MacIntyre of another aspect of the modern university that causes severe distortions in our thought and reinforces the scientistic picture of a "bald naturalism":

The foundation of the liberal university was the abolition of religious tests for university teachers. What the enforcement of religious tests ensured was a certain degree of uniformity of belief in the way in which the curriculum was organized, presented, and developed through enquiry. Each such preliberal university was therefore to some degree an institution embodying either one particular tradition of rational enquiry or a limited set of such traditions, a set whose agreements might well on occasion furnish a background for more or less intense conflict...

When universities without religious tests were founded or religious tests were abolished in universities formerly enforcing them, the consequence was not that such universities became places of ordered intellectual conflict within which the contending and alternative points of view or rival traditions of enquiry could be systematically elaborated and evaluated...Instead, what happened was that in the appointment of university teachers considerations of belief and allegiance were excluded from view altogether. A conception of scholarly competence, independent of standpoint, was enforced in the making of appointments. A corresponding conception of objectivity in the classroom required the appointment of teachers to present what they taught as if there were indeed shared standards of rationality, accepted by all teachers and accessible to all students. And a curriculum was developed which, so far as possible, abstracted the subject matters to be taught from their relationship to conflicting overall points of view. Universities became institutions committed to upholding a fictitious objectivity.

Least harm was done thereby to the teaching of and research into the natural sciences. For they have been constituted in modern culture as a relatively autonomous tradition of enquiry, admission to which requires assent to whichever the basic shared tenets of that tradition are in a particular period...Most harm was done to the humanities, within which the loss of the contexts provided by traditions of enquiry increasingly has deprived those teaching the humanities of standards in the light of which some texts might be vindicated as more important than others and some types of theory as more cogent than others.

What the student is in consequence generally confronted with...is an apparent inconclusiveness in all argument outside the natural sciences, an inconclusiveness which seems to abandon him or her to his or her prerational preferences. So the student characteristically emerges from a liberal education with a set of skills, a set of preferences, and little else, someone whose education has been as much a process of deprivation as of enrichment.²⁰⁷

The abolition of religious tests, which surely arose as a way of accommodating the increasing amount of "pluralism" or fragmentation of world-views that continued to emerge after the Protestant Reformation, means that universities are left to make hiring choices according to a criterion of "fictitious neutrality." The purported neutrality that is used as a criterion for appointing professors requires that form be separated from content. The substantive beliefs that one holds can no longer serve as a valid criterion for scholarly competence, but rather such scholarly competence is judged exclusively according to rigor of method and form of expression. And since, as MacIntyre notes, the natural sciences seem to be the least affected by this shift in university practice, there arises a natural tendency to see the relative good order of the sciences as a confirmation that their methods are to be preferred to any of the methods of the "non-sciences." But the seeming good order of the natural sciences cannot be seen simply as a result

²⁰⁷ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 399-400.

of superior methods and true ontological presuppositions, but rather must be seen as partly the result of institutionalized practical or moral decisions about what counts as legitimate hiring criteria for university appointments. And, insofar as these "neutral" hiring practices tend to structure the administration of the majority of contemporary universities in the English speaking world, it is no surprise that the conception of nature that leaves nature disenchanted – the scientistic bald naturalism – is taken for granted as educated common sense by the majority of educated persons. Hence MacIntyre's bleak conclusion that such education is best thought of as "a process of deprivation."

The idea that fruitful academic discussions, and enriching educational experiences require a certain store of fundamental first principles that are acquired through upbringing, habituation and experience is a central theme of Aristotle's ethics. According to Aristotle, when it comes to ethics or political science:

argument and teaching, we may suspect, are not powerful with all men, but the soul of the student must first have been cultivated by means of habits for noble joy and noble hatred [$\tau \delta \kappa \alpha \lambda \tilde{\omega} \zeta \chi \alpha i \rho \epsilon \nu \kappa \alpha \lambda \mu \iota \sigma \epsilon \tilde{\nu}$], like earth which is to nourish the seed...The character, then, must somehow be there already with a kinship to virtue, loving what is noble [$\tau \delta \kappa \alpha \lambda \delta \nu$] and hating what is base.²⁰⁸

Discursive arguments and formal teaching will not be helpful when it comes to evaluative matters insofar as one needs the proper starting points or first principles. This is because we must begin our arguments from things which we already know, i.e. those things which are known to us:

For, while we must begin with what is known, things are objects of knowledge in two senses – some to us, some without qualification. Presumably, then, we must begin with things known to us. Hence any one who is to listen intelligently to lectures about what is noble and just [$\tau \delta v \pi \epsilon \rho i \kappa \alpha \lambda \tilde{\omega} v \kappa \alpha i \delta i \kappa \alpha i \omega v$], and generally, about the subjects of political science must have been brought up in good habits [$\delta \epsilon \tilde{\iota} \tau \delta \tilde{\iota} \epsilon \delta \epsilon \sigma \iota v \tilde{\eta} \chi \theta \alpha \iota \kappa \alpha \lambda \tilde{\omega} \varsigma$]. For the fact is the starting-point, and if this is sufficiently plain to him, he will not at the start need the reason as well; and the man who has been well brought up has or can easily get startingpoints.²⁰⁹

And while Aristotle emphasizes the need for grasping certain first principles prior to ethical inquiry, we need not assume that this prior grasp of first principles is a necessity that is exclusive to ethical inquiry.

²⁰⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.9 1179b23-26, 1179b29-30 (trans. Ross).

²⁰⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.4, 1095b1-9 (trans. Ross)

Aristotle notes that certain kinds of inquiries are more dependent upon prior experience than others. Yet contrary to modern assumptions, the kind of experience that gives someone warrant about ethical matters is also required for what Aristotle calls *phusis*:

while young men become geometricians and mathematicians and wise in matters like these, it is thought that a young man of practical wisdom cannot be found. The cause is that such wisdom is concerned not only with universals but with particulars, which become familiar from experience, but a young man has no experience, for it is length of time that gives experience; indeed one might ask this question too, why a boy may become a mathematician, but not a philosopher (*sophos*) or a physicist (*phusikos*). It is because the objects of mathematics exist by abstraction, while the first principles of these other subjects come from experience, and because young men have no conviction about the latter but merely use the proper language, while the essence of mathematical objects is plain enough to them.²¹⁰

On the one hand, the kind of abstract, formal thought that is required for mathematics and geometry is the kind of thinking in which youths can excel insofar as such kinds of thought require no experience, and *a fortiori*, no stock of substantive beliefs that are obtained through experience. On the other hand, youths are said to be incapable of being wise or having philosophical wisdom – which we might call metaphysical knowledge – and likewise incapable of being physicists (*phusikoi*) or having scientific knowledge about natural things. This last claim, that youths cannot be physicists, should strike us moderns as very strange. But this is because we think of the natural sciences, especially physics, as being, in many ways, reducible to mathematics. In this modern sense, the number of substantive beliefs that must be acquired from experience is minimal. But the reason that youths cannot have such knowledge, according to Aristotle, is that Aristotle's conception of scientific knowledge about natural things requires demonstration from first principles. But the first principles are gained from experience and *epagoge* – what we might call induction. And these various first principles are not available by means of any sort of formalized, mathematical reasoning. They require a kind of intuitive or perceptual induction – a kind of insight.

When it comes to the kind of experience and habituation that must precede formal teaching in ethics, if such teaching is to be fruitful, Plato and Aristotle both seem to think that

²¹⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.8, 1142a12-19 (trans. Ross)

experience with poetry and music are is the best way to acquire, in Aristotle's phrase, "a taste for the beautiful (*kalon*)".²¹¹ Observe the following passage from Plato's *Republic*:

Aren't these the reasons, Glaucon, that education in music and poetry is most important? [...] because anyone who has been properly educated in music and poetry will sense it acutely [$\delta\xi$ ýτατ' ἀν αἰσθάνοιτο] when something has been omitted from a thing and when it hasn't been finely [καλῶς] crafted or finely [καλῶς] made by nature. And since he has the right distastes, he'll praise fine things [τὰ καλὰ], be pleased by them, receive them into his soul, and, being nurtured by them, become fine and good [καλός τε κἀγαθός]. He'll rightly object to what is shameful, hating it while he is still young and unable to grasp the reason [πρὶν λόγον δυνατὸς εἶναι λαβεῖν], but, having been educated in this way, he will welcome the reason when it comes and recognize it easily because of its kinship with himself [ἀν αὐτὸν γνωρίζων δι' οἰκειότητα].²¹²

Yet note that Plato thinks that an education in music and poetry will instill the requisite habits to discern when things are or are not "finely made by nature." While such an ability to discern natural defects and perfections is related to the discernment of value in ethical or practical contexts, i.e. one's that call for action, there is no reason to think that such an ability to discern perfection and defect is not relevant elsewhere as well. Plato and Aristotle often imply that appeal to the *kalon* is relevant in many other domains of inquiry besides the ethical or the practical. When it comes to philosophical wisdom (*sophia*), Plato has no trouble in appealing to a moralized notion of beauty when he is considering the nature of the *kosmos* as a whole. Consider this passage from the *Timaeus* in which Timaeus is describing the *kosmos* to Socrates:

Now to find the maker and father of this universe [to pan] is hard enough, and even if I succeeded, to declare him to everyone is impossible. And so we must go back and raise this question about the universe: Which of the two models did the maker use when he fashioned it? Was it the one that does not change and stays the same, or the one that has come to be? Well, if this world of ours is beautiful $[\kappa\alpha\lambda\delta\varsigma]$ and its craftsman good, then clearly he looked at the eternal model. But if what it's blasphemous to say is the case, then he looked at the one that has come to be. Now surely it's clear to all that it was the eternal model he looked at, for, of all the things that have come to be, our world is the most beautiful $[\kappa\alpha\lambda\lambda\iota\sigma\tau\varsigma]$, and of causes the craftsman is the most excellent. This, then,

²¹¹ The phrase comes from Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.9 1179b15-16. With regard to "hoi polloi" Aristotle writes "they have no notion of what is beautiful [*tou kalou*] and truly pleasant, having had no taste of it." I use the translation of Joe Sachs here because Sachs seems to be one of the only modern translators who consistently translates '*kalos*' as 'beautiful.' *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2002). See Sach's introduction, xxi-xxv, for his defense of this translation. For further defense of this translation, see Richard Kraut "An Aesthetic Reading of Aristotle's Ethics" in *Politeia in Greek and Roman Philosophy*, ed. Verity Harte and Melissa Lane (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

²¹² Plato, *Republic* III, 401d-402d (trans. G. M. A. Grube revised by C. D. C. Reeve). See also, Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1104b11-13.

is how it has come to be: it is a work of craft modeled after that which is changeless and is grasped by a rational account, that is, by wisdom.²¹³

Timaeus appeals to the fact that the world is beautiful, as a premise, in this little argument about the *kosmos*. This passage seems to fit perfectly as an example of the kind of knowledge that Aristotle called *sophia* – scientific (that is, demonstrative) knowledge, plus intuitive understanding (of the principles of demonstration) about those things which are the most honorable by nature.²¹⁴ And it is clear that, while a youth might grasp the logic of the argument, the grasp of the premise – that the world is beautiful – is only available through experience. Without experience, that only comes with age, a youth would be merely "saying the words"²¹⁵ if he were to repeat what *Timaeus* says here.

On the opposite end of the spectrum with respect to honor in the order to things, Aristotle makes a similar appeal to beauty in regard to what we might call zoological knowledge. The passage deserves quotation at length:

Having already treated of the celestial world, as far as our conjectures could reach, we proceed to treat of animals, without omitting, to the best of our ability, any member of the kingdom, however ignoble. For if some have no graces to charm the sense, yet nature, which fashioned them, gives amazing pleasure in their study to all who can trace links of causation, and are inclined to philosophy. Indeed, it would be strange if mimic representations of them were attractive, because they disclose the mimetic skill of the painter or sculptor, and the original realties themselves were not more interesting, to all at any rate who have eyes to discern the causes. We therefore must not recoil with childish aversion from the examination of the humbler animals. Every realm of nature is marvelous: and as Heraclitus, when the strangers who came to visit him found him warming himself at the furnace in the kitchen and hesitated to go in, is reported to have bidden them not to be afraid to enter, as even in that kitchen divinities were present, so we should venture on the study of every kind of animal without distaste; for each and all will reveal to us something natural and something beautiful [έν ἄπασιν ὄντος τινὸς φυσικοῦ καὶ καλοῦ]. Absence of haphazard and conduciveness of everything to an end are to be found in nature's works in the highest degree, and the end for which those works are put together and produced is a form of the beautiful [$\tau \eta v \tau o \tilde{v} \kappa \alpha \lambda o \tilde{v} \chi \omega \rho \alpha v$].

If any person thinks the examination of the rest of the animal kingdom an unworthy task, he must hold in like disesteem the study of man. For no one can look at the elements of the human frame – blood, flesh, bones, vessels, and the like – without

²¹³ Plato, *Timaeus*, 28c-29a (trans. Donald J. Zeyl).

²¹⁴ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.7 1141a18-19.

²¹⁵ "Saying the words that come from knowledge is no sign [of fully having it]. [...] And those who have just learned something do not yet know it, though they string the words together; for it must grow into them, and this takes time." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII.3 1147a19-23 (trans. Irwin). Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1999).

much repugnance. Moreover, when any one of the parts or structures, be it which it may, is under discussion, it must not be supposed that it is its material composition to which attention is being directed or which is the object of the discussion, but rather the total form. Similarly, the true object of architecture is not bricks, mortar, or timber, but the house; and so the principal object of natural philosophy is not the material elements, but their composition, and the totality of the substance, independently of which they have no existence.²¹⁶

These two passages from Plato and Aristotle respectively could be seen as reinforcing what is often taken by many to be a sharp disagreement between Plato and Aristotle. The disagreement is one that is often taken to be represented in Raphael's famous painting, The School of Athens, in which Plato is depicted, engaged in discussion with Aristotle, with a vertical arm and finger pointing heavenward, while Aristotle seems to respond with his outstretched arm parallel to the ground. But while there may be a disagreement, the disagreement is not as vast as some take it to be.²¹⁷ This is because in the second passage, we hear Aristotle saying that even the changeable things, which appear to be humble and less honorable than the eternal celestial objects, can be seen as instantiations of those eternal forms. And, even more than that, Aristotle seems to think that when we look at individual living things in the right way, we find that our focus is not so much directed to the particular object as a bare particular, but rather our focus is directed to the general form that is present *in* the particular. Even in the kitchen, as Heraclitus says, divinities are present; even in the particular changeable things, we find the general unchanging forms. This is "the alarming truth" that Thompson recognized as being the answer to that certain sort of question about the "repulsive contractions" of the frog's heart, namely, "I was not so much pointing into the individual, as pointing into its form."²¹⁸ And so while Plato sometimes speaks dismissively about particular things in favor of universal forms, Aristotle redeems the worthiness of particulars as objects of contemplation by showing that the forms are present in them – to borrow Thompson's phrase again, we say that the particulars are actually "a special nexus of particular and general." And it is here in this nexus that Aristotle locates the apprehension of beauty.²¹⁹ And so, once again, just as in ethics, and in matters of cosmology, so

²¹⁶ Aristotle, Parts of Animals, I.5 645a5-645b1 (trans. William Ogle).

²¹⁷ Louis Groarke argues for continuity between the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, and he cites a fair number of contemporary and ancient commentators who weigh in on this topic. See Groarke, *Aristotelian Induction*, 281-283.

²¹⁸ Thompson, *Life and Action*, 78.

²¹⁹ Hegel also locates our apprehension of beauty at the special nexus of particular and general, i.e. of intuition and concept. He writes: "Since beauty is the Idea as experienced, or more correctly, as intuited,

in matters of natural philosophy or zoology Aristotle thinks that a taste for the *kalon* is required. One must have sufficient experience with the relevant living things in order to apprehend their forms. And, with the humblest of living things, one must apprehend their forms in order to apprehend their beauty; and it is this beauty which gives value to the science of zoology.

There are two related general observations that we can make about the accounts offered by Plato and by Aristotle. First, these accounts are synoptic, and, second, they are not instrumental. With regard to the synoptic element, Plato and Aristotle are both articulating accounts of knowing and inquiry that try to see things together, or that take up a comprehensive view. Especially in the zoological example given by Aristotle, this synoptic element can be taken in the strong Hegelian sense that I described above – the sense in which an atomistic understanding of parts in abstraction from their broader contests is impossible. And one immediate consequence of such a synoptic view is that, in many cases, evaluative notions are not contained exclusively within the realm of the practical. One gets one's "values" and practical orientation from a general picture of how things are. One's education in music and poetry, according to Plato, helps one to develop a general capacity for discerning perfection and defect that is applicable to both practical affairs and "natural science." We should recall Aaron Garrett's description of a predominant way of thinking of moral philosophy up until the seventeenth that I mentioned earlier. Garrett spoke of a "metaphysically informed moral philosophy" according to which

the breadth of moral philosophy was far greater, and not clearly differentiated from politics...or even from metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, and scientific methodology and practice.²²⁰

In this sense, a great emphasis is placed on developing, not only discursive or logical thought, but also non-discursive, synoptic thought – something like interpretation, construal, or concept formation.

With regard to the non-instrumental element in inquiry, both Plato and Aristotle understand investigations into, say, cosmology or zoology to be "liberal arts", i.e. inquiry and study that is understood to be valuable for its own sake. This model of knowing is

the form of opposition between intuition and concept falls away. Kant recognizes this vanishing of the antithesis negatively in the concept of a supersensuous realm in general. But he does not recognize that, as beauty, it is positive, it is intuited, or, to use his own language, it is given in experience." G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, trans. Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), 87.

²²⁰ Garrett, "Seventeenth-Century Moral Philosophy", 230.

contemplative. Unlike much modern work in the sciences, which is undertaken for the sake of improving the condition of mankind, e.g. research in medicine and sustainable agriculture etc., Plato and Aristotle see the sciences as intrinsically valuable. Likewise, in practical or ethical matters, much of the focus of Plato and Aristotle is on discerning the value that certain actions, activities, and habituated dispositions have simply for their own sake. The fundamental questions are about what it would be good to be, and what kinds of beautiful things are worthy of our love.²²¹ Unlike much modern ethical thought, the focus is not on securing the necessities of life for the greatest number of persons, or maximizing the amount of individual freedom of individuals, but rather the focus is on determining what one should do and how one should live assuming that one's basic needs are met, and that one is not enslaved.

The modern denial of the synoptic and non-instrumental aspects of the thought of Plato and Aristotle, i.e. the modern affirmation of atomism and instrumental reason, are what Charles Taylor refers to as two "malaises of modernity." Taylor acknowledges that both of these malaises seem to stem from, in Max Weber's phrase, "the disenchantment of the world." And the third "malaise" that Taylor names is the institutional pressure to maintain the first two. Taylor, again borrowing a phrase from Weber, notes that we often feel as though the institutional structures of society keep us in an "iron cage." We feel as if we cannot change our tendencies to think atomistically and instrumentally without either, on the one hand, exiling or distancing ourselves from our cultural, and institutional surroundings, or, on the other hand, attempting to dismantle the institutional structures which surround us.²²²

Taylor has caught the scent of something important. And in many ways I agree with him. Yet he is right to use the word "malaise" to describe the negative effect of these modern tendencies insofar as 'maliase' implies that the source is difficult to discern. Taylor seems to confine most of his concern and most of his focus to the practical or ethical side of these issues.

²²¹ Charles Taylor, for example, has written: "Anglo-Saxon moral philosophy has tended to see morality as concerned with questions of what we ought to do and to occlude or exclude questions about what it is good to be or what it is good to love." Charles Taylor, "Iris Murdoch and Moral Philosophy", in *Iris Murdoch and The Search for Human Goodness*, ed. Maria Antonaccio and William Schweiker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3.

²²² Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), Ch.1 "Three Malaises". The original Canadian edition of the book bore the title *The Malaise of Modernity*.

He declares his alliance to something he refers to as "the practical primacy of life."²²³ When he speaks of atomism, he frequently means atomism in the sense of individualism in moral and political thought. When he speaks of instrumental reason, he frequently means instrumental reason as it is found in utilitarianism – especially utilitarianism insofar as it is wedded to economic theory. And when he speaks about institutional pressures to maintain these ways of thinking and acting, he is frequently speaking about political and economic practices. But while he recognizes the fact that almost all of these malaises stem from the "disenchantment" of nature, he seems to take such disenchantment for granted. He seems to think the naturalism that leaves nature disenchanted is simply a fact, and that any conception of nature that leaves nature enchanted is simply something in which we can no longer believe.²²⁴ Yet to focus exclusively on the practical aspect of these three malaises to the neglect of their more theoretical analogues is to concede too much to the modern compartmentalization and departmentalization of ethics.

The malaise of atomism applies not only to individualism in moral and political theory, but also to the artificial boundaries set on university disciplines. The resulting lack of synoptic approaches in the more "theoretical" branches of inquiry is what accounts for the "fictitious neutrality" that serves as a purported ideal in those disciplines. A properly synoptic approach to such questions would acknowledge more explicitly the evaluative assumptions that govern both the methods and the substantive assumptions of these inquiries.

The malaise of instrumental thought applies not only to economic and utilitarian costbenefit analysis, but also to the pragmatic professionalism that seeks to convert every academic discipline into a realm of "intellectual work". In the sciences, this instrumentalism destroys the contemplative aspect of the study of nature, and drives the natural scientist to equate knowledge with control and utility thereby leaving no place for the kind of intelligibility that is proper to meaning – the kind of intelligibility, for example, that is most fitting to life and action. In the humanities, this instrumentalizing equation of knowledge with utility and control trivializes all contemplative pursuits that lack pragmatic utility, and, what is worse, denies the purport of such inquiries to have knowledge at all.

²²³ Taylor, "Iris Murdoch and Moral Philosophy", 28. This passage is lifted unchanged into his later book. See: Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Balknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 637.

²²⁴ Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity*, 19, 75, 86, 89. Also see Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), Ch.1 "Aims of a New Epoch".

And lastly, the malaise of the institutional "iron cage" applies not only to broadly capitalist economic arrangements and political and legislative policy, but also to the institutional structure of the university. In terms of scholars and professors, most universities make hiring and promotional decisions based on the kind of purportedly "neutral" scholarly competence that MacIntyre describes. Yet this purported neutrality often carries the assumption of a disenchanted nature and aims to keep "factual" matters and evaluative matters not only compartmentalized, but departmentalized. And the pressure to publish in peer-review journals – journals that are edited by professors that were hired according to purportedly neutral criteria of scholarly competence and that continue to evaluate and publish articles according to those same criteria causes academic writers to adopt a style of writing compatible with such purported neutrality. In terms of students, it is entirely accidental for most students to emerge from the liberal university with a tolerably coherent world-view. Recall MacIntyre's observation that the effect of hiring scholars with deeply different comprehensive world-views is that it forces them to change the way they teach their subjects and the way that they organize their curricula; the effect was that "a curriculum was developed which, so far as possible, abstracted the subject matters to be taught from their relationship to conflicting overall points of view."²²⁵ No attempt is made to help students to synthesize the conflicting pictures of human nature they receive from biology, psychology, ethics, and literature courses. And of course it frequently happens, at least in humanities departments like ethics and literature, that even within the department there is no consensus. The result is that not only is there no active intention on the part of professors to help students integrate or synthesize knowledge, but there is a more or less acknowledged attempt to prevent them from doing so insofar as admission into one department essentially requires assent to methodological principles and substantive assumptions that necessarily place one in direct conflict with the methods and assumptions of other departments.

The point of showing that the malaises that Taylor focuses on – atomism and instrumentalism – have direct theoretical and as well as practical import is to shift the battleground, so to speak, from the overtly political arena to the university and to the sphere of education. Taylor notes that "the philosophies of atomism and instrumentalism have a head start in our world", yet he optimistically points out that there are many "points of resistance" available

²²⁵ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 399-400. As quoted above in greater length at the beginning of Part I, Section 6.

to us.²²⁶ But the idea that these philosophical notions have a "head start" on us is a massive understatement if we do not consider the "head start" they receive from the nature of our education. Recall again MacIntyre's observation that

Each...preliberal university was therefore to some degree an institution embodying either one particular tradition or rational enquiry or a limited set of such traditions, a set whose agreements might well on occasion furnish a background for more or less intense conflict.²²⁷

This description puts me in mind of something that Thomas Cahill says in a book of popular history. Cahill is describing the life of St. Augustine, and, in particular, he is describing a certain time in Augustine's life before his conversion and return to the church. Augustine has been given his first academic appointment as a teacher of rhetoric, and there he proceeds to form an almost quasi-monastic group of followers who are devoted to seeking truth by studying the philosophy of Plato. The following sentence from Cahill is the one that stuck in my mind:

The establishment...of such a community gives us an idea of how seriously and personally the pursuit of philosophy could be taken in the ancient world – something far closer to an ashram than to a modern department of philosophy.²²⁸

Both MacIntyre's description of the preliberal university, and Cahill's description of the study of Plato by Augustine and his followers in terms of an ashram as opposed to a department of philosophy, give the idea of a group of teachers and students who share a number of assumptions about fundamental first principles, and who engage in intense debate and conflict over the details of working out these assumptions. But what of the liberal university? Macintyre seems to describe the liberal university in contrast to the preliberal university where the contrast is something like this: the preliberal university has an overarching tradition of inquiry that defines its substantive commitments and methods whereas the liberal university does not. But this is not entirely accurate. While the liberal university does have a comparatively more fragmented approach to inquiry, the institutional structures endorse the fragmentation.

There is a prominent tradition of liberal thought centered around the philosophical thought of Kant that gives philosophical support to the fragmented structure of the modern university (it is no surprise that the Anglophone universities in North America and Britain are

²²⁶ Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity*, 99.

²²⁷ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 399-400.

²²⁸ Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 50.

highly influenced by the 19th century German university structure – a structure directly influenced by Kant). According to Kant, theoretical inquiry in the sciences, for example, is to be understood as autonomous from moral thought, and from aesthetic thought. Likewise, ethical thought is autonomous from theoretical inquiry in the sciences and from aesthetic thought.²²⁹ And he is very clear that aesthetic judgments are independent from theoretical inquiry in the sciences and from moral thought.²³⁰ Each branch of inquiry has a compartmentalized subject matter and each branch of inquiry has its own methods, which are not appropriate outside that subject matter. But this philosophical defense of the fragmentation of intellectual inquiry in the university setting has a profoundly negative effect on the theoretical sciences, on the fine arts, and on philosophy, especially on philosophical ethics.

I shall take up each of these in order – sciences, fine arts, and philosophy (and more particularly ethics). I have listed them in what I take to be the order of importance that they bear on the questions and the problems that I have been addressing. And thus I shall say a bit about the first two here, and save my more elaborate treatment of the third, i.e. of philosophy and of philosophical ethics, for the following two Parts. But as a foretaste of where I am headed, I will simply say that this Kantian, liberal way of dividing university disciplines places a kind of institutionally enforced "iron cage" over any intellectual – student or professor – who tries to articulate a more unified and synoptic picture of the relations between these various domains of inquiry. And, most importantly, we cannot simply see this as a *mere* difference between two philosophical outlooks, but rather as a difference between two *moral* outlooks.²³¹ The liberal will not see it this way insofar as the liberal sees it as a strength of his view that it purports to

²²⁹ Kant's discussion in the *Groundwork*, for example, makes it very clear that moral thought is to be kept apart from any kind of scientific or empirical investigation of the world: "it is clear that all moral concepts have their seat and origin completely *a priori* in reason...;that they cannot be abstracted from any empirical and therefore merely contingent cognitions; that just in this purity of their origin lies their dignity." Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary J. Gregor and Allen Wood (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 65. AK 4:411.

²³⁰ In the *Ciritique of the Power of Judgment*, for example, Kant writes: "the judgment of taste is merely **contemplative**, i.e. a judgment that, indifferent with regard to the existence of an object, merely connects its constitution together with the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. But this contemplation itself is also not directed to concepts; for the judgment of taste is not a cognitive judgment (neither a theoretical nor a practical one), and hence it is neither **grounded** on concepts nor **aimed** at them." Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 95. AK 5:209.

²³¹ I borrow this phrasing from Iris Murdoch. See, Iris Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," in *Iris Murdoch and The Search for Human Goodness*, ed. Maria Antonaccio and William Schweiker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 247.

step back from and stand over all the important moral disputes, i.e. liberalism purports to be not just "another sectarian doctrine."²³² But from the other side of things, the Hellenic or Greekminded naturalist, who finds himself sympathetic with Plato or Aristotle, cannot possibly see things in this way. This is because, unlike the liberal, whose general values are purported to emerge *simpliciter* without appeal to metaphysics, or without any comprehensive conception of the nature of things, the Hellenic-style naturalist understands his ethical values to be derived from from a metaphysical conception of things, or from a general framework of reality, of which ethics and the individual ethical agent are only parts.

A. Effects on the Sciences

In the passage from Aristotle's *De Partibus Animalium* quoted in the previous section, Aristotle gives an alternative conception of the role of the anatomist than the one given by Hume, and he also gives an alternative conception of the role of the zoologist than the one given by Nietzsche's man, "the conscientious in spirit." Hume, and Nietzsche's man, "the conscientious in spirit", both find some degree of support from the institutional structure of the contemporary university. Aristotle, on the other hand, finds little support from, and indeed some active hindrance by, the institutional structure of the contemporary university.

Hume's departmentalized conception of inquiry assumes that the anatomist has a unique method of inquiry as well as a bounded domain that defines his subject matter. He conducts his inquiries in isolation from anything that concerns the painter. When he is done, he gives his findings over to the painter who then must set to work with the material he has been given by the anatomist. The anatomist, according to Hume, attempts to understand the various organs and muscles in isolation from their beauty, i.e. in isolation from how they compose a whole. In short the anatomist has a department of his own, and the painter has a department of his own.

But this distorts the understanding of the anatomist's task. Surely the anatomist must know whether or not the specimen he examines is a well-formed member of its kind, as opposed

²³² Rawls, John. "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1985): 246.

to a *teras* or some diseased or otherwise malformed specimen.²³³ If the anatomist merely made particular observations he would not build up a body of knowledge but only an assemblage of chaotic observational data.²³⁴ Aristotle says that the material parts of a body not only fail to constitute the proper subject of natural philosophy, but that such parts cannot even be understood as parts without reference to the totality they compose. But to envision the whole that the parts compose is already to have apprehended its beauty or lack thereof. And it should come as no surprise that, in historical fact, and contrary to Hume's claims – Hume claims that the painter ought not emulate the anatomist, nor should the methods of the anatomist and the painter appear in the same work – many of the finest early anatomists were also practitioners of the fine arts.²³⁵ The same person who was conducting the anatomical study would have had the constant concern of understanding how the parts in question compose a beautiful whole.

Yet the contemporary institution of the university reinforces the isolated conception of the anatomist's task. We can seek this in the example of Nietzsche's man, "the conscientious in spirit" that I described earlier. The man is conscientious, in the sense of industrious and hardworking. He is willing to make any sacrifice and suffer any sort of pain to achieve his goal – he is willing to lie prostrate in the filth of the swamp and literally let his subject suck the life out of him. Yet it is unclear what value the man sees in his work. According to Aristotle, the value of studying the humbler animals – like the leech – only comes from the apprehension of

²³³ Étienne Gilson writes: "Cases of lack of development, hyperdevelopment, and improper development presume a situation in which one can identify proper development. There are no monsters except in relation to normal beings." Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin*, 191 note 13. Edward Feser writes: "Though natural selection might suffice to explain the adaptation of an organism to its environment, there is also the question of the internal development of an organism, in particular of what accounts for the fact that certain growth patters count as aberrations and other as normal. Here Aristotle would say that there is no way to make this distinction apart from the notion of an end towards which the growth pattern naturally points: normal growth patterns are those that reach this end, aberrations (clubfoot, polydactyly, and other birth defects, for example) are failures to reach it." Edward Feser, "Being, the Good, and the Guise of the Good," in *Neo-Aristotelian Perspectives in Metaphysics*, ed. Daniel D. Novotný and Lukáš Novák (New York: Routledge, 2014), 94.

²³⁴ On a related point, Gilson quotes a letter from Charles Darwin in which Darwin writes: "About thirty years ago there was much talk that geologists ought only to observe and not theorize: and I well remember some one saying that at this rate a man might as well go into a gravel-pit and count the pebbles and describe their colors. How odd it is that anyone should not see that all observation must be for or against some view if it is to be of any service!" Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin*, 204 note 3.

²³⁵ Contrary to Hume's advice that the painter and the anatomist ought not to share methods, Monroe Beardsely notes that painters like Alberti and Da Vinci understood painting to be a branch of natural philosophy. See Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present: A Short History* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1975), 121-130.

beauty, i.e. the value of such study only comes when once is able to see "the total form" and to see that this total form is a manifestation of nature's fashioning everything for the sake of some end. But the conscientious in spirit confines his study exclusively to the brain of the leech. He allows nothing of a painterly appreciation of the total form of the leech to penetrate into "his realm." The words of "the conscientious in spirit" are worth recalling:

For its sake I have thrown away everything else; for its sake everything else has become indifferent to me; and close to my knowledge lies black ignorance.

"The conscience of my spirit demands of me that I know one thing and nothing else: I loath all the half in spirit, all the vaporous that hover and rave.

"Where my honesty ceases, I am blind and I also want to be blind. But where I want to know, I also want to be honest – that is, hard, strict, narrow, cruel, and inexorable.²³⁶

He is less of a zoologist and more of an anatomist. Yet it is not clear, from his words, what could drive someone to labor in this way. But I think that we can construct a fairly clear motive.

The contemporary institution of the university produces such men insofar as it makes an incoherent combination of two ideas. The first idea is the ancient Greek notion, which is preserved in the traditional Christian culture of the West, that contemplation is an activity that is valuable for its own sake. In fact, it is arguably the most valuable of human activities. Related to this idea is the idea that the school or university is a place of leisure where such contemplation can take place. The word 'school' even bears the etymological marks of the Greek '*schole*' or 'leisure.' To put the point as bluntly as possible: the very word used in English to describe an institution of education means "leisure."²³⁷ The ancient conception of the institution of education was to educate one in "the Liberal Arts." The liberal arts designated those branches of education and learning that were ordered simply to knowing for its own sake. The Servile Arts, on the other hand, were defined as those kinds of education and learning which have their end as some other utility that is external to themselves. Yet here we arrive at the second idea.

The second idea, which the modern university incoherently combines with the first, is an idea that was central to the founders of the modern scientific revolution: the idea that scientific knowledge must be useful. Francis Bacon wrote that "Knowledge and human power are

²³⁶ Nietzsche, Zarathustra, 251.

²³⁷ Pieper, *Leisure*, 3-5.

synonymous."²³⁸ And Bacon essentially saw the practical fruits of modern scientific practices as confirmation of the truth of their findings. And, when it came to "Greek science", he criticized it on account of its uselessness:

Of all signs there is none more certain or worthy than that of the fruits produced, for the fruits and effects are the sureties and vouchers, as it were, for the truth of philosophy. Now, from the systems of the Greeks...scarcely one single experiment can be culled that has a tendency to elevate or assist mankind, and can be fairly set down to the speculations and doctrines of their philosophy.²³⁹

He went so far as to say that "the inquiry of final causes is a barren thing, or as a virgin consecrated to God."²⁴⁰ Thomas Hobbes, who was Bacon's secretary as a young man and had philosophical conversations with him, phrases this point even more strongly:

The *end* or *scope* of philosophy is, that we may make use to our benefit of effects formerly seen; or that, by application of bodies to one another, we may produce the like effects of those we conceive in our mind, as far forth as matter, strength, and industry, will permit, *for the commodity of human life*.

and again:

The end of knowledge is power...the scope of all speculation is the performing of some action or thing to be done.²⁴¹

And the idea was not exclusive to the Anglophone world. Descartes, on the continent, argued for

a similar conception of scientific knowledge in his Discourse on Method:

As soon as I had acquired some general notions concerning Physics...they caused me to see that it is possible to attain knowledge which is very useful in life, and that, instead of that speculative philosophy which is taught in the schools, we may find a practical philosophy by means of which knowing the force and the action of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens and all other bodies that environ us, as distinctly as we know the different crafts of our artisans, we can in the same way employ them in all those uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature.²⁴²

²³⁸ Sir Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, ed. Joseph Devey (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1902), 11. Bk. I, iii. In this same work, Bacon also writes that: "the real and legitimate goal of the sciences is the endowment of human life with new inventions and riches." Bacon, *Novum Oragnum*, 58. Bk.I, lxxxi. ²³⁹ Bacon, *Novum Organum*, 50. Bk. I, lxxiii.

²⁴⁰ Sir Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, ed. Joseph Devey (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1901), 168. Bk.III, Ch.5.

²⁴¹ These passages from Hobbes are quoted in Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 45-46.

²⁴² Descartes, *Discourse On the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, Part VI (AT VI 61-62) quoted in Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin*, 22-23. See René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes: Volume 1*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 142-143.

Here Etienne Gilson is quick to notice that "Descartes could have written '*beyond* that speculative philosophy', but he wrote '*instead* of that speculative philosophy'."²⁴³ In other words, Descartes sees his pragmatically motivated and pragmatically vindicated philosophical physics as *replacing* the old Greek view of natural philosophy – in Hume's phrase "I imagine it impossible to conjoin these two Views". In opposition to this modern reform of knowledge, as St. Thomas notes, both Aristotle and the Christian tradition were in agreement as to the primacy of contemplation over action:

[15] And so, it is said in Matthew (5:8): "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God"; and in John (17:3): "This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God."

[16] With this view, the judgment of Aristotle is also in agreement, in the last Book of his *Ethics* [X, 7: 1177a 18], where he says that the ultimate felicity of man is "speculative, in accord with the contemplation of the best object of speculation."²⁴⁴

And it is thus that Gilson, alluding to the story in Luke's gospel, calls Descartes' philosophical reform "the revenge of Martha upon Mary, and…the triumph of modern pragmatism over the contemplation of the Greco-Christian tradition."²⁴⁵

Nietzsche's conscientious in spirit, I think, is best seen as an unsuccessful attempt to combine these two ideas. The university has become the home of the new pragmatic science; the institution whose name means leisure is now supposed to house the "intellectual worker", who has replaced the Greco-Christian contemplator. We are tempted, because of *where* we find it, to see what is in fact a kind of instrumental investigation, which could only plausibly be seen to draw its value and legitimacy from some external end or social function, as something that is valuable for its own sake. We hear in the claims of "the conscientious in spirit" exactly what Joseph Pieper describes in his sketch of the "mask-like, stony features" of "the worker": "an outwardly directed, active power; an aimless readiness to suffer pain; an untiring insertion into the rationalized program of useful social organization."²⁴⁶ But what is particularly repulsive about "the conscientious in spirit" ceases to be so if we conceive of a similar "worker" who knowingly makes such sacrifices for the sake of the common good. We are not tempted to feel such pity or revulsion at the idea of Jonas Salk injecting himself with his own polio vaccine, for

²⁴³ Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin*, 23. See also Pieper, *Leisure*, 78-79.

²⁴⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Bk. III, Chapter 25.

²⁴⁵ Gilson, From Aristotle to Darwin, 23.

²⁴⁶ Pieper, *Leisure*, 19, 27.

example, because we recognize that he saw the potential danger of his act and also the potential gain in his assistance to mankind. But medicine, be it remembered, was always considered a craft or a trade, not an academic discipline or a "liberal art." But to have this new method and mindset predominate not only in the crafts or trades, but also in zoology, in natural philosophy, and in philosophy in general, is to destroy the idea of leisured, contemplative philosophical activity and to replace it with the idea of "the intellectual worker."

B. Effects on the Fine Arts

Hume's picture also distorts the painter's task. Hume says that the anatomist is supposed to assist the painter. Yet the painter is already at a significant disadvantage is he is presented with a conception of organs, tissues, etc. that is repugnant. Hume claims that the anatomist's portraits of the various anatomical parts are neither graceful nor engaging. Yet this causes him to admit that, with regard to the image given by the anatomist and that given by the painter: "I imagine it impossible to conjoin these two Views." But if this is true, what help is the anatomist to the painter? To adapt an idea from McDowell, we should not conceive of the painter's task as one of starting with the disenchanted and abstracted dissections of the anatomist and then trying to make a place for beauty or grace. We need not try to get beauty into the picture from that standpoint.²⁴⁷ Rather, as Aristotle insists, we need to see that beauty is there in the first place. This is why, with regard to goodness, Iris Murdoch says that "unless you have it in the picture from the start you cannot get it in later by extraneous means."²⁴⁸ And we can assume that the same is true with regard to beauty. This means that the painter's task cannot be thus entirely dependent upon the antecedent and independent act of the anatomist.

And not only does the contemporary institution of the university reinforce this instrumental and insulated model of the various sciences, but it also reinforces a distorted conception of the various academic departments outside the natural sciences. Returning to Hume's analogy between the anatomist and the painter, we can that the university structure also distorts the painters task. We might think that this is not the case. We might think that the

²⁴⁷ See McDowell, *Mind and World*, 92-95.

²⁴⁸ Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, "Fact and Value," 57.

institutionalized structure of the contemporary university is likely to reinforce the distortion of the anatomist's task more so than that of the painter's, insofar as the contemporary university, for the most part, does not focus on training artists at all. W. H. Auden makes an insightful observation with regard to poets, which could easily be generalized to painters and other artists:

In all societies, educational facilities are limited to those activities and habits of behavior which a particular society considers important. In a culture like that of Wales in the Middle Ages, which regarded poets as socially important, a would-be poet, like a would-be dentist in own culture, was systematically trained and admitted to the rank of poet only after meeting high professional standards. / In our culture a would-be poet has to educate himself; he may be in the position to go to a first-class school and university, but such places can only contribute to his poetic education by accident, not by design. This has its drawbacks; a good deal of modern poetry, even some of the best, shows just that uncertainty of taste, crankiness and egoism which self-educated people so often exhibit.²⁴⁹

Yet we might think that the most harmful influence on artists is simply this very lack of concern, which tends to trivialize such pursuits.

The emergence of the kind of scientific and mathematical intelligibility that promotes mastery and control over nature has been seen, by those like Descartes, to *replace* the older notion of contemplative knowledge, as opposed to serving as a different kind of intelligibility that might complement it, or at least exist along side it. But this implies that, if one is not engaged in the kind of "work" that is appropriate to this new model, one is either an idler who only pretends to knowledge, or one is simply engaged in some trivial pursuit of relaxation. Again, Auden is perspicacious:

in a society governed by the values appropriate to Labor...the gratuitous is no longer regarded – most earlier cultures thought differently – as sacred, because to Man the Laborer, leisure is not sacred but a respite from laboring, a time for relaxation and the pleasures of consumption. In so far as such a society thinks about the gratuitous at all, it is suspicious of it – artists do not labor, therefore they are probably parasitic idlers – or, at best, regards it as trivial – to write poetry or paint pictures is a harmless private hobby.²⁵⁰

Auden here captures the antagonism felt towards the fine arts by those who have adopted the modern pragmatic and instrumental model of truth and knowledge. The idea that there could be a form of knowing that was merely contemplative is no longer even recognized as a possibility. The only vindication of a claim to knowledge now comes from its perceived usefulness. The

²⁴⁹ W. H. Auden, "The Poet & The City," in *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 76.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 74-75.

"useless" productions of the fine arts – poetry, sculpture, painting etc. – are not seen as "sacred" or as conveying any sort of knowledge. Rather they are only objects made by idlers; objects made for others to use in their periods of relaxation that punctuate their work.

But this was surely not always the case. The fine arts, especially poetry, have always had somewhat of an uneasy relationship with philosophy. But this is because philosophers and poets have often seen themselves as competing with one another over a shared subject matter. Philosophers and poets in the pre-modern period both saw themselves as seeking wisdom or truth, and as attempting to convey that truth to others. According to Martha Nussbaum:

For the Greeks of the fifth and early fourth centuries B.C., there were not two separate sets of questions in the area of human choice and action, aesthetic questions and moral-philosophical questions, to be studied and written about by mutually detached colleagues in different departments...The "ancient quarrel between the poets and the philosophers," as Plato's *Republic* ...calls it, could be called a quarrel only because it was about a single subject. The subject was human life and how to live it. And the quarrel was a quarrel about literary form as well as about ethical content...Forms of writing were not seen as vessels into which different contents could be indifferently poured; form was itself a statement of content...²⁵¹

But what this means is that the accusations of culpable idleness and triviality that face poets or artist in the contemporary university are something that the philosopher must also face. One way of avoiding these accusations, on the part of philosophy, is simply to retrench the boundaries of the discipline, and to say, with A. J. Ayer, that philosophy is simply a department of logic. And this means that philosophers can then simply attach themselves to the natural sciences as book-keepers or clerks. But such a move concedes that the pragmatic, modern mode of intelligibility is the only way in which the world is properly understood. To attach philosophy to the natural sciences in this way denies that the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy should be taken seriously. Rather than face the charges of idleness and triviality by attaching philosophy to the natural sciences – methodologically and substantively – I think that we ought to focus more directly on the task of retrieving the kind of intelligibility that was once thought of as shared between philosophy poetry, and which was the source of the quarrel between philosophy and poetry.

Brian Leiter admits that most contemporary analytic philosophers fail to achieve the "grand visions" and "ways of seeing" that seem to be the particular marks of enduring value in

²⁵¹ Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 15.

the so-called "great historical figures." Yet Leiter says that

as a discipline, in which students are recruited to do doctorial work, it is a bit silly that Philosophy Departments can train Nietzsches. Genius, one may hope, will find its way in the world without the benefit of rankings.²⁵²

But here I think that we must tread more carefully. W. H. Auden noted above that educational facilities tend to focus their training on activities and habits of behavior that they find important. We might worry that an exclusive focus on logical, discursive rationality in philosophy departments, and a close alignment of philosophy departments with the methods of the natural sciences, not only leaves off cultivating "ways of seeing" but in fact actively discourages such "ways of seeing." One of the dominant ideas that runs through much of Nietzsche's writing is the idea of applying aesthetic ideas to all philosophical inquiries. The contemporary scholar Kai Hammermesiter goes so far as to claim that what we find in Nietzsche's work is "nothing less than an aesthetisization of philosophy at large."²⁵³ Nietzsche argues against Socratism, i.e. the idea that discursive reason or dialectic alone should guide us in all of our inquiries. Rather, something more immediate and non-discursive - something Nietzsche refers to as "instinct" or "taste" – is what actually drives, and ought to drive our discursive reasoning.²⁵⁴ Nietzsche recommends the image of an "artistic Socrates" or a "music-practicing Socrates" as a preferable alternative to a purely logical and discursive "Socratism." Referring to the scene of Socrates's death-bed in the Phaedo, and the instruction that Socrates claims to have heard from the voice of his *daimonion* to practice music, Nietzsche imagines Socrates asking himself:

Perhaps there is a realm of wisdom from which the logician is exiled? Perhaps art is even a necessary correlative of, and supplement for science?²⁵⁵

I am inclined to think that, in at least this much, Nietzsche is correct. He is correct that we need to supplement our Socratic tendencies towards purely logical and discursive reason with something else - something that we might call non-discursive cognition. And this kind of immediate or intuitive thinking is something which is used both in the process of artistic

²⁵² Brian Leiter, "'Analytic' and 'Continental' Philosophy".

²⁵³ Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 146.

²⁵⁴ See, for example, Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, §39; and Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (Vintage Books, 1989), 271. I discuss this idea in greater detail towards the end of the dissertation.

²⁵⁵ Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, §14 in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 93.

creation, and in the contemplation and interpretation of works of art. Yet if we construct contemporary analytical philosophy departments in such a way that they attract and favor those persons who, in Leiter's words, are "usually very smart (clever, quick, analytically acute), but less often deep", then it seems that we not only fail to cultivate the kind of "music-practicing Socrates" that Nietzsche recommends, but that we also actively discourage the cultivation of such persons.

At least in the case of the fine arts, it seems that there is close relationship between, on the one hand, a certain species of art, and, on the other hand, a belief, on the behalf of the artist, that he was, in some way, imitating reality, or that he was conveying, in some way or other, a truth about the nature of things. Nietzsche recognizes this relation, and he almost laments that such art can never flourish again insofar as the conception of the world that is needed to sustain it is, by his understanding, no longer tenable:

The Beyond in art. – It is not without profound sorrow that one admits to oneself that in their highest flights the artists of all ages have raised to heavenly transfiguration precisely those conceptions which we now recognize as false: they are the glorifiers of the religious and philosophical errors of mankind, and they could not have been so without believing in the absolute truth of these errors. If belief in such truth declines in general, if the rainbow-colors at the extreme limits of human knowledge and supposition grow pale, that species of art can never flourish again which, like the *Divina Commedia*, the pictures of Raphael, the frescoes of Michelangelo, the Gothic cathedrals, presupposes not only a cosmic but also a metaphysical significance in the objects of art. A moving tale will one day be told how there once existed such an art, such an artist's faith.²⁵⁶

But I suggest that we acknowledge the relation that Nietzsche observes between, on the one hand, great mimetic art, and, on the other hand, the belief in the "enchanted" conception of the world, but that we should see a *modus ponens* where Nietzsche sees a *modus tollens*. In this passage, Nietzsche almost seems to argue as follows:

(1) If one ought to make beautiful mimetic art, then one must believe in an "enchanted" world

(2) One ought not believe in an enchanted world

(3) Ergo, one ought not make beautiful mimetic art

Belief in a conception of nature that allows for more than is countenanced by the natural sciences is a necessary condition for the creation of beautiful mimetic art. Yet we cannot in good conscious regard nature in this way any longer. Thus, with some regret, we must cease feeling

²⁵⁶Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche: Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 102. Part I, Ch.4, §220.

obliged to make such art. But here, I suggest, we must disagree with Nietzsche. In fact, I believe that Nietzsche, in these moments, could use a bit of his own medicine.

Nietzsche asks us to trust our instincts, and to trust in our "taste" as opposed to letting a kind of cold discursive reason dominate all of our thoughts. Yet this is exactly what is going on in passages like the one I just quoted. Nietzsche acknowledges a regret in giving up on the possibility of a certain kind of art; but what motivates his renunciation of beautiful mimetic art is presumably a kind of trust in the methods of the natural sciences. If we followed the advice Nietzsche gives elsewhere, we would wind up with a kind of *modus ponens* that retains Nietzsche's observation about the relation of the possibility of a certain kind of beautiful mimetic art and a certain conception of nature, but that essentially holds tight to the other hand of the conditional:

(1*) If one ought to make beautiful mimetic art, then one must believe in an "enchanted" world

(2*) One ought to make beautiful mimetic art

(3*) Ergo, one ought to believe in an "enchanted" world

Here, in holding on to (2^*) , our more intuitive belief about the value of such great art – the intuitive belief that causes Nietzsche to regret its predicted loss – causes us to doubt the method of the natural sciences – trust in such method being what causes Nietzsche to hold tight to (2). But we must be quick to note that such doubt is not in the usefulness of the methods of the natural sciences and the mathematical intelligibility which such methods bring, but only doubt in the exclusivity of such methods as a means to arriving at truth. And our trust in our intuition about the beauty of certain kinds of mimetic are should not be construed as a mere Freudian lapse into believing a comforting illusion. If anything, our motto ought to be something more like *pulchrum index veri* – beauty as a mark of truth.

We might note an observation made by philosophers that there are two basic kinds of attitude that can be taken towards the methods of philosophical inquiry. We might try to grasp the difference by alluding to a famous introductory remark made by Alfred North Whitehead that has become part of lore of analytical philosophers. After their collaboration in writing *Principia Mathematica*, Whitehead was in the process of introducing Bertrand Russell to give a talk at Harvard, and he made the following statement: "Bertie says that I am muddle-headed; but I say that he is simple-minded." Charles Hartshorne, a student of Whitehead's and someone who understands Whitehead's thought, made the following illuminating gloss:

There are two basic attitudes in philosophy, and always have been. These are: the minimalistic, skeptical, or positivistic attitude, on the one side; and the maximalistic, speculative, or metaphysical attitude, on the other. According to the first, the aim of philosophy is to rid us of illusions, confusions, and unverifiable statements, leaving us with only those forms of knowledge which are *clear* and *testable* by interpersonally convincing evidence. In our day, this means that we are left with science (whose success becomes an unexplained miracle, in that any inquiry into a principle of order in the world is rejected as metaphysical) together with the irreducible core of common-sense beliefs by which we obviously must be guided in actual living, whether we admit them in words or not. According to the contrary attitude, the aim of philosophy is to do full justice to all aspects of experience, even those which, perhaps, can never be made entirely clear and obvious, or put to any unambiguous test such as will convince every intelligent person. In men with this attitude, the greatest fear is not that they may be unclear, or adopt beliefs with insufficient justification, but that they may miss the full meaning or nature of life by confining attention to the superficial aspects which, for that very reason, are the obvious ones, and the ones upon which general agreement can be secured...To men of the Russell type, the Whiteheads always appear muddle-headed, and just as surely, to men of the Whitehead type the Russells appear simple-minded.²⁵⁷

W. V. O. Quine reports the following exchange with Whitehead, which he believes to show Whitehead's appreciation of Russell:

He [Whitehead] once told me that he believed Russell to be the greatest analytic thinker the world had ever known, not excluding Aristotle. Whitehead's hero, however, was Plato.²⁵⁸

Yet I believe that this may have been somewhat of a back-handed complement on Whitehead's part. Whitehead seems to be saying that Russell managed to adhere to a minimalistic, positivistic, and skeptical attitude even more so than Aristotle, who, by implication, deviated towards muddle-headedness at times. Whitehead's "hero" is then given as Plato, who, by implication, is squarely muddle-headed.

I will return to the muddle-headed/simple-minded distinction as it might apply to the difference between Plato and Aristotle shortly. But, first, we must see how this distinction helps us to make sense of the tension in Nietzsche's works between, on the one hand, urging us towards a more "musical", "artistic" manner of thought, and, on the other hand, his occasional clinging to a very "hard, strict, narrow" scientific method. In many ways, Nietzsche, by profession a classical philologist, is, unsurprisingly, highly influenced by Greek thought; and we

²⁵⁷ Charles Hartshorne, "Whitehead's Philosophy of Reality as Socially Structured Process." *Chicago Review* 8, no. 2 (Spring-Summer, 1954): 60.

²⁵⁸ W. V. O. Quine, *Quine in Dialogue*, ed. Dagfinn Føllesdal and Douglas B. Quine (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 103-104.

might see him as critically adopting an ancient Greek perspective to criticize certain modern trends. And the Greeks, we might think, were more "poetic." Bertrand Russell, for example, made the following equation of the Greek view with poetry, and contrasted it with the scientific outlook:

The Greeks, eminent as they were in almost every department of human activity, did surprisingly little for the creation of science...The Greeks observed the world as poets rather than as men of science, partly, I think, because all manual activity was ungentlemanly, so that any study which required experiment seemed a little vulgar.²⁵⁹

And so Nietzsche might be seen as pushing us back towards a kind of poetic, Greek conception of the world, and away from a modern scientific conception. But Nietzsche always tempers any such endorsement of a poetic Greek view with a kind of hard-headed belief that, in some sense, reality is how science tells us it is, namely, denuded of any sort of value. In his early work he speaks of art as saving us from "the wisdom of Silenus", i.e. the terrible truth of the absurdity of meaningless existence.²⁶⁰ Later, in a famous unpublished remark, he says: "Truth is ugly. We possess art lest we perish of the truth."²⁶¹ Here he comes very close to saying something similar to one of his contemporaries, Oscar Wilde: "Lying, the telling of beautiful untrue things, is the proper aim of Art."²⁶² But the inability to believe that beautiful mimetic art can really provide us with knowledge or truth, and not mere lies, I think stems from an incomplete revolution on the part of many 19th century thinkers against the mounting scientific rationalism of the 17th and 18th centuries – a kind of abortive attempt at a retrieval of a Greek view of knowledge.

Charles Taylor acknowledges something like the two tendencies implied by Whitehead's remarks, i.e. something like the difference between a muddle-headed, poetic attitude towards philosophical inquiry, and a simple-minded, scientific attitude. And according to Taylor, the modern intellectual climate that emerges in the 17th and 18th centuries tends to side, almost exclusively, with the more analytical and scientific approach, and against the poetic approach. Accordingly, a certain rhetorical narrative is preserved through the 19th century and even up until the present day. On the one hand, according to this narrative, anyone who attempts to defend the

²⁵⁹ Bertrand Russell, *The Scientific Outlook* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954), 18. Also see Groake, *Aristotelian Induction*, 23.

²⁶⁰ Nietzsche, Birth of Tragedy, §3, §7 in Nietzsche, Basic writings, 42, 60.

²⁶¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 435, §822.

²⁶² Oscar Wilde, *Intentions* (Leipzig: Heinemann and Balestier, 1891), 45. From the dialogue "The Decay of Lying."

older pre-modern poetic approach to understanding nature is painted as suffering from "a failure of nerve" and as backsliding towards "a nostalgic return to earlier, comfortable illusions."²⁶³ On the other hand, the modern scientific man, according to this triumphalist narrative, courageously faces up to stern realities. Thus the brave and simple-minded scientific man is favorably contrasted with the indulgent man who clings to the comforting illusions of pre-modern modes of inquiry and thought. There is a kind of inseparable moral criticism that goes along with the acceptance of the new modern scientific paradigm – a moral criticism against those who maintain a belief in any aspects of nature that science does not explicitly endorse. In other words, the modern era has bred a kind of contempt of the muddle-headed approach to philosophy.

Yet in Nietzsche, as well as in many other "Romantic" writers, we can find a twofold desire, both to criticize the hegemonic, scientific and overly analytical modes of inquiry that are praised in the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as to evade the rhetorical-narrative-cum-moralcriticism that would accuse these critics as merely desiring to slip back into nostalgic, comforting illusions. Nietzsche essentially tries to combine the courageous attitude of facing up to stern realties, which came to be associated with early modern scientists, with the notion of Greek, poetical contemplation. One the one hand, Nietzsche's admiration for the Nordic warrior spirit saw something admirable in the triumphalist scientific rhetoric of Promethean early-modern scientists daring to used disengaged reason "to withdraw from holy sacred hierarchies, to stand back from them, and assess them coldly, in the light of how much good they do."²⁶⁴ Early modern philosophers with an analytical and scientific mindset sometimes seemed to take pleasure in criticizing the traditional authority of the church, or of criticizing certain traditional moral ideas. And Nietzsche finds something admirable in this iconoclastic boldness. But, on the other hand, Nietzsche was unhappy with effect that this simple-minded scientism tended to have on moral thought. If we recall Hartshorn's elaboration of Whitehead's distinction, the aim of the simple-minded approach to philosophy is primarily "to rid us of illusions, confusions, and unverifiable statements."²⁶⁵ But what this approach leaves us, however, is "only those forms of knowledge which are *clear* and *testable* by interpersonally convincing evidence."²⁶⁶ As is

²⁶³ Taylor, *Hegel*, 5-6.

²⁶⁴ Taylor, "Iris Murdoch and Moral Philosophy," 7.

²⁶⁵ Hartshorne, "Whitehead's Philosophy," 60.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

common to men, like Nietzsche, who share the muddle-headed approach to philosophy, Nietzsche feared that modern persons were missing "the full meaning or nature of life by confining attention to the superficial aspects which, for that very reason, are the obvious ones, and the ones upon which general agreement can be secured."²⁶⁷ In other words, the simple-minded approach to philosophy that tends to deflate the reasonableness of striving for transcendent, often theistic, realities also deflates the reasonableness of striving for any notions of beauty, nobility, greatness that are not "*clear* and *testable* by interpersonally convincing evidence" or that are not "the ones upon which general agreement can be secured." Nietzsche did not mind the more "theoretical" simple-mindedness that tended to embarrass the church, but he was disturbed by the more practical simple-mindedness that seems to sacrifice higher notions of beauty and excellence for the sake the pursuit of pleasure and comfort. Thus it is in this sense that Nietzsche tries to combine the courageous mindset that the early-modern scientists displayed in their theoretical work, with a criticism of the effects of such simplemindedness on practical thought. But, and here is the rub, he tries to bring off this combination without criticizing the simple-mindedness as it applies to more "theoretical" matters.

Nietzsche tries to show that it might be equally courageous to look at things poetically – that it might be possible to be poets without being indulgent and nostalgic. And, in doing so, he seems to think that he is, in some way, retrieving an authentic pre-modern Greek view:

Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial – *out of profundity*. And is not this precisely what we are again coming back to, we daredevils of the spirit who have climbed the highest and most dangerous peak of present thought and looked around from up there – we who have looked *down* from there? Are we not, precisely in this respect, Greeks? Adorers of forms, of tones, of words? And therefore – *artists*?²⁶⁸

But presumably what makes stopping at the surface courageous, on Nietzsche's view, is the knowledge that, behind the surface, there is something denuded and terrifying. Behind "the manifest image", to use Sellars's term, is the scientific image. And to recognize the denuded scientific image and yet keep one's gaze on the manifest image is supposed to require a kind of courage. While this may be the attitude of a 19th century thinker trying to inhabit a Greek view,

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 38. "Preface for the Second Edition."

it seems to be a misreading of the actual Greek attitude. The actual Greeks simply thought that their artistic depictions were true – true all the way down, not simply true on the surface. Nietzsche, on the other hand, seems to think of these artistic depictions as a needed prophylactic to protect himself from nihilism. And yet here is the point I have been trying to circle in on: even those 19th century thinkers who, I believe rightly, criticized the dominance of simple-minded thinking in the earlier two centuries could not bring themselves to admit that the poetical thought that they defended might be cognitive. Nietzsche could not allow that beauty and truth might be one. In a very observant comment, James S. Taylor notes that:

...the Romantics, in their reaction to Rationalism, tended to isolate the passions and the imagination and then to distribute them as the supreme powers of knowledge...but the Romantic movement in its more radical expressions, forgot that poetic knowledge is cognitive, that is, that the emotions, being cognitive powers, are not mere feelings but intimately integrated with the intelligence.²⁶⁹

James Taylor says that many such 19th century thinkers

are representative of the reaction to the wound received to the integrated view of man, as well as carrying within themselves an incomplete view of pre-Cartesian integrated psychology.²⁷⁰

The idea here is that Nietzsche, and many of the Romantics, confined their criticisms of the earlier centuries to the practical aspects of the simple-minded way of thinking. But, in doing so, they tended to leave untouched the more "theoretical" aspects of such thinking. The point James Taylor is trying to make is that a proper recognition of "the integration of former times" is missing in the Romantic critiques; there is no longer a "harmony of the senses, emotions, will, and intellect."²⁷¹

These last few paragraphs may have seemed like a digression, but allow me to weave them back into the thesis of this section: the idea that the modern liberal institution distorts the practice of the liberal arts. I will do this by returning to a promise I made above to relate the muddle-headed/simple-minded distinction to a difference between Plato and Aristotle. The simple-minded approach that Whitehead attributed to Russell is very similar to the methods practiced in the natural sciences, and has come to be the predominant method in contemporary

²⁶⁹ James S. Taylor, *Poetic Knowledge: The Recovery of Education* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 116-117.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 118.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 117.

analytical philosophy. The muddle-headed approach to philosophy, however, is the method frequently associated with poetry, and it is for this reason that there was traditionally said to be a quarrel between philosophy and poetry – namely, their methods and subject matter to some degree overlapped. And the overlap is perhaps most obvious in the philosophy of Plato, who, unsurprisingly is the one who claimed that such a "quarrel" exists. I would like to suggest that Nietzsche's remarks about the "artistic Socrates" or the "music-practicing Socrates" were on the right track. But Nietzsche needed to press them farther than he did. A satisfactory criticism of the simple-minded philosophical approach that attained hegemony in the 17th and 18th centuries would need to show that there is a way of understanding nature – a certain kind of intelligibility – that might exist along side the more mathematical intelligibility that predominates in the sciences. Such a criticism would need to show that, in philosophy, logical and discursive inquiry is incomplete without recourse to a more integrated and intuitive kind of knowing. We might call this kind of knowledge "poetic knowledge." James S. Taylor finds this phrase helpful in designating the kind of knowing in question. He says that poetic knowledge is:

...a poetic (a sensory-emotional) experience of reality...What must be at the beginning of this understanding is the phenomenon of *poetic experience*. Poetic experience indicates an encounter with reality that is nonanalytical, something that is perceived as beautiful, awful (aweful), spontaneous, mysterious. It is true that poetic experience has that same surprise of metaphor found in poetry, but also found in common experience, when the mind, through the senses and emotions, *sees* in delight, or even in terror, the significance of what is really there...this matter of poetic knowledge is not one that belongs exclusively to the Romantics or to any realm of *feelings*, or to mystical vision. In fact, in its philosophical explanation, the basis of poetic knowledge...is more at home with the tradition of the Realists.²⁷²

And I believe that artists or poets are frequently the ones who are better able to communicate this kind of knowledge. Since it is a mark of realism and a mark of knowledge that one be able to communicate one's insight to others, one must hold that such knowledge is communicable. But merely because such knowledge is not "*clear* and *testable* by interpersonally convincing evidence", and merely because such knowledge is not knowledge is not knowledge of the obvious and superficial aspects of things upon which general agreement can be secured, it does not follow that such knowledge is not knowledge at all. And I believe that Plato and Aristotle both recognized this. And what is more, I believe that Plato and Aristotle both also recognized the epistemic importance of art or poetry in philosophical inquiry. In essence, this is the criticism that the

²⁷² Ibid., 5-6.

Romantics *should* have made against the hegemony of analysis that arose in the late 17^{th} and 18^{th} centuries.

In making the remark that Bertrand Russell was the greatest analytical philosopher "not excluding Aristotle", Whitehead essentially implied that Russell adhered exclusively to a simpleminded approach to philosophy which Aristotle came close to doing but failed to do. Yet I do not think that Whitehead saw Aristotle's "failure" to adhere to this approach to philosophy as a "failure" *simpliciter*, or as a failure as a philosopher. Nor is it clear that he saw Russell's adamant adherence to this approach to philosophy as a philosophical success, i.e. it is not clear that "being the greatest analytical philosopher" was a complement. John McDowell makes the following interesting observation about a certain difference between Plato and Aristotle:

The presence of Callicles in Plato's work shows Plato's interest in people who have come unstuck from an inherited ethical outlook, even to the extent of becoming confident that it is a manipulative fraud. Aristotle, by contrast, gives no sign that he is so much as aware that ethical confidence is fragile, let alone concerned about the fact. He simply stipulates, in effect, that he is addressing only people in whom the value scheme he takes for granted has been properly ingrained.²⁷³

I think that the importance of this difference cannot be overlooked. I want to suggest that the reason Aristotle "stipulates" that he is speaking to a restricted audience is that he recognizes the importance of a kind of knowledge that more formal arguments cannot impart. It is not that Aristotle was unaware of the "fragility" of ethical confidence, or that he was unconcerned about it. Rather, he simply recognized that the roughly analytical method of inquiry he was engaged in was not adequate to the task of instilling such confidence.

Recall the comments of W. Temple on Plato's methodology that I quoted back in Section 2. W. Temple suggests that "[i]n the Ideal Theory we have a doctrine to which I believe that logic and intuition have both contributed."²⁷⁴ Temple compares Plato to Goethe in that both men seemed to have gifts for art and for philosophy. When it came to Plato's theory of Ideas, Temple notes that "it was no logic alone that created the theory."²⁷⁵ Rather, Plato's

²⁷³ John McDowell, "Two Sorts of Naturalism" in *Mind, Value, and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 194-195.

²⁷⁴ Temple, "Plato's Vision," 503.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 514.

logical inquiries and his artistic intuitions acted upon each other; that in most arguments we have logic alone; that in the myths we have intuition alone; but that in the Ideal Theory we have the product of their interaction.²⁷⁶

Temple even suggests, more strongly, that, for Plato

the conviction of the beauty and glory of the Ideal World is prior to all argumentation about the Ideas; the argument moves within the limits of that firm conviction."²⁷⁷

And Temple seems to think that this firm conviction derives from something like a vision of Beauty, something that is non-discursive, yet it still a kind of knowing – a kind of knowing which is both the beginning and end of discursive thought.²⁷⁸ I think that we might see Aristotle as operating *almost* exclusively with a logical and discursive, i.e. analytical, method. But the difference between someone like Aristotle and someone like Russell is that Aristotle admits that there is an entirely other manner of knowing that is arguably central to almost all of his inquiries that he is simply taking for granted.²⁷⁹ Part of the reason that Aristotle can take this kind of knowing for granted is likely that he has already achieved a "firm conviction" of his own – a conviction entrusted to him by his teacher, Plato. It is thus that we might safely call Aristotle a Platonist, even though his differences with Plato sometimes seem to signify a marked departure from Plato's thought. Temple implies that the value of Plato's thought lies in what he expresses through his artistry, even if the logical objections leveled at the young Socrates in the *Parmenides*). The differences that Aristotle has with Plato might be seen as simply a more advanced logical and discursive account of a shared core insight.

What is important for our purposes is that we might see, in the works of Plato, the very "music-practicing" Socrates that Nietzsche calls for. Nietzsche criticizes the supposedly exclusive reliance of discursive thought that he observes in Socrates, and calls for an improved artistic Socrates – one who practices music. Yet it is not clear that Nietzsche's criticisms of Socrates apply to Plato. In fact, some contemporary scholars seem to think that Nietzsche's reading of the Socrates' call to practice music might have been the very reading that Plato

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 503.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 516. See my earlier discussion back in Part I, Section 2.

²⁷⁸ Again, see my earlier discussion in Part I, Section 2.

²⁷⁹ We might think that Aristotle's contributions in logic are somewhat immune from having the right kind of antecedent poetic knowledge. And perhaps this is why contemporary logic textbooks still refer to Aristotle without embarrassment – something which other kinds of textbooks used to do, but have ceased to do in the modern period.

intended. Temple claims that most of Plato's arguments "move within the limits of that firm conviction", i.e. the discursive arguments only operate conjointly with a firm non-discursive insight. David A. White makes a similar comment about the purpose of the poetic myths in Plato's dialogues, especially in the *Phaedo*. White says

Philosophy is indeed the greatest kind of music, but...music must include myth as well as reason in its instrumentation...the myth cannot persuade in a naïve fabulist sense, not just because it is a good story well told. The myth will be persuasive only in relation to the discursive accounts from which the myth originates...The inherent persuasiveness embodied in the strictly rational phase of the inquiry will be extended by this form of development. The arguments will then more likely be persuasive as a result of this mythic chant than if they remained unadorned in their original prosaic setting.²⁸⁰

White suggests that the merely discursive discourse about the immortality of the soul in the earlier parts of the *Phaedo* "require some other form of discourse to fill the gap left by the argument to supply the needed conviction concerning the results of the inquiry."²⁸¹ This other form of discourse is mythical and poetic. And the mythical elements do not merely add extra ornament to the content of the discursive elements. The form/content distinction here breaks down.

In conclusion, it is no surprise why contemporary, analytical philosophers, and liberals in general, have no trouble lionizing the Socrates of the early dialogues. Socrates seems to operate with a purely analytical method that is congenial to a simple-minded approach to philosophy. Socrates is democratic, and he almost delights in embarrassing tradition and orthodoxy. We can imagine this is why Nietzsche sometimes admires Socrates.²⁸² But Plato seems to see the discursive Socratic *elenchus* as parasitic on, and perhaps subservient to, a different kind of non-discursive insight. And it is this reliance on non-discursive insight that makes moderns nervous. The communication of this insight must be poetic and muddle-headed, but this need not make it less deserving of the name of knowledge. Aristotle, who seems to be more analytic in his methods than his teacher, preserves a role for this non-discursive, muddle-headed way of

²⁸⁰ White, Myth and Metaphysics, 238.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 138.

²⁸² Nietzsche's attitude towards Socrates has been described as "ambiguous." See: Walter A. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4th ed. (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1974), Ch. 13 "Nietzsche's Attitude towards Socrates." I think that this ambiguity can be explained by the thesis I have been articulating, namely, the thesis that Nietzsche had mixed feelings about the simple-minded analytical tendency of the enlightenment – a tendency which sometimes manifests itself in the Socrates of the early dialogues. The myth-telling Socrates of the middle dialogues, however, is a different story.

knowing at, what I would argue, is the heart of his philosophical approach. And the distortion that the academy has on the artist is to deny that the muddle-headed artist (or the muddle-headed philosopher for that matter) has any contribution to make to the truth, or to our knowledge of the nature of things. But in fact, it may be that the artist has one of the most important tasks. And more importantly, it may be the case that philosophy needs to hold its middle ground between the simple-minded, analytical approach and the muddle-headed approach. Philosophy needs to recognize its kinship with both modern science and with the fine arts.

To return to something that H. H. Price said, we might think that even synoptic clarity, albeit an improvement over exclusively analytical clarity, is sometimes not enough. Sometimes it may be better to say something in a muddled way, than not to say it at all:

The old saying that philosopher's reach should exceed his grasp has no doubt been grossly abused in the past, and has enabled many solemn muddles to masquerade as profound truths. But it is not wholly a silly statement all the same. And the denial or neglect of it may be even more deleterious than the abuse of it. I think we are in danger of neglecting it. If we do, we shall only succeed in being clear at the expense of being superficial; and in our zeal to "disinfect" our language from muddles, shall only succeed in sterilizing it.²⁸³

Our desire to "disinfect" our language and our philosophical approach to problems has lead, I believe, to a peculiar tendency. Along with Iris Murdoch, I believe that the anxiety not to moralize, which accompanies the simple-minded approach to philosophy that attempts to disinfect our language, has had the effect that "philosophers have done their moralizing unconsciously instead of consciously."²⁸⁴ As Noe said, when conversations are in good order, specialized inquiry is more tolerable. But when conversations are not in good order, a wider and perhaps "fuzzier" view is needed to get things back on track. I think that things are not in good order, and thus we can see this first Part of the dissertation, in a sense, as a methodological

²⁸³ Price, "Clarity is not Enough," 30. I think that we can see the modern Anglophone analytical tendency towards "sterility" as a cultural inheritance from the Enlightenment. Alfred North Whitehead, for example, concedes that there was some value in this attitude, but also acknowledges that it has its limits: "For a thousand years Europe had been prey to intolerant, intolerable visionaries. The common sense of the eighteenth century, its grasp of the obvious fact of human suffering, and of the obvious demands of human nature, acted on the world like a bath of moral cleansing. Voltaire must have the credit, that he heated injustice, he hated cruelty, he hated senseless repression, and he hated hocus-pocus. Furthermore, whe he saw them, he knew them. In these supreme vitues, he was typical of his century, on its better side. But if men cannot live on bread alone, still less can they do so on disinfectants. The age had its limitations…" Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York, N.Y.: New American Library, 1948), 60.

²⁸⁴ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 251.

preface for what follows. In trying to preserve a less distorted picture of the task of the fine arts, I am also trying to preserve a less distorted picture of the role of, for lack of a better term, poetic thinking in philosophy. I believe that John Cottingham's methodological remarks for one of his book's with a similar aim are apt for my own project:

The sharp etching tool is required from time to time if philosophical argument is to be more than arbitrary assertion; but the broader brush is also needed to make out some of the similarities and contrasts between different systems which need to be understood if philosophy is to discharge the task (which no other discipline is equipped to undertake) of placing specialized insights in their wider human context.²⁸⁵

The wider focus is required to identify fundamental differences that lie deeper than those addressed in more specialized debate. And with a wider focus inevitably comes less detail and less clarity than can be expected in more specialized debates. But to call this a methodological preface is misleading. The criticisms of method I have been trying to articulate, and the criticism of the institutional arrangements that enshrine them, are not to be thought of as an innocent and neutral prelude to my more positive arguments. Rather, the form or method is not separable from the content.

²⁸⁵ Cottingham, *Philosophy and the Good Life*, 4.

Part II. 'Great God! I'd rather be a Pagan': How Disenchanting Nature Enfeebles Contemplation

I argued earlier that the greatest threat that the contemporary liberal university structure poses to the fine arts is the threat of trivialization. The hard-sciences have come to set the standard for knowledge. And that standard is pragmatic, instrumental, and quantitative. Knowledge that cannot be quantified and communicated in the neutral language of mathematics, or susceptible to repeatable empirical observation is automatically suspect. Also, the "usefulness" of any knowledge is often times the primary marker of its truth, as well as the vindication of its value. This means that the work of artists – poets, painters etc. – is often seen, in light of this standard of knowledge. Rather, recalling the words of W. H. Auden, the poet in particular, and the artist in general, are generally seen to be "parasitic idlers" or persons engaged in a "trivial" "private hobby."²⁸⁶ I noted briefly that the philosopher seems to face some of the same objections as the artist, and on account of the same reasons. In the next two Parts, I want to address these worries head-on. I want to address the threat of triviality to philosophy in particular.

Section 1. The Nature of the Philosophical Act

Socrates: ...I don't suppose that is has escaped your notice that, when young people get their first taste of arguments, they misuse it by treating it as a kind of game of contradiction. They imitate those who've refuted them by refuting others themselves, and, like puppies, they enjoy dragging and tearing those around them with their arguments.

Glaucon: That's right.

Socrates: Then, when they've refuted many and been refuted by them in turn, they forcefully and quickly fall into disbelieving what they believed before. And, as a result, they themselves and the whole of philosophy are discredited in the eyes of others. **Glaucon**: That's very true.

Socrates: But an older person won't want to take part in such madness. He'll imitate someone who is willing to engage in

²⁸⁶ W. H. Auden, "The Poet & The City," 74-75.

discussion in order to look for the truth, rather than someone who plays at contradiction for sport. He'll be more sensible himself and will bring honor rather than discredit to the philosophical way of life.

Glaucon: That's right.

- *Plato*, Republic $539a-c^{287}$

With the accusation of triviality in mind, I ask "What is philosophical activity?", "What is its end?", and "What is its value?" Important questions all. Surely much could be written about each of them. Yet everyone who engages in the activity of philosophical thought has some more or less explicit, and some more or less articulate, answer to these questions. But one thing that we should notice is that answers to these questions seem to have changed rather dramatically between the ancients and the moderns. And we should notice that this change cannot but bring with it a change in the relative perceived value of different methods and departments of study. As William Hamilton, who beginning in 1836 held the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Edinburgh, put it in the beginning of his *Lectures on Metaphysics*:

The question – Is Truth, or is the Mental Exercise in pursuit of truth, the superior end? – this is perhaps the most curious theoretical, and certainly the important practical, problem in the whole compass of philosophy. For, according to the solution at which we arrive, must we accord the higher or the lower rank to certain great departments of study; and, what is of more importance, the character of its solution, as it determines the aim, regulates from first to last the method, which an enlightened science of education must adopt.²⁸⁸

Hamilton notes that "however curious and important, this question has never, in so far as I am aware, been regularly discussed."²⁸⁹ If we take Hamilton at his word, we might assume that his somewhat extended preliminary discussion of the matter was relatively uncontested among his contemporaries. And we do find that Hamilton's account is only one of two cited, for example, by J. A. Stewart in his commentary on the passages in Book X of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* that are relevant to this question.²⁹⁰ But before I mention Hamilton's answer to the

 ²⁸⁷ C. D. Reeve's revision of the Grube translation in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Co., 1997).
 ²⁸⁸ Sir William Hamilton Bart., *Lectures On Metaphysics, Volume I*, ed. H. L. Mansel and John Veitch,

 ²⁸⁸ Sir William Hamilton Bart., *Lectures On Metaphysics, Volume I*, ed. H. L. Mansel and John Veitch, Sixth Edition (Ediburgh and London: William Blackwood And Sons, 1877), 9.
 ²⁸⁹ Ibid., 9.

²⁹⁰ John Alexander Stewart, *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle, Volume II* (Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press, 1892), 442. The other account cited by Stewart is Sir Alexander Grant, *Ethics of Aristotle Illustrated with Essays and Notes, Volume II*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Company,

question, I wish to look at an answer given by one of Hamilton's predecessors, David Hume.

In the *Treatise*, Hume discusses what he calls "curiosity" or "the love of truth." About this he says:

The first and most considerable circumstance requisite to render truth agreeable, is the genius and capacity, which is employ'd in its invention and discovery. What is easy and obvious is never valu'd; and even what is *in itself* difficult, if we come to the knowledge of it without difficulty, and without any stretch of thought or judgment, is but little regarded.²⁹¹

Here it seems clear that, in terms of Hamilton's question, Hume certainly chooses pursuit over truth as supplying the greatest "agreeableness." He then qualifies his account with the remark that "[t]he truth we discover must also be of some importance."²⁹² But he goes on to remark that the importance of the nature of the truths we seek is clearly secondary and derivative to the pursuit:

the pleasure of study consists chiefly in the action of the mind, and the exercise of the genius and understanding in the discovery or comprehension of any truth. If the importance of the truth be requisite to compleat the pleasure, 'tis not on account of any considerable addition, which of itself it brings to our enjoyment, but only because 'tis, in some measure, requisite to fix our attention.²⁹³

In order to make himself clear he then produces the following striking analogy:

there cannot be two passions more nearly resembling each other, than those of hunting and philosophy...in both cases the end of our action may in itself be despis'd, yet in the heat of the action we acquire such an attention to this end, that we are very uneasy under any disappointments, and are sorry when we either miss our game, or fall into any error in our reasoning. / If we want another parallel to these affections, we may consider the passion of gaming, which affords a pleasure from the same principles as hunting and philosophy.²⁹⁴

The pursuit of truth, and thus philosophy itself, was thus, for Hume, a kind of amusement like that of gaming or hunting.

One of the dominant themes of my previous discussion is that of the effects of university specialization on the nature of philosophical thought. In particular I alluded to Alasdair

^{1866), 334-335.} Grant's account is simply another footnote, not an extended argument like that of Hamilton.

²⁹¹ Hume, *Treatise*, 449. Book II, Part iii, Section x.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid., 450-451.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 451-452.

MacIntyre's observation that the emergence of the liberal universities in the 17th and 18th century – those universities which, having abolished religious tests for educators, adopted a certain purportedly "neutral" methodology as a criterion for assessing and hiring faculty – had dire effects for departments of study outside of the natural sciences. Hume, as MacIntyre notes, styled himself as an Englishman in opposition to his Scottish upbringing. Part of the reason was that Hume saw England as a "land of toleration and liberty," and he believed that "the improvements in reason and philosophy" made by those like Bacon was due to England's more tolerant attitude towards religious difference.²⁹⁵ And it is in this light, MacIntyre argues, that we must see Hume's understanding of the value and importance of philosophical thought. With respect to Hume's view on the value of philosophy and the search for truth, MacIntyre writes:

Philosophy, so it turns out, is like the hunting of woodcocks or plovers; in both activities the passion finds its satisfaction in the pleasures of the chase. And this view of philosophy accords very well with the place which we have seen accorded to it within the dominant English and Anglicizing social and cultural order. Philosophy is a delightful avocation for those whose talents and tastes happen to be of the requisite kind, just as hunting is a delightful avocation for those whose talents and tastes and tastes are of *that* kind. What philosophy cannot have on this view is anything resembling the place accorded to it within the older Scottish tradition, for which it is – in conjunction with theology – the discipline whose enquiries provide the rational justification for the metaphysical and moral principles constitutive of the political and social order. It is a commonplace that Hume aspired to deprive theology of its traditional centrality. It is less often remarked that philosophy, on a Humean view, itself becomes a less than central activity.²⁹⁶

So while the immediate intended result of the liberal policies that came to structure English intellectual and political institutions was to demote the importance of explicitly theological thought with respect to other academic disciplines, it also had the result of demoting the importance of philosophical thought as well. Philosophy comes to be seen as a sort of pastime – something more trivial than it once was.

It may be that Scotland was less quick to adopt the liberal view of the diminished importance of theological and philosophical thought than was England. It has often been speculated that Hume's unorthodox religious views were part of the reason for his never gaining

²⁹⁵ Hume, *Treatise*, "Introduction" xvii. See also MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, Ch. XV, especially p.284.

²⁹⁶ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 301.

a Chair of Philosophy at the University of Glasgow or at Edinburgh.²⁹⁷ But within a few generations, William Hamilton had seemed to wholly adopt Hume's understanding of the end and value of philosophical thought, and Hamilton had no trouble gaining a Chair of Philosophy in a Scottish university.²⁹⁸ Hamilton begins his *Lectures on Metaphysics* by trying to point out the value of the study of philosophy to potential students:

In the commencement of a course of instruction in any department of knowledge, it is usual, before entering on the regular consideration of the subject, to premise a general survey of the more important advantages which it affords...²⁹⁹

He announces the criterion for such advantage in utilitarian terms:

I ... profess myself a utilitarian... But what is a utilitarian? Simply one who prefers the Useful to the Useless – and who does not? 300

Having established his criterion, he goes on to point out the following "dangerous error", namely, the error of:

regarding the cultivation of our faculties as subordinate to the acquisition of knowledge, instead of regarding the possession of knowledge as subordinate to the cultivation of our faculties.³⁰¹

And then he finally makes clear his answer to the question of whether it is truth or the mental exercise in pursuit of truth that is the superior end: "the knowledge of truths is not supreme, but subordinate to the cultivation of the knowing mind."³⁰² And he uses the same analogies used by Hume: "It is ever the contest that pleases us, and not the victory. Thus it is in play; thus it is in hunting; thus it is in the search of truth; thus it is in life."³⁰³ But part of the reason I mention Hamilton's discussion of the question, aside from pointing out the liberal, Anglicizing influence of Hume on the later Scottish intellectual tradition, is that Hamilton takes this conception of the value and end of philosophy to have been the predominant view of the western tradition, and

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 286. Also see Isabel Rivers, Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780, Volume II Shaftesbury to Hume (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 255.

²⁹⁸ William Hamilton came from an academic family. His great-uncle, grandfather, and father consecutively held the Chair of Anatomy at Glasgow University. See: John Veitch, Hamilton (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1882), 2. ²⁹⁹ Hamilton, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, 2.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 4.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 5.

³⁰² Ibid., 9.

³⁰³ Ibid., 11.

proceeds to cite various philosophers in his defense, most surprisingly, Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. While Hume may have recognized himself as somewhat of an iconoclast, it seems that Hamilton is unaware of the radical break that he seems to be making from the ancient and scholastic conception of the end or the good of the philosophical act. By reading Aristotle and St. Thomas through this distorting liberal lens, Hamilton shows no awareness of the importance of the contrast of his understanding of the philosophical act and the alternative pre-modern or pre-liberal conception.

That Hamilton's attempt to justify his view by appeal to Aristotle and to St. Thomas is misguided was noted by some of his contemporaries. W. G. Ward, for example, writing for a Catholic audience only a few years after the publication of Hamilton's *Lectures*, not only disagreed strongly with Hamilton's understanding of the nature and end of the philosophical act, but also objected to Hamilton's citing authorities like St. Thomas in his defense. Let us take up these two points separately: Ward's objection to Hamilton's conception of philosophy; and then his objection to Hamilton's appeals to authority.

As opposed to Hamilton's "dangerous error" of "regarding the cultivation of our faculties as subordinate to the acquisition of knowledge", Ward speaks of "the very serious evil of pursuing intellectual exercises, not for the sake of investigating truth, but for the sake of enjoying the pleasure afforded by those exercises themselves."³⁰⁴ But what is it that is evil about such an understanding of the philosophical act? Ward believes that such an understanding of philosophy leads to a kind of intellectual gluttony. Ward takes his audience to be comprised of theologians and philosophers, and he does not tend to distinguish sharply between them. In order, then, to explain the negative consequences of the Humean conception of philosophy put forth by Hamilton, Ward gives the following example:

³⁰⁴ W. G. Ward, "On the Dangers to be Apprehended from Intellect, When Not Spiritually Regulated and Controlled" in *Essays on Religion and Literature*, ed. Henry Edward Manning (London : Longmans, Green and Co, 1867), 81. While it is understandable that Ward would emphasize truth as the object of philosophy or of intellectual exercise as a kind of corrective, since it is the importance of philosophy's objects that Hamilton seems to demote, we ought not follow Ward's suggestion if it leads us so far as to conceive of intellectual activity as a wholly instrumental activity that aims as the possession of truth as an end state, a state that is completely external to the intellectual activity. Rather, as I will note with Aristotle below, we should think of the object of intellectual activity apart form its object, as Hamilton seems to imply, but nor can we value the objects of inquiry in such a way that they cease to have relation to our intellectual activity of knowing them. Just as virtues can be both valuable in themselves, and done for the sake fo the *kalon*, or for the sake of eudaimonia, so can philosophical wisdom be valued in itself, as well as for the sake of knowing intrinsically noble or beautiful objects.

Externally to pure mathematics, there is no conclusion, however solid, which is not open to ingenious cavil. A genuine theologian, however, who is earnestly in search for truth, will be able in a very large number of cases securely to recognize the object of his search: he will confidently decide, that such or such a doctrine is fully and sufficiently established. But the case will be very different, if we are seeking (not truth but) the pleasurable excitement of discussion. We shall have a vested interest, if I may speak, in keeping questions open, in order that there may be more room for that discussion which affords us our favorite amusement. Considering such a tendency in that extreme state which is ultimately imaginable, one hardly knows what doctrine will be held as absolutely certain...Sir W. Hamilton, as we have seen, compares intellectual exercise to the pleasure of the chase. Take the case then of a foxhunter, with the dogs in full cry. If you step forward and shoot the fox for him, he will regard you as his enemy; for what he desires, is not the fox's death, but the delight of hunting him. And in the same manner, if a so-called theologian is not desiring truth but the pleasure of its pursuit, he will regard you as his enemy, if you deprive him of that pleasure by presenting him with truth ready found.³⁰⁵

The worry then, is that, under this revised understanding of the philosophical act, philosophers (and theologians) individually, as well as the discipline as a whole, will have a "vested interest" in avoiding the truth, and a "vested interest" in prolonging disputes simply for the sake of further dispute. Just as the glutton is indiscriminate in the sources of his pleasures, so the Humean philosopher is indiscriminate in the pleasures he takes in intellectual pursuits. No longer is philosophical activity guided by the nobility of its object, but rather guided, regardless of object, simply by the prospect of the chase. In short, philosophy will cease to engage in *dialectics*, in the manner in which Plato understood that term, i.e. as a kind of discussion that aimed at truth, and will only engage in *eristics*, i.e. in argument which only aims at multiplying disagreement.³⁰⁶ And if it is known to outside observers that this is how philosophy is practiced, and how it is

And if it is known to outside observers that this is now philosophy is practiced, and now it is understood by its practitioners, then one cannot blame such outside observers from concluding that philosophy is something trivial, at best, and vicious at worst. Just as Auden observed that poets were deemed to be "parasitic idlers" or persons engaged in "trivial", "private hobbies", we can see how people would come to see philosophy in the same way.

Having seen what Ward takes to be wrong with Hamilton's conception of philosophy, let us consider why he finds Hamilton's citation of various authorities to be troubling. Regarding that Humean conception of philosophy that takes the philosophical act to consist in "pursuing

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 87.

³⁰⁶ See the quotation at the head of this section from Plato, *Republic*, 539a-c.

intellectual exercises, not for the sake of investigating truth, but for the sake of enjoying the pleasure afforded by those exercises themselves", Ward writes:

Now Sir W. Hamilton expressly declared, that such *is* the end pursued by himself and (as he maintains) by all scientific men without exception...His conclusion is substantially this: we may fancy ourselves to be seeking the possession of truth, but we are really aiming at the pleasurable excitement of its pursuit...Then follows the last consequence of all. An influential philosopher of the day, and one learned almost beyond parallel, inspecting the records of past philosophy, finds that such has been the fact...Instead, therefore, of mourning over this transformation of philosophy into a selfish intellectual gluttony, he endorses that transformation with his own eminent name.³⁰⁷

Ward rightly sees this new Humean understanding of philosophy as a "transformation" of an older, more traditional understanding of philosophy. Yet Ward notes that Hamilton, rather than acknowledging this, instead claims that this is the very understanding of philosophy that we find expressed by all its great practitioners. Of particular interest to me are Hamilton's citations of Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Blaise Pascal. Ward, being a Catholic, was particularly disturbed by Hamilton's citation of St. Thomas, who is not only a canonized saint, but also a Doctor of the church. Thus Ward has already gone some of the way to discrediting Hamilotn's appeal to Aquinas:

How far is the author correct, when he cites certain grave authorities in confirmation of his view? ...in one instance the question is vital; for if St. Thomas, a canonized Saint, really held such a principle, my condemnation of it recoils on my own head. But there is nothing more wonderful, in all this wonderful passage, than his appeal to St. Thomas. The more carefully we read over the few words which he ascribes to the Angelic Doctor, the more difficult we shall find it to understand what Sir William could have imagined to be their connexion with his theme...However, we need not trouble ourselves to consider what St. Thomas would mean by these words, for in point of fact he never wrote them.³⁰⁸

Without accusing Hamilton of calculated misdirection, Ward suggests that Hamilton must have been quoting from memory, and simply misremembered what he claimed to have read in Thomas. But regardless of Hamilton's intentions, his writing still has the effect of making invisible an alternative conception of philosophical thought that was predominant in pre-modern thinkers. When philosophers like Hamilton read the history of philosophy through the lens of the new Humean view of the philosophical act, they threaten to subsume the older model of philosophy, which aims at truth, within the new one which delights in seeking. Through this

³⁰⁷ Ward, "Dangers of Uncontrolled Intellect," 81, 83, 85.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 128.

lens, the defenders of the old view are made to look like just another eristic disputant engaged in light-hearted gaming or hunting.

Not only do Hamilton's citations of Thomas fail to vindicate the view he ascribes to him, but St. Thomas elsewhere makes it very clear that the possession of truth is the end of the philosophical act, as well as its greatest value. And Aquinas cites Aristotle in support of giving the higher value to the contemplation of truth. I think it would be worthwhile to set out some texts of Aristotle and of St. Thomas so that we may see the stark contrast between, on the one hand, the modern, liberal view of the nature and value of the philosophical act shared by Hume and Hamilton, and, on the other hand, the pre-modern understanding of the philosophical act shared by Aristotle and St. Thomas. I then want to look at one additional philosopher whom Hamilton cites in his defense, namely, Pascal.

Let us begin with Aristotle. In the context of discussing the value of contemplation, Aristotle writes the following:

firstly, this activity is the best (since not only is reason the best thing in us, but the objects of reason are the best of knowable objects); and secondly, it is the most continuous, since we can contemplate truth more continuously than we can do anything. And we think happiness has pleasure mingled with it, but the activity of philosophic wisdom is admittedly the pleasantest of virtuous activities; at all events the pursuit of it is thought to offer pleasures marvelous for their purity and their enduringness, and *it is to be expected that those who know will pass their time more pleasantly than those who inquire*.³⁰⁹

Here Aristotle indicates clearly that knowing is more pleasant than seeking. And this is not a mere isolated instance, but rather Aristotle's general theory of pleasure and of value confirms this. Desires or appetites – both non-rational appetites like hunger, and rational appetites like love – are directed towards their natural ends. Aristotle says that "being is choiceworthy and

³⁰⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.7, 1177a20-28. (trans. Ross). Ross's translation of ἡδίστη δὲ τῶν κατ' ἀρετὴν ἐνεργειῶν ἡ κατὰ τὴν σοφίαν ὁμολογουμένως ἐστίν as "the activity of philosophic wisdom is admittedly the pleasantest of virtuous activities" is a strange locution. Both Rackham and Irwin translate this phrase as "activity *in accordance with* wisdom", which seems more true to the Greek as well as less peculiar. However, I prefer Ross's translation overall for certain reasons. One being Irwin's very misleading translation of *theoretike* and *theorein* as "study." Study sounds like what Josef Piper, in his *Leisure and the Basis of Culture*, calls "intellectual work", whereas *theorein* is better understood as a kind of intellectual looking or seeing. To study a rose is very different from contemplating a rose. When I read Irwin I cannot help but hear Wordsworth asking if the man who studies a rose is not: "one that would peep and botanize/upon his mother's grave?" However you translate it, *theorein* for Aristotle should have an aristocratic, leisured ring to it. "Study" seems to conjure a very Protestant, "Whig-ish" image of a man working at a lawyer's brief. In addition to Pieper, see Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, §329.

lovable for all, and we are insofar as we are actualized."³¹⁰ In other words, our very being is brought from potentiality to actuality when we reach our ends. And pleasure is the completion of such goal-directed activities. Aristotle famously says that "pleasure completes the activity...as a sort of consequent end, like the bloom on youths."³¹¹ In other words, one does not seek pleasure for its own sake, but rather one seeks one's end insofar as attaining one's end is simply what it means to be actualized, or 'to be' *simpliciter*. And, as is indicated in the passage above, contemplation seems the best candidate for man's end. The pleasure that results is coincident with the attainment of such an end, but is not the end itself.

And this last point, that pleasure is not the good, or that pleasure is not man's end, is born out by many striking examples in Aristotle's texts. At the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in trying to describe man's good, or that in which his happiness lies, Aristotle writes the following:

...people quite reasonably reach their conception of the good, i.e. of happiness, from the lives they lead; for there are roughly three most favored lives: the lives of gratification, of political activity, and, third, of study. / The many, the most vulgar, would seem to conceive the good and happiness as pleasure, and hence they also like the life of gratification. In this they appear completely slavish, since the life they decide on is a life for grazing animals.³¹²

Aristotle, in calling a life devoted to pleasure "a life for grazing animals", is not engaged in mere name-calling. Aristotle truly believes that someone who pursues pleasure for its own sake, without any concern to how it is obtained, is someone who has failed to recognize the true end of a human being. While the end of a non-rational animal may be simply nourishing and reproducing itself, and while such a beast's proper pleasures may be limited mostly to those of eating and sex, Aristotle believes that man, a rational animal, has additional ends beyond these. Since Aristotle thinks that one's pleasures are rightly understood as the completion of one's end, and since the human being has some end beyond the mere beast or non-rational animal, Aristotle frequently describes persons who fail to recognize this as being somewhat benighted and immature. For example, he writes:

³¹⁰ Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, IX.7 1168a6-7. (trans. Irwin); also see Aristotle, *Generation and Corruption*, II.10 336b27-30: "For in all things, as we affirm, nature always strikes after the better. Now being (we have explained elsewhere the variety of meanings we recognize in this term) is better than notbeing..." (trans. H. H. Joachim) in Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Vol. 1 (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1984).

³¹¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.4 1174b32-33. (trans. Irwin).

³¹² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.5 1095b14-21. (trans. Irwin).

...no one would choose to live with a child's [level of] thought for his whole life, taking as much pleasure as possible in what pleases children, or to enjoy himself while doing some utterly shameful action, even if he were never to suffer pain for it. / Moreover, there are many things that we would be eager for even if they brought no pleasure – for instance, seeing, remembering, knowing, having the virtues. Even if pleasures necessarily follow on them, that does not matter; for we would choose them even if no pleasure resulted from them. / It would seem to be clear, then, that pleasure is not the good, that not every pleasure is choiceworthy, and that some are choiceworthy in themselves, differing in species or in their sources [from those that are not].³¹³

And we can begin to see how this understanding could be brought to condemn the kind of "philosophical" activity that aimed primarily at the pleasures of exercising one's discursive mental powers, i.e. the kind of "philosophical" activity that saw its end as some kind of amusement as in hunting and gaming.

Since he believes that man's good, man's happiness, and man's true pleasure are attained through activities that seek man's proper end, Aristotle does, in fact, apply this way of thinking to a condemnation of the idea that "amusement" might be man's end. Happiness, he notes, seems to be something choiceworthy for its own sake, insofar as it is not chosen for the sake of some other thing. But amusement, Aristotle notes, would also seem to be something chosen for its own sake. This is clear, he observes, insofar as many types of amusement are so far removed from being instrumentally good that they in fact often do more harm than good.³¹⁴ But his argument as to why amusement cannot be man's end is as follows:

Happiness, therefore, does not lie in amusement; it would, indeed, be strange if the end were amusement, and one were to take trouble and suffer hardship all one's life in order to amuse oneself. For, in a word, everything that we choose we choose for the sake of something else – except happiness, which is an end. Now to exert oneself and work for the sake of amusement seems silly and utterly childish...And we say that serious things are better than laughable things and those connected with amusement, and that the activity of the better of any two things – whether it be two elements of our being or two men – is the more serious; but the activity of the better is *ipso facto* superior and more of the nature of happiness.³¹⁵

³¹³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.3 1174a2-12. (trans. Irwin).

³¹⁴ This is not to say that all amusement is harmful. But there is a highly persuasive and highly *amusing* account of the idea that certain kinds of amusement are harmful in Bill Cosby's classic stand-up routine "Bill Cosby-Himself" in which he begins one section with the line: "What I really want to study is this whole thing of drinking, getting drunk, and people saying that they're 'having a good time'." Cosby then proceeds to describe the misery that results from drinking until one becomes ill, and the fact that even such bodily harm does not deter persons from engaging in the exact behavior the very next weekend.

³¹⁵ Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, X.6 1176b28-1177a6. (trans. Ross).

Amusement is deemed "childish" and "silly" insofar as it does not concern "the better elements" of our being. Aristotle says that we ought to "strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us."³¹⁶ This is what it means to be "serious" on Aristotle's view, and that part which is best in us is, according to Aristotle, *nous* – something we might call intuitive intellect.

Perhaps the most striking passage in the Aristotelian corpus that exhibits the value of knowledge and contemplation, however, is found in the *Eudemian Ethics*. Here, near the beginning of the treatise, Aristotle says he is seeking an answer to a most important question:

the question which of the things contained in being alive is preferable, and which when attained would fully satisfy a man's desire.³¹⁷

Albert Camus, at the beginning of his *Myth of Sisyphus*, famously asked a similar question, and he thought that it was of the very essence of philosophy:

There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest— whether or not the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories—comes afterwards. These are games; one must first answer. And if it is true, as Nietzsche claims, that a philosopher, to deserve our respect, must preach by example, you can appreciate the importance of that reply, for it will precede the definitive act. These are facts the heart can feel; yet they call for careful study before they become clear to the intellect.³¹⁸

Camus thinks that a kind of axiological question, i.e. a question about value, lies at the heart of the philosophical act. What makes life worth living? Camus implies that many philosophical questions might be "games", but that clearly a game cannot be one's reason for living – one's *raison d'être*. Aristotle essentially gives his answer to this question, in a most striking passage, in the beginning of *Eudemian Ethics* as follows:

For many of life's events are such that they cause men to throw life away, for instance, diseases, excessive pains, storms; so that it is clear that on account of these things any way it would actually be preferable, if someone offered us the choice, not to be born at all. And in addition, the kind of life that people live while still children is not desirable in fact no sensible person could endure to go back to it again. And further, many of the experiences that contain no pleasure nor pain, and also of those that do contain pleasure but pleasure of an ignoble kind, are such that non-existence would be better than being alive. And generally, if one collected together the whole of the things that the whole of

³¹⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.7 1177b34-1178a1. (trans. Ross).

³¹⁷ Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, I.5 1215b17-18. (trans. H Rackham) in Aristotle, *Loeb Classical Library. Aristotle XX: The Athenian Constitution, The Eudemian Ethics, On Virtues and Vices*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935).

³¹⁸ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus: And Other Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 3.

mankind do and experience yet do and experience unwillingly, because not for the sake of the things themselves, and if one added an infinite extent of time, these things would not cause a man to choose to be alive rather than not alive. But moreover, also the pleasure of food or of sex alone, with the other pleasures abstracted that knowledge or sight or any other of the senses provides for human beings, would not induce anybody to value life higher if he were not utterly slavish, for it is clear that to one making this choice there would be no difference between being born a beast or a man...Now it is said that when somebody persisted in putting various difficulties of this sort to Anaxagoras and went on asking for what object one should choose to come into existence rather than not, he replied by saying, 'For the sake of contemplating the heavens and the whole order of the universe.' ["τοῦ" φάναι "θεωρῆσαι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν περὶ τὸν ὅλον κόσμον τάξιν".] Anaxagoras therefore thought that the alternative of being alive was valuable for the sake of some kind of knowledge [ἐπιστήμης τινὸς ἕνεκεν].³¹⁹

Aristotle essentially affirms Anaxagoras's response that a life of contemplation, and not just contemplation of anything, but of "the heavens" and "the order of the universe" has sufficient value to warrant our choice to live and to exist in the world even in the face of disease, pain, and storms. The value of contemplation, and the value of philosophical activity, is thus found in knowing something about reality – not in the amusing pleasure of the chase.

And it is interesting that this is exactly how Aristotle "markets" the study of philosophy to potential students. Recall that Hamilton had said that an educator is obligated to indicate what use a particular study will be to those who study it, in order that potential students might be encouraged to pursue that line of study. Hamilton had noted his "utilitarianism" by saying that he was "[s]imply one who prefers the Useful to the Useless – and who does not?"³²⁰ And his answer to the prospective student was:

If speculative truth itself be only valuable as a mean of intellectual activity, those studies which determine the faculties to a more vigorous exertion, will, in every liberal sense, be better entitled, absolutely, to the name useful...On this ground I would rest one of the pre-eminent utilities of mental philosophy...I do not at present found the importance on the paramount dignity of the pursuit. It is as the best gymnastic of the mind...that I

³¹⁹ Aristotle, Eudemian Ethics, I.5 1215b18-37, 1216a11-16. (trans. Rackham). See also Aristotle, *Protrepticus*, B18-B19: "Then what is it among existing things for the sake of which nature and god have brought us into being? Pythagoras, when asked about this, answered, 'To observe the heavens', and used to say that he was an observer of nature and had come into life for the sake of this. And when somebody asked Anaxagoras for what end would one choose to come into being and to live, he is said to have answered the question by saying, 'To observe the heavens and the stars, moon and sun in them', everything else being worth nothing." (trans. Barnes and Lawrence). Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Vol.2*, 2406.

³²⁰ Hamilton, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, 4.

would vindicate to these speculations that necessity which has too frequently been denied them. $^{\rm 321}$

Hamilton's answer is that philosophy is useful as a "gymnastic of the mind." Just as contemporary medical doctors encourage elderly persons to do Sudoku puzzles in order to "stay sharp", so Hamilton says that the "pre-eminent" utility of philosophy is to exercise our minds by "vigorous exertion." Yet, in response to Hamilton's rhetorical question – "Who does not prefer the useful to the useless?" – we can safely answer: Aristotle.³²² Aristotle takes a quite opposite approach in the *Protrepticus* – a work meant to exhort students to the study of philosophy. Rather than answer questions like "what is the use or utility of philosophy?" or "what is the advantage of philosophical study?" he rejects these questions outright:

To seek from all knowledge a result other than itself and to demand that it must be useful is the act of one completely ignorant of the distance that from the start separates good things from necessary things; for they differ completely. For the things that are loved for the sake of something else and without which life is impossible must be called necessities and joint-causes; but those that are loved for themselves, even if nothing else follows from them, must be called goods in the strict sense; for this is not desirable for the sake of that, and that for the sake of something else, and so *ad infinitum* – there is a stop somewhere. It is really ridiculous, then, to demand from everything some benefit besides the thing itself, and to ask 'What is the gain to us'? and 'What is the use'? For in truth, as we maintain, such a man is in no way like the one who knows the noble and the good or who distinguishes causes from joint-causes.³²³

Elsewhere in Aristotle's writings, he shows an equal admiration for "useless" things. For example, when he is describing the great-souled or magnanimous (*megalopsychos*) man, who appears to be Aristotle's exemplar of good character – "the adornment of the virtues" – he says that:

He is one who will possess beautiful and profitless things rather than profitable and useful ones; for this is more proper to a character that suffices to itself.³²⁴

Elsewhere, in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle says

Victory, too, and honour belong to the class of noble things, since they are desirable even when they yield no fruits, and they prove our superiority in good qualities...So again are possessions that bring no profit, since they are more fitting than others for a gentleman.

³²¹ Ibid., 13-14.

³²² Aristotle does acknowledge, in *Topics I.2*, for example, that "intellectual training" is a legitimate purpose of practicing "deduction", but this training is not the only or the primary use of "deduction."

³²³ Aristotle, *Protrepticus* B42. Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Vol.2*, 2408.

³²⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IV.3 1125a11-13. (trans. Ross).

So are the distinctive qualities of a particular people, and the symbols of what it specially admires, like long hair in Sparta, where this is a mark of a free man³²⁵

And so in this spirit, in the *Protrepticus*, Aristotle does not think that something's failing to be advantageous is even a *prima facie* mark against its value:

It is not at all strange, then, if it [sc. understanding] does not show itself useful or advantageous; for we call it not advantageous but good, and it should be chosen not for the sake of something else but for itself.³²⁶

But simply because contemplation of truth achieved through philosophy is not advantageous in the sense of *subserving* some other end, it does not follow that the wisdom achieved through philosophical contemplation may not *support* other activities.³²⁷ Just as pleasure may been seen to accompany the attainment of ends in certain activities generally speaking without being "that for the sake of which" those activities are undertaken, so it might be that contemplation yields wisdom that can be applied to other areas of practical activity without those practical activities being that "for the sake of which" contemplation was undertaken. I will return to the matter of the benefits of contemplation below, but let us first look at what St. Thomas has to add to Aristotle's discussion.

St. Thomas directly takes up the question of pleasure in relation to seeking wisdom. In particular, he asks whether or not "wonder" can be a source of pleasure.³²⁸ He considers the following objection, derived from Aristotle's texts, to the statement that wonder is a source of pleasure:

Objection 2. Further, wonder is the beginning of wisdom, being as it were, the road to the search of truth, as stated in the beginning of Metaph. i, 2. But "it is more pleasant to think of what we know, than to seek what we know not," as the Philosopher says (Ethic. x, 7): since in the latter case we encounter difficulties and hindrances, in the former not; while

³²⁵ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I.9 1367a22-23, 1367a27-30. (trans. W. Rhys Roberts). See also Gabriel Richardson Lear, "Aristotle on Moral Virtue and the Fine," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Richard Kraut (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), 125 and footnote. ³²⁶ Aristotle, *Protrepticus*, B44. Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Vol.2*, 2409. In the immediately preceding sentence, Aristotle has said that just as "we receive the gifs of justice in Hades, so, it seems, we gain those of understanding [*tes phroneseos*] in the Isles of the Blessed." Greek text from Aristotle, *Protrepticus or Exhortation to Philosophy: Citations, Fragments, Paraphrases, and Other Evidence*, trans. D. S. Hutchinson and Monte Ransome Johnson (this version finalized 20 January 2015) was released at the Notre Dame Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, 2015), p.51.

³²⁷ This helpful distinction I borrow from Matthew Walker, "The Utility of Contemplation in Aristotle's *Protrepticus.*" *Ancient Philosophy* 30, no. 1 (2010): 145-148.

³²⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q.32, Art.8.

pleasure arises from an operation which is unhindered, as stated in Ethic. vii, 12,13. Therefore wonder hinders rather than causes pleasure.³²⁹

The fact that wonder seems to arise due to a lack of knowledge is taken as possible evidence that it cannot be pleasurable insofar as pleasure, according to Aristotle, is more appropriate to the possession of knowledge than its pursuit. Yet St. Thomas's *sed contra* also references Aristotle: "On the contrary, The Philosopher says (Rhet. i, 11) that wonder is the cause of pleasure."³³⁰ In the passage referenced from the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle says that

Learning things and wondering at things are also pleasant as a rule; wondering implies the desire of learning, so that the object of wonder is an object of desire; while in learning one is brought into one's natural condition.³³¹

And here it is fairly clear that the pleasure afforded by wonder is derivative from the pleasure found in learning and in knowing. When one learns something, one arrives at one's natural condition. Aquinas responds directly to the earlier objection as follows:

Reply to Objection 2. Pleasure includes two things; rest in the good, and perception of this rest. As to the former therefore, since it is more perfect to contemplate the known truth, than to seek for the unknown, the contemplation of what we know, is in itself more pleasing than the research of what we do not know. Nevertheless, as to the second, it happens that research is sometimes more pleasing accidentally, in so far as it proceeds from a greater desire: for greater desire is awakened when we are conscious of our ignorance. This is why man takes the greatest pleasure in finding or learning things for the first time.³³²

Even if occasionally we find that our sense of pleasure is greater in the pursuit of some yet unknown thing, Aquinas is clear that this is a kind of *accidental* pleasure. The true or proper pleasure is still that which completes the activity whose true or proper end is knowing.³³³

It is also important to notice that St. Thomas argues against what seems to be a kind of corollary of the Humean view of the end and value of the philosophical act. Namely, if the value

³²⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q.32, Art.8, arg.2.

³³⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q.32, Art.8, s.c.

³³¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I.11 1371a31-33. (trans. W. Rhys Roberts).

³³² St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q.32, Art.8, ad.2. By "rest in the good" we should recall that Aquinas thinks of understanding (*intellectus*) as a kind of opposite, and yet a compliment to reasoning (*ratio*). See my earlier discussion in Part I, Section 2. Also see Pieper, *Leisure*, Ch.2 pp.8-26. The act of understanding is more like simply looking – it is effortless. It is not "working" in the way that reasoning can be thought of as "work." Understanding is leisurely in its nature.

³³³ For the distinction between proper pleasures and accidental pleasures, see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.5 ; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q.31, Art.7.

and end of the philosophical act is chiefly the pleasure in exercising one's faculties in the pursuit of knowledge, then it follows, according to Hume, that:

What is easy and obvious is never valu'd; and even what is *in itself* difficult, if we come to the knowledge of it without difficulty, and without any stretch of thought or judgment, is but little regarded.³³⁴

In other words, the person who thinks of philosophy as analogous to hunting is likely to seek out answers to "difficult" questions, without regard to whether they are important. Hamilton concurs; he writes

Every votary of science is willfully ignorant of a thousand established facts, - of a thousand which he might make his own more easily than he could attempt the discovery of even one. But it is not knowledge, - it is not truth, - that he principally seeks; he seeks the exercise of his faculties and feelings; and, as in following after the one he exerts a greater amount of pleasurable energy than in taking formal possession of the thousand, he disdains the certainty of the many, and prefers the chances of the one.³³⁵

And in another dubious appeal to authority, Hamilton writes that

Scotus even declares that a man's knowledge is measured by the amount of his mental activity – "tantum scit homo, quantum operatur."³³⁶

But Hamilton's dubious citation of Scotus aside, we can still assume that Hamilton and Hume place a great deal of value on mental effort and, at least in Hamilton's case, begin to think of knowledge as proportionate to effort. But Thomas is very clear that effort, labor, and activity are not proportionate to knowledge or goodness.

When it comes to practical excellence, Thomas writes that "Virtue essentially regards the good rather than the difficult. Hence the greatness of a virtue is measured according to its goodness rather than its difficulty."³³⁷ And again that

³³⁴ Hume, *Treatise*, 449. Bk.II, Pt.iii, Sec.x. ³³⁵ Hamilton, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, 10.

³³⁶ Ibid., 12. Ward expresses doubt over this attribution to Scotus. Ward, "Dangers of Uncontrolled Intellect,"128-129. The Latin phrase - tantum scit homo, quantum operatur - is often attributed to St. Francis; not to Scotus. With regards to Francis, I believe that we should understand it, not as Hamilton does, to mean "a man knows only so much as he toils/works/labors" but rather "a man knows only so much as he performs/puts into practice." This is because St. Francis placed emphasis on the vita practica, whereas someone like St. Dominic placed emphasis on the vita contemplativa. For a helpful illustration of the difference in emphasis between Dominican and Fransiscan modes of approaching the value of knowledge, see Eleonore Stump, Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 44-45.

³³⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.123, Art.12.

The "good" has, more than the "difficult," to do with the reason of merit and virtue. Therefore it does not follow that whatever is more difficult is more meritorious, but only what is more difficult, and at the same time better.³³⁸

And when it comes specifically to the intellectual act of contemplation, Thomas writes that

There may be delight in any particular contemplation in two ways. First by reason of the operation itself, because each individual delights in the operation which befits him according to his own nature or habit...And more delightful still does this become to one who has the habit of wisdom and knowledge, the result of which is that he contemplates without difficulty. Secondly, contemplation may be delightful on the part of its object, in so far as one contemplates that which one loves; even as bodily vision gives pleasure, not only because to see is pleasurable in itself, but because one sees a person whom one loves.³³⁹

He even considers directly a certain objection, namely,

Objection 2. Further, all strife and struggle is a hindrance to delight. Now there is strife and struggle in contemplation...Therefore there is no delight in contemplation.³⁴⁰

And he responds

Reply to Objection 2. Strife or struggle arising from the opposition of an external thing, hinders delight in that thing. For a man delights not in a thing against which he strives: but in that for which he strives; when he has obtained it, other things being equal, he delights yet more...³⁴¹

Here it is clear that Thomas sees hindrance, difficulty, or effort as being obstacles to contemplation and the pleasure it offers. And just as he said that, if one could love thy neighbor without difficulty, this would be an even greater love³⁴², so he says that, if one could contemplate the truth without difficulty, this would offer an ever greater delight.

Section 2. The Object of Contemplation and the Good of Contemplation in Aristotle

I think we have seen enough from Aristotle and from St. Thomas to realize that they disagree somewhat sharply with Hume and Hamilton. Yet, we must now ask ourselves: what

³³⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.27, Art.8. See discussion in Pieper, *Leisure*, 17-20.

³³⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.180, Art.7, co.

³⁴⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.180, Art.7, arg.2.

³⁴¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.180, Art.7, ad.2.

³⁴² See: Pieper, *Leisure*, 18.

accounts for the difference? Why do Aristotle and Thomas claim to find so much pleasure in contemplating truth, as opposed to the pleasure of the chase? Why do Aristotle and Thomas see man's end as lying in some form of contemplation, as opposed to a kind of intellectual "hunting" or running about? The answer I want to suggest is that Aristotle and Thomas saw the world differently from they way in which Hume and Hamilton saw it. In short, Hume and Hamilton both seem to think that "just looking" at something is boring (or worse, as we will see with Pascal). Why would anyone take very much pleasure in "just looking" at something? What is the good of contemplation? Yet I think that we must sneak up on the answer to this question by asking: what is the *object* of contemplation for Aristotle or for Thomas? Will contemplation of just any old thing suffice? Surely no one, if given the choice, would choose to return to live again in a world filled with disease, and pain, and storms, in order to "just look" at, say, leaches in the mud. But Anaxagoras doesn't sound mad when he says that, if given the choice, he would choose to return to live again in a world filled with disease, and pain, and storms "For the sake of contemplating the heavens and the whole order of the universe." But why are Hume and Hamilton not impressed by an answer like that of Anaxagoras? Again, I think we might sneak up on the answer to this question by first answering the question: what is the object of contemplation for Aristotle or for Thomas?

In the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle appears to approve of Anaxagoras's response that he should choose to live for the sake of contemplating the heavens and the whole order of the universe. Yet, later in that same work, Aristotle says that

Therefore whatever mode of choosing and of acquiring things good by nature—whether goods of body or wealth or friends or the other goods—will best promote the contemplation of God, that is the best mode, and that standard is the finest; and any mode of choice and acquisition that either through deficiency or excess hinders us from serving and from contemplating God—that is a bad one...Let this, then, be our statement of what is the standard of nobility and what is the aim of things absolutely good.³⁴³

So the trouble is that Aristotle and Anaxagoras seem to propose different primary objects of contemplation, even though Aristotle seems to endorse Anaxagoras's view. Anaxagoras proposes that the finest object of contemplation, for the sake of which he would choose to live, is "the heavens and the whole order of the universe" and Aristotle seems to say that it is God. I think we are initially tempted to read this apparent difference in terms of the difference between

³⁴³ Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII.3 1249b17-25. (trans. Rackham).

pagan immanence and Christian transcendence, i.e. between the pagan veneration of nature, and the Christian worship of a God who transcends nature and is wholly other than nature. Yet I think the temptation to read a disagreement or tension between Aristotle and Anaxagoras ought to be resisted; the disagreement or tension here is merely apparent.

I think that this tension can be reduced if not wholly eliminated. This is because, according to Anaxagoras,

Mind (*Nous*) is infinite and self ruled, and is mixed with nothing but is all alone by itself...and Mind controls all things, both the greater and the smaller, that have life...And all things that were to be – those that were and those that are now and those that shall be – Mind arranged them all, including this rotation in which are now rotating the stars, the sun and moon, the air and the aither that are being separated off.³⁴⁴

In other words, Anaxagoras believed that all things, including "the heaven and the whole order of the universe", are arranged and controlled by Mind (*Nous*). And if we read his reference to "God" in the *Eudemian Ethics* in light of his theological discussion in the *Metaphysics*, we should recognize that Aristotle also believes that God is *Nous*:

...there is a mover which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality. And the object of desire and the object of thought move in this way; they move without being moved...Thus it produces motion by being loved, and it moves the other moving things...On such a principle, then, depend the heavens and the world of nature. And its life is such as the best which we enjoy, and enjoy for but a short time. For it is ever in this state (which we cannot be), since its actuality is also pleasure...For that which is *capable* of receiving the object of thought, i.e. the substance, is thought. And it is *active* when it *possesses* this object. Therefore the latter rather than the former is the divine element which thought seems to contain, and the act of contemplation is what is most pleasant and best...And life also belongs to God; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and God's essential actuality is life most good and eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this *is* God.³⁴⁵

Here we see that Aristotle understands his famed "unmoved mover" to be essentially mind or *nous*, and not just the *nous* which is able – *potentially* – to receive objects of thought, but fully actualized *nous* which possesses the objects of thought. And, moreover, Aristotle's God serves as

³⁴⁴ G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, eds, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.363, passage 476.

³⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII (Λ).7, 1072a25-27, 1072b3, 1072b14-16, 1072b22-24, 1072b26-31 (trans. Ross) in Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Vol.2*. The Barnes edition makes minor revisions to Ross's text, for example, changing "there is something which moves without being moved" to "there is a mover which moves without being moved."

a cause, specifically a final cause ("that for the sake of which"), for "the heavens and the world of nature." So, in this sense, Aristotle and Anaxagoras are in agreement. They both believe that *Nous* is the ultimate cause of the order of nature and of the *cosmos*. And so, in contemplating "the heavens and the whole order of the universe", we are indirectly contemplating the effects of the ultimate ordering cause, i.e. *Nous* or God. As Aristotle puts it in the *Metaphysics*:

We must consider also in which of two ways the nature of the universe contains the good, and the highest good, whether as something separate and by itself, or as the order of the parts. Probably in both ways, as an army does; for its good is found both in its order and in its leader, and more in the latter; for he does not depend on the order but it depends on him. And all things are ordered together somehow, but not all alike, – both fishes and fowls and plants; and the world is not such that one thing has nothing to do with another, but they are connected. For all are ordered together to one end...³⁴⁶

In other words, the order of nature is itself good and beautiful to behold, but its order is in some part due to "its leader", i.e. to God or *Nous*. In contemplating the order of nature we are always indirectly contemplating the source of that order, i.e. *Nous*.

By understanding *Nous* as the ultimate cause of all of the heavens and nature, the distinction between the contemplation of nature and the contemplation of God becomes somewhat porous. Since all of nature is set in motion and is moved by *Nous*, one can contemplate *Nous* or God by means of contemplating the causes of nature and the heavens.³⁴⁷ Yet while this answers our question about the object of contemplation, we may still ask: what is the good of it?

As a first attempt at an answer, we might simply respond that the order of nature is beautiful. Yet I think that this response tends to be received as somewhat trite or trivial by the modern ear. To say that nature and the universe are beautiful, is not, for Aristotle or for

³⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII (Λ).10 1075a10-19. (trans. Ross). Whens Aristotle writes that "the world is not such that one thing has nothing to do with another, but they are connected. For all ordered together to one end" we should begin to hear the idea espressed in Tennyson's poem "Flower in the crannied wall" – which I quoted earlier – echoing throughout the dissertation.

³⁴⁷ The pre-modern Christian tradition also seeks to resolve the tension between the pagan veneration of something immanent in nature, and the Christian worship of a God who transcends nature, in this same manner. St. Thomas writes: "Since, however, God's effects show us the way to the contemplation of God Himself, according to (Romans 1:20), 'The invisible things of God . . . are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,' it follows that the contemplation of the divine effects also belongs to the contemplative life, inasmuch as man is guided thereby to the knowledge of God. Hence Augustine says (De Vera Relig. xxix) that 'in the study of creatures we must not exercise an empty and futile curiosity, but should make them the stepping-stone to things unperishable and everlasting." *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.180, Art.4.

Anaxagoras, simply to say that "they are pretty" or that they offer a kind of merely sensuous, or non-cognitive pleasure. Rather, the pleasure afforded by perception of beauty is intimately tied up with the pleasure afforded by the perception of teleological order.³⁴⁸ Beauty pleases us because it is the cognitive recognition of the ordering of *Nous*. The cosmos pleases us precisely because it is a *kosmos*, i.e. an ordered thing, and not mere *chaos*. We perceive nature and the universe to be beautiful insofar as the same *nous* by which we perceive it also appears to be its cause.

If the good of perceiving beauty, thus understood, is not already apparent to you, it may not become so. But in order to lend aid, consider a passage from Lowes Dickinson's book entitled *The Greek View of Life*. The section here quoted, at some length, is entitled "Greek Religion an Interpretation of Nature":

When we try to conceive the state of mind of primitive man, the first thing that occurs to us is the bewilderment and terror he must have felt in the presence of the power of nature. Naked, houseless, weaponless, he is at the mercy every hour, of this immense and incalculable Something so alien and so hostile to himself. As fire it burns, as water it drowns, as tempest it harries and destroys; benignant it may be at times, in warm sunshine and calm, but the kindness is brief and treacherous...What is it then, this persistent, obscure, unnameable Thing? What is it? The question haunts the Greek mind; it will not be put aside; and the Greek at last, like other men under similar conditions, only with a lucidity and precision peculiar to himself, makes the reply, "It is something like myself." Every power of nature he presumes to be a spiritual being, impersonating the sky as Zeus, the earth as Demeter, the sea as Poseidon; from generation to generation, under his shaping hands, the figures multiply and define themselves; character and story crystallize about what at first were little more than names; till at last, from the womb of the dark enigma that haunted him in the beginning, there emerges into the charmed light of a world of ideal grace a pantheon of fair and concrete personalities. Nature has become a company of spirits; every cave and fountain is haunted by a nymph; in the ocean dwell the Nereids, in the mountain the Oread, the Dryad in the wood; and everywhere, in groves and marshes, on the pastures or the rocky heights, floating in the current of the streams or traversing untrodden snows, in the day at the chase and as evening closes in solitude fingering his flute, seen and heard by shepherds, alone or with his dancing train, is to be met the horned and goat-footed, the sunny smiling Pan. / Thus conceived, the world has become less terrible because more familiar. All that was incomprehensible, all that was obscure and dark, has now been seized and bodied forth in form, so that everywhere man is confronted no longer with blind and unintelligible force, but with spiritual beings moved by like passions with himself...Man, in short, by his

³⁴⁸ See Lear, "Aristotle on Moral Virtue and the Fine", 118-122. In this section entitled "To Kalon as Effective Teleological Order" Lear takes a helpful survey of the passages in Aristotle's writitings that show that he thinks of beauty as being constituted by teleological order.

religion has been made at home in the world.³⁴⁹

So the good of contemplating God, or of contemplating nature – nature thus understood as set in motion by and ordered to Nous – is that it allows one to feel at home in the world. To the question of "What is it?", the question that Dickinson claims "haunts the Greek mind", Aristotle responds with the Greek answer: "It is something like myself." More specifically, Aristotle responds, that the heavens and the world of nature are something whose cause is *Nous*, and it is also *nous* that is "the most divine element in us."³⁵⁰

It is no surprise then that commentators have been confused by the passage in the *Eudemian Ethics* in which Aristotle claims that we should orient our lives around the contemplation of *ho theos*. Some have argued that *ho theos* should refer exclusively to our own faculty of *nous*, whereas others have argued that it refers exclusively to *Nous*, i.e. the unmoved mover of *Metaphysics XII (A)*.³⁵¹ But the way out of the muddle is to recall that, for Aristotle, as for much of Greek thought, nature is something that is like myself. The exclusivity of the referent of *ho theos* to either the unmoved mover or the human *nous* is likely to bring more confusion than clarity. Ultimately, we must side more closely with those who would read *ho theos* as referring to the unmoved mover, because even if Aristotle's unmoved mover is supremely omphaloskeptic³⁵², Aristotle does not think that man's good lies in omphaloskepsis, since one ought to contemplate the best thing in the world, and "since man is not the best thing in the world."³⁵³ But at the same time, the interpreters who seek to read *ho theos* as referring to be, like Goethe,:

reminded of a significant adage in constant use with the ancient Ionian school— "Like is only known by Like;" and again, of the words of an old mystic writer, which may be thus rendered, "If the eye were not sunny, how could we perceive light? If God's own strength lived not in us, how could we delight in Divine things?"³⁵⁴

³⁴⁹ G. Lowes Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, 9th ed. (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1915), 2-4.

³⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.7 1177a16 (trans. Ross).

³⁵¹ See Michael Wood's commentary in Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics Books I, II, and VIII*, trans. Michael Woods, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1992), 180-184.

³⁵² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII.9 1074b33-34: "it must be of itself that the divine thought thinks (since it is the most excellent of things)..." (trans. Ross).

³⁵³ Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, VI.7 1141a22 (trans. Ross).

³⁵⁴ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, trans. Charles Lock Eastlake (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1840), "Introduction" xxxix. See Plotinus: "This alone is the eye that sees the great beauty. But if anyone comes to the sight blear-eyed with wickedness, and unpurified, or weak and

In other words, the great value of contemplation here lies in the kinship between mind and world, human and nature, human and God. The world of nature is a home for us because it is intelligible to us. Nature is intelligible to us because it has *Nous* for its cause, and because we also possess *nous*, and because "like is only known by like."³⁵⁵

In some sense, then, we can agree with Dickinson that the question "What is it?" or "What is nature?" haunts the Greek mind, and that the answer "It is something like myself" is the Greek answer.³⁵⁶ For while the answer – "nature is something like myself" – is given different expression by Aristotle than it is, say, by Homer or the other poets, the answer is still the same. Homer gives expression to this answer through myth by depicting nature in narrative, poetic verse, and by depicting it as a company of gods, in order to show that nature, albeit divine, still has a kinship with intelligent human beings. Aristotle, on the other hand, gives expression to this answer through philosophy by describing nature in argumentative prose, and by describing it as ordered towards *Nous*, and by describing it in such a way that action "for the sake of an end" is seen to be present in intelligent human acts:

action for an end is present in things which come to be and are by nature...where a series has a completion, all the preceding steps are for the sake of that. Now surely as in intelligent action, so in nature; and as in nature, so it is in each action, if nothing

by his cowardice unable to look at what is very bright, he sees nothing, even if someone shows him what is there and possible to see. For one must come to the sight with a seeing power made akin and like to what is seen. No eye ever saw the sun without becoming sun-like, nor can a soul see beauty without becoming beautiful. You must become first all godlike and beautiful if you intend to see God and beauty." *Ennead* I.6.9 in Plotinus, *Loeb Classical Library. Plotinus: I. Porphyry on Plotinus, Ennead I*, trans. A. H. Armstrong, revised ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

³⁵⁵ For the principle of "like is only known by like" See: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.1 1139a9ff; *De Anima* I.5 410a23ff; *Metaphysics*, III.4 1000b5.

³⁵⁶ R. G. Collingwood describe's the intellectual "kinship" between mind and world, which lies at the heart of the Greek view of nature, as follows: "Greek natural science was based on the principle that *the world of nature is saturated or permeated by mind*...Since the world of nature is a world not only of ceaseless motion and therefore alive, but also a world of orderly or regular motion, they accordingly said that *the world of nature is not only alive but intelligent*; not only a vast animal with a 'soul' or life of its own, but *a rational animal with a 'mind' of its own*. The life and intelligence of creatures inhabiting the earth's surface and the regions adjacent to it, they argued, represent a specialized local organization of this *all-pervading vitality and rationality*, so that a plant or animal, according to their ideas, participates in its own degree psychically in the life-process of the world's 'soul' and intellectually in the activity of *the world's 'mind'*, no less than it participates materially in the physical organization of the world's 'body'. / That vegetables and animals are physically akin to the earth is a belief shared by ourselves with the Greeks; but the notion of a *psychical and intellectual kinship* is strange to us." R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press, 1945), 3-4. Emphasis added.

interferes. Now intelligent action is for the sake of an end; therefore the nature of things also is so. Thus if a house, e.g. had been a thing made by nature, it would have been made in the same way as it is now by art; and if things made by nature were made also by art, they would come to be in the same way as by nature. Each step then in the series is for the sake of the next; and generally art partly completes what nature cannot bring to a finish, and partly imitates her. If, therefore, artificial products are for the sake of an end, so clearly also are natural products. The relation of the later to the earlier terms of the series is the same in both.³⁵⁷

Aristotle and Homer both see a certain kinship or similarity between intelligent (human) beings and the natural world. But while I have suggested that Aristotle and Homer agree in some basic sense, it is important to see how they differ.

The relationship between Homer and Aristotle might best be captured in terms made popular by Wilfred Sellars. We might say that Homer gives us something like "the original image of man-in-the-world" where Aristotle gives us "the manifest image of man-in-the-world." Seemingly in agreement with Dickinson's thesis about the Greek understanding of nature, Sellars says that the essential characteristic of what he calls the "original image of man-in-the-world" is that it is a framework of thought, or system of concepts, in which "*all* the 'objects' are persons."³⁵⁸ In other words, in the most obvious sense, every object in nature is something like myself, i.e. every object is a person. He then describes what he calls the "manifest image" as a kind of "refinement" or "sophistication" of that original image.³⁵⁹ And, since the manifest image is still a refinement of the original image, it retains the core commitment of the original image insofar as "the primary objects" of the manifest image are still *persons*.³⁶⁰ Sellars explains this idea as follows:

...when I say that the objects of the manifest image are primarily persons, I am implying that what the objects of this framework, primarily *are* and *do*, is what persons are and do...the most important contrasts are those between actions which are expressions of character and actions which are not expressions of character, on the one hand, and between habitual actions and deliberate actions, on the other.³⁶¹

The refinement the manifest image makes to the original image thereby involves "the gradual

³⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Physics* II.8, 199a7-19 (trans. Hardie and Gaye) in Richard McKeon ed., *The Basic Works of Aristotle*.

³⁵⁸ Sellars, "Scientific Image," 10.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 7.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 9.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 11.

'de-personalization' of objects other than persons."³⁶²:

...it is the modification of an image in which *all* the objects are capable of *the full range* of personal activity, the modification consisting of a gradual pruning of the implications of saying with respect to what *we* would call an inanimate object, that it *did* something. Thus, in the original image to say of the wind that it blew down one's house would imply that the wind *either* decided to do so with an end in view, and might, perhaps, have been persuaded not to do it, *or* that it acted thoughtlessly (either from habit or impulse), or, perhaps, inadvertently, in which case other appropriate action on one's part might have awakened it to the enormity of what it was about to do. / In the early stages of the development of the manifest image, the wind was no longer conceived as acting deliberately, with an end in view; but rather from habit or impulse. Nature became the locus of 'truncated persons'; that which things could be expected to do, its habits; that which exhibits no order, its impulses. Inanimate things no longer 'did' things in the sense in which persons do them – not, however, because a *new* category of impersonal things and impersonal processes has been achieved, but because the category *of persons* is now applied to these things in a pruned or truncated form.³⁶³

This seems to be the difference between Homer and Aristotle. Homer gives us the "original image" – in which Achilles can pray to the winds, and Iris can convey his prayer to them, and they can muster themselves to respond to his prayer³⁶⁴; and Aristotle gives us the "manifest

³⁶² Ibid., 10.

³⁶³ Ibid., 12-13.

³⁶⁴ Homer, Illiad XXIII. Now the pyre about dead Patroclus would not kindle. Achilles therefore bethought him of another matter; he went apart and praved to the two winds Boreas and Zephyrus vowing them goodly offerings. He made them many drink-offerings from the golden cup and besought them to come and help him that the wood might make haste to kindle and the dead bodies be consumed. Fleet Iris heard him praying and started off to fetch the winds. They were holding high feast in the house of boisterous Zephyrus when Iris came running up to the stone threshold of the house and stood there, but as soon as they set eyes on her they all came towards her and each of them called her to him, but Iris would not sit down. "I cannot stay," she said, "I must go back to the streams of Oceanus and the land of the Ethiopians who are offering hecatombs to the immortals, and I would have my share; but Achilles prays that Boreas and shrill Zephyrus will come to him, and he vows them goodly offerings; he would have you blow upon the pyre of Patroclus for whom all the Achaeans are lamenting." / With this she left them, and the two winds rose with a cry that rent the air and swept the clouds before them. They blew on and on until they came to the sea, and the waves rose high beneath them, but when they reached Troy they fell upon the pyre till the mighty flames roared under the blast that they blew. All night long did they blow hard and beat upon the fire, and all night long did Achilles grasp his double cup, drawing wine from a mixing-bowl of gold, and calling upon the spirit of dead Patroclus as he poured it upon the ground until the earth was drenched. As a father mourns when he is burning the bones of his bridegroom son whose death has wrung the hearts of his parents, even so did Achilles mourn while burning the body of his comrade, pacing round the bier with piteous groaning and lamentation. / At length as the Morning Star was beginning to herald the light which saffron-mantled Dawn was soon to suffuse over the sea, the flames fell and the fire began to die. The winds then went home beyond the Thracian sea, which roared and boiled as they swept over it. The son of Peleus now turned away from the pyre and lay down, overcome with toil, till he fell into a sweet slumber. (trans Samuel Butler). Cited in Dickinson, The Greek View of Life, 6-7.

image" – the kind of refinement or sophistication of that "original image", but a refinement that still preserves, in some truncated sense, the core idea that objects are to thought of as persons. We can see Aristotle's commitment to something like this in the following remarks from the *Metaphysics* in which Aristotle is discussing the movement of heavenly bodies:

Our forefathers in the most remote ages have handed down to their posterity a tradition, in the form of a myth, that these bodies are gods, and that the divine encloses the whole of nature. The rest of the tradition has been added later in mythical form with a view to the persuasion of the multitude and to its legal and utilitarian expediency; they say these gods are in the form of men or like some of the other animals, and they say other things consequent on and similar to these which we have mentioned. But if one were to separate the first point from these additions and take it alone – that they thought the first substances to be gods, one must regard this as an inspired utterance, and reflect that, while probably each art and each science has often been developed as far as possible and has again perished, these opinions, with others, have been preserved until the present like relics of the ancient treasure.³⁶⁵

He acknowledges a desire to protect the "ancient treasure" or "inspired utterance" – that nature is, in some sense, to be approached as personal – that lies somehow behind or within the traditional myths.

The way in which Aristotle preserves the "personal" aspect of nature is, as Sellars indicates, by maintaining certain ways of conceptualizing objects and their motions. This is why Michael Thompson says that it is commonplace among philosophers that use Sellars' terminology that "Aristotle is a philosopher of the manifest image, or of 'the ordinary', or of the rustic world of common sense." This is because Aristotle approaches "nature, in general" "with the categories derived from the representation of life and action."³⁶⁶ This is perhaps most obvious when it comes to Aristotle's discussion of the movements of the stars.

According to Cicero's paraphrase of one of Aristotle's early dialogues, Aristotle believed that "in these [sc. the stars] there should be perception and intelligence."³⁶⁷ This is because Aristotle was reported to have believed that all motion was either "according to nature" or "forced" or "voluntary." Even sublunary, inanimate, perishable bodies like stones have a natural way of moving, i.e. their nature gives them a kind of inner moving principle, which, if nothing

³⁶⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII.8 1174b1-13. (trans. Ross).

³⁶⁶ Thompson, *Life and Action*, 10.

³⁶⁷ Aristotle, Fragment, 23. in Barnes ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Vol. II*, p.2396. Quoted from Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, II, xv, 42. See also Aristotle, *Loeb Classical Library. Aristotle: VI. On the Heavens*, trans. W. K. C. Guthrie (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), "Introduction" xxv-xxvi.

interferes, will cause them to move in characteristic ways: e.g. stones, being made of earth, move downward, fire moves upwards ect. But these "natural" movements were limited to rectilinear motions, whereas the stars exhibited circular motions. Therefore, assuming the stars could not be forced to move in circular motions – since what could be strong enough to force them? – they must move according to a kind of indwelling voluntary source of motion, i.e. a soul. Later, in the *De Caelo*, Aristotle admits that there may be a fifth kind of element that, unlike the other four – earth, water, air, and fire – does not characteristically move in a rectilinear manner, but rather in a circular manner. With the concession that there may be able to explain the motions of the stars without his earlier appeal to their having soul, perception, and intelligence. In other words, it seems that the stars might be considered an ultimate source of eternal motion, and that they might simply move according to some inanimate natural motion. But yet here something very interesting happens. Aristotle almost seems to rebuke himself for the materialistic trend of these arguments. Aristotle writes:

We think of the stars as mere bodies, and as units with a serial order indeed but entirely inanimate; but we should rather conceive them as enjoying life and action.³⁶⁸

W. K. C. Guthrie ventures the following interpretation of the passage:

...a possible interpretation of these words would be that by "we" Aristotle means himself, and that the sentence betrays an uneasiness about the nature of the arguments by which in this treatise he has been accounting for the motion of the stars, and an attempt to recall himself to what his instincts tell him to be the truth. Possibly, that is, he is taking himself to task for the materialistic trend of his earlier arguments and rousing his Platonic conscience to activity. Whether or not this is so, what has happened seems to be this. The divinity of the stars was an article of the Platonic faith which it could never occur to Aristotle to doubt. This must be emphasized, since otherwise the present discussion may be thought to go too far and make Aristotle, at one stage of his thought, into a materialist. All that is suggested is that he was temporarily in difficulties over the intellectual reconciliation of his belief in the life and divinity of the heavenly bodied and his rational explanation of their movement.³⁶⁹

Guthrie notes that Aristotle's theology and his theory of motion are bound up with one another, and that the *De Caelo* seems to offer a clear instance of a transitional stage in Aristotle's thinking. But what is most important is to see Aristotle doing what Sellars describes as definitive of any philosopher of the manifest image, i.e. "pruning" the implications of applying

³⁶⁸ Aristotle, On the Heavens, II.12 292a18-21 (trans. J. L. Stocks).

³⁶⁹ Guthrie trans., On the Heavens, "Introduction" xxxiv-xxxv.

personal categories to things instead of simply trafficking exclusively in impersonal things and processes as the materialist thinkers do.

The transitional stage of Aristotle's theory of motion, which exhibits this tension between materialism and Platonic "ensouled" motion, is resolved in Aristotle's mature theology or cosmology. Aristotle's mature position is to deny the possibility of any ultimate form of self-motion. According to his mature position, even natural or un-forced motion, motion whose origin appears to proceed form inside of an object, is ultimately said to derive from an external unmoved mover. W. C. K. Guthrie discerns three stages in the development of Aristotle's theory: the first being his position in the *De Philosophia* in which the stars move by being "ensouled" and possessed of perception and intelligence; the second being his position in the *De Caelo* in which it is suggested that the stars move by an immanent natural principle of circular motion; and the third being his mature position in which all motion is ultimately due to an unmoved mover. Guthrie describes the last position as follows:

We have disentangled three versions of Aristotle's cosmology, each an improvement on the last...The third stage (expounded in Met. A) admits the doctrine, foreign to the second, that self-motion is an impossibility. It therefore explains the motion of the heavens as due not only to their own indwelling nature but also to the influence of an external, unmoved and therefore incorporeal being. This being does not work by compulsion. It calls into activity the powers of motion (*physis*) in the heavens, which otherwise must needs have remained dormant, by arousing in them the desire for its own perfection. Now we see at once that this final explanation of their motion has one important feature in common with the earliest, namely, that it relies for its efficacy on the belief that the stars (or rather the spheres in which they are set) are alive and sentient. The influence of the transcendent mover on them is compared to that which is exercised on a lover by the beloved, and no other explanation is offered.³⁷⁰

W. D. Ross understands Aristotle's mature theology-cum-cosmology similarly; according to Ross:

There has been much controversy over the question whether God is for Aristotle only the final cause, or the efficient cause as well, of change. The answer is that God is the efficient cause by being the final cause, but in no other way. Yet He is the final cause not in the sense of being something that never is but always is to be. He is an ever-living being whose influence radiates through the universe in such wise that everything that happens – at any rate if we leave out of account the obscure realms of chance and freewill – depends on Him. He moves directly the 'first heaven'; i.e., He causes the daily rotation of the stars round the earth. Since He moves by inspiring love and desire, it seems to be implied that the 'first heaven' has soul. And this is confirmed by statements

³⁷⁰ Guthrie trans., On the Heavens, "Introduction" xxx-xxxi.

elsewhere that the heavenly bodies are living things...How does love or desire produce the physical movements that have to be explained? The theory is that each of these spheres desires a life as like as possible to that of its moving principle.³⁷¹

Both Guthrie and Ross realize that the relation between the transcendent unmoved mover and the heavenly bodies is conceived by Aristotle in personal terms: what the objects of this framework, primarily *are* and *do*, is what persons are and do. The unmoved moves the heavenly objects by inspiring love and desire as the beloved inspires the lover.

And while this position is mostly developed in the *Metaphysics*, it is also given early expression in other works of Aristotle. With regard to the *De Motu Animalium*, Guthrie says that "[t]he need for an unmoved being is there argued from a simple analogy with the movements of animals."³⁷² In *De Motu Animalium 2*, Aristotle says

Now it is worth while to pause and consider what has been said; for it involves a speculation which extends beyond animals even to the motion and march of the universe. For just as there must be something immovable within the animal, if it is to be moved, so even more must there be without it something immovable, by supporting itself upon which that which is moved moves.³⁷³

Once again, we see Aristotle speaking of animals and the universe as both capable of something like "desire." The proximate immovable objects, which are the source of motion for animals, are the objects of desire in the animal's environment. And just as animals "desire" and tend towards their various objects of desire, so the entire "motion and march of the universe" "desires" to be like *Nous*, i.e. the unmoved mover. Aristotle, being a philosopher of the manifest image, is, as Sellars suggests, implying "truncated" or "pruned" person concepts to nature at large. As Aristotle says elsewhere "For in all things, as we affirm, nature always strikes after the better."³⁷⁴ We see here Aristotle approaching "nature, in general" "with the categories derived from the representation of life and action."³⁷⁵ Organism, not mechanism, is Aristotle's predominant conceptual framework.

I will eventually address the plausibility of such ideas, but for the time being, recall that we are trying to discern what Aristotle and the pre-modern tradition take to be the object of contemplation and to discern in what the good of such contemplation might consist. And it is

³⁷¹ Sir William David Ross, *Aristotle*, 6th ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 186-187.

³⁷² Guthrie trans., On the Heavens, "Introduction" xxviii.

³⁷³ Aristotle, *Movement of Animals*, 2, 698b8-15. (trans. A. S. L. Farquharson).

³⁷⁴ Aristotle, *Generation and Corruption*, II.10 336b27-29. (trans. H. H. Joachim).

³⁷⁵ Thompson, *Life and Action*, 10.

through answering these questions that I hope we will be able to understand the sea-change in the understanding of the end or the good of the philosophical act. I addressed an initial tension felt between two objects of contemplation: God or nature. And yet I have been trying to show that Aristotle dissolves this tension by understanding nature as ordered towards God or towards *Nous*. I have suggested that the good of contemplating nature, or of contemplating God, is that nature and God are both akin to human *nous*. The idea of kinship, or perhaps, to use an old word, connaturality, is the source of this good. Like knows like; like moves like. The world is "a home" for us. And we feel this "at-home-ness" in our perceptions of beauty. And the idea of 'the good' and 'the beautiful', are, for Aristotle, principles in the highest degree. Not unlike Plato, Aristotle sees goodness or beauty as featuring in any complete explanation of nature and the universe.

Even without giving a proper defense of the plausibility of this idea, a moment's reflection may show that we can sense something intutively plausible about it, especially in our experiences of beauty. It is here that this view has continued to find a foothold even into modernity. In the early modern period, Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, who Gilbert Ryle describes as "a Grecian by study and predilection"³⁷⁶, and who is sometimes thought of as the father of modern aesthetics, describes this instance of "like knowing like" as follows:

Here then...is all I wou'd have explain'd to you before: "That *the Beautiful, the Fair, the Comely*, were never in the *Matter*, but in the *Art* and *Design*; never in *Body* it-self, but in the *Form* or *forming Power*." Does not the beautiful *Form* confess this, and speak the Beauty of *the Design* whene'er it strikes you? What is it but *the Design* which strikes? What is it you admire but MIND, or the Effect of *Mind*? 'Tis *Mind* alone which forms. All which is void of *Mind* is horrid, and Matter formless is *Deformity it-self*.³⁷⁷

And later:

³⁷⁶ Gilbert Ryle, "Jane Austen and The Moralists," in *Critical Essays: Collected Papers Volume 1* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 298. Ryle continues: "A Deist rather than a Christian, he had based his religion, such as it was, on his ethics and aesthetics, rather than on his religion." In other words, Shaftesbury seems to adhere to something close to what Dickinson called the religion of the Greeks, i.e. that religion according to which man is at home in the world.

³⁷⁷ Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* edited by Douglas Den Uyl (Indianapolis, Ind: Liberty Fund, 2001), Vol. II, 226. "The Moralists," Part III, Section ii, pp. 405. [the second set of pages listed are Shaftesbury's originals.]

For whate'er is void of Mind, is *void* and *Darkness* to the *Mind's* Eye. This languishes and grows dim whene'er detain'd on foreign Subjects, but thrives and attains it natural Vigour, when employ'd in Contemplation of what is like it-self.³⁷⁸

Here we can see that Shaftesbury seeks to explain our delight in beauty as a kind of delight in intelligible order; he sees the delight in beauty as arising from a recognition of kinship between our own minds and the intelligible order of the beautiful object. And of course Shaftesbury thinks that nature provides some of the best instances of beauty, and therefore that such intelligible order is to be found in nature as well as in artworks and man-made artifacts.³⁷⁹ As Roger Scruton writes:

The experience of natural beauty is not a sense of 'how nice!' or 'how pleasant!' It contains a reassurance that this world is a right and fitting place to be -a home in which our human powers and prospects find confirmation.³⁸⁰

Just as Dickinson says that, according to the Greek view, man is made at home in the world, so Scruton emphasizes over and over again that experiences of beauty have this quality as well – the quality of being made to feel "at home."³⁸¹ And the feeling of being at home has to do with the kinship between the all-pervading mind, believed by the Greeks to exist in natural things, and our own minds.

The point of introducing Sellars's terminology of "original image", and "manifest image" and of showing how these seem to track fairly accurately Homer and Aristotle, is not to emphasize the differences between poetry and philosophy, between Homer and Aristotle. In fact, we can see that Aristotle really is, in some sense, simply pruning some of the myth away from Homer's world-view, not making a radical break from it. The point of introducing Sellars terminology is to point out the difference between the manifest image and "the scientific image." Sellars does not see the primary dichotomy as that between the original and the manifest images, but rather between the manifest image and something he calls "the scientific image." If Aristotle

³⁷⁸ Ibid, 238. "The Moralists," Part III, Section ii, pp. 426-427.

³⁷⁹ And the presence of Mind in nature is, as Shaftebury implies, ultimately to be ascribed to divine Mind or *Nous* as the ultimate forming power. Like in Aristotle, divine Mind (*Nous*) is the source of intelligible, teleological order to things, without which they would appear "horrid" to us. As Adam of St. Victor writes: "*effectiva vel formalis / causa Deus, et finalis / sed numquam materia.*"

³⁸⁰ Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 55.

³⁸¹ The word 'home' shows up surprisingly often in Scruton's short text. See Scruton, *Beauty*, 12, 51, 56, 57, 61, 67, 75, 79, 81, 105, 128, 145.

is a philosopher of the manifest image, then I think that we can characterize some of his "pre-Socratic" Ionian predecessors as philosophers of the scientific image.

Sellars defines the "scientific image" as a kind of refinement, not of the original image, but of the manifest image. And the scientific image is derived by a particular kind of refinement, namely, "postulational theory construction", i.e. the scientific image emerges by "postulat[ing] imperceptible objects and events for the purpose of explaining correlations among perceptibles."³⁸² The scientific image presupposes the manifest image, but only in a "methodological sense", not in a "substantive sense."³⁸³ In other words, "although methodologically a development within the manifest image, the scientific image presents itself as a rival image."³⁸⁴ The scientific purports to be a "complete image" or the "whole truth" about "that which belongs to the image", i.e. reality.³⁸⁵ And thus, it follows that, according to the scientific image, the manifest image, the manifest image, the manifest image is "an 'inadequate' but pragmatically useful likeness" of reality as seen, truly, through the scientific image.

Aristotle describes his "pre-Socratic" predecessors, omitting some of the details, in the following way:

Of the first philosophers, most thought the principles which were of the nature of matter were the only principles of all things...Yet they do not all agree as to the number and the nature of these principles. Thales, the founder of this school of philosophy, says that the principle is water...Anaximenes and Diogenes make air prior to water, and the most primary of the simple bodies, while Hippasus of Metapontium and Heraclitus of Ephesus say this of fire, and Empedocles says it of the four elements, adding a fourth – earth – to those which have been named...From these facts one might think that the only cause is the so-called material cause...³⁸⁶

In commenting on the pre-Socratic Ionian philosophers, Frederick Copleston says:

Ionian philosophy or cosmology is therefore mainly an attempt to decide what this primitive element or *Urstoff* of all things is, one philosopher deciding for one element, another for another element...The Ionians differed as to the character of their *Urstoff*, but they all held it to be material – Thales plumping for water, Anaximenes for air, Heraclitus for fire...But it must be remembered that they did not stop short at *sense*, but went beyond appearance to *thought*. Whether water or air or fire be assigned as the *Urstoff*, it certainly does not *appear* as such, i.e. as the ultimate element. In order to arrive at the conception of any of these as the ultimate element of all things it is necessary to go

³⁸² Sellars, "Scientific Image," 19.

³⁸³ Ibid., 20.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 20.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 20.

³⁸⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.3 983b6-984a18. (trans. Ross).

beyond appearance and sense.³⁸⁷

In other words, the Ionian philosophers seem to have adopted the method of "postulational theory construction" that Sellars says is definitive of philosophers of the "scientific image."

Aristotle notes that these philosophers seem only to concern themselves with a single cause – the cause Aristotle calls the "material cause." Yet he says that, in order to be adequate theories, they must account for motion and change in some way. In other words, they must account for what Aristotle calls – "that from which comes the beginning of movement", i.e. what the tradition has referred to as the "efficient cause". And when it came to efficient causes, he says "The question of movement – whence or how it belongs to things – these thinkers, like the others, lazily neglected."³⁸⁸ Yet, on the matter of identifying an efficient cause, Aristotle praises Anaxagoras as appearing to be the only sober man among the pre-Socratics:

When these men and the principles of this kind had had their day, as the latter were found inadequate to generate the nature of things, men were again forced by the truth itself, as we said, to inquire into the next kind of cause. For surely it is not likely either that fire or earth or any such element should be the reason why things manifest goodness and beauty both in their being and in their coming to be (*tou gar eu kai kalos ta men echein ta de gigesthai ton onton*), or that those thinkers should have supposed it was; nor again could it be right to ascribe so great a matter to spontaneity and luck (*to automato kai tyche*). When one man said, then, that reason (*nous*) was present – as in animals, so throughout nature – as the cause of the world and of all its order (*aitiou tou kosmou kai tes taxeos*), he seemed like a sober man in contrast with the random talk of his predecessors. We know that Anaxagoras certainly adopted these views, but Hermotimus of Clazomenae is credited with expressing them earlier. Those who thought thus stated that there is a principle of things which is at the same time the cause of beauty (*tou kalos*), and that sort of cause from which things acquire movement (*hothen he kinesis*).³⁸⁹

In other words, Anaxagoras appears to be the only sober man among the pre-Socratics insofar as he, like Aristotle, seems to recognize that the goodness, beauty, and orderly arrangement of nature and of the heavens seems to require some other cause than mere matter alone, or some cause other than mere matter plus whatever spontaneous and chance moving causes might be attributed to such matter as an afterthought. Anaxagoras, like Aristotle in his mature views, thinks that one and the same cause, *Mind*, is responsible for *both* beauty *and* motion.

Aristotle assumes, charitably, that even most his predecessors must not have thought that

³⁸⁷ Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy. Vol. 1: Greece and Rome From the Pre-Socratics to Plotinus* (New York: Image Books, 1993), 20.

³⁸⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.4 985b19-20. (trans. Ross).

³⁸⁹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.3 984b8-22. (trans. Ross).

mere material causes and chance forces were responsible for things coming to be arranged both well and beautifully. He almost seems to imply that their discussion of efficient causes, if they discussed them at all, must have been a kind of afterthought or by-product of their search for the underlying *Urstoff*. Aristotle is calling them away from their postulational theory construction and back to "the rustic world of common sense." He almost seems to imply that these early naturalists were "drunk" with a certain scientific project that kept them from seeing the broader picture. They were, as we might say, "in the grip of a theory." To recall an image from Richard Weaver that I mentioned earlier, it seems that the early Greek naturalists had much of the characteristics that Weaver attributes to the modern scientific knower:

The modern knower may be compared to an inebriate who, as he senses his loss of balance, endeavors to save himself by fixing tenaciously upon certain details and thus affords the familiar exhibition of positiveness and arbitrariness. With the world around him beginning to heave, he grasps at something that will come within a limited perception. So the scientist, having lost hold on organic reality, clings the more firmly to his discovered facts, hoping that salvation lies in what can be objectively verified.³⁹⁰

And while the early Greek naturalists have no modern conception of empirical verification, they do seem to neglect organic reality and to "fix tenaciously" on some kind of *Urstoff* that will "come within a limited perception." And they proceed to explain organic reality in terms of this latter. And they do seem to collectively exhibit a kind of "positiveness and arbitrariness": "everything is made out of water"; "everything is made out of air", etc. And Aristotle sees Anaxagoras, by positing Mind as a kind of basic cause of things, as someone who has sobered up, as someone who is no longer "in the grip of a theory", and as someone who will set inquiries on the right track.

Plato, too, believed that Anaxagoras was wise in identifying mind (*nous*) as the cause of all things. Consider the following well-known passage from the *Phaedo*:

One day I heard someone reading, as he said, from a book of Anaxagoras, and saying that it is Mind that directs and is the cause of everything. I was delighted with this cause and it seemed to me good, in a way, that Mind should be the cause of all. I thought that if this were so, the directing Mind would direct everything and arrange each thing in the way that was best. If then one wished to know the cause of each thing, why it comes to be or perishes or exists, one had to find what was the best way for it to be, or to be acted upon, or to act. On these premises then it befitted a man to investigate only, about this and other things, what is best...As I reflected on this subject I was glad to think that I had found in Anaxagoras a teacher about the cause of things after my own heart, and that he

³⁹⁰ Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences*, 57-58.

would tell me, first, whether the earth is flat or round, and then would explain why it is so of necessity, saying which is better, and that it was better to be so. If he said it was in the middle of the universe, he would go on to show me that it was better for it to be in the middle, and if he showed me those things I should be prepared never to desire any other kind of cause.³⁹¹

Like Aristotle, Plato praises Anaxagoras for assigning the cause of everything to Mind. If we may assume that Socrates is speaking partly on Plato's behalf here, we can see that Socrates says that such a cause is "delightful" because such a cause would allow Plato to investigate the natural world in a way that is an extension of, and that is continuous with, the historical Socrates's own investigation into ethical matters. In other words, Plato sees the possibility of turning his focus towards the natural world without abandoning his own teacher's commitment to focus on ethics. If Mind is the cause of things, then we might be warranted to approach the investigation of the natural world with the categories of life and action.

For recall that Aristotle said of Socrates that he was "busying himself about ethical matters and neglecting the world of nature as a whole but seeking the universal in these ethical matters."³⁹² We might think that Socrates had the exact opposite priority of his Ionian predecessors; we might even say, of them, that "they were essentially busying themselves about the world of nature as a whole and neglecting ethical matters but seeking the universal *Urstoff* in these natural matters." (We might be reminded here of the anecdote of Thales falling into a well while gazing aloft at the stars).³⁹³ If Mind is the cause of all things, then, on account of the kinship between our own minds and the ordering Mind, it would seem to follow that nature and the cosmos would be as we would expect them to be. With the presupposition that Mind is the cause of nature, and that Mind has ordered things towards the good, we can conduct investigations under the motto *bonum index veri* – goodness as an indicator of truth. For Socrates, what rings true is that we should concern ourselves primarily with investigating "the good" and with ethics. And with the presupposition that natural world is ordered by Mind, Plato hopes that he may be able to turn his focus towards an investigation of the natural world while

³⁹¹ Plato, *Phaedo* 97c-98a. (trans. G. M. A. Grube) in Cooper and Hutchinson ed., *Plato: Complete Works*.

³⁹² Aristotle, Metaphysics, I.6 987b1-3. (trans. Ross).

³⁹³ see Plato, *Theaetetus*, 174a-b. Burnyeat points out that this story of Thales is counterbalanced by the one given by Aristotle in *Politics* I.4 1259a6-19 in which Thales turns a profit by predicting a large olive crop and subsequently buying up all the olive presses and renting them for a fee. Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, 301-302.

still retaining his teacher's commitment to the primacy of the "the good." Again, he might be able to approach the natural world with the categories of life and action.

But while Plato and Aristotle both singled out Anaxagoras for praise from among the early Ionian natural philosophers, they were both ultimately disappointed to learn that Anaxagoras did not "make use of his cause" in most of his inquiries. According to Aristotle:

These thinkers, as we say, evidently got hold up to a certain point of two of the causes which we distinguished in our work on nature – the matter and the source of movement, - vaguely, however, and with no clearness, but as untrained men behave in fights...For Anaxagoras uses reason (*Nous*) as a *deus ex machina* for the making of the world, and when he is at a loss to tell for what cause something necessarily is, then he drags reason in, but in all other cases ascribes events to anything rather than to reason (*Nous*).

Aristotle's criticism is that Anaxagoras essentially assigns mind (*nous*) an important role in jump-starting the motion that we see in nature *ab initio*, but that he then ceases to appeal to reason or mind thereafter, and rather ends up explaining what we would take to be the effect of mind by appeal to low-level material causes and blind efficient causes. And Aristotle and Plato were in agreement here insofar as Plato had essentially made the same criticism of Anaxagoras in the *Phaedo*. Socrates's words, which deliver Aristotle's criticism in a narrative form, are worth quoting:

I eagerly acquired his books and read them as quickly as I could in order to know the best and the worst as soon as possible.

This wonderful hope was dashed as I went on reading and saw that the man made no use of Mind, nor gave it any responsibility for the management of things. That seemed to me much like saying that Socrates' actions are all due to his mind, and then in trying to tell the causes of everything I do, to say that the reason that I am sitting here is because my body consists of bones and sinews, because the bones are hard and are separated by joints, that the sinews are such as to contract and relax, that they surround the bones along with flesh and skin which hold them together, then as the bones are hanging in their sockets, the relaxation and contraction of the sinews enable me to bend my limbs, and that is the cause of my sitting here with my limbs bent.

Again, he would mention other such causes for my talking to you: sounds and air and hearing, and a thousand other such things, but he would neglect to mention the true causes, that, after the Athenians decided it was better to condemn me, for this reason it seemed best to me to sit here and more right to remain and to endure whatever penalty they ordered. For, by the dog, I think these sinews and bones could long ago have been in Megara or among the Boeotians, taken there by my belief as to the best course, if I had not thought it more right and honorable.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.4 985a10-21. (trans. Ross).

³⁹⁵ Plato, *Phaedo*, 98b-99a. (trans. Grube).

According to Plato, Anaxagoras has neglected "the true cause" and focused instead only on, bones, sinews etc. Aristotle says as much, and echoes the Platonic critique:

Some say that the soul moves its body exactly as it is moved itself. Such is the view of Democritus, arguing in the vein of Philippus the comic dramatist; for he tells us that Daedalus made his wooden Aphrodite move by pouring in quicksilver. Democritus speaks in a similar strain; for he says that the spherical atoms, as they move because it is their nature never to remain still, draw the whole body with them and so move it. But we shall ask whether these same atoms also produce rest. How they can do so, it is difficult, if not impossible to say. In general the living creature does not appear to be moved by the soul in this way, but by some act of mind or will (*dia prohairesis tinos kai noeseos*).³⁹⁶

To approach the explanation of the motion of a living thing, especially a rational living thing like a person, like Socrates, by a reductive appeal to its more basic constitutive parts, its *Urstoff*, is, according to Aristotle, and according to Plato, wrongheaded. It is the other way round. Or, to use Sellars phrase, to explain the cause of Socrates's sitting in prison by appeal to bones and sinews is to look through a stereoscope with one eye dominating – the "scientific image" dominates and the "manifest image", the organic world of life and action, recedes into the background. And once one has taken up the scientific image as a starting point, it's unclear how one can build the obvious characteristics of the manifest image back into it. It is unclear how one can make room for the causal powers of Mind when one has already posited a "closed system" of causal relations among the bones and sinews and limbs. This is because, as Sellars said, the "scientific image" presents itself as a "rival" image.

Aristotle said of his own teacher, Plato, that "he has used only two causes, that of the essence and the material cause."³⁹⁷ I think this is certainly somewhat uncharitable, yet it is true that Plato, in positing the *chorismos* or separation between forms and particulars, does run into some trouble about how the Form of a thing might cause its movement. This leads Aristotle to say that, while Plato and his followers seemed to have grasped what Aristotle calls "the formal cause", they seem to have had trouble in understanding the cause that Aristotle calls "that for the sake of which", i.e. the cause the tradition has labeled the "final cause." With regard to the Platonists, Aristotle says "in a sense they both say and do not say the good is a cause; for they do

³⁹⁶ Aristolte, *De Anima* I.3 406b16-26 (trans. W. S. Hett) in Aristotle, *Loeb Classical Library. Aristotle VIII: On the Soul, Parva Naturalia, On Breath*, trans. W. S. Hett, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957).

³⁹⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.6 988a10. (trans. Ross).

not call it a cause *qua* good but only incidentally."³⁹⁸ Elsewhere, in *De Generatione et Corruptione*, he notes that, in order to account for motion, and to account for coming-to-be and passing-away, we must acknowledge not only matter, and form, but also a third principle. This third principle is the source of motion, and regarding this "efficient cause" he calls it "the cause vaguely dreamed of by all our predecessors, definitely stated by none of them."³⁹⁹ He then goes on to criticize both the Platonists and the early materialistic naturalists as failing to properly account for motion.

Now it is clear that the form or the "formal cause", for Aristotle, not only makes a thing what it is, but that the form also, contrary to the dominant strain of Platonic thought, indwells the thing, and serves as its cause of motion. Aristotle is clearer and more explicit in emphasizing the dynamic relation between form and matter, whereas Plato often treats of this relation in static terms. This is not a rejection of the Platonic emphasis on the primacy of form, but rather a continued development of an aspect of form that was not, for Plato, the central focus of his work - the idea of the dynamic goal-directedness of form. We might say that the dynamic goal-directedness of form is perhaps Aristotle's most profound insight, and the insight at the core of all of his writing.

I quoted a passage from the *Physics* towards the beginning of this section in order to demonstrate that Aristotle sees an analogy between nature and art, and that in this analogy is preserved that paradigmatically Greek insight about nature – that nature is something like myself. But now we must see that this goal-directed behavior seen in nature has its moving cause in form, and not form understood in the static Platonic sense, but form in the sense of final cause:

If then it is both by nature and for an end that the swallow makes its nest and the spider its web, and plants grow leaves for the sake of the fruit and send their roots down (not up) for the sake of nourishment, it is plain that this kind of cause is operative in things which come to be and are by nature. And since 'nature' means two things, the matter and the form, of which the latter is the end, and since all the rest is for the sake of the end, the form must be the cause in the sense of 'that for the sake of which'.⁴⁰⁰

The early Ionian natural philosophers, according to Aristotle, by omitting the causal effects of form, invest all the forces or moving causes in "simple bodies."

³⁹⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.7, 988b15. (trans. Ross).

³⁹⁹ Aristotle, *Generation and Corruption*, II.9 335b7-8. (trans. Joachim).

⁴⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Physics*, II.8 199a26-33. (trans. Hardie and Gaye).

They make a second mistake in omitting the more controlling cause; for they eliminate the essential nature, i.e. the form. And what is more, since they remove the formal cause, they invest the forces they assign to the 'simple' bodies – the forces which enable these bodies to bring things into being – with too instrumental a character.⁴⁰¹

Yet this is clearly what leads to the problem Socrates raises in the *Phaedo* – "For, by the dog, I think these sinews and bones could long ago have been in Megara or among the Boeotians, taken there by my belief as to the best course."⁴⁰² Surely Socrates sits in prison because of his choices, not because of his bones and sinews. Aristotle is clear elsewhere that the very coming-to-be or generation of any substance, e.g. Socrates, must be due to the guiding influence of form, not merely to the blind forces of 'simple bodies.':

Now that with which the ancient writers, who first philosophized about Nature, busied themselves, was the material principle and the material cause. They inquired what this is, and what its character; how the universe is generated out of it, and by what motor influence, whether, for instance, by antagonism or friendship, whether by intelligence or spontaneous action, the substratum of matter being assumed to have certain inseparable properties; fire, for instance, to have a hot nature, earth a cold one; the former to be light, the latter heavy. For even the genesis of the universe is thus explained by them. After a like fashion do they deal also with the development of plants and of animals. They say, for instance, that the water contained in the body causes by its currents the formation of the stomach and the other receptacles of food or of excretion; and that the breath by its passage breaks open the outlets of the nostrils; air and water being the materials of which bodies are made; for all represent nature as composed of such or similar substances.

But if men and animals and their several parts are natural phenomena, then the natural philosopher must take into consideration not merely the ultimate substances of which they are made, but also flesh, bone, blood, and all other homogeneous parts; not only these, but also the heterogeneous parts, such as face, hand, foot; and must examine how each of these comes to be what it is, and in virtue of what force. For to say what are the ultimate substances out of which an animal is formed, to state, for instance, that it is made of fire or earth, is no more sufficient than would be a similar account in the case of a couch or the like. For we should not be content with saying that the couch was made of bronze or wood or whatever it might be, but should try to describe its design or mode of composition in preference to the material; or, if we did deal with the material, it would at any rate be with the concretion of material and form. For a couch is such and such a form embodied in this or that matter, or such and such a matter with this or that form; so that its shape and structure must be included in our description. For the formal nature is of greater importance than the material nature.⁴⁰³

And unlike Anaxagoras, who claims that Mind is indeed a principle cause of things, but then

⁴⁰¹ Aristotle, *Generation and Corruption*, II.9 335b34-336a3. (Joachim).

⁴⁰² Plato, *Phaedo*, 98e-99a. (trans. Grube).

⁴⁰³ Aristotle, *De Partibus Animalium*, Book I.1 640b5-29. (trans. William Ogle).

fails to make use of it in his explanations of things, Aristotle does indeed appeal to final causes and to Mind in his inquires and in his attempt to explain natural things.

Aristotle does not utterly reject the work of his predecessors who abandoned the methods of the poets and sought to make a "scientific" investigation of nature. He does believe, like many of his predecessors, that simple natural bodies like earth, water, air, and fire have natural tendencies to move in certain ways. But rather than begin with simple elements, or postulated simple bodies, e.g. atoms, and then try to explain how it is that they give rise to more complex forms, Aristotle begins with actualized forms and explains how it is that they effect the more simple bodies and material elements which comprise them. For example, in the *De Caelo*, Aristotle writes:

Retardation is always due to incapacity, and incapacity is unnatural. The incapacities of animals, age, decay, and the like, are all unnatural, due, it seems, to the fact that the whole animal complex is made up of materials which differ in respect of their proper places, and no single part occupies its own place.⁴⁰⁴

In other words, the various elements or simple materials that make up an animal, e.g. water, earth etc., all have their own tendencies to move according to their own internal tendencies, e.g. earth moves down, air up etc. And were it not for the organizing cause, i.e. the animal's form, these elements would simple dissolve into their respective "proper places" as they in fact do when the animal dies. Commenting on passages such as these, Guthrie remarks that

...the soul in sublunary creatures is regarded by A. as a force which prevents the elements of which a creature is composed from performing their proper motion. In this sense the soul of a living creature is a constraining force⁴⁰⁵

And, to phrase this negative point in a more positive manner, he says

Aristotle must mean...that the peculiar power of a living creature is to move its body in directions which are unnatural to it *qua* body...The body is earthy, therefore its natural motion is downwards, but the psyche is a force which intervenes and prevents it from performing that natural motion.⁴⁰⁶

And when we recall that Aristotle's mature view holds that nothing is ultimately capable of selfmotion, and that everything is ultimately moved by the unmoved mover, i.e. by *Nous*, as a lover is moved by his beloved, then this creates a striking image of the natural world. In this image of

⁴⁰⁴ Aristotle, *De Caelo*, II.6 288b14-16. (trans. Stocks).

⁴⁰⁵ Guthrie trans., On the Heavens, xxxvi. (note discussing De Caelo II.6, 288b16).

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 64 note c. (note on *De Caelo* I.7 275b27).

the natural world, we see the forms and dormant powers of organic beings being awakened into activity, having been inspired by *Nous* with a desire for their own perfection, which they all seek to imitate through the movements issuing from their indwelling natures.⁴⁰⁷ It is for the sake of contemplating the beauty of this drama that Anaxagoras said he would choose life as opposed to death.

Aristotle thinks that beauty is best understood as something like effective teleological order. And, thus, I want to conclude this section by looking again at passage that I quoted earlier from the *De Partis Animalium*. This passage I think best captures the Aristotelian understanding of the good of philosophical contemplation. Aristotle has already discussed the good of contemplating the beauty of the heavens, since they are more orderly due to their being closer to the ultimate cause of order and motion, i.e. God. Yet he notes that even in the contemplation of the humbler creatures, one still finds beauty in tracing their "causes", i.e. in contemplating their striving to imitate the effective teleological order found in the heavens, and ultimately, in God:

Having already treated of the celestial world, as far as our conjectures could reach, we proceed to treat of animals, without omitting, to the best of our ability, any member of the kingdom, however ignoble. For if some have no graces to charm the sense, yet nature, which fashioned them, gives amazing pleasure in their study to all who can trace links of causation, and are inclined to philosophy. Indeed, it would be strange if mimic representations of them were attractive, because they disclose the mimetic skill of the painter or sculptor, and the original realties themselves were not more interesting, to all at any rate who have eyes to discern the causes. We therefore must not recoil with childish aversion from the examination of the humbler animals. Every realm of nature is marvelous: and as Heraclitus, when the strangers who came to visit him found him warming himself at the furnace in the kitchen and hesitated to go in, is reported to have bidden them not to be afraid to enter, as even in that kitchen divinities were present, so we should venture on the study of every kind of animal without distaste; for each and all will reveal to us something natural and something beautiful. Absence of haphazard and conduciveness of everything to an end are to be found in nature's works in the highest degree, and the end for which those works are put together and produced is a form of the beautiful.

If any person thinks the examination of the rest of the animal kingdom an unworthy task, he must hold in like disesteem the study of man. For no one can look at the *elements* of the human frame – blood, flesh, bones, vessels, and the like – without

⁴⁰⁷ In his *Exposition of Dionysius on the Divine Names*, St. Thomas quotes Dionysius as saying that "God is the cause of harmony, 'as calling all things to Himself,' in that He turns all towards Himself as to an end." "For this reason", St. Thomas writes, "beauty is named *kalos* in Greek, which is derived from the verb 'to call'." Presumably Thomas is thinking of the Greek verb '*kaleo*.' Regardless of whether his etymology can be vindicated, he does seem to capture the essence of the Aristotelian picuture: beings called forth by the beauty of God/*Nous* as to an end. St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Pocket Aquinas*, ed. Vernon J. Bourke (New York: Washington Square Press/Pocket Books, 1960), 270.

much repugnance. Moreover, when any one of the parts or structures, be it which it may, is under discussion, it must not be supposed that it is its *material composition* to which attention is being directed or which is the *object* of the discussion, but rather *the total form*. Similarly, the true object of architecture is not bricks, mortar, or timber, but the house; and so *the principal object of natural philosophy is not the material elements, but their composition, and the totality of the substance*, independently of which they have no existence.⁴⁰⁸

Section 3. The Confusion of Seventeenth Century Philosophy with Philosophy as Such

Le silence eternel des ces espaces infinis m'effraie⁴⁰⁹

*DIEU d'Abraham, DIEU d'Isaac, DIEU de Jacob non des philosophes et des savants.*⁴¹⁰

I began this Part by asking some questions: what is the nature of the philosophical act?; what is its end or object?; what is the good of philosophy? I initially noted that modern philosophers in the 18^{th} (Hume) and 19^{th} (Hamilton) centuries seem to conceive of the nature of the philosophical act very differently than did philosophers of antiquity such as Aristotle or St. Thomas Aquinas. The best way to describe the difference between them is to say that certain modern philosophers have come to see the philosophical act as essentially a hunt, whose object and whose value lies in the hunt itself. Whereas the predominant conception of the philosophical act in antiquity is of an act that aims at the contemplation of the truth – an act whose object and whose good lies in the attainment of the end. The difference is something like the desire for restlessness as opposed to the desire for rest. I spent some time examining the texts of Aristotle and Aquinas on the nature of philosophy to make it perfectly clear that there was a real difference; this is because Hamilton, for example, did not see his own conception of philosophy – philosophy conceived as a kind of restless hunting – as being different from the traditional understanding of the philosophical act. I then spent what was – and I apologize – quite a number

⁴⁰⁸ Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, I.5 645a5-645b1. (trans. Ogle). (emphasis added).

⁴⁰⁹ "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me." Blaise Pascal, *Pascal's Pensées*, trans. W.
F. Trotter (New York: E. P. DUtton & Co., Inc., 1958), 61. Frag. 206.

⁴¹⁰ "GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, GOD of Jacob / not of the philosophers and of the learned." From Pascal's "Memorial." See facsimile in Blaise Pascal, *Oeuvres de Blaise Pascal; publiées suivant l'ordre chronologique, avec documents complémentaires, introductions et notes*, ed. Léon Brunschvicg, Pierre Boutroux, and Félix Gazier, Vol. IV (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1914), 1-5.

of pages in describing why I believe that Aristotle understood the philosophical act in the way that he did. I did this by describing in some detail what it was he took to be the object of contemplation, and why such contemplation would have been taken to be such a great good. My reasons for doing so will hopefully become clear at a later stage, and I want to drive home the point that the pagan Aristotle and the medieval Christian have much in common when it comes to understanding the nature, end, and good of the philosophical act. And my reason for spending what might have seemed like an undue number of pages in describing the underlying basis for the Thomistico-Aristotelian conception of the philosophical act is that I was trying to paint a picture of what C. S. Lewis refers to as a "discarded image." It is very difficult to inhabit such a pre-modern state of mind, because it involves divesting ourselves of a certain amount of our own intellectual inheritance. But, if it is not already obvious from the nature of my broad institutional criticism of the modern, liberal university, I think that we ought to try to divest ourselves from certain aspects of this inheritance. And it is in the spirit of helping us to exercise our imaginations in inhabiting such a discarded frame of mind that I have spent the last two Sections writing. But now that I have painted some picture of this discarded image, I am now ready to make my claim that it is the very discarding of this image that is responsible for shift in the conception of the nature of the philosophical act. The difference between, on the one hand, Hume and Hamilton, and, on the other hand, Aristotle and St. Thomas, with regard to their rival conception of the philosophical is best diagnosed by the latter's adherence to, and the former's repudiation of, what I have just called "the discarded image."

A. Pascal

This brings us to Pascal. I think that Pascal's discussion of the nature of philosophical activity perhaps best vindicates my diagnosis. Hamilton, recall, quoted Pascal in support of his conception of the philosophical act as a kind of love of the hunt, which shows no concern for the prize. Hamilton directly quotes the following passage from Pascal: "In life, we always believe

that we are seeking repose, while, in reality, all that we ever seek is agitation."⁴¹¹ He then proceeds to paraphrase various further parts of the *Pensees*, such as the following:

The struggle alone pleases us, not the victory...It is the same in play, and the same in the search for truth. In disputes we like to see the clash of opinions, but not at all to contemplate truth when found. To observe it with pleasure, we have to see it emerge out of strife...We never seek things for themselves, but for the search.⁴¹²

The quotations here are indeed from the *Pensees*, and, unlike the case of his citations of Aristotle or St. Thomas, Hamilton does support himself in at least in this very thin sense, i.e. by making clear and verifiable references to the salient parts of Pascal's texts. Pascal's *Pensees*, being a work true to its title, is indeed a collection of "thoughts" and it is by no means a polished treatise. Yet I think that we can still discern some very real and important lines of thought within the *Pensees*. And once we do this, I think we see that Hamilton's appeal to Pascal does not really support his case in any way that he might wish.

The first quotation above is from "fragment" 139. This is a comparatively long fragment, and the entire fragment bears the heading "Diversion." The second quote is from fragment 135. Both of these fragments come from the second "Section" of the *Pensees* entitled "The Misery of Man Without God." This serves not only as a title for the second Section, but also serves a title for the first of two broad "Parts" that divide the entire work. In the following excerpt, I present, with some material omitted, the general point of fragment 139:

When I have occasionally set myself to consider the different distractions of men, the pains and perils to which they expose themselves at court or in war, whence arise so many quarrels, passions, bold and often bad ventures, etc., I have discovered that all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber...

But on further consideration, when, after finding the cause of all our ills, I have sought to discover the reason of it, I have found that there is one very real reason, namely, the natural poverty of our feeble and mortal condition, so miserable that nothing can comfort us when we think of it closely.

Hence it comes that play and the society of women, war, and high posts, are so sought after. Not that there is in fact any happiness in them, or that men imagine true bliss to consist in money won at play, or in the hare which they hunt; we would not take these as

⁴¹¹ Hamilotn, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, 11. The translation that I am using translates the same passage: "They think they are truly seeking quiet, and they are only seeking excitement." Pascal, *Pensées*, 41. Frag. 139.

⁴¹² Pascal, *Pensées*, 38. Frag. 135. Hamilton's quotes and paraphrases are found on p.11 of his *Lectures* on *Metaphysics*. I am here quoting directly from the English translation of the *Pensées*.

a gift. We do not seek that easy and peaceful lot which permits us to think of our unhappy condition, nor the dangers of war, nor the labour of office, but the bustle which averts these thoughts of ours, and amuses us.

Reasons why we like the chase better than the quarry.

This is all that men have been able to discover to make themselves happy. And those who philosophise on the matter, and who think men unreasonable for spending a whole day in chasing a hare which they would not have bought, scarce know our nature. The hare in itself would not screen us from the sight of death and calamities; but the chase which turns away our attention from these, does screen us.

They have a secret instinct which impels them to seek amusement and occupation abroad, and which arises from the sense of their constant unhappiness. They have another secret instinct, a remnant of the greatness of our original nature, which teaches them that happiness in reality consists only in rest, and not in stir. And of these two contrary instincts they form within themselves a confused idea, which hides itself from their view in the depths of their soul, inciting them to aim at rest through excitement, and always to fancy that the satisfaction which they have not will come to them, if, by surmounting whatever difficulties confront them, they can thereby open the door to rest.

Thus so wretched is man that he would weary even without any cause for weariness from the peculiar state of his disposition; and so frivolous is he, that, though full of a thousand reasons for weariness, the least thing, such as playing billiards or hitting a ball, is sufficient to amuse him.

But will you say what object has he in all this? The pleasure of bragging to-morrow among his friends that he has played better than another. So others sweat in their own rooms to show to the learned that they have solved a problem in algebra, which no one had hitherto been able to solve. Many more expose themselves to extreme perils, in my opinion as foolishly, in order to boast afterwards that they have captured a town. Lastly, others wear themselves out in studying all these things, not in order to become wiser, but only in order to prove that they know them; and these are the most senseless of the band, since they are so knowingly, whereas one may suppose of the others, that if they knew it, they would no longer be foolish.⁴¹³

Pascal notes that there is in us a certain "instinct" which is a "remnant of our greatness of our original nature" which tells us that our good lies in rest and in peace. And upon this "instinct" is founded the philosophy of St. Thomas and of Aristotle. But Pascal implies that our original nature is fallen and irrecoverable. He writes:

This man, born to know the universe, to judge all causes, to govern a whole state, is altogether occupied and taken up with the business of catching a hare. And if he does not lower himself to this, and wants always to be on the strain, he will be more foolish still, because he would raise himself above humanity; and after all he is only a man, that is to say capable of little and of much, of all and of nothing; he is neither angel nor brute, but

. . .

⁴¹³ Pascal, *Pensées*, 39-42. Frag. 139.

man.414

He thinks our "original nature" is irrevocably corrupted, perhaps corrupted by "original sin."⁴¹⁵ The title of the first part of the *Pensees*, as I noted above, is "The Misery of Man Without God"; but Pascal gives it an alternative title "Or, First part: That nature is corrupt. Proved by nature itself."416 Regardless of why Pascal thinks this (and I will say a bit more about it in a moment), he clearly seems to have a much more pessimistic understanding of the prospects of reason than did Aristotle or St. Thomas. He seems to think that most all of our pursuits, philosophy and intellectual activity included, are just palliative distractions or diversions that keep us from thinking of our own mortality, of our coming death, and of the meaninglessness of our existence. Whereas Aristotle and Aquinas, while not denying man's liminal or threshold location upon the boundary of angel and brute, said that we, like every being, should strive to be like what is more excellent, i.e. that we should strive to be like the angels or gods that are our betters. Yet this strain of thought seems absent from Pascal. Pascal seems to think that (natural) reason alone can do nothing but make us more acutely aware of our misery, despair, and ultimate mortality. If there is any hope or goodness in the heavens or the earth that angels can see, man cannot see it; and, unlike the lucky brutes, man is condemned by his reason to be cognizant or self-aware of his meaningless misery.

Yet he does imply that there is something that can come to our aid. He implies as much in Section II when he writes that diversion makes us incapable of facing up to and potentially easing the sources of our misery:

Misery.—The only thing which consoles us for our miseries is diversion, and yet this it the greatest of our miseries. For it is this which principally hinders us from reflecting upon ourselves, and which makes us insensibly ruin ourselves. Without this we should be in a state of weariness, and this weariness would spur us to seek a more solid means of escaping from it. But diversion amuses us, and leads us unconsciously to death.⁴¹⁷

Diversion keeps us from seeking a means of escaping our hopeless state. If we would only cease diverting ourselves from the recognition of our mortality, perhaps this recognition would spur us

⁴¹⁴ Pascal, Pensées, 43. Frag. 140.

⁴¹⁵ See: Ibid., 25. Frag. 82: "How ludicrous is reason."; 27. Frag. 83: "Man is only a subject full of error, natural and ineffaceable, without grace. Nothing shows him the truth. Everything deceives him." Also see: MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Ch. 5, especially pp.53-54.

⁴¹⁶ Pascal, *Pensées*, 14. Frag. 60.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 49. Frag. 171.

to look for some means of comfort or consolation. He concludes section II by saying that "We run carelessly to the precipice, after we have put something before us to prevent us seeing it."⁴¹⁸ But it is not until Section III that we see what Pascal believes to be the consolation for our state, i.e. our coming to know God.

Section III begins "A letter to incite to the search after God."⁴¹⁹ Pascal paints a grim picture of the urgency of reflecting on what Camus calls "the fundamental question of philosophy", i.e. whether or not life is or is not worth living. And like Camus, he thinks that all the other problems are mere games in comparison to this one:

Let us imagine a number of men in chains, and all condemned to death, where some are killed each day in the sight of the others, and those who remain see their own fate in that of their fellows, and wait their turn, looking at each other sorrowfully and without hope. It is an image of the condition of men.

...

A man in a dungeon, ignorant whether his sentence be pronounced, and having only one hour to learn it, but this hour enough, if he know that it is pronounced, to obtain its repeal, would act unnaturally in spending that hour, not in ascertaining his sentence, but in playing piquet...⁴²⁰

Now the image of trying to discern the verdict of the final judgement is surely Pascal's specifically Christian understanding of this more general question, i.e. the question about life's "meaning" or its "value. And he thinks it very peculiar that we would waste our short lives, which he compares to single hour, "playing piquet" when we might be trying to answer this fundamental question. Here, it would seem, that Pascal can be seen to fall into a long tradition of thought – one that stretches from Socrates to Boethius to Camus – that sees philosophy as, fundamentally, a preparation for death. But, at least unlike Socrates or Boethius, Pascal does not think philosophy itself has much to offer in helping us to answer this question.

It is in Section III that we find Pascal's famous "wager." Most people are probably only familiar with Pascal, if they are familiar with him at all, from having had to read his "wager argument" for the existence of God in some undergraduate Introduction to Philosophy course, or perhaps in a Philosophy of Religion course. The wager begins as follows:

Let us then examine this point, and say, "God is, or He is not." But to which side shall we incline? Reason can decide nothing here. There is an infinite chaos which separated us. A game is being played at the extremity of this infinite distance where heads or tails will

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 51. Frag. 183.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 52. Frag. 184.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 60. Fragments 199, and 200.

turn up. What will you wager? According to reason, you can do neither the one thing nor the other; according to reason, you can defend neither of the propositions.

Do not then reprove for error those who have made a choice; for you know nothing about it. "No, but I blame them for having made, not this choice, but a choice; for again both he who chooses heads and he who chooses tails are equally at fault, they are both in the wrong. The true course is not to wager at all."

Yes; but you must wager. It is not optional. You are embarked. Which will you choose then?⁴²¹

Pascal then goes on, as if speaking to a gambling man, to enumerate "the odds" of wagering "yes" or "no" by describing the potential "pay-off's" to be had by the respective answers: the eternal good of heaven and the eternal suffering of hell, if God exists, and the finite good and finite suffering of earthly life, if He does not. But of far more importance to our present inquiry than the cogency of the wager is the nature of the prefatory statement: "Reason can decide nothing here."

It seems clear that, for Aristotle, or for St. Thomas, reason can certainly decide much here. More specifically, it seems that nous or intellectus, what we might call "insight" or "intuitive intellect", plays a large role in determining how we should "wager" with regard to the existence of God. Pascal thinks that we must simply "choose" what to believe here. The will is involved, but reason is not. Neither Aristotle nor Thomas would deny that the will is involved. But of course "the will" for Aristotle or for Thomas is simply a "rational appetite" not some peculiar faculty that allows us to simply "choose" or "plump for" various options in the absence of reason. As I have intimated earlier, Aristotle and Plato surely believed that we must possess a "taste for beauty (i.e. for to kalon)" or a certain "connatural" sympathy or kinship with the good in order to achieve a proper understanding of the natural world.⁴²² This kind of knowledge is no neutral, discursive, ratiocination or cold calculation, but it is not for this reason any less "rational." It is a cognitive use of the intellect. And according to the understanding of the world held by Aristotle or St. Thomas – an understanding of the world as a teleologically ordered home in which we could come to see beauty, and in which we could come to see our own natural good - a kind of "natural piety" made sense. Such natural piety was simply part and parcel of coming to understanding the world, i.e. was part and parcel of the philosophical act. But this is not how Pascal sees it.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 66. Frag. 233.

⁴²² See my discussion in Part I, Section 6.

Recall that all of the sections of the *Pensees* are divided into two broad parts. The first we have already noted. It speaks of the misery of man without God, and the corruption of nature (including, presumably we ourselves and our own reason). The second part is given the title "*Second part*: Happiness of man with God", and the alternate title "Or… *Second part*: That there is a Redeemer. Proved by Scripture."⁴²³ Now "the wager" is included in the first part, not in the second. The wager is not meant to prove God's existence, but only to get one to realize that one ought to seek for God's existence, or that it would be in one's best interest to seek for God's existence. Finding God is supposed to be the answer to the fundamental philosophical question, i.e. the question about life's good or "value." But the very title of the second part is clear that this is not to be accomplished by natural reason, or by philosophy, but by appeal to sacred Scripture.

Section IV is entitled "The Means of Belief" and it is in this section that we find the preface to that second broad "Part" of the Pensees. Pascal writes:

Preface to the second part.—To speak of those who have treated of this matter.

I admire the boldness with which these persons undertake to speak of God. In addressing their argument to infidels, their first chapter is to prove Divinity from the works of nature. I should not be astonished at their enterprise, if they were addressing their argument to the faithful; for it is certain that those who have the living faith in their heart see at once that all existence is none other than the work of the God whom they adore. But for those in whom this light is extinguished, and in whom we purpose to rekindle it, persons destitute of faith and grace, who, seeking with all their light whatever they see in nature that can bring them to this knowledge, find only obscurity and darkness; to tell them that they have only to look at the smallest things which surround them, and they will see God openly, to give them, as a complete proof of this great and important matter, the course of the moon and planets, and to claim to have concluded the proof with such an argument, is to give them ground for believing that the proofs of our religion are very weak. And I see by reason and experience that nothing is more calculated to arouse their contempt.

It is not after this manner that Scripture speaks, which has a better knowledge of the things that are of God. It says, on the contrary, that God is a hidden God, and that, since the corruption of nature, He has left men in a darkness from which they can escape only through Jesus Christ, without whom all communion with God is cut off. *Nemo novit Patrem, nisi Filius, et cui voluerit Filius revelare.*

This is what Scripture points out to us, when it says in so many places that those who seek God find Him. It is not of that light, "like the noonday sun," that this is said. We do not say that those who seek the noonday sun, or water in the sea, shall find them; and hence the evidence of God must not be of this nature. So it tells us elsewhere: *Vere tu es Deus absconditus*.⁴²⁴

⁴²³ Pascal, *Pensées*, 14. Frag. 60.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 71-72. Frag. 242.

Here Pascal directly confronts the tradition that I have been heretofore describing – the tradition of ancient Greece and that of medieval Christendom – and he essentially condemns it. He says that all attempts "to prove Divinity from the works of nature" are bound to fail. And not only that, but that such attempts are liable to "arouse contempt" in the "infidels" to whom such reasonings are directed. He says that "God is a hidden God" – *Deus absonditus* – and that man's corrupted nature leaves him unable to know God except through Christ as transmitted through scripture.

A biographical note is order here. Pascal himself seems to have undergone a kind of mystical or religious experience towards the end of his life: his so-called "night of fire." For the last decade or so of his life after this experience, he carried a piece of paper sowed into the inside of his coat that was a kind of memorial to this incident. On the piece of paper is scrawled a number of phrases that could best be described as something like gnomic maxims that served to remind him of what was conveyed I this experience. The first line reads:

*DIEU d'Abraham, DIEU d'Isaac, DIEU de Jacob non des philosophes et des savants.*⁴²⁵

Here Pascal juxtaposes the biblical God of the scriptures with that of a "philosopher's God." And the juxtaposition seems to imply not only their difference, but their antagonism. What this seems to imply is that Pascal not only believes that various "natural theological" arguments are either weak or utterly unpersuasive, but also that, even if such arguments worked, they would prove the existence of a god that is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In other words, Pascal seems to be denying the reality of anything like a "natural piety." And, even if such a piety were possible, he seems to think of it as antagonistic towards the God of Scripture in which he believes. And, as a final biographical note, Pascal seems to have all but abandoned his other intellectual work after his experience, e.g. his work in mathematics. Instead he devoted his time to writing works like the *Pensées*.

There is much in Pascal that is just old fashion Christian orthodoxy. But there is also something distinctly modern. In terms of orthodoxy, it is certainly true that philosophy and natural theology do not reveal the central Christian doctrines or the "mysteries of faith": e.g. the incarnation, the trinity etc. St. Thomas does not think that philosophy alone, or unaided natural

⁴²⁵From Pascal's "Memorial." "GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, GOD of Jacob / not of the philosophers and of the learned." Elizabeth T. Knuth translates the facsimile text on her webpage, "Pascal's Memorial": <u>http://www.users.csbsju.edu/~eknuth/pascal.html</u>.

reason, can do this. But St. Thomas does think that philosophy reveals "the preambles of the faith", e.g. that God exists.⁴²⁶ The God that philosophy alone, or natural reason, or natural theology reveals is obviously not the triune, incarnate God of the Christian scriptures, but rather something closer to Aristotle's God. But the medievals thought that such a God was not antagonistic to the Christian God, but rather a kind of rational preamble to the true Christian mysteries of faith. On the medieval picture, we might think that faith in the Christian scriptures is what allowed one come to know the identity of some person whom one had only previously seen at a distance. One's "natural piety" for this distant and unknown person, a piety that followed from reason's revelation, could be transformed by faith into a more intimate and personal relation. But Pascal seems to deny that philosophy alone could reveal anything like "the preambles of faith" – as he says with regard to God's existence, "reason can decide nothing here." And, even if could reveal, say, that God exists, such a *DIEU des philosophes* could never turn out to be the God of Christian scripture. It is this latter thought, that reason cannot provide the preambles to faith, that seems to be a more peculiarly modern notion.

I would like to suggest that Pascal overemphasizes the hidden-ness of God. And that he overemphasizes the corruptness of human nature. In particular, I think that his understanding of the futility of philosophical and intellectual activity, with regards to discerning man's good, and with regard to discerning God, are unduly pessimistic. And here I think the reason lies in something peculiar about philosophy in the seventeenth century. To adapt a phrase from Alasdair MacIntyre, it is not implausible to think that Pascal confused the nature of philosophical activity at Port-Royal (and in other such places with a similar inheritance) in the seventeenth century with philosophical activity as such, and that he therefore presented what was in essentials a correct account of the former as though it were an account of the latter.⁴²⁷ Recall that Aristotle's God is, in Ross's words, "an ever-living being whose influence radiates through the universe in such wise that everything that happens...depends on Him." In other words, Aristotle's God is inextricably bound up with Aristotle's cosmology and Aristotle's Physics. But by the seventeenth century, Aristotelian conceptions of physics, i.e. of nature (*phusis*), are being

⁴²⁶ See the brief account of the *praeambula ad articulos* and the relation between theology and philosophy in the writings of St. Thomas found in Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy. Vol. 2: Medieval Philosophy From Augustine to Duns Scotus* (New York: Image Books, 1993), 312-316.

⁴²⁷ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 17. MacIntyre was talking about Emotivists and "moral utterance at Cambridge" at the turn of the twentieth century.

violently overthrown. But with the overthrow of Aristotelian Physics comes the overthrow of the Aristotelian God, and ultimately, as I shall argue, the Aristotelian ethics.

Alfred North Whitehead makes a very insightful methodological observation about how we ought to approach the philosophical thought of various periods of history. He writes:

When you are criticizing the philosophy of an epoch, do not chiefly direct your attention to those intellectual positions which its exponents feel it necessary explicitly to defend. There will be some fundamental assumptions which adherents of all the variant systems within the epoch unconsciously presuppose. Such assumptions appear so obvious that people do not know what they are assuming because no other way of putting things has ever occurred to them. With these assumptions a certain limited number of types of philosophic systems are possible, and this group of systems constitutes the philosophy of the epoch.⁴²⁸

And when it comes to the seventeenth century, Whitehead identifies what he takes to be the almost unconscious fundamental assumption of seventeenth century philosophy as the commitment to the mechanistic theory of nature:

One such assumption underlies the whole philosophy of nature during the modern period. It is embodied in the conception which is supposed to express the most concrete aspect of nature. The Ionian philosophers asked, What is nature made of? The answer is couched in terms of stuff, or matter, or material – the particular name chosen is indifferent – which has the property of simple location in space and time, or, if you adopt the more modern ideas, in space-time. What I mean by matter, or material, is anything which has this property of *simple location*. By simple location I mean one major characteristic which refers equally both to space and to time, and other minor characteristics which are diverse as between space and time.

The characteristic common both to space and time is that material can be said to be *here* in space and *here* in time, or *here* in space-time, in a perfectly definite sense which does not require for its explanation any reference to other regions of space-time...

The answer, therefore, which the seventeenth century gave to the ancient question of the Ionian thinkers, 'What is the world made of?' was that the world is a succession of instantaneous configurations of matter – or of material, if you wish to include stuff more subtle than ordinary matter, the ether for example.

We cannot wonder that science rested content with this assumption as to the fundamental elements of nature. The great forces of nature, such as gravitation, were entirely determined by the configurations of masses. Thus the configurations determined their own changes, so that the circle of scientific thought was completely closed. This is the famous mechanistic theory of nature, which has reigned supreme ever since the seventeenth century. It is the orthodox creed of physical science. Furthermore, the creed

⁴²⁸ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 49-50.

justified itself by the pragmatic test. It worked. Physicists took no more interest in philosophy. They emphasized the anti- rationalism of the Historical Revolt.⁴²⁹

Twice Whitehead likens the modern scientific view of nature to that of the Ancient Greek Ionian philosophers. The question posed by the Ionian philosophers – "What is the world made of?" or "What is nature made of?" – is the question that modern science also takes as central. And the answer of the modern mechanistic science, in many ways like that, in particular, of the ancient atomists, is that it is matter, and more specifically, anything that can be understood as having the property of "simple location" in space-time. And, what is more, Whitehead notes that this assumption about what is supposedly "the most concrete aspect of nature" was taken as orthodoxy among the physical sciences because "it worked", i.e. the pragmatic benefits of the new physics in terms of technology and predictive power were seen as confirmation of the truth of the underlying assumption about the most concrete aspect of nature. "Ye shall know them by their fruits" was the stick by which the modern science beat down the old Aristotelian science; recall Bacon's estimation of Greek science: "the inquiry of final causes is a barren thing, or as a virgin consecrated to God."430 And, as Whitehead also notes, the result was the cessation of concern with philosophy by the physicists. In other words, the assumption about the concreteness or the ontological primacy of material located at points of space-time delivered theoretical and technological fruit, and thus did not require rationalist, philosophical justification. But what Whitehead also notes is that, in abandoning their concern with philosophy, the physicists also emphasized what Whitehead refers to as the "anti-rationalism" of their view of nature.

With regard to the "anti-rationalism" of the scientific revolution in the 17th century, Whitehead describes it as being opposed to the "rationalism" of the pre-modern science. With regard to the raitoanlism of pre-modern science, Whitehead writes:

By this rationalism I mean the belief that the avenue to truth was predominantly through metaphysical analysis of the nature of things, which would thereby determine how things acted and functioned. The historical revolt was the definite abandonment of this method in favour of the study of the empirical facts of antecedents and consequences. In religion, it meant the appeal to the origins of Christianity; and in science it meant the appeal to experiment and the inductive method of reasoning.⁴³¹

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 50-51.

⁴³⁰ Bacon, Advancement of Learning, 168. Bk.III. See my earlier discussion in Part I, Section 6.A.

⁴³¹ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 39-40.

And again:

The Greek view of nature...was essentially dramatic...It conceived nature as articulated in the way of a work of dramatic art, for the exemplification of general ideas converging to an end...Nature was a drama in which each thing played its part...The effect of such an imaginative setting for nature was to damp down the historical spirit. For it was the end which seemed illuminating, so why both about the beginning? The Reformation and the scientific movement were two aspects of the revolt which was the dominant movement of the later Renaissance. The appeal to the origins of Christianity, and Francis Bacon's appeal to efficient causes as against final causes, were two sides of one movement of thought.⁴³²

I have already discussed the "rationalism" of the Greek view, in Part II, Section 2. This was the idea that nature should be intelligible to us insofar as there is a kinship between our minds and the pervasiveness of Mind in nature. McDowell attempts to recover some of this idea when he says that "what we experience is not external to the realm of the kind of intelligibility that is proper to meaning"⁴³³ And, to foreshadow the upcoming discussion in Part II, Section 4, we can see Christoph Cardinal Schönborn as a contemporary voice that echoes Whitehead's diagnosis of the chief difference between conceptions of nature before and after the seventeenth century scientific revolution. Schönborn writes:

Being mechanistic, modern science is also historicist: It argues that a complete description of the efficient and material causal history of an entity is a complete explanation of the entity itself - in other words, that an understanding of how something came to be is the same as understanding what it is . But Catholic thinking rejects the genetic fallacy applied to the natural world and contains instead a holistic understanding of reality based on all the faculties of reason and all the causes evident in nature - including the "vertical" causation of formality and finality.⁴³⁴

As we shall see later below, Schönborn, relying on the Aristotelian elements preserved in the Catholic intellectual tradition, attempts to argue for the continuing plausibility of ceratin aspects of this older Greek picture.

I shall return to discuss challenges to the "anti-rationalism" to the scientific revolution, but for now I want to mention a corollary that flows from the assumption about the supreme concreteness of matter-with-simple-location. As in the case of the Ionian philosophers, the idea that nature was to be most truly and essentially understood in terms of matter with simple

⁴³² Ibid., 8-9.

⁴³³ McDowell, *Mind and World*, 72. See Part I, Section 5.A.2; and also see Part III, Section 4.B.1 below.

⁴³⁴ Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, "The Designs of Science," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion* & *Public Life*, no. 159 (January 2006): 37.

location went against common sense and experience. It was what Sellars calls, an exercise in "postulation theory construction", a paradigmatic instance of thought according to "the scientific image." The element of common experience with which it clashed is the idea that various bodies or substances possess certain qualities that do not seem to be accounted by such a theory. But the seventeenth century scientists responded in a manner similar to Democritus: "By convention sweet, by convention bitter, by convention hot, by convention cold, by convention colour: but in reality atoms and void."⁴³⁵ Only the seventeenth century scientists had more theoretical motive to make such assumptions than did Democritus, namely, seventeenth century science was in the process of elaborating various "transmission theories" of light and sound in terms of their primary materialistic assumption. But, as Whitehead eloquently notes, the philosophical minds of the seventeenth century are forced into an odd conclusion on account of this assumption:

The primary qualities are the essential qualities of substances whose spatio-temporal relationships constitute nature. The orderliness of these relationships constitutes the order of nature. The occurrences of nature are in some way apprehended by minds, which are associated with living bodies. Primarily, the mental apprehension is aroused by the occurrences in certain parts of the correlated body, the occurrences in the brain, for instance. But the mind in apprehending also experiences sensations which, properly speaking, are qualities of the mind alone. These sensations are projected by the mind so as to clothe appropriate bodies in external nature. Thus the bodies are perceived as with qualities which in reality do not belong to them, qualities which in fact are purely the offspring of the mind. Thus nature gets credit which should in truth be reserved for ourselves; the rose for its scent: the nightingale for his song: and the sun for his radiance. The poets are entirely mistaken. They should address their lyrics to themselves, and should turn them into odes of self-congratulation on the excellency of the human mind. Nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless; merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly.⁴³⁶

And here we have a further implication. Namely, not only does this materialistic posit cause physicists to cease caring about philosophy, but it also causes them to cease caring about poetry. Or at least to cease caring about poetry insofar as poets claim to have any knowledge about nature. All of the qualities about which the poets write do not properly belong to nature, but are simply projections of our minds. The "fixed scientific cosmology" of the seventeenth century:

presupposes the ultimate fact of an irreducible brute matter, or material, spread throughout space in a flux of configurations. In itself such a material is senseless, valueless, purposeless. It just does what it does do, following a fixed routine imposed by external

⁴³⁵ Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, eds, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 410. Passage 549.

⁴³⁶ Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 55-56.

relations which do not spring from the nature of its being.⁴³⁷

And these "external relations" are the ones understood by mathematical physics. Any qualities described by the poets are simply superfluous decoration added by our own mind. Not aspects of nature itself.

If Whitehead is right, and the materialist assumption about matter and space-time and the resulting corollary about "second qualities" truly are the unspoken, guiding assumptions of the epoch of the seventeenth century, then it is no surprise that Pascal thinks that reason is incapable of supplying anything like "the preambles of faith." One of the most poignant and haunting sentences of Pascal's *Pensées* is the very short fragment number 206; it reads:

Le silence eternel des ces espaces infinis m'effraie⁴³⁸

The immediately preceding fragment reads:

When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the little space which I fill, and even can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I am ignorant, and which know me not, I am frightened, and am astonished at being here rather than there; for there is no reason why here rather than there, why now rather than then. Who has put me here? By whose order and direction have this place and time been allotted to me? *Memoria hospitis unius diei prætereuntis*.⁴³⁹

Life is simply "as the remembrance of a guest of one day that passeth by." And that life is lived, not in a world that is a home for us, but in a frightening void of infinite space and eternal silence. If this is the concept of nature held by the learned, it is no surprise that pointing to nature thus understood, as a proof for God, would appear a weak proof indeed, and would, as Pascal suspects, only arouse contempt in any person who was spoken to thus.

C. S. Lewis captures the difference between the modern and pre-modern experience of turning to the heavens eloquently in the following passage:

The really important difference is that the medieval universe, while unimaginably large, was also unambiguously finite...because the medieval universe is finite, it has shape, the perfect spherical shape, containing within itself an ordered variety. Hence to look out on the night sky with modern eyes is like looking out over a sea that fades away into mist, or looking about one in a trackless forest – trees forever on the horizon. To look up at the towering medieval universe is much more like looking at a great building. The 'space' of modern astronomy may arouse terror, or bewilderment or vague reverie; the spheres of

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 18.

⁴³⁸ Pascal, Pensées, 61. Frag. 206. "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me"

⁴³⁹ Pascal, *Pensées*, 61. Frag. 205. Latin from the Vulgate, The Book of Wisdom, 5:15 "the remembrance of a guest of one day that passeth by."

the old present us with an object in which the mind can rest, overwhelming in its greatness but satisfying in its harmony...

This explains why all sense of the pathless, the baffling, and the utterly alien – all agoraphobia – is markedly absent from medieval poetry when it leads us, as so often, into the sky. Dante, whose theme might have been expected to invite it, never strikes that note...Pascal's terror at le silence éternel de ces espace infnis never entered his mind. He is like a man being conducted through an immense cathedral, not like one lost in a shoreless sea.440

The difference might be put this way. When the medieval man looked to the heavens, he saw something that appeared to be ordered by a mind like his own. He was never truly alone in the world because nature and nature's God were "something like himself." The teleological or goaldirected order familiar to one in one's own actions was found mirrored in the heavens, or, perhaps more accurately, the teleological or goal-directed order of the heavens was found mirrored in one's own actions. The same was the case if one were to look down at, to use Pascal's words, "the smallest things that surround [one]" - Aristotle's humbler creatures. Yet Pascal does not see this. If the heavens have any "order" at all, it is a mere mathematical regularity. The heavens do not ring out with "the music of the spheres", they are not finite and arranged for the sake of a beautiful end, as in a Cathedral, but rather a silent, infinite space. And if, from such mathematical regularity alone, one could infer the existence of a god or a creator, it could not, according to Pascal, be the God of Abraham, Isaac and Joseph. According to Whitehead:

we find in the eighteenth century Paley's famous argument, that mechanism presupposes' a God who is the author of nature. But even before Paley put the argument into its final form, Hume had written the retort, that the God whom you will find will be the sort of God who makes that mechanism. In other words, that mechanism can, at most, presuppose a mechanic, and not merely a mechanic but its mechanic. The only way of mitigating mechanism is by the discovery that it is not mechanism.⁴⁴¹

Pascal seems to have already anticipated Hume's response here: the mechanical regularity of the "the eternal silence of these infinite spaces" could only point to the existence of a mechanic, not to God. And, for Pascal, the idea that nature is a mere mechanism was an assumption that appeared so obvious to him, and to most all of his seventeenth century *confrères*, that he did not know he was assuming it insofar as no other way of putting things had ever occurred to him.

⁴⁴⁰ C. S. Lewis, The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 99-100. ⁴⁴¹ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 77.

In many ways, Pascal was ahead of his time. Much seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophical thought was spent trying to digest and assimilate the core assumptions of seventeenth century scientific mechanistic cosmology into the broader areas of philosophical thought. The real backlash against this project did not occur until the rise of Romantic thought around the beginning of the nineteenth century. For example, we hear Pascal's "*Le silence eternel des ces espaces infinis m'effraie*" echoed in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*:

III O Sorrow, cruel fellowship, O priestess in the vaults of Death, O sweet and bitter in a breath, What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, `blindly run; A web is woven across the sky; From out waste places comes a cry, And murmurs from the dying sun:

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands— With all the music in her tone, A hollow echo of my own,— A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind, Embrace her as my natural good; Or crush her, like a vice of blood, Upon the threshold of the mind?⁴⁴²

What is implicit in Pascal's terror at the silence of the eternal spaces, and Tennyson's being appalled at the idea that the stars might "blindly run", is the idea that modern physics gives us an image of nature in which nature operates in a very different manner than we take our own mind's to operate. According to the manifest image, nature is simply a truncated person. According to the scientific image, nature is a mere mechanism. But there is something implied by this juxtaposition of human mind and mechanical nature that is less often directly or explicitly stated. Something Whitehead calls a kind of "skeleton in the cupboard."⁴⁴³ The point is made explicit by some inferences from Tennyson's lament that the stars might "blindly run":

This line states starkly the whole philosophic problem implicit in the poem. Each

⁴⁴² Alfred Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, ed.William F. Rolfe (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1895), 5. Stanza III.

⁴⁴³ Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 79.

molecule blindly runs. The human body is a collection of molecules. Therefore, the human body blindly runs, and therefore there can be no individual responsibility for the actions of the body. If you once accept that the molecule is definitely determined to be what it is, independently of any determination by reason of the total organism of the body, and if you further admit that the blind run is settled by the general mechanical laws, there can be no escape from this conclusion. But mental experiences are derivative from the actions of the body, including of course its internal behaviour. Accordingly, the sole function of the mind is to have at least some of its experiences settled for it, and to add such others as may be open to it independently of the body's motions, internal and external.

There are then two possible theories as to the mind. You can either deny that it can supply for itself any experiences other than those provided for it by the body, or you can admit them.

If you refuse to admit the additional experiences, then all individual moral responsibility is swept away. If you do admit them, then a human being may be responsible for the state of his mind though he has no responsibility for the actions of his body.⁴⁴⁴

In other words, as soon as the physicist turns his mechanistic principles, derived for the study of nature external nature, in on his own self, he realizes that he must be a mechanism too. Or, if not a mechanism, then a ghost trapped in a machine.

So while Pascal explicitly realizes the troubling implications of the mechanistic theory of nature in terms of how we conceive of our place in the world, or our relation to God, it is not clear whether he recognizes the troubling further implications for such a view when we turn to investigate ourselves. With regard to the first issue, of not feeling at home in the world, Pascal says that we must simply "choose" to have faith in the God and take solace in what we find written in holy scripture. Here I would like briefly to recall something that H. H. Price had said about what it was that persons demanded of philosophy; Price says that the philosophical consumer:

needs, as it were, a map of the universe so far as our empirical information has disclosed it; and not a map of the physical world only, but one which makes room for all the known aspects of the universe, physical, spiritual, and whatever others there may be. He needs it nowadays more than ever, since for good reasons or bad the Christian metaphysical scheme has lost its hold over him; and Science does not give him what he wants either, since he feels (in my opinion rightly) that there are a number of very important questions on which Science has nothing to say.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 78-79.

⁴⁴⁵ Price, "Clarity is Not Enough", 27-28.

I shall have something more to say about this later, but I think we are in a good position to make a guess as to why "the Christian metaphysical scheme has lost its hold" over most persons. If one can only trust in this system by a blind "choice" to believe in the existence of the God, and subsequently to believe in the scriptures, then it is fairly easy to see why many people would have a hard time taking such a choice overly seriously. But with regard to the second issue, i.e. the potentially troubling issue of how we make sense of our own selves in light of the mechanist cosmology, I think it would be worthwhile to look briefly at some prominent "solutions" to the problem.

B. Descartes

Descartes is the father of a certain modern dualism of mind and body that most contemporary theorists tend to steer away from. Yet this dualism did not seem to trouble Descartes overly much. What then is Descartes' "solution" to the problem? I believe that the reason the problem did not trouble him was due to his intellectual aims. Princess Elisabeth, in a now famous letter, writes:

...I beseech you tell me how the soul of man (since it is but a thinking substance) can determine the spirits of the body to produce voluntary actions.⁴⁴⁶

Descartes' reply is somewhat telling:

For, there being two things in the human soul on which depends all the knowledge we can have of its nature – the first, that it thinks, and the second, that being united to the body, it can act and suffer with it – I have said nearly nothing of this latter, and have studied only to understand well the first, since my principal design was to prove the distinction that exists between the soul and the body, for which the first alone could suffice, while the other would have been an impediment.⁴⁴⁷

In other words, Descartes saw it as his primary goal simply to prove the soul's separateness from the body, not to bother about the interaction. And the reason, we might think, that he wanted

⁴⁴⁶ Margaret Atherton, ed., *Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period* (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), 11. Elizabeth to Descartes from the Hague 6-16 May 1643.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 13. Descartes responds, from Egmond du Hoef 21 May 1643. Descartes response can also be found in René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes Volume III The Correspondence*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch, and Anthony Kenny (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 218. AT III 664-665.

prove its separateness, is because he wanted to be able to focus his attention solely on his revolution in the domain of physics or natural science. His overthrow of the Aristotelian science and setting of modern science on a sure footing was his primary concern. And even there, it was his concern to bring about a revolution for the sake of its pragmatic aid. Recall a passage I quoted above:

As soon as I had acquired some general notions concerning Physics...they caused me to see that it is possible to attain knowledge which is very useful in life, and that, instead of that speculative philosophy which is taught in the schools, we may find a practical philosophy by means of which knowing the force and the action of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens and all other bodies that environ us, as distinctly as we know the different crafts of our artisans, we can in the same way employ them in all those uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature.⁴⁴⁸

In other words, just as the pre-Socratic Ionian philosophers had busied themselves in seeking to understand the *Urstoff* that was the primary constituent of nature, so Descartes busied himself with a fundamental re-thinking of the principles of physics for the sake of giving us more control over nature. And just as the pre-Socratic Ionian philosophers, unlike Socrates, did not busy themselves with ethical matters, neither did Descartes. But Descartes' method for bringing about this revolution in Physics was the method of radical doubt. And, as Onora O'Neill and others have pointed out, in order to carry out such meditations, and such exercises in radical doubt, it must be possible to insulate one's continuing life and practical affairs from the radical doubt exercised for the sake of reforming one's ideas in physics.⁴⁴⁹ And one way of assuring this separation is to conveniently insulate the mind from the domain of physics. Physics is the domain of body; the mind is not. And, so while Descartes was legitimately perplexed by questions like those of Princess Elisabeth, I think that he was, on the whole, not overly troubled by them in so far as his methods and thinking on other matters were beginning to show theoretical and practical fruit.

Unlike Otto Neurath's famous analogy of being forced to re-build one's broken ship at sea without the aid of a dry dock, Descartes says that we should simply set aside a provisional

⁴⁴⁸ Descartes, *Discourse On Method*, Part VI (AT VI 61-62) quoted in Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin*, 22-23. See Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes: Volume 1*, 142-143. See above: Part I, Section 6A.

⁴⁴⁹ Onora O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 4ff.

moral code, while we are in the process of demolishing the old physics by means of radical doubt:

Now, before starting to rebuild your house, it is not enough simply to pull it down, to provision for material and architects (or else train yourself in architecture), and to have carefully drawn up the plans; you must also provide yourself with some other place where you can live comfortably while building is in progress. Likewise, lest I should remain indecisive in my actions while reason obliged me to be so in my judgments, and in order to live as happily as I could during this time, I formed for myself a provisional moral code consisting of just three or four maxims, which I should like to tell you about...⁴⁵⁰

And, according to some such reason as this, Descartes assures us that his revolution in Physics is not meant to have any political implications:

...regarding the opinions to which I had hitherto given credence, I thought that I could not do better than undertake to get rid of them, all at one go, in order to replace them afterwards with better ones, or with the same ones once I had squared them with the standard of reason...For although I noted various difficulties in this undertaking, they were not insurmountable. Nor could they be compared with those encountered in the form of even minor matters affecting public institutions...That is why I cannot by any means approve of those meddlesome and restless characters who, called neither by birth nor by fortune to the management of public affairs, are yet forever thinking up some new reform. And if I thought this book contained the slightest ground for suspecting me of such folly, I would be very reluctant to permit its publication. My plan has never gone beyond trying to reform my own thoughts and construct them upon a foundation which is all my own.⁴⁵¹

But the plausibility of either of these claims, either the claim to being able to lay aside a sufficient provisional moral scheme for oneself, or the claim to being able to assure the political impotence or irrelevance of the intended intellectual project, is dependent on the separability of thought and action. Moral philosophy and Politics must be somewhat autonomous or insulated from theoretical investigations, lest radical doubt about matters in physics bring about "indecision" in one's actions, and lest such radical doubt foment political rebellion.

And so when Descartes writes that "the entire class of causes which people customarily derive from a thing's "end", I judge to be utterly useless in physics"⁴⁵² or that "it was my view

⁴⁵⁰ Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, Part III, (AT VI 22) in *Philosophical Writings of Descartes Vol.1*, 122.

⁴⁵¹ Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, Part II, (AT VI 13-15).

⁴⁵² Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Fourth Meditation, (AT VII 55) in René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald A. Cress, 3rd ed. (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993).

that the power of self-motion, and likewise of sensing or thinking, in no way belonged to the nature of a body"⁴⁵³ he tends not to see these respectively as undermining judgments about his own "end" or good, or judgments about his ability to be a self-mover or an originator of external actions. Because, again, he has already set it aside, as a kind of methodological posit, that he will not allow his doubts about nature to infect such practically relevant judgments. And, when pressed on them, he tends to divert objections away from these problems by gesturing towards his theoretical "successes", which have more directly to do with his intended project. But what he has also done here, whether he recognizes it or not, is to methodologically posit the negation of Aristotelian moral and political philosophy as well. While he frequently speaks of the necessity of doing away with Aristotelian or Scholastic Physics, he seems not to realize that Aristotelian or Scholastic Ethics and Politics derives from the belief that

there is a principle of things which is at the same time the cause of beauty (tou kalos), and that sort of cause from which things acquire movement (hothen he kinesis).⁴⁵⁴

In other words, the understanding of evaluative qualities – like beautiful or good – as well as the understanding of the possibility of self-motion, are both bound up with the notion of final cause, which, according to Aristotle and the Scholastics, is a principle in Physics, i.e. a principle requisite for a full understanding of *phusis* or nature – of which human action is a part.

So while Pascal essentially despaired at the implications of the mechanistic cosmology to render any sort of Weltanschauung that might lend meaning to our lives, and suggested a kind of blind faith in God and the promise of the Gospel, Descartes essentially diverts his eyes from the trouble. His own aims of trying to set the new science on firm foundations made it such that he was less concerned with the implications for a mechanistic cosmology of ethics and moral philosophy, and evaluative issues more generally. He assumes as a kind of methodological posit, somewhat implausibly, that it is possible to leave aside a "provisional moral code" that remains untouched by the radical doubt used to dismantle the Aristotelian physics. But to see what happens when philosophers apply themselves more directly to the problem of understanding human nature in terms of the mechanistic cosmology, we must look ahead.

 ⁴⁵³ Descartes, *Meditations of First Philosophy*, Second Meditation, (AT VII 26).
 ⁴⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.3 984b20-22. (trans. Ross).

C. Hume

Many philosophers in the eighteenth century aspired to be "Newtons of the Mind."⁴⁵⁵ In other words, while many seventeenth century philosophers and physicists were primarily focused on repudiating the Aristotelian physics and setting the New Science on a firm foundation, the eighteenth century saw many philosophers aspiring to apply the scientific method, and its assumptions about what should be considered "the most concrete" aspects of nature, to human nature, or the human science, or to moral philosophy. David Hume is a prime example of this. For example, in the Abstract that Hume later wrote to accompany the *Treatise of Human Nature*, he writes:

Most of the philosophers of antiquity, who treated of human nature, have shewn more of a delicacy of sentiment, a just sense of morals, or a greatness of soul, than a depth of reasoning and reflection. They content themselves with representing the common sense of mankind in the strongest lights, and with the best turn of thought and expression, without following out steadily a chain of propositions, or forming the several truths into a regular science. But 'tis at least worth while to try if the science of man will not admit of the same accuracy which the several parts of natural philosophy are found susceptible of. There seems to be all the reason in the world to imagine that it may be carried to the greatest degree of exactness...This seems to have been the aim of our late philosophers, and, among them, of this author. He proposes to anatomize human nature in a regular manner, and promises to draw no conclusions but where he is authorized by experience...This treatise therefore of human nature seems intended for a system of the sciences.⁴⁵⁶

Hume criticizes the ancients. They, he says, have shown "a delicacy of sentiment", and "a just sense of morals", and they "content themselves with representing the common sense of mankind in the strongest lights", but they have been unable to "follow out steadily a chain of reasons." In other words, the ancients have lacked sufficient self-discipline, or moral and intellectual toughness, to follow the materialistic suppositions of the mechanistic physics to where they lead. Nietzsche says that his ideal conception of a philosopher would have at least the following quality:

⁴⁵⁵ I believe the *locus classicus* for the phrase "Newton of the Mind" comes from Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. The Science of Freedom* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company,1969). See especially Ch.4, section II, which is entitled "Newtons of the Mind."

⁴⁵⁶ Hume, *Treatise*, 645-646. Also see the subtitle of Book III of the *Treatise*, which reads: "An attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects." The title page is reproduced after p.454 of this edition.

...the deliberate employment of a unity of method, a shrewd courage...Indeed they admit to a pleasure in saying No and in taking things apart, and to a certain levelheaded cruelty that knows how to handle a knife surely and subtly, even when the heart bleeds.⁴⁵⁷

And Hume is perfectly at home with such anatomical metaphors. He "proposes to anatomize human nature in a regular manner." I have already alluded to his idea that

"There are different ways of examining the Mind as well as the Body. One may consider it either as an Anatomist or as a Painter"

and his corresponding idea that he imagines "it impossible to conjoin these two Views."⁴⁵⁹ But herein lies the trouble, i.e. in the fact that it is impossible to conjoin the two views.

It is the essential reflexivity of the task of human science that causes trouble. Hume notes, in his Introduction, that "we ourselves are not only the beings, that reason, but also one of the objects, concerning which we reason."⁴⁶⁰ The trouble involves keeping in focus the understanding of one's self as an organic whole, while at the same time trying to analyze one's self in terms of material-with-the-property-of-simple-location. It seems that that "levelheaded cruelty that knows how to handle a knife surely and subtly, even when the heart bleeds" is particularly required when "applying the knife vivisectionally to the chest"⁴⁶¹, and not just any chest, but one's own. The poet Robinson Jeffers forewarns of the danger of applying such dissectional methods to the understanding of human nature:

Being used to deal with edgeless dreams, Now he's bred knives on nature turns them also inward: they have thirsty points though.⁴⁶²

And the case of Hume is a perfect example of the result of turning the anatomical, atomic methods of nature science – these "knives" which have been "bred" for the investigation of inanimate nature – on oneself.

Perhaps the best example is not Hume's discussion of how it is that we could be selfmovers, but rather his discussion of how it is that we could be a self at all. With regard to this

⁴⁵⁷ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, §210.

⁴⁵⁸ Hume, The Letters of David Hume: Volume I, 32-33.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. See my earlier discussion of this passage in Part I, Section 4.B.

⁴⁶⁰ Hume, *Treatise*, xv.

⁴⁶¹ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, 212.

⁴⁶² Robinson Jeffers, "Science", lines 7-9. In F. O. Matthiessen ed., *The Oxford Book of American Verse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 783.

question Hume gives his famous response that we are "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions":

There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our SELF; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence; and are certain, beyond the evidence of demonstration, both of its perfect identity and simplicity...Unluckily all these positive assertions are contrary to that very experience, which is pleaded for them, nor have we any idea of self...all our particular perceptions...are different, and distinguishable, and separable from each other, and may be separately consider'd, and may exist separately, and have no need of any thing to support their existence. After what manner, therefore, do they belong to self; and how are they connected with it? For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble upon some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I can never catch *mvself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception...If any one upon serious and unprejudic'd reflexion, thinks he has a different notion of himself, I must confess I reason no longer with him...But setting aside some metaphysician of this kind. I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle of collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement.⁴⁶³

Here we can see an analogical application to our experience of that particular ontological assumption, which Whitehead described as the core of the mechanistic science, and thereby the core of all modern philosophy of nature, i.e. the assumption that the most concrete aspect of nature is material, which has the property of "simple location" in space and time.⁴⁶⁴ Recall that Whitehead writes that

⁴⁶³ Hume, *Treatise*, 251-252. Bk.I, Part iv, Sec. vi.

⁴⁶⁴ William James criticizes traditional empiricist accounts of perceptual experience – accounts that claim that our richer perceptual experiences are built up from atomic 'simple ideas' or 'simple impressions' – in the same way that Alfred North Whitehead criticizes seventeenth century atomistic ontology. Namely, just as Whitehead thinks that the atomistic ontology is an mere abstraction from reality, so James thinks that the atomistic accounts of perceptual experience are a mere abstraction from a much richer stream of sensation. James declares his intention "to impeach the entire English psychology derived from Locke and Hume." James, *Principles of Pyshcology*, Vol.1, 196. According to James, "[t]he 'simple impression' of Hume, the 'simple idea' of Locke are both abstractions, never realized in experience'' and "the elements with which the traditional associationism performs its constructions – 'simple sensations' namely – are all products of discrimination carried to a high pitch." James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol.1, 487. In other words, we might analyze our perceptual experience into simple atomic qualities for the purposes of certain introspective scientific analyses, but we might also direct our attention to richer or more complex aspects of our perceptual experience that need not be reducible to these atomic qualities. I will say more about Whitehead in Part II, Section 4, and more about James in Part III, Section 4.B.1.

The characteristic common both to space and time is that material can be said to be *here* in space and *here* in time, or *here* in space-time, in a perfectly definite sense which does not require for its explanation any reference to other regions of space-time...⁴⁶⁵

And Hume treats mental phenomena, i.e. conscious experience, in just this way:

all our particular perceptions...are different, and distinguishable, and separable from each other, and may be separately consider'd, and may exist separately, and have no need of any thing to support their existence.⁴⁶⁶

But this has the result that "concreteness" is located not in any unified experience of the self, but in what we would normally call the atomic constituents, i.e. the atomic experiences or perceptions, of the self. And this has the result that there *really* is no self, but only a bundle of discrete, atomic, and merely accidentally related mental states.⁴⁶⁷ Concreteness lies with the atomic experience, not with what we would tend to think of as our self.

And here I believe that we see Pascal vindicated. Hume writes, in the Appendix to the Treatise, that

Most philosophers seem inclin'd to think, that personal identity arises from consciousness; and consciousness is nothing be a reflected thought or perception. The present philosophy, therefore, has so far a promising aspect. But all my hopes vanish, when I come to explain the principles, that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot discover any theory, which gives me satisfaction on this head.⁴⁶⁸

Hume recognizes that, by attempting to apply the experimental philosophy to moral subjects, and by attempting to anatomize human nature in a regular manner, he has in fact simply made it impossible to recognize the very thing he was attempting to anatomize, i.e. himself. Hegel, be it remembered, noted that the occupations of the anatomist are not with the living body, but with the corpse. According to Hegel, we do not call all acts of dissection mistakes, but rather,

⁴⁶⁵ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 50.

⁴⁶⁶ Hume, *Treatise*, 252. Bk.I, Part iv, Sec. vi.

⁴⁶⁷ And of course calling them "perceptions" is somewhat baffling as well, insofar as perceptions seem to be intrinsically "intentional", i.e. what makes them perceptions in the first place is their relation of intending or purporting to be "about" some other thing. Considered in themselves, they are more like "sense data" that must be linked up with some external object in order to be vindicated as "perceptions" and not simply "hallucinations." I think the proper way to respond here may be along the lines of some modern "Disjunctivists" like McDowell who argue against the idea that hallucinatory states and veridical perceptual states share some common phenomenal datum in common. But any thorough discussion of this matter would distract from the current line of thought.

⁴⁶⁸ Hume, *Treatise*, 635-636.

we only mean that the external mechanical relation of whole and parts is not sufficient for us, if we want to learn the truth of organic life. And if this be so in organic life, it is the case to a much greater extent when we apply this relation to the mind...⁴⁶⁹

Whether Hume was capable of envisioning any plausible conception of nature other than the seventeenth century mechanistic cosmology is hard to know. But regardless, the effects of "swallowing this cosmology whole"⁴⁷⁰ when it comes to investigating human nature are fairly clear. Hume writes as follows:

For I have already shewn, that the understanding, when it acts alone, and according to its most general principles, entirely subverts itself, and leaves not the lowest degree of evidence in any proposition, either in philosophy or common life...We have, therefore, no choice left but betwixt a false reason and none at all. For my part, I know not what ought to be done in the present case. I can only observe what is commonly done; which is, that this difficulty is seldom or never thought of; and even where it has once been presented to the mind is quickly forgot, and leaves but a small impression behind it. Very refin'd reflections have little or no influence upon us; and yet we do not, and cannot establish it for a rule, that they ought not to have any influence; which implies a manifest contradiction.

But what have I here said, that reflections very refined and metaphysical have little or no influence upon us? This opinion I can scarce forbear retracting, and condemning from my present feeling and experience. The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another. Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom have, I any influence, or who have any influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, invironed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty.

Most fortunately it happens, that since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium, either by relaxing this bent of mind, or by some avocation, and lively impression of my senses, which obliterate all these chimeras. I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strained, and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any farther.

Under what obligation do I lie of making such an abuse of time? And to what end can it serve either for the service of mankind, or for my own private interest?

...I feel an ambition to arise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally

⁴⁶⁹ Hegel, *The Logic of Hegel*, 211-212. See above Part I, Section 4.B.

⁴⁷⁰ Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 19.

in my present disposition; and should I endeavour to banish them, by attaching myself to any other business or diversion, I *feel* I shou'd be a loser in point of pleasure; and this is the origin of my philosophy.⁴⁷¹

Hume notes that there is a fundamental difficulty or contradiction when it comes to using reason in the manner that he has proposed. Either one follows it, and leads one into skepticism and contradictions, or one simply abandons reason and follows one's passions or fancy. Such philosophical and metaphysical speculations wreak havoc upon his temperament, and he seeks distraction from them by playing backgammon. When he considers what reason he could have for possibly going back to his speculations, he mentions an ambition to acquire a name for himself by his inventions and discoveries.

Here we can hear Pascal: "This man, born to know the universe…is altogether occupied and taken up with the business of catching a hare."⁴⁷² Philosophy leads us into contradictions and skepticism; better to leave off and play backgammon. And if we do return to such speculations, why do it? To make a name for ourselves:

But will you say what object has he in all this? The pleasure of bragging to-morrow among his friends that he has played better than another. So others sweat in their own rooms to show to the learned that they have solved a problem in algebra, which no one had hitherto been able to solve...others wear themselves out in studying all these things, not in order to become wiser, but only in order to prove that they know them; and these are the most senseless of the band, since they are so knowingly, whereas one may suppose of the others, that if they knew it, they would no longer be foolish.⁴⁷³

Hume acknowledges that there is a kind a fundamental problem of skepticism or contradiction involved in philosophy, and he notes that most people simply do not think about it. Or if they do, they simply forget about it as quickly as possible. For to dwell on it causes one to become "splenetic." Yet many people, like Hume, return over and over to such speculations for the sake of "instructing mankind" and "acquiring a name by [one's] inventions." But even this is still just a game. Recall that Hume thinks of philosophy along the lines of hunting or gaming:

there cannot be two passions more nearly resembling each other, than those of hunting and philosophy...If we want another parallel to these affections, we may consider the passion of gaming, which affords a pleasure from the same principles as hunting and philosophy.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷¹ Hume, *Treatise*, 267-271. I, iv, vii.

⁴⁷² Pascal, *Pensées*, 43. Frag. 140.

⁴⁷³ Pascal, *Pensées*, 41-42. Frag. 139.

⁴⁷⁴ Hume, *Treatise*, 451, 452. Book II, Part iii, Section x. See above Part II, Section 1.

There is some self-acknowledgment that the endeavor is foolish, yet one continues anyway.

And not much has changed on this score. Consider the following self-report of a kind of "splenetic" temperament from a recent book by Robert Roberts:

No moral philosophers these days, virtue theorists or others, are very serious about the prospects of using moral theory to dispel deep moral disagreements. Very few think of themselves as chemists of the moral concepts in search of the objective and universally accessible truth about their hierarchical ordering. They see too clearly the essential contestability of any foundations that may be proposed. We might wonder, then, why they do moral theory. The answer, it seems, is often something like an appeal to tradition: This is what moral philosophers do. It's what with much sweating lubrication we learned to do in graduate school. If I didn't do this, what *would* I do? I'm too weak to dig, and ashamed to beg. I have a Ph.D. and need to eat: and, besides, the puzzles are challenging enough to be interesting for a long career.⁴⁷⁵

Philosophers cannot be "chemists of the moral concepts". In other words, there is no prospect of successfully applying the scientific method to moral subjects. If one does continue to do philosophy, it is simply because "the puzzles are challenging enough." Philosophy is an intellectual game. And it might have the indirect benefit, according to Hamilton, of being a kind of gymnastic of the mind, i.e. it might have the indirect benefit of "keeping one sharp."

We have briefly examined three "solutions" given by philosophers in the face of the implications of the seventeenth century mechanistic cosmology. Pascal's despair and blind faith, Descartes' dualism and narrow focus on natural philosophy, and Hume's philosophical despair and subsequent trivialization of the philosophical act into a kind of game. I think all of these "solutions" are generally "live options" in the sense that they describe the solutions that contemporary persons adopt in their own affairs. I am judging not so much by what people say, but by how they behave and, in some cases, how they write. First, there seem to be plenty of persons, particularly outside the academy, at least in this country, who still identify as Christians. And many of them tend to think that their "belief" or their "faith" has little to do with their other intellectual commitments. It is neither supported by their more or less conscious acceptance of the seventeenth century cosmology, nor is it particularly threatened by it. Second, there also seem to be plenty of persons who are engaged in various scientific inquires who tend to think

⁴⁷⁵ Robert C. Roberts, *Emotions in the Moral Life* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 13.

little of how their research affects their moral practices or their self-conception. Like, Descartes, they adhere to a sort of provisional moral code, which is somewhat ungrounded and free-floating, and that likely comes mostly from custom and societal osmosis. And third, and finally, there seem to be plenty of persons, especially in non-scientific academic disciplines, like philosophy, that seem to adopt the roughly Humean "solution" to the problem. Namely, they "sweat in their own rooms to show the learned that they have solved a problem" or "wear themselves out in studying all these things…only in order to prove that they know them." And, in cool moments of reflection, they probably think something like Robert's imagined philosopher:

This is what moral philosophers do. It's what with much sweating lubrication we learned to do in graduate school. If I didn't do this, what *would* I do? I'm too weak to dig, and ashamed to beg. I have a Ph.D. and need to eat: and, besides, the puzzles are challenging enough to be interesting for a long career.⁴⁷⁶

Yet I want to suggest that all of these "solutions" are troubling. And that we need not settle for any of them.

Section 4. The "Unpopular" Solution

Alfred North Whitehead makes a general observation about the nature of this problem.

He writes:

We quickly find that the Western peoples exhibit on a colossal scale a peculiarity which is popularly supposed to be more especially characteristic of the Chinese. Surprise is often expressed that a Chinaman can be of two religions, a Confucian for some occasions and a Buddhist for other occasions. Whether this is true of China I do not know; nor do I know whether, if true, these two attitudes are really inconsistent. But there can be no doubt that an analogous fact is true of the West, and that the two attitudes involved are inconsistent. A scientific realism, based on mechanism, is conjoined with an unwavering belief in the world of men and of the higher animals as being composed of self-determining organisms. This radical inconsistency at the basis of modern thought accounts for much that is halfhearted and wavering in our civilization: It would be going too far to say that it distracts thought. It enfeebles it, by reason of the inconsistency lurking in the background. After all, the men of the Middle Ages were in pursuit of an excellency of which we have nearly forgotten the existence. They set before themselves the ideal of the attainment of a harmony of the understanding. We are content with superficial orderings from diverse

⁴⁷⁶ Robert Roberts, *Emotions in the Moral Life*, p.13

arbitrary starting points.... It is not popular to dwell on the absolute contradiction here involved. It is the fact, however you gloze it over with phrases.⁴⁷⁷

I want to focus on each of the many threads in the comment. First, Whitehead notes that there is something "half-hearted" and "wavering" in our civilization, and that the failure to directly confront this contradiction in our thinking has an "enfeebling" effect on our thinking. I think that the above examples bear this out, and I shall endeavor to vindicate further this observation below. Second, he notes that we are generally unaware that there might be an alternative. He says that "the men of the Middle Ages were in pursuit of an excellency of which we have nearly forgotten the existence." I hope to have already given a sketch of what such a harmony of understanding might look like when I described the conception of nature held by Aristotle and the medievals – a conception of nature that undergirded their conception of the philosophical act. Third, Whitehead says that the phenomenon of wavering half-heartedness and enfeebled thought is exhibited on a colossal scale. And he hints at the reason in the following comment regarding the seventeenth century mechanistic cosmology:

In the first place, we must note its astounding efficiency as a system of concepts for the organization of scientific research. In this respect, it is fully worthy of the genius of the century which produced it. It has held its own as the guiding principle of scientific studies ever since. It is still reigning. Every university in the world organizes itself in accordance with it. No alternative system of organizing the pursuit of scientific truth has been suggested. It is not only reigning, but it is without a rival.⁴⁷⁸

Both the scale or the extent of this phenomenon of half-heartedness, as well as the seeming lack of awareness of an alternative, can be attributed to what I earlier referred to as a kind of institutional iron cage. Earlier I suggested that Pascal's pessimistic beliefs about the futility of philosophy to bring any solace or guidance might be true of philosophical activity in the seventeenth century, but need not be true of philosophical activity as such. But the problem is that we are still basically practicing philosophy in the same manner as those in the seventeenth century. In particular, we are still practicing a kind of philosophy that has been colored by the scientific method adopted by revolutionary proponents of the new science in the seventeenth century. Yet the fourth and final thing to recognize in Whitehead's observation is that "[i]t is not popular to dwell on the absolute contradiction here involved." In other words, it is unpopular to suggest that the mechanistic cosmology might not be a complete picture of reality, or that it

⁴⁷⁷ Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 76-77.

⁴⁷⁸ Whitehead, *Sciecne and the Modern World*, 56.

fundamentally conflicts with our other experiences of reality.

I think that Whitehead does well in directing us to the source of the problem, and I think that he also does well in observing that there is both a philosophical and an institutional aspect to the problem. Whitehead himself proposes a solution which involves both a new set of fundamental metaphysical categories, as well as an institutional criticism about the nature of professionalism in the academy. I will briefly note the nature of Whitehead's metaphysical categories and the nature of the institutional reforms he sees as necessary in order to aid in undoing the "enfeeblement" that characterizes modern thought. I think that the general shape of his proposals is certainly a step in the right direction. But I only want to suggest that something like Whitehead's proposals are correct. I have no intention of defending the particularities of his claims (such a task would exceed the already ambitious task that I am presently pursuing). My real aim is, after briefly noting the nature of the two aspects of Whitehead's solution, to note the continuing "unpopularity" of proposals like Whitehead's. And what I would like to argue is that the reason that such proposals have not encountered more support or interest is due to the fact that such proposals are seen as morally problematic.

A contemporary scholar, David Tracy, has made the remark that "Whitehead's Process and Reality can be read as a modern scientific rewriting of Plato's *Timaeus*."⁴⁷⁹ Rather than try to summarize that book, which has been referred to as "one of the most difficult books ever written"⁴⁸⁰, I am simply going to mention the core idea of that book as it is presented in Whitehead's earlier lectures on "Science and Modern World". i.e. the lectures from which I have been quoting. Whitehead, as I noted above, tries to show that, ever since the seventeenth century, there has been an operative assumption that the most concrete aspect of nature is material, and, more specifically, material-with-the-property-of-simple-location. Whitehead's

⁴⁷⁹ David Tracy, "Iris Murdoch and the Many Faces of Platonism," in *Iris Murdoch and The Search for Human Goodness*, ed. Maria Antonaccio and William Schweiker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 55. In the preface to his *Process and Reality*, Whitehead writes: "The history of philosophy discloses two cosmologies which at different periods have dominated European thought, Plato's *Timaeus*, and the cosmology of the seventeenth century, whose chief authors were Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Locke. In attempting an enterprise of the same kind, it is wise to follow the clue that perhaps the true solution consists in a fusion of the two previous schemes, with modifications demanded by selfconsistency and the advance of knowledge. The cosmology explained in these lectures has been framed in accordance with this reliance on the positive value of the philosophical tradition." Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: The Free Press, 1978), xiv.

⁴⁸⁰ Sir Alistair MacFarlane, "Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947)," *Philosophy Now* 86 (September/October 2011): 28.

principle complaint is that this assumption commits what he calls "The Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness." Accordingly he says that this core materialistic assumption commits the error of "mistaking the abstract for the concrete."⁴⁸¹ Whitehead's view is not that seventeenth century science is simply wrong, but rather that the matter-with-simple-location that many scientists and scientifically minded philosophers have henceforth taken to be the most concrete aspect of nature is rather an abstraction from a richer conception of nature, and it is therefore incomplete:

...among the primary elements of nature as apprehended in our immediate experience, there is no element whatever which possesses this character of simple location. It does not follow, however, that the science of the seventeenth century was simply wrong. I hold that by a process of constructive abstraction we can arrive at abstractions which are the simply-located bits of material, and at other abstractions which are the minds included in the scientific scheme. Accordingly, the real error is an example of what I have termed: The Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness.⁴⁸²

Whitehead notes that there are both advantages and disadvantages to confining one's focus to such abstractions.

The advantage of confining attention to a definite group of abstractions, is that you confine your thoughts to clear-cut definite things, with clear-cut definite relations...The disadvantage of exclusive attention to a group of abstractions, however well-founded, is that, by the nature of the case, you have abstracted from the remainder of things. In so far as the excluded things are important in your experience, your modes of thought are not fitted to deal with them.⁴⁸³

The abstraction in question, i.e. matter-with-simple-location, was a perfect instrument for scientific research, and so the abstraction itself was not questioned insofar as it produced scientific fruit. Philosophy, in Whitehead's understanding, has one of its primary tasks as the critique of various modes of abstraction. But, in the seventeenth century, many intellectuals ceased to concern themselves with the philosophical task of revising the mode of abstraction that reduced experiences to material-with-simple-location insofar as this abstraction was proving very fruitful at streamlining scientific research.

The early success of this paradigm of abstraction was most successful in dealing with the motion of inorganic bodies. Yet, when it comes to self-moved organisms, the problems discussed above result, i.e. the problem about accounting for self-moved organisms within a closed mechanistic system of nature. But some of the most prominent voices of revolt against

⁴⁸¹ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 52.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 58-59.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 59.

the mechanistic cosmology were not motivated by the insolubility of this intellectual tension, but rather by a more straightforward protest that "the remainder" of experience that was left behind by the abstraction was important, and that the mode of abstraction in question did not acknowledge its importance. These prominent voices were the Romantics, in general, and Wordsworth, in particular. Whitehead writes:

Wordsworth in his whole being expresses a conscious reaction against the mentality of the eighteenth century. This mentality means nothing else than the acceptance of the scientific ideas at their full face value. Wordsworth was not bothered by any intellectual antagonism. What moved him was a moral repulsion. He felt that something had been left out, and that what had been left out comprised everything that was most important.⁴⁸⁴

We can hear Wordsworth's anger at what he perceives to be the moral implications of this mode of scientific abstraction most clearly in this short, but oft anthologized, poem:

The world is too much with us; late and soon, Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers: Little we see in Nature that is ours; We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon! The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon; The winds that will be howling at all hours, And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers; For this, for everything, we are out of tune; It moves us not. – Great God! I'd rather be A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn; So might I, standing on this pleasant lea, Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn; Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea; Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.⁴⁸⁵

Wordsworth is noting that the old Greek idea that "nature is something like myself" has been lost: "Little we see in Nature that is ours." Nature is cold mechanism; we are self-moved organisms. Our activities have value and purpose; the activities of nature do not. He implies that the technological application of the pragmatic idea of the scientific revolution, and the resulting industrial revolution, have caused us to be solely taken up with "getting and spending" and no longer concerned with simply looking. When we do *look*, we no longer *see*: "we are out of tune; / It moves us not." This is because we have taken up a wholly instrumental stance towards the natural world. In Descartes' words:

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 78.

⁴⁸⁵ John Hayward, ed., *The Oxford Book of Nineteenth-Century English Verse* (Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press, 1964), 79.

instead of that speculative philosophy which is taught in the schools, we may find a practical philosophy by means of which...we can...render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature.⁴⁸⁶

Wordsworth seems to think that nature itself might, like us, have a kind of purposeful and valuable activity. Nature might speak to us in a language which gives counsel, as opposed to simply being a source of meaningless material for our projects. (And, on the other hand, man is part of nature, and so our own nature, as well as the nature outside our selves, might also give us counsel – a counsel to which we have become deaf). The pinnacle and climax of the poem is Wordsworth's thundering fulmination – "Great God! I'd rather be / A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn." And here Wordsworth is noting the effects of the iron cage. All educated persons are taught to approach the world through the mode of abstraction that is best fitted to scientific research. Yet this leaves us out of tune with nature. And it is here, I would argue, that we must not see Wordsworth's cry as ridiculous or absurd, not as a mere exasperated cry of despair, but as a kind of battle cry for educational reform.

Whitehead thinks that both of these factors, i.e. both the intellectual antagonism between mechanism and organism, as well as the more straightforward poet's protest about the neglected aspects of reality, make the seventeenth century materialist assumptions ripe for replacement. And Whitehead thinks that poets like Wordsworth are crucial in helping philosophers with their task of criticizing systems of abstraction; poets help philosophers to see when certain modes and systems of abstraction may sit uneasily with our experience. With regard to the poet's ability to help philosophers, Whitehead writes:

...we must recollect the basis of our procedure. I hold that philosophy is the critic of abstractions. Its function is the double one, first of harmonising them by assigning to them their right relative status as abstractions, and secondly of completing them by direct comparison with more concrete intuitions of the universe, and thereby promoting the formation of more complete schemes of thought. It is in respect to this comparison that the testimony of great poets is of such importance. Their survival is evidence that they express deep intuitions of mankind penetrating into what is universal in concrete fact. Philosophy is not one among the sciences with its own little scheme of abstractions which it works away at perfecting and improving. It is the survey of sciences, with the special objects of their harmony, and of their completion. It brings to this task, not only the evidence of the separate sciences, but also its own appeal to concrete experience. It confronts the sciences with concrete fact. / The literature of the nineteenth century, especially its English poetic literature, is a witness to the discord between the aesthetic intuitions of mankind and the

⁴⁸⁶ Descartes, *Discourse On Method*, Part VI (AT VI 61-62) quoted in Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin*, 22-23. See Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes: Volume 1*, 142-143.

mechanism of science.487

And examining this discord, the discord between a rich notion of experience, and the abstractions that the natural sciences take as their subject, might benefit the sciences as well. With regard to Wordsworth in particular, Whitehead writes:

his characteristic thought can be summed up in his phrase, 'We murder to dissect.' In this...he discloses the intellectual basis of his criticism of science. He alleges against science its absorption in abstractions. His consistent theme is that the important facts of nature elude the scientific method. It is important therefore to ask, what Wordsworth found in nature that failed to receive expression in science. I ask this question in the interest of science itself; for one main position in these lectures is a protest against the idea that the abstractions of science are irreformable and unalterable. Now it is emphatically not the case that Wordsworth hands over inorganic matter to the mercy of science, and concentrates on the faith that in the living organism there is some element that science cannot analyse. Of course he recognises, what no one doubts, that in some sense living things are different from lifeless things. But that is not his main point. It is the brooding presence of the hills which haunts him: His theme is nature *insolido*, that is to say, he dwells on that mysterious presence of surrounding things, which imposes itself on any separate element that we set up as an individual for its own sake. He always grasps the whole of nature as involved in the tonality of the particular instance. That is why he laughs with the daffodils, and finds in the primrose thoughts 'too deep for tears.'488

And here we begin to see clearly the motivation for Whitehead's own proposed alternative to the scientific assumption of the primacy of matter-with-simple-location. First, by focusing on "the haunting presences of nature", Whitehead implies that Wordsworth denies the possibility of extracting particular things from their contexts without loss. Like Tennyson's "flower in the crannied wall", there is a sense in which Wordsworth seems to believe that natural things are related to each other, perhaps, through what philosophers like G. E. Moore would call "internal relations" (although, as I said earlier, Moore rejects the doctrine of internal relations in favor of atomically understood individuals related only accidentally by means of "external relations").⁴⁸⁹ Just as parts of a body cannot be defined adequately without relation to the wholes of which they are a part, so, Whitehead implies, Wordsworth thinks that there may be such "internal relations"

⁴⁸⁷ Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 88.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 84.

⁴⁸⁹ William Norman Pittenger says that Whitehead's theory of concretion expresses the same idea as Tennyson's poem in hard prose. William Norman Pittenger, *Christ and Christian Faith: Some Presuppositions and Implications of the Incarnation* (New York: Round table Press, Incorporated, 1941), 116. See above Part I, Section 4.B.

"hand over inorganic matter to the mercy of science", we might say that Wordsworth seems to deny what Whitehead refers to as the troubling doctrine of "vitalism":

This doctrine is really a compromise. It allows a free run to mechanism throughout the whole of inanimate nature, and holds that the mechanism is partially mitigated within living bodies. I feel that this theory is an unsatisfactory compromise. The gap between living and dead matter is too vague and problematical to bear the weight of such an arbitrary assumption, which involves an essential dualism somewhere.⁴⁹⁰

Whitehead seems to find in Wordsworth the idea that there must be some deeper similarity that underlies that distinction which "no one doubts", i.e. the distinction between living and non-living things.

Whitehead's solution to the antagonism between scientific mechanism and the "manifest image" of self-moving organisms involves a change in fundamental category. According to Whitehead, "We must start with the event as the ultimate unit of natural occurrence."⁴⁹¹ This is the core claim of his "process philosophy." The most concrete aspect of nature is not the atomic location of matter at discrete points in space-time, but rather "events." Accordingly, all things are treated as organisms, i.e. they are simply events that distinguish themselves from their "background" by exhibiting and retaining certain patterns:

an actual event is an achievement for its own sake, a grasping of diverse entities into a value by reason of their real togetherness in that pattern, to the exclusion of other entities. It is not the mere logical togetherness of merely diverse things...Thus though each event is necessary for the community of events, the weight of its contribution is determined by something intrinsic in itself. We have now to discuss what that property is. Empirical observation shows that it is the property which we may call indifferently *retention*, *endurance* or *reiteration*. This property amounts to the recovery, on behalf of value amid the transitoriness of reality, of the self-identity which is also enjoyed by the primary eternal objects. The reiteration of a particular shape (or formation) of value within an event occurs when the event as a whole repeats some shape which is also exhibited by each one of a succession of its parts. Thus however you analyse the event according to the flux of its parts through time, there is the same thing-for-its-own-sake standing before you. Thus the event, in its own intrinsic reality, mirrors in itself, as derived from its own parts, aspects of the same patterned value as it realises in its complete self. It thus realises itself under the guise of an enduring individual entity, with a life history contained within itself.⁴⁹²

We can see why Whitehead's view has been likened to the views of Plato. It essentially relies on "eternal objects", which are abstract qualities or properties, e.g. color, sound, scent, and

⁴⁹⁰ Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 80.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 105.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 106-107.

geometrical characters, being actualized or instantiated and thus distinguishing themselves as transitory stabilities of pattern amid the flux of other "events" or processes. It also has a very Aristotelian character (and Aristotle is still a Platonist in the sense just mentioned) insofar as it focuses more on the *dynamic* aspect of the relation between abstract and concrete, or between form and particular. Whitehead thinks of the "atoms" and other subatomic particles of physics as being certain kinds of "events" or organisms, which can potentially become parts of larger and more complex events or organisms. Like Aristotle, this view sees the distinction between matter and form as a distinction between potentiality and actuality. (And, as I will note below, Whitehead also makes the Aristotelian equation of actuality with goodness or value) And like Aristotle, there is no actual or concrete *prima materia (prima materia* would be an abstraction just like matter-with-simple-location). In this sense, since events are simply enduring patterns, it can be said that "organism" or "form" takes the place of matter-with-simple-location as the most concrete aspect of nature.⁴⁹³

On Whitehead's view, the tension between the mechanistic behavior of inanimate material, and the self-motion of organism, dissolves insofar as "material" is just seen as aggregates of organisms:

In surveying nature, we must remember that there are not only basic organisms whose ingredients are merely aspects of eternal objects. There are also organisms of organisms. Suppose for the moment and for the sake of simplicity, we assume; without any evidence, that electrons and hydrogen nuclei are such basic organisms. Then the atoms, and the molecules, are organisms of a higher type, which also represent a compact definite organic unity. But when we come to the larger aggregations of matter, the organic unity fades into the background. It appears to be but faint and elementary. It is there; but the pattern is vague and indecisive. It is a mere aggregation of effects. When we come to living beings, the definiteness of pattern is recovered, and the organic character again rises into prominence. Accordingly, the characteristic laws of inorganic matter are mainly the statistical averages resulting from confused aggregates. So far are they from throwing light on the ultimate nature of things, that they blur and obliterate the individual characters of the individual organisms. If we wish to throw light upon the facts relating to organisms, we must study either the individual molecules and electrons, or the individual living beings.

And the patterns and organic unities exhibited by events or organisms of the lower type are in some sense affected by their presence in the organized patterns of organisms of the higher type:

The concrete enduring entities are organisms, so that the plan of the whole influences the very 'characters of the various subordinate organisms which enter into it. In the case of an

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 193.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 112-113.

animal, the mental states enter into the plan of the total organism and thus modify the plans of the successive subordinate organisms until the ultimate smallest organisms, such as electrons, are reached. Thus an electron within a living body is different from an electron outside it, by reason of the plan of the body. The electron blindly runs either within or without the body; but it runs within the body in accordance with its character within the body; that is to say, in accordance with the general plan of the body, and this plan includes the mental state. But the principle of modification is perfectly general throughout nature, and represents no property peculiar to living bodies.⁴⁹⁵

This view is more like the Platonico-Aristotelian Greek view I described earlier, and less like the modern materialist view. Here, on Whitehead's process view, there is a fundamental similarity between higher or more complex organisms and lower or less complex organisms. The idea of immanent self-motion as a property of organism is primary. There is less of a problem of trying to get it into the picture later. It is built in from the start.

And, arguably the most important aspect of this view, is that it has value or goodness built into it as well. Regarding the events or processes or organisms that are the fundamentally concrete aspect of his ontology, Whitehead writes:

These unities, which I call events, are the emergence into actuality of something. How are we to characterise the something which thus emerges? The name 'event' given to such a unity, draws attention to the inherent transitoriness, combined with the actual unity. But this abstract word cannot be sufficient to characterise what the fact of the reality of an event is in itself...no one word can be adequate. But conversely, nothing must be left out. Remembering the poetic rendering of our concrete experience, we see at once that the element of value, of being valuable, of having value, of being an end in itself, of being something which is for its own sake, must not be omitted in any account of an event as the most concrete actual something. 'Value' is the word I use for the intrinsic reality of an event. Value is an element which permeates through and through the poetic view of nature. We have only to transfer to the very texture of realisation in itself that value which we recognise so readily in terms of human life. This is the secret of Wordsworth's worship of nature. Realisation therefore is in itself the attainment of value. But there is no such thing as mere value. Value is the outcome of limitation. The definite finite entity is the selected mode which is the shaping of attainment; apart from such shaping into individual matter of fact there is no attainment. The mere fusion of all that there is would be the nonentity of indefiniteness. The salvation of reality is its obstinate, irreducible, matter-offact entities, which are limited to be no other than themselves.⁴⁹⁶

Like the old scholastic doctrine of the convertibility of the transcendentals, Whitehead's ontology holds that being and goodness, or being and "value" (to use Whitehead's term), are convertible, i.e. extensionally identical, yet differing in intension alone. The attainment of being

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 80.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 95.

or actuality, or realization, is itself the attainment of value or goodness. There is a kind of goodness, or beauty, in the endurance and reiteration of one's individual form. The first stanza of a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins brings out this idea in a striking way:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame; As tumbled over rim in roundy wells Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name; Each mortal thing does one thing and the same: Deals out that being indoors each one dwells; Selves - goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells, Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*⁴⁹⁷

Each individual thing, animate or inanimate, - "each mortal thing" – simply by pulling itself together into a unity out of the background patterns or events, simply by limiting and shaping itself apart from "the mere fusion of all that there is", announces itself: "finds tongue to fling out broad its name", "What I do is me: for that I came". To borrow the words of Charles Darwin, "There is grandeur in this view of life." This, Whitehead says, is the secret to Wordsworth's worship of nature.

Whitehead explains the relation to an aesthetic sense of beauty as follows:

That which endures is limited, obstructive, intolerant, infecting its environment with its own aspects. But it is not self-sufficient. The aspects of all things enter into its very nature. It is only itself as drawing together into its own limitation the larger whole in which it finds itself. Conversely it is only itself by lending its aspects to this same environment in which it finds itself. The problem of evolution is the development of enduring harmonies, of enduring shapes of value, which merge into higher attainments of things beyond themselves. Aesthetic attainment is interwoven in the texture of realisation. The endurance of an entity represents the attainment of a limited aesthetic success, though if we look beyond it to its external effects, it may represent an aesthetic failure. Even within itself, it may represent the conflict between a lower success and a higher failure. The conflict is the presage of disruption.⁴⁹⁸

Just like Aristotle, who sees teleological order as the principle source of beauty, so Whitehead sees "aesthetic attainment" as "interwoven in the texture of realization." Every "endurance of an

⁴⁹⁷ Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. W. H. Gardner and N. H. MacKenzie, 4th ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 90. Also see p.xl in the foreword where it is explained that this fourth edition of the poems removes the "stresses" that some readers may be accustomed to seeing printed – stresses that were supposed to aid the reader in noticing instances of "sprung rhythm." Hopkins' own autograph of this poem contained no such stresses in the first stanza; and so the later additions of editors have been removed.

⁴⁹⁸ Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 96.

entity" represents "a limited aesthetic success." Thus, in understanding and tracing the causes of things in nature, philosophical contemplation once again finds a value. And it is part of Whitehead's institutional criticism that contemporary educational arrangements not only do not provide training to see these aesthetic aspects of reality, but in fact may actively hinder the development of such an ability.

Whitehead describes how the German educational model in the nineteenth century essentially applied the technological aspects of the new science, as utilized by England in the industrial revolution, to the very acquisition of knowledge itself. Scholars become professionals, and scholarly research becomes professionalized:

The possibilities of modern technology were first in practise realised in England, by the energy of a prosperous middle class. Accordingly, the industrial revolution started there. But the Germans explicitly realised the methods by which the deeper veins in the mine of science could be reached. They abolished haphazard methods of scholarship. In their technological schools and universities progress did not have to wait for the occasional genius, or the occasional lucky thought. Their feats of scholarship during the nineteenth century were the admiration of the world. This discipline of knowledge applies beyond technology to pure science, and beyond science to general scholarship. It represents the change from amateurs to professionals.

There have always been people who devoted their lives to definite regions of thought. In particular, lawyers and the clergy of the Christian churches form obvious examples of such specialism. But the full self-conscious realisation of the power of professionalism in knowledge in all its departments, and of the way to produce the professionals, and of the importance of knowledge to the advance of technology, and of the methods by which abstract knowledge can be connected with technology, and of the boundless possibilities of technological advance, - the realisation of all these things was first completely attained in the nineteenth century; and among the various countries, chiefly in Germany.⁴⁹⁹

But the gains in efficiency brought about by such changes are not necessarily net gain, i.e. they come with a certain loss. Whitehead argues that our education system, at present, is too "bookish", i.e. it spends too much time studying abstractions.

At present our education combines a thorough study of a few abstractions, with a slighter study of a larger number of abstractions. We are too exclusively bookish in our scholastic routine. The general training should aim at eliciting our concrete apprehensions...In the Garden of Eden Adam saw the animals before he named them: in the traditional system, children named the animals before they saw them.⁵⁰⁰

Whitehead says that there are two sides of education and training. One is "professional

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 98-99.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 198.

training": "Its centre of gravity lies in the intellect, and its chief tool is the printed book."⁵⁰¹ One of the drawbacks of this kind of education is that is produces what Whitehead calls "minds in a groove":

Each profession makes progress, but it is progress in its own groove. Now to be mentally in a groove is to live in contemplating a given set of abstractions. The groove prevents straying across country, and the abstraction abstracts from something to which no further attention is paid. But there is no groove of abstractions which is adequate for the comprehension of human life. Thus in the modern world, the celibacy of the medieval learned class has been replaced by a celibacy of the intellect which is divorced from the concrete contemplation of the complete facts. Of course, no one is merely a mathematician, or merely a lawyer. People have lives outside their professions or their businesses. But the point is the restraint of serious thought within a groove. The remainder of life is treated superficially, with the imperfect categories of thought derived from one profession.⁵⁰²

Whitehead says that "wisdom is the fruit of a balanced development" and this echoes a theme that I have already tried to describe in some detail. Richard Weaver spoke of trying to reclaim or retain the idea of a well-rounded knower, something like the scholastic doctor or the learned gentleman. And Whitehead's particular worry is that a certain "groove" of abstractions that originate from within the professionalized ranks of the practitioners of the natural sciences have come to dominate all of life, and even much philosophical speculation. All the "leading intellects", after being funneled through such a system of professionalized academic training "lack balance." And so while the specialized disciplines advance efficiently within their grooves, there are few left to undertake the work of "coordination": "The task of coordination is left to those who lack either the force or the character to succeed in some definite career."⁵⁰³ In other words, no "leading intellects" or bright minds are encouraged to coordinate the various specialized disciplines. Rather, such work of coordination is presumed to be "amateurish" and not something worth the time of a serious person.

But in opposition to this professionalizing trend, Whitehead mentions another side of education and training that he calls "art and aesthetic education." This is the kind of education that would aim to develop the kind of "wise passiveness" that we see exhibited in Wordsworth's poetry. Regarding such an education, Whitehead writes:

The centre of gravity of the other side of training should lie in intuition without an

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 199.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 196-197.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 197.

analytical divorce from the total environment. Its object is immediate apprehension with the minimum of eviscerating analysis. The type of generality, which above all is wanted, is the appreciation of variety of value. I mean an aesthetic growth. There is something between the gross specialised values of the mere practical man, and the thin specialised values of the mere scholar. Both types have missed something; and if you add together the two sets of values, you do not obtain the missing elements. What is wanted is an appreciation of the infinite variety of vivid values achieved by an organism in its proper environment. When you understand all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset. There is no substitute for the direct perception of the concrete achievement of a thing in its actuality. We want concrete fact with a high light thrown on what is relevant to its preciousness.

What I mean is art and aesthetic education. It is, however, art in such a general sense of the term that I hardly like to call it by that name. Art is a special example. What we want is to draw out habits of aesthetic apprehension...We must foster the creative initiative towards the maintenance of objective values. You will not obtain the apprehension without the initiative, or the initiative without the apprehension. As soon as you get towards the concrete, you cannot exclude action. Sensitiveness without impulse spells decadence, and impulse without sensitiveness spells brutality. I am using the word 'sensitiveness' in its most general signification, so as to include apprehension of what lies beyond oneself; that is to say, sensitiveness to all the facts of the case. Thus 'art' in the general sense which I require is any selection by which the concrete facts are so arranged as to elicit attention to particular values which are realisable by them. For example, the mere disposing of the human body and the eyesight so as to get a good view of a sunset is a simple form of artistic selection. The habit of art is the habit of enjoying vivid values.⁵⁰⁴

But this kind of observation or appreciation, which is different from the observation of the values of the specialized practical man, or the specialized scholar, nonetheless requires training. And the idea that some persons might be better trained, or better habituated, or that some might work with superior conceptual schemes, or superior systems of abstractions, is sometimes seen as troubling. This is especially true when one acknowledges, as Whitehead does, that there may be some objective basis for the "values" that one purports to perceive. The fact that a view like Whitehead's view understands an essential evaluative component to reality, I believe, accounts for its unpopularity. Before I move onto the next section, I want to note a few recent examples of persons who have made attempts to articulate the possibility of an evaluative laden ontology, i.e. an ontology with a Platonic character that sees being as convertible with goodness, or that understands being to have an intrinsic impulse to seek the actualization of certain ends. I want to note the lack of "popularity" of such views.

I want to briefly mention just two incidents of persons making such a suggestion, and note

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 199-200.

the kind of "unpopularity" they have received on account of it. It seems that, in the United States, we have never had a culture that pays a great deal of attention to "public intellectuals." Even in Britain, where there is long history of philosophers appearing on the BBC, for example, there seems to be more public interest in the work of intellectuals than in America. Hence Brian Leiter's statement that:

analytic philosophers generally become unbearably trite and superficial once they venture beyond the technical problems and methods to which their specialized training best suits them, and try to assume the mantle of "public intellectual" so often associated with figures on the Continent.⁵⁰⁵

But, in the past decade or so, I can recall a few incidents in which statements by intellectuals made it into the popular or the quasi-popular American media. Both involve the suggestion that natural things may have teleological tendencies, or, to put the point another way, both involve suggestions that reductive accounts of scientific materialism might be false or insufficient. The first person is not an analytic philosopher. The second *was* an analytic philosopher, but, as we will see below, his good standing as an analytical specialist, or as a "neutral scientific worker", may have been revoked.

First, Christoph Schönborn, a European Cardinal in the Catholic church, published a short op-ed piece in the *New York Times* entitled "Finding Design in Nature." In that article he writes:

The Catholic Church, while leaving to science many details about the history of life on earth, proclaims that by the light of reason the human intellect can readily and clearly discern purpose and design in the natural world, including the world of living things.⁵⁰⁶

He then quotes a few sentences from Pope John Paul II, taken from an address of that pontiff to a general audience:

All the observations concerning the development of life lead to a similar conclusion. The evolution of living beings, of which science seeks to determine the stages and to discern the mechanism, presents an internal finality which arouses admiration. This finality which directs beings in a direction for which they are not responsible or in charge, obliges one to suppose a Mind which is its inventor, its creator.⁵⁰⁷

And finally, Schönborn makes an interpretive remark about the words of John Paul II:

in this quotation the word "finality" is a philosophical term synonymous with final cause,

⁵⁰⁵ Leiter, "Analytic' and 'Continental' Philosophy".

⁵⁰⁶ Christoph Schönborn, "Finding Design in Nature.," The New York Times, July 7, 2005.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

purpose or design.⁵⁰⁸

I am less concerned, at present, with the idea that such "finality" might "oblige one to suppose a Mind which is its inventor, its creator" than I am with the first idea, i.e. idea that observation presents "an internal finality." Schönborn, following John Paul II, then says that a failure to acknowledge the experiential knowledge of such finality would be "an abdication of human intelligence."⁵⁰⁹ But what is most relevant to my present aim is to note the vehement and urgent nature of the responses received by Schönborn.

According to fellow Catholic, George Coyne, an astronomer, and, at that time, the director of the Vatican Observatory:

The murky waters of the rapport between the Church and science never seem to clear... Now the waters have again been darkened by the publication in the *New York Times* of 7 July 2005 of an article by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna...⁵¹⁰

Coyne essentially likens Schönborn's critique of "Neo-Darwinian dogma" to the late medieval church's condemnation of Galileo. Another Catholic physicist, Stephen Barr, writes:

So why did Christoph Schönborn, the cardinal archbishop of Vienna, lash out this summer at neo-Darwinism?... In the United States, the harsh questions and mocking comments came fast and furious. Could it really be that the modern Church is condemning a scientific theory? How much doctrinal weight does Schönborn's article have?...Why did he write it?⁵¹¹

It seems that the particular urgency and vehemence in this responses arises from the idea that Schönborn seemed to be questioning the insularity of different intellectual spheres. Coyne seemed to think this was the issue, and, accordingly he writes that;

Science is completely neutral with respect to philosophical or theological implications that may be drawn from its conclusions.⁵¹²

But Schönborn's point is that there is a distinction that is often not made between "evolution" and "evolutionism" or between Darwin's theory of natural selection and "neo-Darwinism." In both cases, the latter alternative is not "neutral" with respect to "philosophical or theological

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ George Coyne, "God's Chance Creation," *The Tablet*, August 6, 2005.

⁵¹¹ Stephen M. Barr, "The Design of Evolution," *First Things*, no. 156 (October 2005): 9.

⁵¹² Coyne, "God's Chance Creation."

implications."⁵¹³ Schonborn is worried that the implications that are often drawn by scientists from such theories are incompatible with the important philosophical or religious beliefs that we hold from the perspective of "the manifest image." When asked in an interview to clarify his point, Cardinal Schonborn responded: "It's all about materialism. That's the key issue."⁵¹⁴ In other words, Schönborn seems to be making the same sort of criticism that Whitehead was making. If a certain set of materialist abstractions are considered to be the most concrete aspect of reality, as opposed to a mere logical abstraction, then we must conclude that much of what we find in the manifest image is false and merely an inadequate but useful likeness to the truth that we find in reductive materialism. In short, I think the vehemence and urgency of the criticisms of Schönborn, regardless of their merit, are due to the fact that the question about finality in nature is morally charged.

Second, I want to point out something that others have noted about the similar vehemence and urgency of the criticisms directed to a recent book published by Thomas Nagel that bears the provocative title: *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False.* In this book, Nagel writes

The aim of this book is to argue that the mind-body problem is not just a local problem, having to do with the relation between mind, brain, and behavior in living animal organisms, but that it invades our understanding of the entire cosmos and its history.⁵¹⁵

Nagel is clear that his target is

a comprehensive, speculative world picture that is reached by extrapolation from some of the discoveries of biology, chemistry, and physics – a particular naturalistic *Weltanschauung*.⁵¹⁶

In other words, Nagel is not necessarily aiming to meddle in the business of scientific specialists. It may be that various scientific specialists simply do not think about, or focus much energy on, trying to see how their work links up with any particular comprehensive *Weltanshauung*. Like Descartes, they might find such questions simply distracting. "But", Nagel writes, "among such

⁵¹³ Schönborn clarifies: "Evolution is a scientific theory. What I call evolutionism is an ideological view." Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, "Catholics and Evolution: Interview with Cardinal Christoph Schönborn," *Beliefnet*. See also: Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, *Chance or Purpose?: Creation, Evolution and a Rational Faith*, ed. Hubert Philip Weber, trans., Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 77. ⁵¹⁴ Schönborn, "Catholics and Evolution."

 ⁵¹⁵ Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.
 ⁵¹⁶ Ibid., 4.

scientists and philosophers who do express views about the natural order as a whole, reductive materialism is widely assumed to be the only serious plausibility."⁵¹⁷ In other words, Whitehead is right that the fundamental assumption of seventeenth century science and philosophy is essentially without rival. Nagel, however, like Whitehead, thinks that this view has a skeleton in the cupboard when it comes to accounting for the mind-body problem and the related problem of how to conceive of the antagonism between mechanism and purposeful organic self-motion. And Nagel, like Whitehead, thinks that any solution to this problem will likely involve some fundamental re-thinking of our basic metaphysical concepts, or, to use Whitehead's language, some fundamental re-thinking of what we consider to be the most concrete aspect of nature.

There are many reviews of the book: some positive, some harshly critical. But one of the most insightful reviews, written by Andrew Ferguson, instead of focusing solely on the strength of the arguments of the book, focuses rather on the nature of the reaction the book provoked for even raising the issue. Ferguson gives a quick transcription, with some commentary, from an academic workshop convened shortly after the publication of Nagel's book entitled "Moving Naturalism Forward." The entire workshop was videotaped and one can watch it online⁵¹⁸; among the participants were "New Atheists" like Richard Dawkins, and other philosophers and intellectuals, like Daniel Dennett, who have written widely in defense of the explanatory sufficiency of what Nagel has called the "materialist neo-Darwinian conception of nature." Here is part of Ferguson's transcription, with his added commentary:

A video of the workshop shows Dennett complaining that a few—but only a few! contemporary philosophers have stubbornly refused to incorporate the naturalistic conclusions of science into their philosophizing, continuing to play around with outmoded ideas like morality and sometimes even the soul.

"I am just appalled to see how, in spite of what I think is the progress we've made in the last 25 years, there's this sort of retrograde gang," he said, dropping his hands on the table. "They're going back to old-fashioned armchair philosophy with relish and eagerness. It's sickening. And they lure in other people. And their work isn't worth anything—it's cute and it's clever and it's not worth a damn."

There was an air of amused exasperation.

"Will you name names?" one of the participants prodded, joking.

"No names!" Dennett said.

The philosopher Alex Rosenberg, author of *The Atheist's Guide*, leaned forward, unamused. "And then there's some work that is neither cute nor clever," he said. "And it's by Tom Nagel."

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁵¹⁸ <u>http://preposterousuniverse.com/naturalism2012/video.html</u>

There it was! Tom Nagel, whose *Mind and Cosmos* was already causing a derangement among philosophers in England and America.

Dennett sighed at the mention of the name, more in sorrow than in anger. His disgust seemed to drain from him, replaced by resignation. He looked at the table.

"Yes," said Dennett, "there is that."

Around the table, with the PowerPoint humming, they all seemed to heave a sad sigh—a deep, workshop sigh.

Tom, oh Tom .!!.!!. How did we lose Tom .!!.!!. 519

It is fairly clear from watching the interview that there is a kind of morally charged criticism directed towards philosophers who defend positions like Nagel's, i.e. positions that attempt to draw attention to the potential inadequacy of a certain scheme of scientific concepts to account for the fullness of our experience of nature.

In conclusion, it seems that the suggestion of the inadequacy of a certain scheme of scientific concepts to account for the fullness of our experience of nature, is at the same time a suggestion of the inadequacy of a certain conception of moral philosophy that inevitably goes along with materialist conception of scientific knowledge. And this, I believe, is the source of the vehemence and urgency behind the criticisms of such proposals as Whitehead's, Schönborn's or Nagel's.⁵²⁰ In the next Part, I wish to exhibit two kinds of moral worries that I believe occur in conjunction with criticisms of the reigning scientific orthodoxy, or in conjunction with movements to introduce finality or "value" into one's conception of nature. I believe that such worries are potentially responsible for both the paucity of philosophical work that seeks to develop such views, as well as the "unpopularity" of such philosophical projects. In the end, I believe that these moral criticisms can only be met on similar moral grounds. And although the upcoming Part may be thought of as the "Ethics Part" or the Part dealing with "Moral Philosophy", I hope it is becoming evident that I have been doing moral philosophy all along. We are perpetually moralists; and the failure to recognize this truth when engaging any sort of philosophical theory construction is, at best, a failure of self-knowledge, and, at worst, a knowing act of intellectual subterfuge.

⁵¹⁹ Andrew Ferguson, "The Heretic: Who Is Thomas Nagel and Why Are so Many of His Fellow Academics Condemning Him?", *The Weekly Standard* 18, no. 27 (March 25, 2013).

⁵²⁰ I would need to do more research to determine exactly how Whitehead's work was received at the time of its writing. A minority of process philosophers and process theologians still show interest in his metaphysical scheme. And it seems that, initially, there was little interest in his work due to the perceived obscurity of the topic, as well as the difficulty of his writing style – Whitehead labeled himself a "muddle-headed" philosopher.

Part III. Fantasia on a Theme by Iris Murdoch: How Unlearning Liberal Morality Restores Philosophy

Section 1. Introduction and Preliminaries

And after that, that is to say, from the age of twenty, those who are chosen will also receive more honors than the others. Moreover, the subjects they learned in no particular order as children they must now bring together to form a unified vision [*synopsin*] of their kinship both with one another and with the nature of that which is.

At any rate, only learning of that sort holds firm in those who receive it.

It is also the greatest test of who is naturally dialectical and who isn't, for anyone who can achieve a unified vision is dialectical, and anyone who can't isn't. [ho men gar synoptikos dialektikos, ho men me ou]

I agree.

- Plato, Republic, 537c

Every education teaches a philosophy; if not by dogma then by suggestion, by implication, by atmosphere. Every part of that education has a connection with every other part. If it does not all combine to convey some general view of life it is not education at all.

- G. K. Chesterton⁵²¹

Philosophical doctrines which profess neutrality, whether they are professedly analytic (against preaching) or scientific (against value) cannot help, by what they obliterate or what they emphasize, making moral judgments.

- Iris Murdoch⁵²²

Plato believes that it is a necessary quality of a good philosopher that he be able to achieve a unified picture of things, or, to excuse a pleonasm, a synoptic vision of things.

⁵²¹ G. K. Chesterton, "The New Case for Catholic Schools", in *The Common Man* (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1950), 167. Quoted in John Haldane, "Chesterton's Philosophy of Education," in *Faithful Reason: Essays Catholic and Philosophical* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 185. And again in Haldane, "Catholic Education and Catholic Identity," in *Faithful Reason*, 211.

⁵²² Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, "Fact and Value", 297.

Willfred Sellars seconds this idea with his own admirable definition of "the aim of philosophy": "to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term."⁵²³ I have argued that there is a historical trend leading away from this conception of the aim of philosophy. Many contemporary philosophers do not see themselves as "system builders" or as purveyors of Weltanschauungen. In other words, many contemporary philosophers do not see their own work as constituting this synoptic enterprise, and, perhaps more importantly, they do not see their teaching as presenting any such synoptic view. But, if Chesterton is right (and he is) to claim that every education teaches "a philosophy", i.e. a "general view of life", then it follows either that the contemporary university often fails to impart an education at all, or that the contemporary university imparts a kind of unconscious or merely implicit education.

Regarding the former, it may very well be the case that students often leave the university with an eclectic assemblage of fragments of various more or less comprehensive belief systems-fragments that do not, in Sellars's sense, "hang together" very well at all. Alasdair MacIntyre famously argues, in After Virtue, that our moral language is in such a state of "grave disorder."⁵²⁴ I think he may be right. But, for reasons that are already implied in what I have written, I do not think that the disorder can be contained or isolated within the domain of our moral language. Or, to put the matter another way, I do not think that morality, and thereby our moral language, is merely an insular part of our understanding of how things hang together. But this means that things might be worse than McIntyre suspected; if the grave disorder of our moral language cannot be quarantined within the purportedly insular domain of "the moral", then perhaps much more, or even all, of our language suffers from this disorder.

Regarding the latter, it seems equally likely that many students leave the university with a certain philosophy, a certain Weltanschauung, or a certain synoptic view; only they do not realize it. This is because much of this view was not taught "by dogma", but rather "by suggestion", "by implication" and "by atmosphere." And if there was any direct teaching "by dogma", then it seems that the dogma that was likely taught was the dogma that their education was "neutral" with respect to any deep evaluative questions. Much education is aimed at developing analytical "skills" and amassing scientific "facts", which purport to be innocent

⁵²³ Sellars, "Scientific image," 1. ⁵²⁴ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2.

preludes to any evaluative judgments that may come later—evaluative judgments that are entirely left to the free choice of the student after the innocent prelude is concluded. But what I shall argue is that this—this dogma of neutrality—is a moral view. And, by its strangely reflexive insistence on the fact that it is not a moral view, it makes other moral views that deny the dogma invisible.

If it is true that many students leave the university either without an education ('education' here being used in that Chertertonian sense in which the necessary and essential component of an education is that "every part of that education have a connection with every other part), or with a kind of education that they do not realize that they have, then this seems to give teeth to Macintyre's worry that the experience of someone leaving the university "has been as much a process of deprivation as of enrichment."⁵²⁵ In the first case, the case of suspected lack of education, the deprivation in question is the loss of whatever rude (in the sense of "unwrought") belief system a person would have had, had he not came to university. This sense of deprivation only makes sense if one thinks, as Iris Murdoch does, that "an unexamined life can be virtuous" or that there is such a thing as a "virtuous peasant."⁵²⁶ According to Murdoch "[p]hilosophers merely do explicitly and systematically and often with art what the ordinary person does by instinct."⁵²⁷ In other words, we might think that philosophy, and university education more generally, is merely meant to give polish and systematic sophistication to the kind of naïve instincts that persons have to begin with. But if the university instead imparts a disordered and fragmentary array of belief systems, we might think that a person would be better off just sticking with the treasury of home-grown human wisdom and language, as opposed to an imparted confused technical apparatus.⁵²⁸

In the second case, the case of imparting an unrealized dogma, the deprivation in question has to do not only with lack of self-knowledge (which is certainly somewhat troubling), but also with the fact that the dogma, and its attendant moral view, is a bad one. In particular, I think that this dogma has a tendency to make persons incapable of discerning the good, and inarticulate in

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 91.

⁵²⁵ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 399-400.

⁵²⁶ Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge, 2001), 2.

⁵²⁸ In the foreward to Josef Pieper's *Anthology*, Hans Urs von Balthasar approvingly quotes Pieper as saying: "A word from the treasury of home-grown human language contains more reality than a technical term." This is because "the philosopher…does best to keep to that language which always grows out of the wisdom of man as he philosophizes unconsciously." Josef Pieper, *An Anthology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), ix. See also: Pieper, Josef. "On Clarity." *Chronicles* 12, no. 4 (April 1988): 12–13.

describing it. But before I can explain further what is bad about it, I must explain what the attendant moral view is, and why it is that it is often invisible.

Section 2. The Invisibility of Alternative Moral Views

Moral philosophers in the past differed concerning what they supposed themselves to be doing. Some (e.g. Plato) attempted to reveal the truth which was not accessible to all men. Others (e.g. Kant) tried to analyze the morality of an ordinary conscientious person. Philosophers who attempted the latter have usually found themselves bound to coin new concepts in making the attempt, and have not in the past been shy of doing do. And here it is that description moves imperceptibly into moralizing...But we have been shy of such extensive description and shy of coining concepts because we are anxious not to moralize, and because we think that ethics should study the logical structure of moral language and have the neutrality of logic. If I am right, this has merely had the result that philosophers have done their moralizing unconsciously instead of consciously.

- Iris Murdoch⁵²⁹

I previously mentioned a kind of methodological principle articulated by Alfred North Whitehead that deserves mentioning again:

When you are criticizing the philosophy of an epoch, do not chiefly direct your attention to those intellectual positions which its exponents feel it necessary explicitly to defend. There will be some fundamental assumptions which adherents of all the variant systems within the epoch unconsciously presuppose. Such assumptions appear so obvious that people do not know what they are assuming because no other way of putting things has ever occurred to them. With these assumptions a certain limited number of types of philosophic systems are possible, and this group of systems constitutes the philosophy of the epoch.⁵³⁰

Whitehead's remarks might be understood as aimed at the intellectual historian, or the philosopher of history, but, perhaps unlike some other intellectual disciplines, one of the philosopher's primary duties is always to identify dominant assumptions and bring them to light so as to evaluate them. In this sense, Whitehead's remark should serve as a kind of methodological principle for all philosophy, because often the epoch in question is one's own.

⁵²⁹ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 251.

⁵³⁰ Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 49-50.

In particular, I am interested in trying to identify certain guiding assumptions in contemporary ethics that seem to be as Whitehead describes: ideas that are "unconsciously presupposed", ideas that "appear so obvious that people do not know what they are assuming because no other way of putting things has ever occurred to them." But while such assumptions may be "unconscious", or may seem obvious, the reason is often because these are the deepest convictions of the philosophers in question.

Isaiah Berlin makes frequent reference to an idea found in the writings of Bertrand Russell (someone who worked closely with Whitehead) that one needs to search out these deep, unconscious convictions in order to properly understand the thought of a philosopher. And, implicit in Berlin's reference to this idea of Russell's, is a more specific methodological principle that should govern philosophical inquiry. Berlin writes:

Bertrand Russell once observed that to understand a thinker, one must understand and grasp the basic pattern, the central idea which he is defending. The thinker's cleverness is usually expended in inventing arguments with which to fortify this central idea, or, still more, to repel attacks, refute objections; but to understand all this reasoning, however cogent and ingenious, will not lead one to grasp the thought of a philosopher, a historian, a critic unless one penetrates through these sophisticated defenses upon his bastions to what he is really defending – the inner citadel itself, which is usually comparatively simple, a fundamental perception which dominates his thought and has formed his view of the world.⁵³¹

And again elsewhere:

Bertrand Russell ... once remarked that the deepest convictions of philosophers are seldom contained in their formal arguments; fundamental beliefs, comprehensive views of life are like citadels which must be guarded against the enemy. Philosophers expend their intellectual power in arguments against actual and possible objections to their doctrines, and although the reasons they find, and the logic that they use, may be complex, ingenious and formidable, they are defensive weapons; the inner fortress itself – the vision of life for the sake of which the war is being waged – will, as a rule, turn out to be relatively simple and unsophisticated.⁵³²

The more specific methodological procedure implied here is that, since the various "formal arguments", the "clever", "logical" arguments, are deployed as mere "defensive weapons", and

⁵³¹ Isaiah Berlin, "The Birth of Greek Individualism: A Turning Point in the History of Political Thought," in *Liberty*, ed. Henry Hardy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 288.

⁵³² Isaiah Berling, "John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life" in *Liberty*, ed. Henry Hardy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 245-246. The passage from Russell to which Berlin alludes is found in Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy: And Its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Woking, UK: George Allen And Unwin Ltd, 1946), 226.

since the views which these arguments defend are held, not on the basis of logical argument, but on the basis of something Russell calls, borrowing the Santayana's term, "animal faith", it follows that it cannot be the sole province of the philosopher to deal exclusively with formal, logical arguments. Rather, philosophers must also seek to confront what Russell calls "the imaginative background" and what Berlin calls "the fundamental perception" that forms one's "view of the world" and that "for the sake of which the war is being waged." G. K. Chesterton once remarked "You can only find truth with logic if you have already found truth without it."⁵³³ And so if the philosopher is concerned with truth (and he ought to be) he may need to also concern himself with aspects of inquiry that go beyond logic and discursive, formal argument.

I am suggesting that this is good methodological advice. I believe that, in order to understand the thought of a philosopher, we really do need to "penetrates through these sophisticated defenses upon his bastions to what he is really defending." I intend to apply this methodology to describe some of the contents of the "inner citadel" of the hegemonic view that opposes the kind of philosophy and the kind of education I have been describing. But before I do this, I want to forestall at least two types of objection to this kind of methodology.

The first objection is that any attempt to discuss the fundamental vision or the sovereign concepts that define the thought and outlook of some particular epoch, or particular school of thought, or even a particular philosopher, without first responding to all of the defensive arguments is cheating. Or perhaps it might be seen as careless, un-professional, etc. With regard to this kind of worry, I am reminded of a kind of apologetic preface I once encountered while reading an article by Jonathan Barnes. Barnes, who was about to discuss the nature of *nous* in Aristotle's concept of mind, wrote: "it is hardly necessary to say that my discussion will trip nonchalantly over ground wired and mined by platoons of past scholars."⁵³⁴ If we think that prefatory statements like this are ever warranted (and I think that they are), the question, I suppose, is: When is it fruitful or warranted to "trip nonchalantly" over the various defensive arguments of scholars? I think the appropriate answer here is: when one suspects that the details

⁵³³ G. K. Chesterton, *Daily News*, 21 December 1906. Quoted in Haldane, *Faithul Reason*, 190.

⁵³⁴ Jonathan Barnes, "Aristotle's Concept of Mind," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, 72 (January 1, 1971): 110.

of the formal arguments flow from a deeper mistaken assumption.⁵³⁵ But this simply leads to a second related objection.

The second objection is that we ought to follow the arguments where they lead. The idea that either we, or our interlocutors, already adhere to certain positions prior to the arguments, and that we should seek to uncover our interlocutor's assumptions, or voice our own, without the aid of arguments, seems un-Socratic and un-philosophical insofar as Plato's Socrates of the early dialogues is often portrayed as a champion of philosophical arguments, and of following the arguments where they lead. In other words, one might object that the method of searching out the contents of the inner citadel, i.e. the method that I believe to be implicitly endorsed in Berlin's remarks, leads to an abandonment of philosophy, and to a mere trading in dogmatic assumptions. Once we let go the possibility settling our differences by arguments, we might be "willing to stoop even to the highly un-Socratic tactic of saying 'Well, either you see it or you don't'"⁵³⁶ But I believe that "dogmatism" is harder to identify than we think.

Thomas Kelly argues, persuasively, that dogmatism, contrary to *prima facie* assumptions, is not a "formal vice." Kelly argues that we are tempted to think that

whether a person who dismisses considerations that challenge her beliefs is guilty of dogmatism is an issue that can in principle be adjudicated without resolving substantive and potentially difficult questions about the status of the beliefs to which she appeals.⁵³⁷

At the beginning of his paper, Kelly gives an example from Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* (the same work mentioned by Berlin above) in which Russell claims that St. Thomas Aquinas lacks the "philosophical spirit" of following the arguments where they lead. Rather, is seems to Russell that Aquinas merely tries to come up with arguments to defend foregone conclusions that he already believes:

There is little of the true philosophic spirit in Aquinas. He does not, like the Platonic Socrates, set out to follow wherever the argument may lead. He is not engaged in an inquiry, the result of which it is impossible to know in advance. Before he begins to philosophize, he already knows the truth; it is declared in the Catholic faith. If he can find

⁵³⁵ Iris Murdoch, for example, writes of a book by R. M. Hare: "although [the] book is under attack in many quarters. Most of these attacks, in my view, are upon the details of [the] analysis and not upon its deep assumptions." Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 240.

⁵³⁶ Richard, M. Rorty "Introduction: Metaphilosophical Difficulties of Linguistic Philosophy," in Richard M. Rorty, ed. *The Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method. With Two Retrospective Essays* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1992), 4.

⁵³⁷ Kelly, Thomas. "Following the Argument Where It Leads." *Philosophical Studies* 154, no. 1 (2011): 119.

apparently rational arguments for some parts of the faith, so much the better: If he cannot, he need only fall back on revelation. The finding of arguments for a conclusion given in advance is not philosophy, but special pleading. I cannot, therefore, feel that he deserves to be put on a level with the best philosophers either of Greece or of modern times.⁵³⁸

But Kelly's point is that dogmatism is not really identifiable without regard to the substantive beliefs in question. It cannot merely be Aquinas's formal procedure that draws Russell's disapproval, but the combined thought that Aquinas is guilty of a kind of "motivated irrationality." Russell not only thinks that Aquinas deploys arguments derivatively to support a prior assumption about, say, the existence of God, but Russell also believes that it is somehow unreasonable or, perhaps better, unwarranted to believe in the existence of God.⁵³⁹ In other words, we might think that, according to Russell, Aquinas's belief in God, and the teaching of the Catholic faith, both fly in the face of common sense. It is partly this, a more substantive, and not a formal, aspect of Aquinas's arguments that Russell takes issue with.

If such beliefs and teachings, i.e. that God exists, were of a more common sense variety, then it is not clear that Aquinas would be guilty of dogmatism.⁵⁴⁰ Kelly gives a few examples in which adhering to one's prior beliefs, even in the face of arguments to the contrary, is perfectly warranted and does not constitute a blameworthy instance of failing to follow the arguments where they lead. Both involve appeals to "common sense." He has us consider an average, unsophisticated, Eleatic peasant who is confronted with Zeno's "ingenious arguments" for the impossibility of motion. The average Eleatic continues to believe that motion is possible, even though he does not know how to refute the arguments of Zeno to the contrary. And, Kelly argues, the average Eleatic does not lapse into objectionable dogmatism in so doing:

When the Average Eleatic encounters Zeno's argument, he in effect reasons as follows:

The conclusion of Zeno's argument is that motion is impossible. But motion *is* possible. Therefore, Zeno's argument must harbor some hidden flaw, even though I am unable to find it.

I have argued that this reasoning is perfectly legitimate, and that when the Average Eleatic retains his belief in motion in these circumstances it does not mean that his doing so is either unreasonable or dogmatic, or that he has failed to follow the argument where it leads.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁸ Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 484-5.

⁵³⁹ I express concerns about the implications of terms like 'unreasonable' below.

⁵⁴⁰ I think that the existence of God *is* of this common sense variety. At least the existence of some sort of God that warrants a sense of natural piety like we find the poetry of Wordsworth, or like the God we find in Aristotle's understanding of philosophical contemplation.

⁵⁴¹ Kelly, "Following the Argument Where it Leads", 116.

And the reason why the average Eleatic is not dogmatic is because he makes a kind of inference to the best explanation about his own inability to find a flaw in the argument. The average Eleatic considers two possibilities: either the argument is flawless and motion is impossible; or I lack the ability to locate the flaw in the argument and motion is possible. And he chooses the latter. And this choice is due to a kind of intellectual humility. We might think that intellectual humility would lead the average Eleatic to question the warrant of his prior belief about the possibility of motion – a belief derived form experience, or perception, or intuition etc. - but, in fact, it seems as if his humility is better exemplified in his acknowledgement that he is perhaps a less skillful dialectician, or less skillful discursive reasoner, than Zeno. In this way, Kelly notes, intellectual humility about one's own cognitive limitations "can be something of a double-edged sword."⁵⁴² I think that contemporary philosophers are far too confident in their discursive abilities, and far too neglectful of what we might call "visual thinking" or "visual intelligence." I will say more about this later. But, for now, suffice it to say that that intellectual humility, being a double-edged sword, might cut against trusting one's non-discursive beliefs, but it might also just as easily cut against trusting one's ability to reason about matters discursively.

Kelly also gives the example of G. E. Moore's refutations of skepticism. On a number of occasions, Moore made arguments against skepticism about our ability to know the external world that simply appealed to common sense intuitions about knowledge. Kelly cites an example in which Moore asserts "I know that this pencil exists." On another occasion Moore asserted "here is one hand…and here is another." Moore's ensuing argument then has a structure such that he asserts P ("I know that this pencil exists"), the Humean skeptic makes an argument that concludes not-P ("You cannot know that this pencil exists"), and Moore rejects the skeptics argument simply on the basis of re-affirming P. Moore's argument is meant as a refutation of skepticism about knowledge of the external world. And while Kelly argues that Moore's argument is not dogmatic, he says that

the feeling that there is something deeply wrong with such reasoning might persist. After all, if such reasoning is legitimate, what is to prevent one from simply retaining any belief that one desires to hold onto, no matter what arguments and evidence are offered against it, by simply asserting that, since one's belief is true, any arguments and evidence to the contrary must be misleading?⁵⁴³

⁵⁴² Ibid., 115.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 116.

But the way out of this problem is to concede that we cannot evaluate such forms of reasoning without considering the substance of the claims in question. Just because Moore's argument adheres to this form of reasoning does not, in itself, imply that his reasoning is unacceptably dogmatic. As Kelly puts it: "There is, I think, no *general* objection to Moorean reasoning of this kind—although, of course, certain instances of such reasoning are objectionable."⁵⁴⁴ In other words, some reasoning of this form should be seen as objectionable, and some should not. But the decision about whether such reasoning exemplifies the vice of dogmatism depends on the substance of the claims, and not just on the logical form of the argument.

But if this is true, what should we make of the apparent tension between Russell's methodological comments about Aquinas, and his general methodological comments about the nature of philosophical arguments in general? Here is the passage from Russell that Berlin alludes to:

Every philosopher, in addition to the formal system which he offers to the world, has another, much simpler, of which he may be quite unaware. If he is aware of it, he probably realizes that it won't quite do; he therefore conceals it, and sets forth something more sophisticated, which he believes because it is like his crude system, but which he asks others to accept because he thinks he had made it such as cannot be disproved. The sophistication comes in by way of refutation of refutations, but this alone will never give a positive result: it shows, at best, that a theory may be true, not that it must be. The positive result, however little the philosopher may realize it, is due to his imaginative preconceptions, or to what Santayana calls "animal faith."⁵⁴⁵

Here Russell believes that the point is entirely general. According to him, *every* philosopher sets forth formal arguments for positions that they already hold. The arguments a philosopher puts forth are *always* in service of some prior "imaginative preconception." And so it would seem, in light of this statement, that Russell would have to see Aquinas's lack of "the philosophical spirit" as arising not simply from the formal relation between his arguments and his prior assumptions, but also in terms of the substance of Aquinas's assumptions. When it comes to such imaginative preconceptions, what Berlin calls "fundamental perceptions", Berlin gives the following list of examples:

Aristotle's biological model of every entity as developing towards its own perfection and inner goal, in terms of which alone it can be defined or understood; the great medieval

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 119.

⁵⁴⁵ Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 226.

pyramid that stretches from God to the lowest amoeba; the mechanical structure of Hobbes;...the legal notion of the social contract⁵⁴⁶

Aquinas would seem to accept the first two imaginative pre-conceptions, and Russell would seem to adhere to the latter two. And so it would seem that Aquinas's purported "dogmatism" or his purported "failure to follow the arguments where they lead" can only be vindicated by showing that his assumptions are "unreasonable" or unwarranted in some sense.

I put "unreasonable" in scare quotes here because I think that such prior "imaginative preconceptions" or "fundamental perceptions" are often prior to discursive argument, and that they are themselves non-discursive in nature. I have already noted that both Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas believe that discursive reason or logical inference (*ratio/logos/dianoia*) both begins and ends in an act of non-discursive cognition or intuitive apprehension (*intellectus/nous*).⁵⁴⁷ Words like "reasonable" inevitably carry the etymological marks of the Latin '*ratio*' and inevitably carry the prejudices of the modern "rationalism" that I also alluded to earlier – the belief that philosophy's sole purview is the assessment of discursive, logical arguments.⁵⁴⁸ Kelly later acknowledges that if "following the argument where it leads" is a way of articulating a genuine intellectual virtue, then this virtue should be something that applies to varieties of inquiry beyond the narrow kind of argument that is often taken to be the focus of contemporary philosophy, i.e. "the rational consideration of arguments, in the sense of articulated bits of text containing premises and a distinct conclusion."⁵⁴⁹ Rather, says Kelly

we should not think of the ideal as "follow the argument where it leads" *as opposed to* "accept whatever conclusions are best supported by your observational evidence", or something similar.⁵⁵⁰

But the problem here is that "reasonable" and "unreasonable" do not seem like appropriate criteria by which to assess beliefs whose warrant lies in some form of non-discursive cognition, i.e. perception, observation, or any form of insight or apprehension that is immediate or that does not rely on inference. Again, Kelly acknowledges that there indeed seems to be a shift, in

⁵⁴⁶ Berlin, *Liberty*, 289.

⁵⁴⁷ See, for example, Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (trans. Ross), VI.11, 1143a35ff; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.8, Art.1, Ad2. Also see Groarke, *Aristotelian Induction*, 303; and, finally, see above, Part I. Section 2.

⁵⁴⁸ See: Groarke, Aristotelian Induction, 284. And see above Part I, Section 3.

⁵⁴⁹ Kelly, "Following the Argument Where it Leads," 119-120.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., 120.

contemporary intellectual culture, away from discursive arguments, narrowly construed, and towards more observational modes of inquiry:

For the ancient Greeks, the construction and evaluation of arguments was the paradigm of theoretical inquiry, in a way that it perhaps no longer is in our intellectual culture. After all, for the ancient Greeks, the paradigms of theoretical inquiry were mathematics (understood as a deductive science in which theorems are derived from axioms) and philosophy; and of course, both of these intellectual disciplines are argument-driven in the relevant sense. In contrast, in our own intellectual culture, observation- and experiment-driven science is the paradigm of theoretical inquiry, which can look quite different from the kind of thing that Socrates and his interlocutors were doing.⁵⁵¹

Yet Kelly still argues that the relevant virtue of "following the argument where it leads" is still applicable even in modes of inquiry that are driven more by observation than by argument. Even the scientist, Kelly argues, attempting to discern the relevance of certain anomalous data to the potential rejection of a "cherished hypothesis" must resist the temptation to remain dogmatically committed to his hypothesis no matter what evidence may come. Here I agree with Kelly. We must have some account of this virtue that applies even to non-discursive cases. But Kelly's manner of articulating this virtue, the virtue picked out by the phrase "following the argument where it leads", is that it is a "modalized *reasonableness*."⁵⁵² The person who has it is "open to believing anything that it might become *reasonable* for her to believe."⁵⁵³ Yet I think that we must find some other way of cashing out "reasonable" that gets rid of the discursive connotations. Otherwise, it is unclear what we mean when we are discussing the relevant intellectual virtue in contexts other than those of philosophical arguments narrowly conceived.

When it comes to the virtue of non-discursive cognition, Iris Murdoch, for example, speaks of "a refined and honest perception of what is really the case, a patient and just discernment and exploration of what confronts one"⁵⁵⁴ or "our ability to forget self, to be realistic, to perceive justly"⁵⁵⁵ or "a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality."⁵⁵⁶ These seem to be ways of articulating the specifically observational or non-discursive analogue of the more discursive "following the argument where it leads." There is a still an idea that one

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 120, note 24.

⁵⁵² Ibid., 111. Emphasis added.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 113. Emphasis added.

⁵⁵⁴ Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good, 37.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., 88.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 33. For a helpful discussion of Murdoch's idea of "vision" with passages cited, see: Ana Lita, "Seeing' Human Goodness: Iris Murdoch On Moral Virtue," *Minerva* 7 (2003): 143–72.

would preserve an openness or receptivity to "seeing things differently" through different *modal* situations. Yet I think that there is a reason or a motivation that drives much of the philosophical community to steer away from virtue terms like "honest perception of what is really there" and towards more discursive sounding terms like "reasonable" – there is a reason why "[j]ustice as fairness proceeds through [John Rawls'] *Political Liberalism* to the soft rhythm of the reasonable."⁵⁵⁷ And the reason is that, as Russell says, defensive formal arguments "never give a positive result" and, at best, show "that a theory may be true." "The positive result", as Russell says, "is due to [one's] imaginative preconception."⁵⁵⁸ But if one is in the business of defending the existence of a "reasonable pluralism" of "reasonable comprehensive doctrines" it would be best to retain a conception of intellectual virtue that would allow for the sustainment of such a "reasonable" plurality, and to ignore or demean any concept of intellectual virtue that might give "a positive result." But I get ahead of myself – I will return to this idea below.

The last point to make about dogmatism is that dogmatism is sometimes identified with following one's desires or one's wishes, instead of "following the arguments where they lead." But surely Berlin's list of "fundamental perceptions" or "fundamental beliefs" or "imaginative conceptions" are *moral* pre-conceptions. Kelly, at one point, even acknowledges that there is a tendency to think that

One follows the argument where it leads when where one ends up is not influenced by one's desires or other conative states concerning the questions at issue in the inquiry.⁵⁵⁹

And, here again, Kelly notes that Russell gives voice to this idea; according to Russell

One of the defects of all philosophers since Plato is that their inquiries into ethics proceed on the assumption that they already know the conclusions to be reached.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁷ Leif Wenar, "*Political Liberalism*: An Internal Critique," *Ethics* 106, no. 1 (1995): 34. Rawls writes: "the idea of the reasonable makes an overlapping consensus of reasonable doctrines possible in ways the concept of truth may not." John Rawls, *Political Liberalism: Expanded Edition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 94. And again: "being reasonable is not an epistemological idea (though it has epistemological elements). Rather it is part of a political ideal of democratic citizenship that includes the ideas of public reason." Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 62.

⁵⁵⁸ Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 226.

⁵⁵⁹ Kelly, "Following the Argument Where it Leads," 121.

⁵⁶⁰ Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 99. Quoted in Kelly, "Following the Argument Where it Leads," 107.

Russell essentially inverts the teaching of Plato and praises the Sophists. Russell describes what he takes to be the difference between the Sophists and other philosophers, and he holds up the Sophists as a purportedly more admirable ideal:

It was usual, except among the Sophists, for a teacher to found a school, which has some of the properties of a brotherhood; there was a greater or smaller amount of common life, there was often something analogous to a monastic rule and there was usually an esoteric doctrine not proclaimed to the public...Among the Sophists there was none of this. What they had to teach was not, in their minds, connected with religion or virtue. They taught the art of arguing and as much knowledge as would help in this art. Broadly speaking, they were prepared, like modern lawyers, to show how to argue for or against any opinion, and were not concerned to advocate conclusions of their own. Those to whom philosophy was a way of life, closely bound up with religion, were naturally shocked; to them, the Sophists appeared frivolous and immoral.

To Some extent...the odium which the Sophists incurred...was due to their intellectual merit. The pursuit of truth, when it is wholehearted, must ignore moral considerations; we cannot know in advance that the truth will turn out to be what is edifying in a given society. The Sophists were prepared to follow an argument wherever it might lead them.⁵⁶¹

The Sophists, according to Russell, unlike other teachers and philosophers, were prime examples of the intellectual virtue of articulated by the phrase "following the argument where it leads" insofar as they did not let moral considerations affect their inquiries. But here we must certainly wonder why, if the Sophists had no concern for goodness or for moral concerns, they should have had any such "wholehearted" concern for finding truth either. Are arguments without a concern for truth, or a concern for the good, not merely what Nietzsche called them: "pitiless instruments"?⁵⁶² Was the sophist, that intellectual fencing master, not simply the illicit arms dealer of his day – willing to sell dialectical weapons to the highest bidder?

At any rate, Russell seemed to think that Plato's concern with the good was the prime source of his "dishonesty":

Plato is always concerned to advocate views that will make people what he thinks virtuous; he is hardly ever intellectually honest, because he allows himself to judge doctrines by their social consequences. Even about this, he is not honest; he pretends to follow the argument and to be judging by purely theoretical standards, when in fact he is twisting the discussion so as to lead to a virtuous result. He introduced this vice into philosophy, where is has persisted ever since.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶¹ Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 98.

⁵⁶² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 42. "The Problem of Socrates," §7.

⁵⁶³ Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 98-99.

I concede that Plato may have introduced the centrality of good in philosophical inquiry, but I certainly do not think that this was a vice. There is nothing intellectually dishonest in "a just and *loving* gaze directed upon an individual reality."⁵⁶⁴

The idea that discursive reason is parasitic on desire or on one's conception of the good certainly persisted to Plato's immediate predecessor: Aristotle. We might start with Aristotle's often misunderstood statement: "Though by itself moves nothing."⁵⁶⁵ Not even theoretical reason moves itself to contemplate anything, or infer about anything without some desire. According to John Alexander Stewart:

Although it is convenient to distinguish *dianoia aute* from *he met' orexeos* ... it must be remembered that all *dianoia* is *met' orexeos*. Pure speculation is sustained by the ardour of a mind striving to make itself more and more perfect – a truth recognized by Plato when he makes *eros* the impulse to dialectic, and by Spinoza when he identifies *intellectus* and *voluntas*, and by Aristotle himself in the opening words of the *Metaphysics – panta anthropoi tou eidenai oregontai phusei.*⁵⁶⁶

What this means is that the divide between theoretical reason and practical reason is, according to Aristotle or Plato, not watertight. Russell's idea that "the pursuit of truth…must ignore moral considerations" is a false ideal so long as we assume that 'moral' simply has the broad sense that ranges over anything that is evaluative or practical.⁵⁶⁷ Aristotle says that all men desire to know; Plato's image of the philosopher is someone who is a lover of beauty, and who is goaded to seek truth by *eros*.⁵⁶⁸ If we think of the will, as the ancients did, as a rational faculty of desire, then surely the will will play a role in any inquiry. Without equating the intellect and the will, Aquinas noted the complimentarity of these mental faculties and their objects:

The will and the intellect mutually include one another: for the intellect understands the will, and the will wills the intellect to understand.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁴ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 33. Emphasis added.

⁵⁶⁵ Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, VI.2 1139a36 (trans. Irwin): διάνοια δ' αὐτὴ οὐθὲν κινεῖ.

⁵⁶⁶ Stewart, Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle, Vol. II, 29.

⁵⁶⁷ I assume that 'moral', in that peculiar modern sense that Anscombe describes, has no place in a discussion of Plato or the ancient Sophists. I refer to the sense of "ought" that Anscombe describes as having a mere "mesmeric force." The sense of "ought" that flows from a legalistic sense that is either contractual or a leftover of Christian divine-command theories. The sense of 'moral' that causes Anscombe to remark: "If someone professes to be expounding Aristotle and talks in a modern fashion about "moral" such-and-such he must be very imperceptive if he does not constantly feel like someone whose jaws have somehow got out of alignment: the teeth don't come together in a proper bite." G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33, no. 124 (January 1, 1958): 2.

⁵⁶⁸ See above Part I, Section 2.

⁵⁶⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia, Q.16, Art. 4., ad.1.

and

these powers include one another in their acts, because the intellect understands that the will wills, and the will wills the intellect to understand. In the same way good is contained in truth, inasmuch as it is an understood truth, and truth in good, inasmuch as it is a desired good.⁵⁷⁰

In short, questions of desire, and "moral" questions about what it is good to love, are always relevant to inquiry.

Consider some more contemporary remarks on philosophical methodology from Robert Nozick. Nozick says that there are certain questions - e.g. "Does life have meaning?", "Do we have free will?" - that moved him initially to study philosophy.⁵⁷¹ He says that, in trying to answer philosophical questions, he is always trying to answer a certain kind of question: "How are we valuable and precious?"⁵⁷² Notice that even his form of asking the question presupposes that we are "valuable and precious" in some sense. He does not ask "Are we valuable and precious?" but rather "How are we valuable and precious?" He basically admits that any philosophical arguments that result in the conclusion that we are not "valuable and precious" are like argumentative dead-ends. But, luckily, he says, we do not have to stop the arguments when we arrive at such dead-ends. Nozick seems to think that his methodology of letting his concerns about the value of human life guide his writing and his philosophical inquiries is perfectly natural, and not troubling in the least. When it comes to such questions about human value, Nozick says that "I care what their answers are." He writes:

I want (to be able) to conclude that we are worthwhile and precious. But this bias does not mean I refuse to follow philosophical reason where it leads. Fortunately, two factors help me avoid conclusions of valuelessness. No philosophical argument forces us to accept its (unpleasant) conclusions; instead, we always can pursue the philosophical task of uncovering the argument's defects. [...] Or we can try to find a route (believing it exists although it has not yet been found) to something almost as good as what the argument seemed to eliminate; [...] The second factor is an optional stop rule. I do not stop the philosophical reasoning until it leads me where I want to go; then I stop.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., Ia, Q. 82, Art. 4, ad.1.

⁵⁷¹ Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), 1.

⁵⁷² Ibid., 1.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 2.

He says that, in the course of philosophical inquiry, "a value criterion is at work. The goal is getting to a place worth being."⁵⁷⁴ This idea of *wanting* to be somewhere is what guides philosophers not only in how they treat certain topics, but indeed it even guides philosophers in what topics they select in the first place. Nozick seems to be making a perfectly *general* claim that *all* philosophical arguments are "teleologically directed."⁵⁷⁵ And this tendency to "stop the reasoning" only when one has reached some "place worth being", this "control over conclusions", "explains why so few philosophers publish ones that (continue to) upset them."⁵⁷⁶

In short, Nietzsche is right that "moral judgment…reveals the most precious realities of cultures and inner worlds."⁵⁷⁷ But this claim holds even if, *pace* Nietzsche, moral judgments may track reality. In fact, the question of whether moral judgments track reality *is a moral question*. Nietzsche, again, seems very close to the truth when he says:

Gradually it has become to clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir; also that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constituted the real germ of life from which the whole plant had grown.⁵⁷⁸

Even when it comes to metaphysics, Nietzsche writes:

if one would explain how the abstrusests metaphysical claims of a philosopher really came about, it is always well (and wise) to ask first: at what morality does all this (does *he*) aim?⁵⁷⁹

Now of course there are people, i.e. scholars, who strive for Russell's ideal of "ignoring moral considerations" in their scholarship. I think there are two such related but distinct classes of persons who fit this bill, yet I mention them only to distinguish them, and to focus on the second.

The first class of persons that seem to exemplify Russell's purported "intellectual merit" of striving to purge evaluative beliefs from their intellectual "work" are those that Nietzsche describes as "scientific men", "objective men", and "philosophical laborers." Yet Nietzsche distinguishes such persons from philosophers. Of the former he writes:

To be sure: among scholars who are really scientific men, things may be different – "better," if you like – there you may really find something like a drive for knowledge,

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁷⁷ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, 66. "The 'Improvers' of Mankind," §1.

⁵⁷⁸ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 13. §6.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 13. §6.

some small, independent clockwork that, once well wound, works on vigorously without any essential participation form all the other drives of the scholar...Indeed, it is almost a matter of total indifference whether his little machine is placed at this or that spot in science, and whether the "promising" young worker turns himself into a good philologist or an expert on fungi or a chemist: it does not *characterize* him that he becomes this or that. In the philosopher, conversely, there is nothing whatever that is impersonal;⁵⁸⁰

Nietzsche seems to express some contempt for the activities of such "scientific men", such whose work does not *characterize* them. And the reason is that "the real 'interests' of the scholar therefore lie usually somewhere else – say, in his family, or in making money, or in politics."⁵⁸¹ Elsewhere, Nietzsche claims that "intent on narrow utility" is contemptible, and is characteristic of "slave morality."⁵⁸² But it is not the scholar's having an interest to support his family by his work, *per se*, that is contemptible, but rather the idea that the nature of his work might be dominated by an external goal, e.g. making money, a goal which is, to use a phrase of MacIntyre's, external to the practice of scholarship.⁵⁸³ If this is so, then the scholar's work would not characterize him, but rather only characterize his desire to meet standards external to the practice of his scholarship, i.e. he will write whatever and however the people who are paying him want him to write.

In certain lines of work, in industrial labor, for instance, one's motivations or "interests" may very well leave the quality of one's "products" unaffected. The riveter who works to feed his family may rivet just as well as the riveter who rivets for its own sake (or, perhaps more plausibly, for the sake of creating the ship, bridge, etc, that is being built). But this does not seem to be the case in scholarship, and especially not in philosophy. In scholarship, and especially in philosophy, there is a greater tendency to let such external motivations distort one's work. I have already written at length about how a misplaced sense of professionalism can cause philosophers to retreat from the kind of philosophy that is a way of life, or the kind of philosophy that constitutes what Russell referred to as "a school", to the safely professionalized task of evaluating arguments for logical consistency – "grinding away at the consequences of this or that

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 14. §6.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., 14. §6.

⁵⁸² Ibid., 204-5. §260.

⁵⁸³ For MacIntyre's disctinction between goods internal to, and goods external to, a practice, see MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187-189.

particular proposition as if filing a legal brief."⁵⁸⁴ But the result of such a conception of philosophy is that it is objectionable in the very same way that many people find lawyers objectionable, i.e. such philosophers and lawyers often wind up defending the positions of the highest bidder. As Nietzsche says, such a person is contemptible because "he is an instrument, something of a slave."⁵⁸⁵

The philosopher nowadays is so much in danger of becoming this kind of slave-like creature, that, when Nietzsche says that "[i]n the philosopher...there is nothing whatever that is impersonal"⁵⁸⁶ Walter Kauffman feels that the contemporary reader needs an explanatory note to make sense of the claim. Kauffmann writes:

Nietzsche is thinking of the "great" philosophers. Now that there are literally thousands of "philosophers," these tend to be more akin to their colleagues in other departments than to the men discussed here.⁵⁸⁷

In other words, people with any experience of the academy are likely to think of the denizens of philosophy departments as being entirely impersonal; we could almost adapt Nietzsche's description of the "objective man" to apply to many modern philosophers:

some small, independent clockwork that, once well wound, works on vigorously without any essential participation form all the other drives... it is almost a matter of total indifference whether his little machine is placed at this or that spot in *philosophy*.

But to make a distinction between "great" philosophers and other kinds is to imply that they are aiming at different goals, not simply that one did a better job attaining that goal than another. This seems to imply that most "philosophers" should be content with simply applying their logical and dialectical skills to a set of given problems, as opposed to letting their own deepest evaluative concerns guide their inquiries.

⁵⁸⁴ William Barrett, *The Illusion of Technique: A Search for Meaning in a Technological Civilization*. Anchor Press, 1978), 60. This is William Barrett's description of what he takes to be an objectionable characterization of philosophy. Barrett is quoted in Leiter, "Analytic and Continental Philosophy." Russell describes the Sophists as acting in this manner – as lawyers – only with a different valence, i.e. Russell, like Brian Leiter, praises this conception of the philosopher's task.

⁵⁸⁵ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 128. §207. I am tempted to add that such a person is contemptible because he is *willingly* a slave or an instrument. But the Greeks, and perhaps Nietzsche too, may find such a qualification unnecessary, insofar as the Greeks found *all* slaves contemptible insofar as *all* slaves are, in some sense, slaves willingly – they chose to remain enslaved rather than to die.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., 14. §6.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., 14 note 7.

As a little evidence for the predominance of this idea of philosophy, an interview was conducted recently with contemporary philosopher Edward Mooney. The interview sought to determine if there was something that might be called "lyrical philosophy" that was distinct from the instrumental, lawyer-like, logical activity championed by Russell and the Sophists. At one point, the interviewer asked: "Do you see then, a larger role for philosophy in the every day than it currently has?" Mooney responded:

I think there are at least two temperaments at war here. One is the ideal of a community sharing common bread, reading from a common stock of literature and poetry and philosophy that inspires and binds souls together, the sort of wedding-scene of comedy, with wine and dance and circling communions of flesh and spirit, a wedding scene built around celebration of words, words of rhythm and color, of anchoring and affecting in the world... But of course the reality is that faculty are pushing their mortgages ahead of them, heads down, making payments through the labor of specialized publications, etc.,... If a wedding were in progress in the meadow to the left, they'd trudge on by. If they happened by Walden, they'd not notice, and fall right in...The other temperament...is not marked by community-yearning but by battle- seeking. Non-lyrical philosophy loves a fight, loves to defeat the competition in getting the 'right theory' of this and that, and thinks of intellectual inquiry and exploration as a Darwinian survival struggle or as justified colonial imperialism.

Here we see at least two motivations for the avoidance of a philosophy distinct from the "objective" and value-less paradigm, i.e. two motivations for continuing to work in that paradigm. One is the idea of specialist publications whose "interest" lies in "pushing mortgages." The other is an idea that I have already described above in some detail, namely, philosophy might simply be a kind of sport and battle-seeking, in which philosophers live up to Plato's description of the abuse of dialectic: "like puppies, they enjoy dragging and tearing those around them with their arguments."⁵⁸⁹

But there is a second class of persons who strive to adhere to Russell's purported "intellectual merit" of purging moral concerns from their arguments. And while this class of persons is certainly related to the first, and may overlap with them, they are nonetheless distinct. This second class of persons is made of philosophers who hold that there is no intelligible goodness to be found in nature, no objective "values" "out there", and therefore any attempt to steer philosophical inquiry by "moral considerations" is bound to result in distortion of truth. If some of the contemptible creatures in the first class, the ones pushing their mortgages by means

⁵⁸⁸ Edward Mooney, "Interview: Philosopher Edward Mooney," *The Vitalist*.

⁵⁸⁹ Plato, *Republic*, 539a-c. See the beginning of Part II, Section 1.

of specialist publications which are written with the aim to push mortgages, are contemptible because they are slave-like, then there is some sense in which the persons of this second class are their masters. Some persons who contour their writing to be accepted in specialist journals and publishing houses may do so without actually agreeing that the criteria of these publishers are well suited to the nature of philosophy, yet they feel trapped by a kind of iron cage which they are powerless to resist. They may find themselves sounding like Roberts' imagined moral philosopher:

This is what moral philosophers do. It's what with much sweating lubrication we learned to do in graduate school. If I didn't do this, what *would* I do? I'm too weak to dig, and ashamed to beg. I have a Ph.D. and need to eat.⁵⁹⁰

But some, like Russell, *do* think that the value-less approach is well suited to the nature of philosophy, insofar as evaluative claims do not fall within the purview of any area of philosophy except the insular domain of ethics. All other philosophy, on this view, be it metaphysics, epistemology, philosophical psychology, or philosophy of mind, is conducted as a purportedly neutral and morally indifferent affair. Or, if such inquiries do relate to ethics, then they take on the role of neutral and innocent preludes to moral philosophy. But here I believe that these persons, in spite of the themselves, are philosophers in Nietzsche's sense; their moral intentions, albeit perhaps "involuntary and unconscious" are "the real germ of life from which the whole plant [has] grown."⁵⁹¹

The one philosopher who has articulated this idea more clearly than any other of which I am aware is Iris Murdoch. Murdoch argues that there is, on the one hand, a kind of comprehensive moral outlook on the world, one that Murdoch calls "naturalism", that is different from, on the other hand, a kind of comprehensive moral outlook that is presupposed by most contemporary Anglophone philosophers, an outlook Murdoch calls "liberalism." And, most importantly, Murdoch argues that the naturalist moral outlook often remains invisible from the liberal perspective. The naturalist alternative is rendered invisible because the liberal view is "disguised as a logical theory."⁵⁹² I have been trying to show that philosophers like Russell,

⁵⁹⁰ Robert Roberts, *Emotions in the Moral Life*, 13.

⁵⁹¹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 13. §6.

⁵⁹² This phrase is used by Cora Diamond to describe the pith of one of Murdoch's central arguments that pervaded much of her work. Cora Diamond, "We Are Perpetually Moralists': Iris Murdoch, Fact, and Value," In *Iris Murdoch and The Search for Human Goodness*, ed. Maria Antonaccio and William Schweiker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 86.

arguably one of the founders of analytical philosophy - the dominant Anglophone tradition think that allowing evaluative concerns to guide philosophical inquiry is a sign of intellectual "dishonesty", a failure of "intellectual merit." There is a strong tendency to praise philosophers for "following the argument where it leads" where this often means something like: selecting a few purportedly neutral assumptions and discursively tracing their logical implications. And sometimes more praise is awarded if a philosopher continues to "follow the argument where it leads" even when the initial assumptions seem to lead into absurdities. But what I hope to have shown is that even Russell does not think this is an adequate account of philosophical methodology. Rather, philosophical dialectic, or discursive philosophical argument, always takes its guidance from more comprehensive imaginative conceptions or fundamental perceptions. And, if one is a naturalist, then such comprehensive imaginative conceptions will conceive of the world as being immanently infused with goodness to be discerned. Any attempt to conceive of the world in "value-neutral" terms will inevitably involve a kind of abstraction of one aspect of its being. According to naturalist view, one cannot simply describe the world first, and determine where its goodness lies later. Rather, goodness is already present form the start.⁵⁹³ And any philosophical methodology that thinks that goodness, or that evaluative concerns, can be safely abstracted from inquiry and re-inserted at a later stage, already presupposes a different kind of imaginative conception.⁵⁹⁴

Charles Taylor, in the course of writing about Murdoch's philosophy, says that one of the drawbacks of analytical philosophy is "a tendency to narrowness":

And one of the most marked sites of this narrowness was in moral philosophy. The narrowness concerns more than just the range of doctrines considered, though it also consists in that. But, more fundamentally, it has restricted the range of questions that it seems sensible to ask. In the end it restricted our understanding of what morality is. I have tried to sum this up by saying that *Anglo-Saxon moral philosophy has tended to see morality as concerned with questions of what we ought to do and to occlude or exclude questions about what it is good to be or what it is good to love.* The focus is on obligatory action, which means that it turns away from issues in which obligation is not

⁵⁹³ Murdoch writes: "...this essential thing must be built into the explanation at the start, or else it tends to fly away and become problematic and remote and extremely difficult to integrate." Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, 55.

⁵⁹⁴ Murdoch writes: "We desire to simplify and clarify our thinking and one way to do this is to gather all the value together in one place. If this is done the question of how to redistribute it must arise..." Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, 50.

really the issue, as well as those where no just actions but ways of life or ways of being are what we have to weigh.⁵⁹⁵

In what follows, I plan to follow Murdoch in trying think about what it is good to love and what it is good to be. I am trying to think directly about the contents of the "inner citadel" of what Murdoch refers to as "the Liberal view", i.e. the moral germs from which the plant of "the current view" grows. And, as I have said above, I do not think that directly confronting these questions, and suggesting alternatives, constitutes any sort of intellectual dishonesty, or any want of a philosophical spirit. To suggest that it does is simply to force legitimate philosophical alternatives – different imaginative preconeptions - back into debates *within* Liberalism. This is a problem that MacIntyre has also tried to articulate. According to MacIntyre:

Liberalism...does of course appear in contemporary debates in a number of guises and in so doing is often successful in preempting the debate by reformulating quarrels and conflicts *with* liberalism, so that they appear to have become debates *within* liberalism, putting in question this or that particular set of attitudes or policies, but not the tenets of liberalism...So so-called conservatism and so-called radicalism in these contemporary guises are in general mere stalking horses for liberalism: the contemporary debates within modern political systems are almost exclusively between conservative liberals, liberal liberals, and radical liberals. There is little place in such political systems for the criticism of the system itself, that is, for putting liberalism in question.⁵⁹⁶

The liberal view, by its claims to neutrality, and by its claims to be something other than just "another sectarian doctrine"⁵⁹⁷, essentially throws up a smoke-screen that makes it seem invisible. It purports to be a framework within which moral debates can take place, not a moral view in itself. And it is the plausibility of this claim that Murdoch puts in question.

It is often said that the vice of an epigone is that the epigone simply echoes and, in doing so, exaggerates or distorts his master's voice. There is a certain sense in which I do take myself to be an epigone. In many ways I find myself in agreement with Murdoch. But the reason is that Murdoch considers herself to be a Platonist. I consider Aristotle to be a Platonist also, at least in the sense that he falls on the side of Murdoch's naturalist, as opposed to the side of the liberal. Yet, since this distinction that Murdoch is at pains to articulate is, according to her (and I think rightly), often overlooked, I think that it is something that must be not only echoed, but

⁵⁹⁵ Charles Taylor, "Iris Murdoch and Moral Philosophy," 3. My emphasis.

⁵⁹⁶ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 392. My emphasis.

⁵⁹⁷ Rawls, "Political Not Metaphysical," 246.

amplified. In what follows I shall reiterate what Murdoch takes to be the distinction she is driving at. I shall focus on two of the three aspects of Murdoch's naturalist view, and I shall point out the seeds of the liberal moral view that grow, in each instance, so as to mask the existence of the naturalist alternative. In response to each, I shall argue that one reason for the invisibility of the naturalist view, a reason that Murdoch does not emphasize, is that university education tends to teach persons to be blind to the possibility of the naturalist alternative.

Section 3. Attaching Morality to the Substance of the World

A. The Naturalist, The Liberal, and The Moral Argument Against Naturalism

There is no method of reasoning more common, and yet none more blameable, than in philosophical debates to endeavour to refute any hypothesis by a pretext of its dangerous consequences to religion and morality. When any opinion leads us into absurdities, it is certainly false; but it is not certain an opinion is false, because it is of dangerous consequence.

- Hume⁵⁹⁸

The pursuit of truth, when it is wholehearted, must ignore moral considerations; we cannot know in advance that the truth will turn out to be what is edifying in a given society.

- Betrand Russell⁵⁹⁹

Murdoch...had attempted to articulate a *totally different kind* of contrast between approaches to morality, not at all a difference in the content of principles. She had tried to show that a view of *what we are as moral agents* could itself be a moral view; and that a view of *what the world is like* could be a moral view.

- Cora Diamond⁶⁰⁰

Iris Murdoch argues that our current way of conceiving morality is "roughly a Protestant, liberal, empiricist, way, of conceiving morality."⁶⁰¹ I want to take up the "Protestant" aspect of

⁵⁹⁸ Hume, *Treatise*, 409. II, iii, 2.

⁵⁹⁹ Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 98.

⁶⁰⁰ Diamond, "Perpetually Moralists," 88-89.

our current way of conceiving morality first. I will return to the empiricist aspect below. And, in my conclusion, I shall suggest how these relate to the third, namely, the liberal aspect, and, in particular, the liberal conception of moral freedom. Now each of these aspects - Protestant, empiricist, liberal – can also in some sense be aspects of liberalism. Hence, Murdoch claims that the view she is calling "naturalism" rejects all three of these aspects, and that the opposite of naturalism is liberalism. In other words, with respect to the aspect of the current view that she refers to as its "Protestant" aspect, she can also say that it is "roughly a Protestant; and less roughly a Liberal, type of view."⁶⁰² So what is it that distinguishes the liberal and the Protestant from the naturalist? The answer is basically that the naturalist sees the world as enchanted, and the Protestant and the Liberal both see it as disenchanted (to use a now canonical translation of Max Weber's term). To put the point another way, the naturalist sees his moral views as flowing directly out of his broader conception of the world, whereas the Protestant and the Liberal both see their moral views as self-contained or autonomous, and having little to do with any other beliefs about how the world is. To put the point in a more historical way, we might say that the naturalist accepts a roughly Greek view of natural philosophy in which the good plays a crucial role in understanding the world, whereas the anti-naturalist believes that modern science, with its pragmatic orientations and its emphasis on mathematical modeling, is our exclusive source of knowledge about the world.

Murdoch thinks that there are various arguments against the naturalist view. One she refers to as a general argument against metaphysical entities. I have already suggested that we need not accept the "bald naturalist" picture of the world, and that, in fact, much of the purportedly objectionable metaphysical entities of, say, an Aristotelian naturalism, are in fact compatible with much of contemporary science. It is only when modern science claims to be our exclusive source of knowledge that it becomes objectionable. And the exclusivity claim is a philosophical one, which means that it does not simply flow from science proper, but rather from a quasi-scientific metaphysical claim. I also pointed out, following McDowell, that we should not assume that the disenchanted picture of bald naturalism is a kind of common sense, or that it is necessitated by the successes of modern science – even though these ideas are often assumed. Such claims are rather primitive, and often unconscious, metaphysics. Murdoch too denies such

⁶⁰¹ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 247.

⁶⁰² Ibid., 245.

a "bald naturalism." She does, however, accept a version of the argument against "metaphysical entities" which concedes that the existence of many such metaphysical entities are not susceptible to philosophical or scientific *proof*. But this does not mean that such things do not exist, or that they do not affect moral thought. To quote Goethe: "Much is true that cannot be calculated, and much that cannot be shown in a definitive experiment."⁶⁰³ I will say more below about how, if not by proof or calculation, such things may be known. But I have already intimated as much in what has come before: we might learn to see the goodness and beauty of things by patiently gazing at them in a leisurely manner, or by trying to depict them artistically, or by turning to great artists who might help us to see. Such an answer will cut against the "empiricist" aspect of the liberal view; and therefore I save it for treatment below.

The second argument that attempts to refute the existence of an enchanted nature involves what Moore has called "the Naturalistic fallacy"⁶⁰⁴, or an argument attributed to Hume that one cannot derive an "ought" from an "is."⁶⁰⁵ Of this argument, Murdoch says

[t]his argument...to the effect that we cannot derive values from facts is the most important argument in modern moral philosophy – indeed it is almost the whole of modern moral philosophy.⁶⁰⁶

Such terms are particularly troubling, however, insofar as Murdoch rightly claims that Moore was a naturalist in spite of himself:

Moore believed that good was...an object of knowledge and (implicitly) that to be able to see it was in some sense to have it. He thought of the good upon the analogy of the beautiful; and he was, in spite of himself, a 'naturalist' in that he took goodness to be a real constituent of the world.⁶⁰⁷

We might think the power of the argument derives from the already implied assumption that the only source of "facts" about nature is the natural sciences. If one assumes that the extent of our knowledge about the world is given by, say, mathematical physics, then it is no surprise that one would think that no moral claims can be inferred from *that*. But when Moore said that evaluative

⁶⁰³ Goethe, *Scientific Studies*, xix. Letter to Zelter, 22 June 1808.

⁶⁰⁴ Moore, *Principia Ethcia*, 62, 65-6, 70-1, 90-1, 100, 108-9, 110, 113, 114, 118-19, 121, 124, 125, 155-6, 159-60, 165, 169, 175, 176, 189-90, 222, 225, 249-50. These are the pages listed in the Index of Moore's Principia under "Naturalistic Fallacy." The sheer ubiquity of the discussion of the "fallacy" in Moore's book, and the long shadow that Moore's book has cast over 20th century moral philosophy, give some vindication to Murdoch's claim that this argument is "the whole of modern moral philosophy." ⁶⁰⁵ Hume, *Treatise*, 469-470. Bk. III, Part I. Sec.i.

⁶⁰⁶ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 241.

⁶⁰⁷ Murdoch. *The Sovereignty of Good*, 3. "The Idea of Perfection."

properties like good were "non-natural", he meant only that they did not fall within the purview of the natural sciences. But by calling them non-natural, he perhaps unwittingly (and unfortunately) conceded all that is 'natural' to the modern natural sciences. But, if 'natural' is understood in the broader sense of 'that which is out there to be experienced' as opposed to 'that which is a mere subjective fancy', then Moore certainly did believe that evaluative properties were natural.⁶⁰⁸ Part of his reason for denying that 'good' was natural is that, as Murdoch suggests, Moore (rightly) believed that "to be able to see [the good] was in some sense to have it." I will say more about this later.

The important thing to note here, however, is that by calling it a "fallacy" Moore implied that there was some logical mistake involved in the naturalist belief. Hume essentially implies the same thing we he suggests that one cannot derive an 'ought' from an 'is'. But once we consider, in a non-question-begging manner, the idea that the world might be intrinsically valueladed, or that goodness might be there to be experienced and not a mere projection of the emotions or the will, then it ceases to look as if naturalism is simply a logical mistake. Rather, it seems that there is a substantive (moral) assumption that is being disguised as a logical error. According to Murdoch

if the anti-naturalist argument is designed merely to point out that a statement of value cannot be derived directly, and with no further help, from an ordinary statement of fact, then perhaps it may be called the exposure of a logical fallacy.⁶⁰⁹

But, she continues:

What the great moral philosophers, in the past, have usually been doing is something much more complicated. They present a total metaphysical picture of which ethics forms a part. The universe, including our own nature, is like *this*, they say.⁶¹⁰

Murdoch's description of how this naturalist conception of moral thought differs from the common way in which Anglophone liberal philosophers tend to conceive it is worth quoting. Regarding the naturalist, she writes:

The individual is seen as held in a framework which transcends him, where what is important and valuable is the framework, and the individual only has importance, or even reality, in so far as he belongs to the framework

....Here the individual is seen as moving tentatively vis-à-vis a reality which transcends him. To discover what is morally good is to discover that reality, and to become good is

⁶⁰⁸ See Part I, Section 4.B above.

⁶⁰⁹ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 241.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., 242.

to integrate himself with it. He is ruled by laws which he can only partly understand. He is not fully conscious of what he is. His freedom is not an open freedom of choice in a clear situation; it lies rather in an increasing knowledge of his own real being, and in conduct which naturally springs from such knowledge.⁶¹¹

With regard to such a view, she also notes that "[t]he individual's choice is less important, and the interest may lie in adoration of the framework rather than in the details of conduct."⁶¹² It is for this reason that I spent so much time earlier trying to describe, in sympathetic detail, the contemplative outlook of the ancients, like Anaxagoras or Aristotle.⁶¹³ These purportedly theoretical activities, these acts of contemplation, for the naturalist, shade directly into thinking about ethics.⁶¹⁴

But something happens after the seventeenth century that displaces this picture of how moral philosophy is related to other kinds of philosophical, religious, and scientific inquiry. Earlier I quoted Aarron Garrett's entry on seventeenth century moral philosophy from *The Oxford Handbook on the History of Ethics*; recall that Garrett felt that contemporary readers needed to be reminded of the broader conception of moral philosophy that was still operative in the seventeenth century:

when compared with Hume's incisive discussions of whether moral distinctions are derived from reason, many of the best-known works by seventeenth-century moral

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 247.

⁶¹² Ibid., 248.

⁶¹³ Something similar might hold true for many medieval Christian thinkers as well.

⁶¹⁴ Murdoch quotes Stuart Hampshire as saying that "a decision has to be made between two conceptions of personality." Hampshire describes the two as follows: "It may be that in a society in which a man's theoretical opinions and religious beliefs were held to be supremely important, a man's beliefs would be considered as much part of his responsibility as his behavior to other men. In a culture that is largely utilitarian in its outlook, a sharper distinction might be made between inner life and responsible action.", Stuart Hampshire, Thought and Action (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), 155-156. Quoted in Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good, 42-43. And it would be tempting, yet wrong, to think that all self identified "religious" persons adhere to the picture of personality based on inner life. Rather, it seems that Hampshire's distinction between conceptions of moral personality that are based on theoretical, versus purely practical, aspects is mirrored in the internecine strife *within* many Chrsitian demoninations. For example: "It is here that the point of cleavage arises between the ordinary traditionalists and the Liberals, or, as some of them prefer to call themselves, the modernists. The traditionalists as a body...assert that the essence of Christianity consists in its dogmatic contents...In opposition to this view the Liberals maintain that the essence of the Christian faith does no consist in its dogmatic but in its religious and moral contents. It is not a man's theoretical opinions upon points of dogma which make him a Christian, but the religious and moral character of his life." William D. Morrison "German Evangelic Liberalism," in Anglican Liberalism, ed. Twelve Churchmen (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), 288-289. Also, see: Haldane, Faithful Reason, 46-47. Haldane describes a similar point of strife within the Catholic tradition.

philosophers read like self-help manuals buttressed with psychology, speculative law, and religion. Much that is recognizably philosophy appears not to be moral philosophy but metaphysics, scientific methodology, and the theory of knowledge.⁶¹⁵

and

the breadth of moral philosophy was far greater, and not clearly differentiated from politics, or the cultivation of intellectual virtues and attitudes crucial to discovering what one truly was and serving as guides for practical reason (as well as for politics), or even from metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, and scientific methodology and practice.⁶¹⁶

In other words, Garrett is trying to show that, up until the seventeenth century, a roughly naturalist picture of moral philosophy was the predominant one: philosophers saw their moral views as arising directly out of their broader conception of the world. In particular, one's actions depended on one's conception of what sort of life one should lead, and what sort of life one should lead depended upon "discovering what one truly was." And, of course, to discover what one is, according to the naturalist, is not merely to discover some "factual" statements about how one happens to be, or some statistical statements about how most people happen to be, but rather to discover, through some act of insight, the teleologically directed nature, or essence, of human beings in general, and thereby, of oneself in particular.

In MacIntyre's words, according to the naturalist approach to philosophy:

[t]here is a fundamental contrast between man-as-he-happens-to-be and man-as-he-couldbe-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature. Ethics is the science which is to enable men to understand how they make the transition from the former state to the latter. Ethics therefore in this view presupposes some account of potentiality and act, some account of the essence of man as a rational animal and above all some account of the human *telos*.⁶¹⁷

MacIntyre emphasizes the necessity of each of these three elements to the coherence of the conceptual scheme: man-as-he-happens-to-be; man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature; and the precepts of ethics.⁶¹⁸ And MacIntyre attributes the failing of "the Enlightenment Project" to the loss of the concept of "man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature." But, as I have already argued, the rejection of this concept *appears* to be a rejection on merely logical grounds, only because the relation between the particular man "as he happens to be" and

⁶¹⁵ Garrett, "Seventeenth-Century Moral Philosophy," 229-230.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., 230. See above Part I, Section 1; and Part I, Section 6.

⁶¹⁷ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 52.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., 53.

the species form – in which what really "ought to be" in the individual really "is" in its form⁶¹⁹ – is an "internal relation." One of the ideas that runs deep in the mind of the analytical philosopher is the idea that internal relations – that Hegelian doctrine of "dark holism" – involve some sort of muddled-headed logical mistake. The idea that we must look to something else, i.e. the species, in order to understand an individual, is thought to involve some sort of logical muddle. We ought to be able, says the analytical philosopher, to make perfect sense of the individual by "the method of absolute isolation." (And it is not surprising that the "method of absolute isolation" in analytical philosophy almost exactly mirrors what Whitehead critizes as the fundamental ontological posit of seventeenth century physics: that the most concrete entities are made of matter having the property of simple location).⁶²⁰ Other relations into which an individual might enter are "external relations." But, on the contrary, I believe that, as Michael Thompson suggests, a reference to the general life-form, or species, is best thought of as *already contained* in the thought of the individual. When we make an evaluative judgment about some living thing – and this includes human beings – we do not appeal to some mysterious, external evaluative criteria "at a distance" from the individual, rather, we make an "immanent critique."⁶²¹

Before I go on, I must note one potential difficulty or misunderstanding regarding Murdoch's naturalist view. One might find talk of teleology and of Murdoch's naturalism jarring in the same breadth. Some people, like Murdoch, are averse to the language of "teleology." Murdoch often slides between calling her view, on the one hand, a naturalist view, and on the other hand, a "Natural Law" view.⁶²² And while the traditional Thomistic conception of natural law, or what philosophers nowadays sometimes refer to as the "Old Natural Law", is perfectly at home with the language of teleology, Murdoch, on other occasions, denies the existence of a human "*telos*". I believe that there is an ambiguity in speaking about teleology in nature, and once that ambiguity is resolved, then I believe that the tension between Murdoch and the Old

⁶¹⁹ Thompson, *Life and Action*, 81. See above Part I, Section 5.B.

⁶²⁰ This is what Whitehead calls "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness." Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 52. See above Part II, Section 3.A; and Part II, Section 4.

⁶²¹ Thompson, *Life and Action*, 81.

⁶²² In some places, Murdoch refers to the view she defends as a "naturalist" view, and she opposes her view to a "liberal" view. See, for example, Iris Murdoch, "Vision and Choice in Morality," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society: Dreams and Self-Knowledge*, Supplementary Volumes, Vol. 30 (1956): 52, 55, 57. In other places, she is happy to call the view she defends by "an old name", namely, "Natural Law morality." See: Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 245, 247, 248.

Natural Lawyers can be mitigated. Rather than leading the reader on an excursus away from the present line of thought, I have placed this excursus in an Appendix (Appendix I), which one may consult if one is bothered by speaking of Murdoch's naturalism as being similar to an Aristotelian-Thomist variety of naturalism. Otherwise, one may read on.

So while Garrett describes the seventeenth century as one in which we can still find philosophers adhering to a "naturalist" approach to moral philosophy, an approach that is likely to confuse modern readers, we can also see the seventeenth century as "The Century of Genius" in which the approach to moral philosophy shifts towards the liberal and Protestant approach. Those *virtuosi* or geniuses of the seventeenth century laid the intellectual groundwork for rejecting the naturalist approach to moral philosophy. By the eighteenth century – "The Age of Enlightenment" – the Liberal, Protestant approach to morality has become dominant. The liberal, as opposed to the naturalist, sees morality as self-contained in such a way that other metaphysical claims have little or no relevance to it. Murdoch says we can describe this Protestant aspect of the liberal view as "the elimination of metaphysics from ethics."⁶²³ According to this way of conceiving morality:

We are certainly now presented with a stripped and empty scene. Morality is not explained in terms of metaphysical concepts such as the rational will, nor in terms of metaphysical concepts such as moral feelings. It is not pictured by the philosopher, nor defended by philosophical arguments, as being attached to any real natural or metaphysical structure. It is presented without any transcendent background.⁶²⁴

And again:

Our morality is, on the whole, conceptually simple. We approach the world armed with certain general values which we hold *simpliciter* and without the assistance of metaphysics or dogmatic theology – respect for freedom, for truth, and so on.⁶²⁵

But this view clearly does not result from a mere logical criticism of the naturalist view. It is the product of the scientific, philosophical, political, and religious upheaval that defines the seventeenth century and continues to color contemporary approaches to moral philosophy.

When it comes to the manner in which major moral shifts occur, Nietzsche writes:

⁶²³ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 240.

⁶²⁴ Ibid., 240.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 244.

The change in general taste is more powerful than that of opinions. Opinions, along with all proofs, refutations, and the whole intellectual masquerade, are merely symptoms of the change in taste and most certainly not what they are still often supposed to be, its causes.

What changes the general taste? The fact that some individuals who are powerful and influential announce without shame, *hoc est ridiculum, hoc est absurdum*, in short, the judgment of their taste and nausea; and then they enforce it tyrannically.⁶²⁶

As usual, I think that Nietzsche is very close to (but not quite) saying something true here. Yet I think that his tendency to interpret "taste" in a very non-cognitive manner leads him astray. "Taste" was simply the word by which philosophers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century referred to the faculty that apprehended beauty. But if we think, like Murdoch, that beauty (as well as other evaluative concepts like 'good') have "the authority of truth" and the authority "of reality", then it seems that I can agree more wholeheartedly with Nietzsche that "taste", or our ability to discern such evaluative qualities, is indeed what is responsible for the shift in major moral and metaphysical views. As John Ruskin once put it:

Taste is not only a part and index of morality; – it is the ONLY morality. The first, and last, and closest trial question to any living creature is, 'What do you like?' Tell me what you like, and I'll tell you what you are.⁶²⁷

And if Nietzsche is right that some moral aim, some aspect of taste, is "the real germ of life" from which the whole plant of a metaphysical system grows⁶²⁸, then we must ask: What was the moral aim of those enlightenment thinkers who gave us the liberal/Protestant view of morals as opposed to the naturalist view? They indeed seem to be like those powerful and influential individuals of whom Nietzschee speaks – the powerful and influential individuals who say "*hoc est ridiculum*" and "*hoc est absurdum*." With regard to those "philosophers" writing in the wake of the "Century of Genius" Whitehead writes:

Les philosophes were not philosophers. They were men of genius, clear-headed and acute, who applied the seventeenth century group of scientific abstractions to the analysis of the unbounded universe...Whatever did not fit into their scheme was ignored, derided, disbelieved.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁶ Nietzsche, Gay Science, §39.

⁶²⁷ From Ruskin's lecture entitled "Traffic." In John Ruskin, *The Crown of Wild Olive: Four Lectures on Industry and War* (Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent: George Allen, 1882), 64.

⁶²⁸ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 13. §6

⁶²⁹ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 60.

I think Murdoch does see the "moral aim" that drove much of this thought, i.e. she sees the moral aim that drove the disenchantment of the world, the moral aim that ignored, derided, and disbelieved the idea that morality might be attached to the world.

Murdoch says that the denial of naturalism, i.e. the claim that "you cannot attach morality to the substance of the world", expresses the spirit of liberalism and of modern ethics.⁶³⁰ And she says that it "has been accorded a sort of logical dignity" insofar as it is often claimed to follow from the recognition of a fallacy.⁶³¹ But, as I have already noted, this is an inadequate grasp of the reason for thinking that one cannot attach one's morality to the world. In a striking passage, Murdoch puts her finger on what I take to be "the real germ of life" that lies behind liberalism and the denial of naturalism:

Now I suggest there is another type of answer to the question, why not attach morality to the substance of the world? – and that is a moral answer. If you do this, you are in danger of making your morality into a dogma, you are in danger of becoming intolerant of the values of others, and of ceasing to reflect on your own values through taking them too much for granted. In short, if you start to think morality as part of a general way of conceiving the universe, as part of a larger conceptual framework, you may cease to be reflective and responsible about it, you may begin to regard it as a sort of fact. And as soon as you regard your moral system as a sort of fact, and not as a set of values which only exist through your own choices, you moral conduct will degenerate...This is not a logical or philosophical objection, it is a straight moral objection to the effect that certain bad results follow in practice from thinking about morality in a certain way⁶³²

The idea here is that, according to the Liberal

morality should be flexible and argumentative, centered upon the individual, and that no alleged transcendent metaphysical realities, such as God, or History, or the Church, should be allowed to overshadow the moral life."633

And if we think of our morality as attached to the world, then our moral claims will no longer be "flexible and argumentative." Failure to be flexible and argumentative might result in being intolerant, or in failing to be respectful of the values of others. Murdoch says that "We, in our society, believe in...backing up our recommendations by reference to facts, in breaking down intuitive conclusions by arguments, and so on."634 But if we see our moral recommendations as flowing from our discernment of a overarching framework of the world of which we are a part, it

⁶³⁰ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 242.

⁶³¹ Ibid., 242.

⁶³² Ibid., 243.

⁶³³ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 55.
⁶³⁴ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 244.

is not clear that we can reduce our intuitive conclusions to arguments, or back up our recommendations with "facts." This is because, according to the naturalist

moral differences look less like differences of choice, given the same facts, and more like differences of vision. In other words, a moral concept seems less like a movable and extensible ring laid down to cover a certain area of fact, and more like a total difference of *Gestalt*. We differ not only because we select different objects out of the same world but because we see different worlds.⁶³⁵

It is in the handling of moral difference between persons that the naturalist's conduct is supposed to break down. The naturalist's conduct is supposed to break down because it is difficult to be respectful of someone else's values when you think that that person's entire conception of the world is not only radically different from one's own, but also perniciously false.

Of course the deep irony here is that, if Murdoch is right, it seems that the liberal is doing exactly what he says that we ought not to do in philosophy: he is maintaining that naturalism in moral philosophy "is false, because it is of dangerous consequence"⁶³⁶; he is claiming to "know in advance that truth will turn out to be what is edifying in a given society"⁶³⁷, i.e. to know that the liberal approach to moral philosophy (and philosophy in general) is true because it is edifying, because it promotes respect and tolerance. But while I argued in the previous section that "dogmatism" is not merely a formal vice, hypocrisy *is* merely a formal vice. It does not matter whether the methodological recommendation to banish moral considerations from one's broader philosophical inquiries is good advice or not (and it is not), it still follows that one ought to adhere to the recommendations that one gives to others. This, if Murdoch is right, the liberal does not do: he claims not to be doing moral philosophy when he is in fact doing it. In which case, he is a hypocrite.

But the instance of hypocrisy here in question, like so many instances of hypocrisy, involves a recommendation to do something which may in fact be impossible. The liberal fails to adhere to his own principle of banishing moral considerations from his more general philosophical inquiries because it is often not possible to banish moral considerations from one's more general philosophical inquires. As Cora Diamond puts it: "in all understanding of ourselves and other human beings our moral nature is involved."⁶³⁸ I would in fact go further to

⁶³⁵ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 40-41.

⁶³⁶ Hume, *Treatise*, 409. II, iii, 2. Quoted at the beginning of this section.

⁶³⁷ Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 98. Quoted at the beginning of this section.

⁶³⁸ Diamond, "Perpetually Moralists," 102.

say that, if we think that there is beauty to be found in nature, and in other non-human beings, then our moral nature is likewise involved in the understanding of those things as well. As Murdoch said of G. E. Moore: "[h]e thought of the good upon the analogy of the beautiful"; and "to be able to see [the good] was in some sense to have it."⁶³⁹ In other words, in order to see or discern the evaluative qualities of things, one may need to possess the very qualities in question - like knows like. There may need to be a certain kinship between the good of the knower and the good of the known. Or, to put the matter the other way, one might become good, in part, by discerning the good of other things (other human persons obviously here included). Also, if evaluative qualities like goodness or beauty are thought to be tied to the nature of the world, it then may very well follow that *pulchrum idex veri* and *bonum index veri* are good mottos to guide philosophical reasoning. But if this is true, i.e. if it is true that "we are perpetually moralists", then it follows that the only way to avoid the hypocrisy in question is to drop the recommendation to free one's philosophizing from moral considerations. In Murdoch's words: "All one can do is try to lay one's cards on the table."⁶⁴⁰ In other words, one may not be in the right, but at least one is not a hypocrite if one makes the moral argument against naturalism openly and in a self-acknowledged manner.

Some few persons have indeed self-consciously articulated the moral argument against naturalism. It is these liberal philosophers, i.e. the ones who have put their cards on the table, that do the best service to philosophy. Two philosophers, in particular, that come to mind on this score, are Isaiah Berlin and Richard Rorty. James Chappel, in the preface to an essay about Berlin, says:

Berlin delights in ideas that flash instead of plod...This essay is my attempt to ascertain how and why Berlin's ideas "flash"...instead of seeming limp and dull like those of John Dewey and Karl Popper, two of the most estimable liberals of the 20th century. Berlin's wit, which has ever remained his most attractive feature to me, is much closer to the aristocratic *hauteur* of the conservative Waugh than the bitter acerbity of Bertrand Russell.⁶⁴¹

I think the reason that Berlin's ideas "flash" is that Berlin does not see himself primarily as a dialectician. Murdoch seems to imply that the question of deciding between naturalism and

⁶³⁹ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 3.

⁶⁴⁰ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 58.

⁶⁴¹ James Chappel, "Dignity Is Everything: Isaiah Berlin and His Jewish Identity," (B. A. Thesis, Haverford College, 2005), 4.

liberalism is more likely to be settled by thinking about our moral concepts, and about what kinds of metaphors and concepts we use to describe our moral activities, than by any sort of straightforward logical arguments. She writes:

Man is a creature who makes pictures of himself and then comes to resemble the picture. This is the process which moral philosophy must attempt to describe and analyze.⁶⁴²

And again:

Metaphors can be a mode of understanding, and so of acting upon our condition. Philosophers merely do explicitly and systematically and often with art what the ordinary person does by instinct.⁶⁴³

Berlin, it seems, does this; he does with wit and with art what the ordinary person does by "instinct." Berlin looks to acknowledge and redefine things like goodness and human freedom in light of various historically prominent ways of defining such things. And he is always very honest to point out where he has broken from the tradition. It is this bold openness or honesty that I believe gives Berlin's ideas their flash, and that gives Berlin his aristocratic *hauteur*. As Nietzsche says, in his answer to the question "What is noble?":

One feels contempt for the cowardly...above all liars: it is part of the fundamental faith of all aristocrats that the common people lie. "We truthful ones" – thus the nobility of ancient Greece referred to itself."⁶⁴⁴

Elsewhere he says that the noble personality "desires his enemy for himself, as his mark of distinction."⁶⁴⁵ In other words, the aristocratic or noble person is not afraid to acknowledge real disagreement, to acknowledge that he has enemies. Rather than simply entering into a number of dialectical skirmishes or logical wrangles, Berlin seems to be openly engaging in the kind of image play that Murdoch says if often neglected – the kind of image play that gives articulation to the vision of life for the sake of which the dialectical skirmishes are waged. It for this reason that I tried to draw out what I took to be this underlying philosophical "method" in Berlin's writing in the previous section.

The particular image that Berlin wishes to paint for us is an image of the irreconcilable plurality and heterogeneity of human goods. This image, he recognizes, denies an "ancient

⁶⁴² Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 252.

⁶⁴³ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 91.

⁶⁴⁴ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 204-205. §260. See also, Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, 28-31. Essay I, section 5.

⁶⁴⁵ Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morals, 39. Essay I, section 10.

faith^{**,646} in the coherence or compatibility of human goods – or to use a phrase at home in the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition: the ancient faith of "the unity of the virtues." And the primary reason, or we might even say the primary evidence, that Berlin thinks should cause us to abandon that faith is the violent conflict that he believes it has caused. In other words, Berlin thinks that we should abandon our "ancient faith" in the unity of the virtues, or our ancient faith in the unity and compatibility of human goods, because such a belief has evil consequences:

One belief, more than any other, is responsible for the slaughter of individuals on the alters of the great historical ideals...This is the belief that somewhere, in the past or in the future, in divine revelation or in the mind of an individual thinker, in the pronouncements of history or science, or in the simple heart of an uncorrupted man, there is a final solution. This ancient faith rests on the conviction that all the positive values in which men have believed must, in the end, be compatible, and perhaps even entail one another.⁶⁴⁷

And again:

It is, I have no doubt, some such dogmatic certainty, that has been responsible for the deep, serene, unshakable conviction in the minds of some of the most merciless tyrants and persecutors in history that what they did was justified by its purpose.⁶⁴⁸

Berlin then concludes that "the belief that some single formula can in principle be found whereby all the diverse ends of men can be harmoniously realized is demonstrably false."⁶⁴⁹ And the flip side of this coin, i.e. the positive characterization of Berlin's negative rejection of this naturalist-type moral view, looks like the following:

If, as I believe, the ends of men are many, and not all of them are in principle compatible with each other, then the possibility of conflict – and of tragedy – can never wholly be eliminated from human life, either personal or social. The necessity of choosing between absolute claims is then an inescapable characteristic of the human condition. This gives its value to freedom...as an end in itself, and not as a temporary need, arising out of our confused notions and irrational and disordered lives, a predicament which a panacea could one day put right.⁶⁵⁰

Yet here we can see the conflict or the difference in images. Here we can see the difference between the liberal and the naturalist.

⁶⁴⁶ Berlin, *Liberty*, 4, 111, 175 footnote, 193, 212.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., 212. "Two Concepts of Liberty."

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., 214.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., 214.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., 214.

According Berlin's picture of moral thought, a picture that denies the ancient faith of the unified human good, "choosing between absolute claims" becomes a central feature of "the human condition." And the centrality of "choice" in determining which fundamental human goods to pursue and which to avoid is exactly what the naturalist denies. According to the naturalist:

value concepts are...patently tied on to the world, they are stretched as it were between the truth-seeking mind and the world, they are not moving about on their own as adjuncts of the personal will. The authority of morals is the authority of truth, that is of reality. We can see the length, the extension, of these concepts as patient attention transforms accuracy without interval into just discernment. Here too we can see it as natural to the particular kind of creatures that we are that love should be inseparable from justice, and clear vision from respect for the real.⁶⁵¹

On the naturalist view we not creatures that are centrally defined by our ability to make choices, but rather we are defined by our ability to discern through loving, and our ability to love through discernment. The kind of "choices" that Berlin places at the center of the human condition are necessitated precisely because we cannot give any cognitive warrant for choosing one fundamental good or one set of virtues over another. There is no possibility of increasing discernment of the real. We cannot characterize the judgments based on such choices as true or false, i.e. the judgments that result from our choices cannot claim to have "the authority of truth, that is of reality."⁶⁵²

And the fact that we cannot give cognitive warrant to our choosing between fundamental human goods and between different conceptions of the virtues means that freedom of choice, what some have called the "freedom of indifference", and what Berlin has called the negative conception of freedom, takes on an intrinsic value, i.e. such choice between contrary alternatives becomes valuable as an end in itself. This is a value or a good that seems alien to the naturalist tradition of moral thought. The negative conception of freedom seems to produce problems both for the choosing individual, and for his understanding of his choices as related to the choices of others. Servais Pinckaers acknowledges a distinction between two conceptions of freedom that is similar to the distinction acknowledged by Berlin, only Pinckaers seems to see the negative

⁶⁵¹ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 88.

⁶⁵² John Rawls interprets Berlin's view as follows: "In the realm of values, as opposed to the world of fact, not all truths can fit into one social world." Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 197, note 32. But what it would mean for such "values" to be "truths" if they are not even compatible, much less mutually entailed, is hard to say.

conception – the freedom of indifference, or the freedom to choose between contraries – as a kind of reactionary revolt from, and a pale shadow of, the older notion of positive freedom – what Pinckaers calls "freedom for excellence." According to the older notion:

The natural root of freedom develops in us principally through a sense of the true and the good, of uprightness and love, and through a desire for knowledge and happiness. Or, again, by what the ancients calls *semina virtutum*, the seeds of virtue, which give rise to these natural dispositions – the sense of justice, of courage, of truth, friendship, and generosity – which cause us to give spontaneous praise to acts so conformed and to condemn their absence, at least in a general way. Such dispositions project a certain ideal of life, which gives direction to our desires and forms and influences our moral judgments.⁶⁵³

Like Murdoch, Pinckaers conceives this freedom as stemming from an outward attention towards the world – " a sense of the true and the good" – and such a conception allows us to "project a certain ideal of life." In other words, our growth in intellectual and moral virtues helps us to conceive of the world in ways that improve our discernment of goodness. And it is our developing conception of the world that gives us direction in our actions and our life plans. The other model of freedom, the one that acknowledges the under-determination of choice at any moment, leaves us somewhat in the dark about how we are to proceed:

If freedom consist[s] wholly in a choice between contraries, and [is] possessed sovereignty by our will alone, then each of our actions [is] held fixed in the instant of choice and separated from all the actions preceding of following it...Continuity [is] broken up into a succession of instants, like the perforated line made by an unthreaded sewing machine. Each moral action [is] forever isolated, like an island, an atom, a monad.⁶⁵⁴

Just as the seventeenth century scientists conceived of the most fundamental and concrete ontological unit as a discrete particle of matter with simple location, which was intelligible on its own terms without relation to anything else, so the picture of freedom as choice among

⁶⁵³ Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics, Third Edition*, trans. Mary Thomas Noble (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 357-358.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 337. I changed the tense of Pinckaers' statement. Pinckaers associates the modern freedom of indifference with the theology and philosophy of William of Ockham, and since the original quotation was discussing the view of Ockham, it was phrased in the past tense. But Pinckaers also believes that most modern moral philosophy and moral theology has been living in the shadow of Ockham and the nominalist revolution of the 14th century. Pinckaers advocates a return to the older notion of freedom rooted in the Aristotlelian-Thomistic tradition. For his discussion of the two different notions, see his Chapter 10, as well as all the chapters in Part Three of *The Sources of Christian Ethics*.

contraries threatens to reduce our life to a series of punctuated choices that bear little or no relation to the broader arcs of our lives, or to our unfolding discernment of reality.

By attributing intrinsic value to acts of choice between contraries, our understanding of our own choices in relation to the choices of those with whom we live also takes on a new appearance in light of this changed understanding of freedom. On the older Platonic-Aristotelian view, conflict is seen to be an evil: one that should be avoided or eliminated. As MacIntyre writes: "Both Plato and Aristotle treat conflict as an evil and Aristotle treats it as an eliminable evil."⁶⁵⁵ For Aristotle, conflict was "something to be avoided or managed."⁶⁵⁶ Berlin, on the other hand, says that freedom of choice must retain its absolute value, "not as a temporary need, arising out of our confused notions and irrational and disordered lives, a predicament which a panacea could one day put right."⁶⁵⁷ The idea of "panacea", the idea that conflict might be eliminated or managed, is for Berlin not an option. And the reason it is not an option is that Aristotle, like Plato, and like Aquinas, believes that "there exists a cosmic order which dictates the place of each virtue in a total harmonious scheme of human life."⁶⁵⁸ Berlin, on the other hand, makes it very clear that he does not believe in any such order. For example, in commenting on his relationship to Charles Taylor, he writes:

The chief difference between my outlook and that of Charles Taylor is that he is basically a teleologist...He truly believes, as so many in the history of thought have done and still do, that human beings, and perhaps the entire universe, have a basic purpose – whether created by God, as religious Christians and Jews believe, or by nature, as Aristotle and his followers, and perhaps Hegel...have taught. [...] At this point, we part ways, I think. I do no believe in teleology. ...like Spinoza and Hume and other thinkers less sympathetic to Taylor than they are to me, I believe that purposes are imposed by humans upon nature and the world, rather than pursued by them as part of their own central natures or essences... I believe in a multiplicity of values, some of which conflict, or are incompatible with each other, pursued by different societies, different individuals, and different cultures; so that the notion of one world, one humanity moving in one single march of the faithful, *laeti triumphantes*, is unreal.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁵ MacIntyre, After Virtue, 157.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 163.

⁶⁵⁷ Berlin, *Liberty*, 214.

⁶⁵⁸ MacIntyre, After Virtue, 142.

⁶⁵⁹ Isaiah Berlin, "Introduction," in *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question*, ed. James Tully and Daniel M. Weinstock (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1-3.

Berlin, Introduction, pp.1-3 in *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question*, ed. James Tully.

In short, one's view of moral conflict is dictated, in large part, by one's view of whether naturalism is a live option, i.e. whether moral conflict actually reveals a deep disconnect between many person and the nature of reality or not.

It seems that Berlin has articulated a defense of the liberal view of morality that seems very close to what Murdoch calls the "moral argument" against naturalism. As I shall argue below, it seems that a rejection of naturalism on these grounds is reactionary. Berlin's rejection seems to stem more from a desire (an admirable one no doubt) to avoid violent conflict, and not a more direct desire to determine whether the world might indeed provide a source of value – as so many have claimed that it does. Before I consider further the strength of this argument; I want to consider one other contemporary liberal who articulates a very similar argument: Richard Rorty.

Rorty's articulation of the liberal view is helpful in that he (perhaps inadvertently) points towards what I think is the trouble with this moral argument for liberalism. The pith of the argument appears when he writes:

The danger of re-enchanting the world...is that it might interfere with the development of what Rawls calls "a social union of social unions,"... For it is hard to be both en-chanted with one version of the world and tolerant of all the others.⁶⁶⁰

This sounds exactly like what Murdoch hypothesized to be at the base of the liberal's rejection of naturalism:

if you start to think morality as part of a general way of conceiving the universe, as part of a larger conceptual framework, you may cease to be reflective and responsible about it, you may begin to regard it as a sort of fact. And as soon as you regard your moral system as a sort of fact, and not as a set of values which only exist through your own choices, you moral conduct will degenerate.⁶⁶¹

But the most relevant part of Rorty's argument, when it comes to my concerns about the institutional place of philosophy in the university, is how Rorty thinks we ought to conceive of the traditional project of trying to give a philosophical justification to our moral and political beliefs.

⁶⁶⁰ Richard M. Rorty, "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy," in *The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom: Its Evolution and Consequences in American History*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson and Robert C. Vaughan (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 273.

⁶⁶¹ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 243.

John Rawls, in his work dating from his article "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical", can best be described as attempting to make good on what it would look like to "apply the principle of toleration to philosophy itself." Rorty says that we ought to understand this idea of applying the principle of toleration to philosophy itself by means of an analogy to what modernity has come to think of certain religious disputes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He writes:

We can think of Rawls as saying that just as the principles of religious toleration and the social thought of the Enlightenment proposed to bracket many standard theological topics when deliberating about public policy and constructing political institutions, so we need to bracket many standard topics of philosophical inquiry. For purposes of social theory, we can put aside such topics as an historical human nature, the nature of selfhood, the motive of moral behavior, and the meaning of life. We treat these as irrelevant to politics as Jefferson thought questions about the Trinity and about transubstantiation.⁶⁶²

Elsewhere Rorty continues his analogy between "theological" disputes and "philosophical" disputes:

The general course of historical experience may lead us to neglect theological topics and bring us to the point at which, like Jefferson, we find a theological vocabulary "meaningless" (or, more precisely, useless). I am suggesting that the course of historical experience since Jefferson's time has led us to a point at which we find much of the vocabulary of modern philosophy no longer useful.⁶⁶³

But the implication of saying that philosophy, like theology, is irrelevant for public, political concerns, is that philosophy, like theology, becomes a kind of optional, private amusement. With regard to any model of "the self", or a philosophical account of the meaning of life, Rorty writes:

...for the purposes of liberal social theory, one can do without such a model. On can get along with common sense and social science, areas of discourse in which the term "the self" rarely occurs.

If, however, one has a taste for philosophy – if one's vocation, one's private pursuit of perfection, entails constructing models of such entities as "the self," "knowledge," "language," "nature," "God," or "history," and then tinkering with them until they mesh with one another – one will want a picture of the self. Since my own vocation is of this sort, and the moral identity around which I wish to build such models is that of a citizen of a liberal democratic state, I commend the picture of the self as a centerless and contingent web to those with similar tastes and similar identities. But I would not commend it to those with a similar vocation but dissimilar moral identities – identities built, for example, around the love of God, Nietzschean self-overcoming, the

⁶⁶² Rorty, "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy," 261-262.

⁶⁶³ Ibid., note 31.

accurate representation of reality as it is in itself, the quest for "one right answer" to moral questions, or the natural superiority of a given character type...⁶⁶⁴

I have written earlier that perhaps the greatest threat to those in the humanities and the philosophy departments is a threat of trivialization, and here we find Rorty noting that such a trivialized view of philosophy is a natural outcome of applying the principle of toleration to philosophy itself. And Rorty unashamedly notes that he encourages this "light-minded" attitude towards traditional philosophical questions as a way of preserving the a liberal view of morality:

I can, however, make one point to offset the air of light-minded aestheticism I am adopting toward traditional philosophical questions. This is that there is a moral purpose behind this light-mindedness. The encouragement of light-mindedness about traditional philosophical topics serves the same purposes as does the encouragement of lightmindedness about traditional theological topics. Like the rise of large market economies, the increase in literacy, the proliferation of artistic genres, and the insouciant pluralism of contemporary culture, such philosophical superficiality and light-mindedness helps along the disenchantment of the world. It helps make the world's inhabitants more pragmatic, more tolerant, more liberal, more receptive to the appeal of instrumental rationality.

If one's moral identity consists in being a citizen of a liberal polity, then to encourage light-mindedness will serve one's moral purposes.⁶⁶⁵

Not only does Rorty see the trivialization of philosophy as a natural outcome of "applying the principle of toleration to philosophy", he in fact encourages this trivialized view for moral purposes.

Here we can see that there might be a kind of liberal moral argument that stands in the face of much of what I have argued above in my discussion of the problematic nature of the dramatic change in our conception of the philosophical act. Deep philosophical disagreements, like that over the naturalist as opposed to the liberal approach to moral questions, are, for Rorty, only relevant to "those with a taste for philosophy." In the words of MacIntyre, which I quoted earlier:

Philosophy is a delightful avocation for those whose talents and tastes happen to be of the requisite kind, just as hunting is a delightful avocation for those whose talents and tastes are of *that* kind. What philosophy cannot have on this view is anything resembling the place accorded to it within the older Scottish tradition, for which it is – in conjunction with theology – the discipline whose enquiries provide the rational justification for the metaphysical and moral principles constitutive of the political and social order.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., 270.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., 271-272. Notice that Rorty explicitly encourages the trends which Charles Taylor critically calls "the malaises of modernity"

⁶⁶⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 301.

In other words, a philosophical outlook on life, or an answer to philosophical questions is not of interest to a general audience, but only those with peculiar tastes for making arguments. And MacIntyre notes that one result of this view of philosophy within the liberal order is that "gradually less and less importance has been attached to arriving at substantive conclusions and more and more to continuing the debate for its own sake."667 In other words, it seems to follow from Rorty's "light-minded" approach to philosophical questions that philosophy starts to look like liberal political discourse: "the Socratic commitment to free exchange of views" is retained "without the Platonic commitment to the possibility of universal agreement"; "the question of whether we ought to be tolerant and Socratic" is disengaged from "the question of whether this strategy will lead to truth."668 When J. S. Mill, for example, presents his liberal arguments for free speech, part of the persuasive power of those arguments is that free speech is supposed to be conducive to truth. But, according to Rorty, Rawls aims to sever this commitment to free "Socratic" inquiry from it grounding in any conduciveness or philosophical truth. And Rorty agrees that this is not only justified with regard to political discourse, but with regard to philosophy as well. If one has simply "chosen" to build one's moral identity around something other than perpetuating a liberal moral order - "identities built, for example, around the love of God, Nietzschean self-overcoming, the accurate representation of reality as it is in itself, the quest for 'one right answer' to moral questions, or the natural superiority of a given character type"⁶⁶⁹ – then one's philosophical views will look very different. But regardless of one's philosophical views, one should not allow these trivial, private views to infringe upon the liberal political order. And, we might add, regardless of one's trivial, private, philosophical views, one should not allow these views to infringe upon one's view of the how other academic departments should be structured within a university setting.

In short, it looks like the moral argument against naturalism, as hypothesized by Murdoch, or as it is in fact employed by those who aim to reject naturalism on its behalf, i.e. Berlin or Rorty, looks like the inversion of some gnomic wisdom traditionally attributed to

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., 344.

⁶⁶⁸ Rorty, "Priority of Democracy to Philosophy," 269-270.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 270.

Martin Luther: "peace if possible, truth at all costs."⁶⁷⁰ It seems very plausible that Luther would have said something like this, insofar as the truth, as he saw it, did in fact contribute to centuries of religious war; Luther did not think that the prospect of conflict, even violent conflict, was sufficient to shake his judgment about the truth (presumably the rejection of Catholic Christianity). The liberal proponent of the moral argument against naturalism, however, seems to invert this wisdom: "truth if possible, peace at all costs." If peace or political stability comes at the sacrifice of seeing our morality as attached to the substance of the world, i.e. at the sacrifice of naturalism, then so much the worse for naturalism. Yet I will offer two reasons for why this is a bad argument: one empirical and one moral. Ironically, both of my responses aim to re-establish one of the very things that Luther fought to destroy: a belief in Greek naturalism.

B. Empirical Response: The Dogmatism of the Moral Argument Against Naturalism

Briefly the idea is that in a constitutional democracy the public conception of justice should be, so far as possible, independent of controversial philosophical and religious doctrines. Thus, to formulate such a conception, we apply the principle of toleration to philosophy itself: the public conception of justice is to be political, not metaphysical.

- John Rawls⁶⁷¹

Since the modern world began in the sixteenth century, nobody's system of philosophy has really corresponded to everybody's sense of reality; to what, if left to themselves, common men would call common sense...[my] only object...is to show that the Thomist philosophy is nearer than most philosophies to the mind of the man in the street.

- G. K. Chesterton⁶⁷²

The ordinary person does not, unless corrupted by philosophy, believe that he creates values by his choices. He thinks that some things really are better than others and that he is capable of getting

⁶⁷⁰ I have not been able to track down a actual citation from the writings of Luther to make good on this common attribution. However, it seems like people have at least been attributing it to him for a long time. A slight variant: "Peace, if possible, but the truth at any rate" shows up in a 19th century collection of quotations: Gilbert, Josiah Hotchkiss. *Dictionary of Burning Words of Brilliant Writers*. New York: Wilbur B. Ketcham, 1895, p.603.

⁶⁷¹ John Rawls, "Political Not Metaphysical," 223.

⁶⁷² Chesterton, St. Thomas Aquinas, 172-173. Quoted in Haldane, Faithful Reason, 196.

it wrong. We are not usually in doubt about the direction in which the good lies.

- Iris Murdoch⁶⁷³

But, why can morality not be thought of as attached to the substance of the world? Surely many people who are not philosophers, and who cannot be accused of using faulty arguments, do think of their morality in just this way? They think of it as continuous with some sort of larger structure of reality... - Iris Murdoch⁶⁷⁴

I might begin by saying that the moral argument against naturalism is dogmatic. But, as I argued in the previous section, the idea of dogmatism in philosophy is hard to pin down because dogmatism cannot be a merely formal vice. When Russell accuses Aquinas of being dogmatic, of lacking the philosophical spirit, and of arguing for foregone conclusions, I suggested that Russell must think this is true, in part, because he thinks the various conclusions for which Aquinas was arguing – e.g. that God exists; that things have natural ends etc. – fly in the face of common sense. Dogmatism must involve some idea of refusing to amend one's beliefs in light of the evidence. Both Russell and Hume also note that simply showing that some belief would, if held by many, lead to negative consequences, is not sufficient reason for taking the belief to be false. In some sense, this is simply to point out that pragmatism is false: useful beliefs are not necessarily true. So what should we make of the liberal who makes the moral argument against naturalism, i.e. the argument that the belief in an enchanted world leads to bad consequences, or the argument that the belief in a disenchanted world leads to good consequences? If there really was no compelling evidence one way or another as to whether we should see the world as enchanted, as the naturalist does, then perhaps this purported or hypothesized practical consequence would be enough to sway us toward the disenchanted picture. But is there any other evidence? Murdoch describes three sorts of objections she has to the liberal picture of morality; she writes:

I have simple empirical objections (I do not think people are necessarily or essentially 'like that'), I have philosophical objections (I do not find the arguments convincing), and I have moral objections (I do not think people ought to picture themselves in this way). It

⁶⁷³ Murdoch, Sovereignty of Good, 93.

⁶⁷⁴ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 242-243.

is a delicate and tricky matter to keep these kinds of objections separated in one's mind. 675

I have already suggested certain philosophical objections that have to do with the nature of philosophical argument that seem to make the naturalist view invisible, and that seem to favor the liberal view. But here I want to articulate what I take to be an empirical objection: the world does seem to be enchanted, and many people do seem to notice it (especially those who have not had been spoilt by a liberal university education).

Political theorist Alan Ryan puts the point this way:

The "enchanted" world…was a world where we were at home. It was not necessarily a world created by, or ruled by, any of the gods of the great world religions; but it was a world where "natural piety" made sense. William Wordsworth's poetry conveys perhaps more acutely than any philosophical explanation what it was whose loss the critics of the Enlightenment lamented. The Romantic poets had no doubt that what we first encounter is an enchanted world. The child who comes into this world "trailing clouds of glory" needed no teaching or prompting to rejoice in the rainbow or to tremble as the shadow of the mountain stole across the lake. The natural world spoke to him, and he needed only to listen to it. Only when these natural reactions had been suppressed could he think that science could tell him all there is to know about the world. But the suppression of these reactions was a moral and emotional disaster, well captured in the lines "shades of the prison house close around the growing boy."⁶⁷⁶

Ryan notes that liberal university education, structured as it is around a scientific or quasiscientific model, tends to disparage non-scientific academic pursuits. And, as a result, such education

is notoriously a solvent of traditional forms of religious belief. It is also likely to promote the belief that what cannot be explained by some kind of scientific explanation cannot be explained at all. That, in turn, is likely to promote a view of poetry – and with it, religion – that denies it any cognitive content and sees it as pure self-expression, a matter of sentiment, not intellect. The thought that poetry is "only" expressive is simply the other face of the view that a strictly scientific understanding of the world is all the understanding that there can be.⁶⁷⁷

Ryan mentions Wordsworth, and it is poets like Wordsworth who give testimony to the idea that the world does naturally seem to appear enchanted, or filled with meaning and value; and that it is only through the cultivation of a certain "second-nature", a certain manner of thinking, that blinds us to the evaluative qualities of the world.

⁶⁷⁵ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 9.

⁶⁷⁶ Alan Ryan, *The Making of Modern Liberalism* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2012), 77.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid., 77-78.

Wordsworth's idea that it is "the Youth" who "still is Nature's Priest" is a way of acknowledging that '*naïveté*' and 'nature' are related terms. When he writes:

Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind

he is referring to "Thou little child".⁶⁷⁸ '*Naiveté*', 'nature', 'natural', 'native' are all derived from the Latin *nascor*, *nasci*, *natus sum* – "to be born." I began this Part by noting that a university education could only seem to be an act of deprivation if there were already something of which it could deprive us.⁶⁷⁹ And Wordsworth seems to imply that there is indeed something. Alexander Pope also acknowledges something like this in his "Essay on Criticism." In an Introduction to the arguments of Part I of that essay, an editor indicates some of the theses of the essay: "That most men are born with some Taste, but spoiled by false education"; and "Nature the best guide of judgement. Improved by Art and rules, which are but methodized Nature."⁶⁸⁰ Pope writes as follows:

Yet if we look more closely, we shall find Most have the *Seeds* of Judgment in their Mind; Nature affords at least a *glimm'ring Light*; The *Lines*, tho' touch'd but faintly, are drawn right. But as the slightest Sketch, if justly trac'd, Is by ill *Colouring* but the more disgrac'd, So by *false Learning* is *good Sense* defac'd; Some are bewilder'd in the Maze of Schools, And some made *Coxcombs* Nature meant but *Fools*. In search of *Wit* these lose their *common Sense*, And then turn Criticks in their own Defence⁶⁸¹

It is clear that Pope believes that not all education must have this distorting effect, but only "*false Learning*". And by false learning, he understands that education which "by ill *Colouring*" disgraces what was already "drawn right" albeit "but faintly" by Nature. Art and learning, as Aristotle believed, is meant to imitate nature; and Pope thinks the same:

⁶⁷⁸ Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" in John Hayward, ed., *The Oxford Book of Nineteenth-Century English Verse* (Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press, 1964), 84-90. See Stanza's V, and VIII. This is the poem quoted by Ryan.

⁶⁷⁹ See above Part III, Section 1.

⁶⁸⁰ Alexander Pope, *The Complete Poetical Works of Alexander Pope*, ed. Henry Walcott Boynton (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1903), 67.

⁶⁸¹ Pope, Alexander. *An Essay on Criticism* (London: Printed for W. Lewis in Russel-Street, Covent-Garden, 1711), 4-5. Part I, line 19-29. I quote from the original so as to preserve Pope's punctuation, capitalization, italics, etc.

First follow NATURE, and your Judgment frame By her just Standard, which is still the same: Unerring Nature, still divinely bright, One *clear*, *unchang'd* and *Universal* Light, Life, Force, and Beauty, must to all impart, At once the Source, and End, and Test of Art⁶⁸²

And again

Those RULES of old *discover'd*, not *devis'd*, Are *Nature* still, but *Nature Methodiz'd*;⁶⁸³

Those familiar with the debates of the early modern period will know that I am opening up a real can of worms here. John Locke, for example, a champion of early modern liberalism, famously denied that we had any stock of innate ideas, much less innate moral ideas. But the real issue is not whether we have such ideas immediately upon leaving the womb, but rather whether we have any *natural* impulses, or any ends that are part of our *nature*.

Bertrand Russell gives an accurate description of this latter Greek sense of "nature" when

he writes:

Physics, in Aristotle, is the science of what the Greeks called "phusis" (or "physis"), a word which is translated "nature", but has not exactly the meaning which we attach to that word..."Phusis" had to do with growth; one might say it is the "nature" of an acorn to grow into an oak, and in that case one would be using the word in the Aristotelian sense. The "nature" of a thing, Aristotle says, is its end, that for the sake of which it exists. Thus the word has a teleological implication. Some things exist by nature, some from other causes. Animals, plants, and simple bodies (elements) exist by nature; they have an internal principle of motion... This whole conception of "nature," though it might well seem admirably suited to explain the growth of animals and plants, became, in the event, a great obstacle to the progress of science, and a source of much that was bad in ethics. In the latter respect it is still harmful.⁶⁸⁴

And, from Russell's description, we can also see that Russell recognized the issue about "innate" or "natural" ideas as a morally charged one. Many modern liberals, for example, believe that it is unenlightened to accuse anyone of acting "unnaturally."⁶⁸⁵ Yet one of Locke's students,

⁶⁸² Ibid., 7. Part I, lines 68-73.

⁶⁸³ Ibid., 8. Part I, lines 88-89.

⁶⁸⁴ Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 227-228.

⁶⁸⁵ Hence we find prominent discussions of naturalism in the analytical literature prefaced by statements which sound less like part of a sincere philosophical inquiry, and more like the awkward rehearsals of liberal clan shibboleths: "I shall go no further than to remark that by natural goodness I emphatically do not mean the goodness thought by many to belong, for instance, to some but not other sexual practices because some but not others are 'natural." Phillipa Foot, Natural Goodness, p.3. This is particularly odd

Anthony Ashley Cooper, The Third Earl of Shaftesbury, for one, noted a moral consequence of this idea. If there were no "natural" ideas, it seems that it would follow that our moral ideas were mere products of culture or art – a conclusion that seemed to threaten moral judgments with a relativism of the highest degree. On this point, Shaftesbury saw his teacher's views to be not only deleteriously false, but also to fly in the face of common sense. And it is most telling that one of his clearest condemnations of such thinking, in which he names Locke specifically as the target of his criticism, comes in a letter he wrote to a young man, Michael Ainsworth, who was presently *at university*:

In general truly it has happened, that all those they call *free writers* now-a-days have espoused those principles which Mr. Hobbes set a-foot in this last age. Mr. Locke, as much as I honour him on account of other writings...and as well as I knew him, and can answer for his sincerity as a most zealous *Christian* and believer, did, however, go in the self -same tract, and is followed by...all the other ingenious free authors of our time.

...'Twas Mr. Locke that struck at all fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of the world, and made the very ideas of these (which are the same as those of God) *unnatural*, and without foundation in our minds. *Innate* is a word he poorly plays upon; the right word, though less used, is *connatural*. For what has birth or progress of the foetus out of the womb to do in this case? The question is not about the time the ideas entered, or the moment that one body came out of the other, but whether the constitution of man be such that, being adult and grown up, at such or such a time, sooner or later (no matter when), the idea and sense of order, administration, and a God, will not infallibly, inevitably, necessarily spring up in him.

The comes the credulous Mr. Locke, with his Indian barbarian stories of wild nations, that have no such ideas...

But Mr. Locke, who had more faith, and was more learned in modern wonder- writers than in ancient philosophy, gave up an argument for the Deity, which Cicero (though a professed sceptic) would not explode...

Thus virtue, according to Mr. Locke, has no other measure, law, or rule, than fashion and custom; morality, justice, equity, depend only on law and will, and God indeed is a perfect free agent in his sense ; that is, free to anything, that is however ill: for if He wills it, it will be made good; virtue may be vice, and vice virtue in its turn, if he pleases. And

insofar as aspects of practical reason that deal with our more "biological" and "ethological" spheres of activity – those that deal with our "animal" nature, such as eating and sex, and with maintaining, in Bernad Williams's phrase "a bright eye and gleaming coat" – are, at first glance, generally thought to be the *more* obvious instances of practical reason that may be susceptible to analysis in terms of "natural" goodness, yet these are the ones that Foot seems most eager to place "off the table" at the beginning of her discussion. It is almost as if she fears her liberal readers would simply stop reading if they saw any implications for sexual practices in the offing. All this is simply evidence that any discussion of naturalism in moral philosophy is not a "neutral" affair. Williams's caricature of the Aristotelian view – the idea of the "ethological standard of the bright eye and the gleaming coat" – can be found in Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 46.

thus neither right nor wrong, virtue nor vice, are anything in themselves; nor is there any trace or idea of them naturally imprinted on human minds. Experience and catechism teach us all! I suppose 'tis something of like kind which teaches birds their nests, and how to fly the minute they have full feathers. Your Theocles, whom you commend so much, laughs at this, and, as modestly as he can, asks a *Lockist* whether the idea of *woman* (and what is sought after in woman) be not taught also by some catechism, and dictated to the man. Perhaps if we had no schools of Venus, nor such horrid lewd books, or lewd companions, we might have no understanding of this, till we were taught by our parents; and if the tradition should happen to be lost, the race of mankind might perish in a sober nation. – This is very poor philosophy. But the gibberish of the schools for these several centuries has, in these latter days of liberty, made any contrary philosophy of good relish, and highly savoury with all men of wit, such as have been emancipated from that egregious form of intellectual bondage. But I see, good Michael, you are on a better scent.⁶⁸⁶

So Lord Shaftesbury accuses Locke, and the other *Lockists* at University, of perpetuating a "contrary" philosophy of "gibberish", and of making it appear attractive to other "men of wit." He essentially warns the young man off this track of philosophical thought, and encourages him to pursue the "better scent" which he has presumably discerned.

Nietzsche tells us that "the noble man lives in trust and openness with himself (*gennaios* "of noble descent" underlines the nuance "upright" and probably also "naïve")."⁶⁸⁷ In other words, naiveté is one aspect of nobility. Aristotle is often described as "a philosopher of the manifest image, or of 'the ordinary', or of the world of rustic common sense."⁶⁸⁸ Yet it might seem that "rustic" is the opposite of noble. But here it is my thesis that the rustic, perhaps uneducated, person, shares a relative nobility with the high-born. And that this nobility, in the sense of *naivete*, is often absent from those in between – the ones we might call the bourgeoisie.⁶⁸⁹ The difference, in part, would seem to lie in the absence of pressures to conform to the standards and accepted norms of thought and writing found in the university. The rustic peasant simply does not attend university, and the truly high-born, e.g. Shaftesbury, is

⁶⁸⁶ Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, *The Life, Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*, ed. Benjamin Rand (New York: The Macmillan Co, 1900) 403-405. For the passages in Locke describing "barbarian stories", see, for example, John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1979), 71. Bk.I, Ch.iii, §9.

⁶⁸⁷ Nietzsche, Genealogy, 38. Essay I, §10.

⁶⁸⁸ Thompson, *Life and Action*, 10.

⁶⁸⁹ Nietszsche also acknowledges something like this: "it is possible that even among the common people, among the less educated, especially among peasants, one finds today more *relative* nobility of taste and tactful reverence than among the newspaper-reading *demi-monde* of the spirit, the educated." Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 213. §263.

independently wealthy and so has no monetary, or academic professional, interest in conforming to styles of thought that prevail within the university. Although Shaftesbury was a student of Locke's, it seems that he was also very much an autodidact, spending much of his time reading authors in Greek and Latin.⁶⁹⁰ One of his contemporaries, John Toland, went so far as write that "Perhaps no modern ever turned the Ancients more into sap and blood, as they say, than he. Their doctrines he understood as well as themselves, and their virtues he practiced better."⁶⁹¹ When it comes to the peasant, Wordsworth, in the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1802, says that the peasant is more likely in a better place to discern and to communicate his discernment of nature, both on account of his stock of daily experiences, and on account of his language itself. Regarding the nature of the poems included in the *Lyrical Ballads*, and their language, Wordsworth writes:

Low and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended; and are more durable; and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.692

⁶⁹⁰ Thomas Fowler, a biographer of Shaftesbury, writes "the greater part of his attention was directed to the perusal of those classical authors, and to the attempt to realize the true spirit of that classical antiquity, for which he had conceived so ardent a passion." Thomas Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson* (London: Gilbert and Rivington, Limited, St. John's Square, 1882), 7.

⁶⁹¹ Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, 8.

⁶⁹² William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Lyrical Ballads: 1798 and 1802*, ed. Fiona Stafford (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 97.

In short, I am trying to make the case that common sense, both that possessed by the uneducated person, and that noble naiveté or natural-ness possessed by the hereditary noble, are both in opposition to the kind of anti-naturalistic conclusions that are frequently championed by university education.

It is for this reason that I opened this section with Chesterton's remark that "the Thomist philosophy is nearer than most philosophies to the mind of the man in the street." Some philosophers nowadays think that Aristotle's ethics views, particularly his "function argument", are strange implications of his arcane speculations, i.e. implications of his "metaphysical biology."⁶⁹³ But, in fact, it is arguable that, while Aristotle did see the function argument as continuous with his "scientific" thought, he actually took himself to be appealing to the *endoxa*, i.e. the everyday consensus of common sense.⁶⁹⁴ Aristotle's sense of education was, generally speaking, that of a compliment and a development of common sense – a kind of tending and nurturing of those "*Seeds* of Judgment" naturally present in the minds of men. Other philosophers nowadays are willing to concede that teleological judgments do seem to be present in most people, and that they are a part of "common sense"; yet these philosophers then turn and quickly reject such judgments as "unenlightened." Consider the following passage from William

⁶⁹³ Even someone like Alasdair MacIntyre, who is otherwise sympathetic to Aristotlian thought, tried, at the time of his writing *After Virtue*, to avoid grounding his ethical views in anything like Aristotle's "metaphysical biology" insofar as he believed this to be untenable. However, in his later writing, he admits to a need for a "metaphysical" and a "biological" grounding for ethics. See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, x-xi.

⁶⁹⁴ Robert Bolton writes: "Aristotle almost never introduces *phusikos* procedure in his inquiries in the *Ethics*. The famous *ergon* argument in I.7, for instance, does not embody such procedures. The crucial premises of that argument, e.g. that the good for a thing with an *ergon* lies in its *ergon*, and that the *ergon* distinctive to man and not shared with plants or other animals is some sort of life based on reason, all come from on what "is held" (dokei) or what "appears so" (phainetai) or what "is said" (legesthai) or what "we suppose" (tithemen) (1097b25-34, 1098a2-13)." Robert Bolton, "Aristotle on the Objectivity of Ethics," in Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy IV: Aristotle's Ethics, ed. John P. Anton and Anthony Preus (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 23. With regard to 'naturalism,' or "the belief that a true conception of the good life for man must be based on a clear an accurate conception of the nature of man," Brad Inwood and Lloyd Gerson write: "This belief we take to have been the implicit position or pre-philosophical Greek ethics; it was given clear expression by Plato and Aristotle." Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson, trans. *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*, 2nd ed (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1997), xvii-xviii. MacIntyre argues that the "functional concept" of man is older than Aristotle. MacIntyre, After Virtue, 58. And Mikirihan's discussion of phusis in pre-Socratic ethical thought seems to vindicate this idea. Richard D. McKirahan, Philosophy Before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2010), Ch. 19 "Early Greek Moral Thought and the Fifth Century Sophists", Ch. 20 "The Nomos-Phusis Debate."

James, in which James acknowledges the common sense nature of teleological judgment, and then flatly denies that there is anything to be preserved in common sense:

Men are so ingrainedly partial that, for common-sense and scholasticism (which is only common-sense grown articulate), the notion that there is no one quality genuinely, absolutely, and exclusively essential to anything is almost unthinkable. "A thing's essence makes it what it is. Without an exclusive essence it would be nothing in particular, would be quite nameless, we could not say it was this rather than that..." The reader is pretty sure to make some such comment as this. But he is himself merely insisting on an aspect of the thing which suits his own petty purpose...Meanwhile reality overflows these purposes at every pore. Our usual purpose with it, our commonest title for it, and the properties which this title suggests, have in reality nothing sacramental. They characterize us more than they characterize the thing. But we are so stuck in our prejudices, so petrified intellectually, that to our vulgarest names, with their suggestions, we ascribe an eternal and exclusive worth... / Locke undermined the fallacy. But none of his successors, so far as I know, have radically escaped it, or seen that the only meaning of essence is teleological, and that classification and conception are purely teleological weapons of the mind. The essence of a thing is that one of its properties which is so *important for my interests* that in comparison with it I may neglect the rest.⁶⁹⁵

According to James, scholasticism – and by this he surely means Thomistic realism, not the late scholastic nominalism – is the same thing as common sense.⁶⁹⁶ And yet we ought to reject this, he says, because we are "prejudiced" and because nothing in reality is "sacramental." The denial of the "sacramental" nature of reality begins to bring home why it is that Murdoch refers to the denial of naturalism as a "Protestant" view. Like Shaftesbury's accusing Locke of "giving up an argument for the Deity", these claims that there is no such thing as natural theology, and that nothing (at least nothing here on earth) is sacred, are at the heart of the Protestant criticism of Catholicism, and they are here being applied directly to philosophy itself. I will return to this idea shortly, but, for the meantime, I simply want to give one final example of the "common sense" nature of Aristotelian realism.

⁶⁹⁵ William James, *Psychology : Briefer Course* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1892), 356-357.

⁶⁹⁶ He somewhat surprisingly makes the claim, later in the same work, that "the common-sense point of view" is "that of all the natural sciences." James, *Briefer Course*, 464. Here I think we must ask: which is it? Is common sense better reflected in scholasticism or in the natural sciences? James notes that the "one Science of all things" is just "Philosophy." But that, seeing that such a theory of everything is incomplete, each individual science "has to stick to its own arbitrarily-selected problems, and to ignore all others" James, *Briefer Course*, 1. How such treatment of "arbitrarily-selected" problems counts as common sense I do not know.

Jonathan Schaffer and David Rose, two contemporary analytic philosophers at Rutgers, have been working on a paper that seeks understand something they call "folk mereology."⁶⁹⁷ Mereology is a branch of metaphysics that is concerned specifically with parts and wholes. One of the chief questions for mereology is: When does mereological composition occur? This question has been complicated significantly insofar as many contemporary philosophers attempt to answer this question by beginning with the assumptions that Whitehead attributes to the theory of misplaced concreteness, i.e. many answers to the question of "When does composition occur?" have been given against that background assumption, shared with the *virtuosi* of the seventeenth century, that the most concrete things are specifiable bits of matter with simple location. As Schaffer and Rose note, "teleological notions are almost completely absent from the current debate."⁶⁹⁸ Yet many contemporary metaphysicians have leveled claims against one another, each implying that the other's views fly in the face of common sense. It is this last claim, that the common answers given by analytical metaphysicians about when composition occurs fly in the face of common sense, that Schaffer and Rose set out to empirically verify.

Their conclusion is that "the folk", i.e. non-academics, and persons who are not analytical philosophers, have an overwhelmingly teleological understanding of when composition occurs. Schaffer and Rose reach their conclusion by means of a number of questionnaires designed to elicit intuitions about when certain objects compose a whole. The common trend tracked the idea that composition occurs when the objects in question are seen to have a unified purpose or end. Schaffer and Rose then cite numerous, more general, sociological and psychological studies that confirm the "bias" of "the folk" towards teleological judgments. According to one source:

One of the most interesting discoveries in the developmental psychology of religion is that the bias towards creationism appears to be cognitively natural. Four-year-olds insist that everything has a purpose...⁶⁹⁹

According to another:

[T]he preference for teleology is never outgrown. Rather, the preference persists throughout life, reemerging when causal beliefs that might otherwise constrain it are

⁶⁹⁷ Jonathan Schaffer and David Rose, "Folk Mereology Is Teleological," unpublished draft, June 6, 2014. (forthcoming in *Noûs*).

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 31.

limited or compromised. In short, these findings provide evidence for a basic human preference to understand the world in terms of purpose.⁷⁰⁰

But, like William James, Schaffer and Rose think that these "folk" intuitions about teleological judgment generally, and mereological composition in particular, ought to be ignored from the standpoint of metaphysics. They write:

To summarize: Many metaphysicians have wanted a view of mereological composition that fits with folk intuitions, and have charged leading views with failing to do so, while failing themselves to agree as to what the folk intuit or why they do so. So we have tried to put the tools of experimental philosophy to constructive use to break this impasse. We have found something that, though unconsidered by any of the metaphysicians, coheres well with recent psychological work: the folk intuitions are based on a crude teleologically-laden conception of when composition occurs. The folk tend to connect composition to purpose. And we have suggested, in conclusion, that this finding should lead us to liberate the metaphysics of composition from any demand of fitting with folk intuitions. Folk mereology is teleological, and hence unenlightened.⁷⁰¹

Yet, as I have argued, I think we should be wary of such violations to common sense, insofar as the quasi-scientific "enlightened" claims to the contrary are often times based on intrusions of the scientific mindset into debates where such thinking is no longer warranted; and, most importantly, that such oversteps are likely morally motivated attempts to "help along the disenchantment of the world" for the sake of perpetuating a certain liberal moral and political view. It seems all too convenient that liberal, analytical metaphysicians would be so quick to reject the overwhelmingly common intuitions of "the folk" regarding a teleological scheme of nature - the conception of which, according to Russell, was "a source of much that was bad in ethics." The quick rejection of the validity of teleological judgments, as Shaftesbury might say, serves to "give up an argument for the Deity", i.e. it serves to eliminate the kind of Wordsworthian "natural piety" that was the ground of much traditional Catholic natural theology; and it also serves, in Rorty's words, to make us generally "more pragmatic, more tolerant, more liberal, more receptive to the appeal of instrumental rationality." In other words, I think the argument to reject widespread "folk" intuitions gains an implicit added strength from the fact that this rejection seems to help along what are, for the Liberal, favorable moral consequences.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 32.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 40.

C. Moral Response: The Protestant, The Liberal, and the Gravedigger Hypothesis

There is surely an important and philosophically interesting difference between the man who believes that moral values are modes of empirically describable activity which he endorses and commends and the man who believes that moral values are visions, inspirations or powers which emanate from a transcendent source concerning which he is called on to make discoveries and may at present know little...It has been possible to ignore such differences in England partly because the Protestant Christian and the Liberal atheist have, for historical reasons, so much in common.

- Iris Murdoch 702

Here I shall explain why it is that Murdoch refers to the denial of naturalism as a "Protestant" view of ethics. And then I shall to note a kind of difficulty that seems to affect Protestant Christian thought, and to point out that an analogous difficulty seem to apply to Liberal thought. The "problem" I point out here is meant to be a kind of response to the liberal's moral argument against naturalism. It is a kind of response that says that the Liberal cannot do away with naturalism in the way that he would like.

The Protestant reformers tended to have a very low opinion of Aristotelian-style naturalism, partly no doubt, because of its association with Catholic scholasticism. Catholic theologians and philosophers did, and many still do, hold that Christianity is consistent with, or complemented by, a certain strain of Hellenic naturalism, i.e. the kind of naturalism that sees the world as ordered according to an immanent intelligibility. St. Augustine says that "whatever has been rightly said by the heathen, we must appropriate to our uses", and famously describes this Christian appropriation of Hellenistic thought as an intellectual analogue of the Isrealites despoiling of the Egyptians.⁷⁰³ In the 21st century, Pope Benedict the XVIth, formerly Cardinal Ratzinger, argued that:

I believe that here we can see the profound harmony between what is Greek in the best sense of the word and the biblical understanding of faith in God. Modifying the first verse of the Book of Genesis, the first verse of the whole Bible, John began the prologue of his Gospel with the words: "In the beginning was the $\lambda \delta \gamma o \varsigma$ "...Logos means both reason and

⁷⁰² Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 55-56.

⁷⁰³ St. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. James Shaw, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series*, Vol.2., ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887), Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight, Bk II. Chapter 40, paragraph 60.

word - a reason which is creative and capable of self-communication, precisely as reason. $^{704}\,$

and earlier that:

The Christian picture of the world is this, that the world in its details is the product of a long process of evolution but that at the most profound level it comes from the *Logos*. Thus it carries rationality within itself, and not just a mathematical rationality – no one can deny that the world is mathematically structured – not, that is to say, just an entirely neutral, objective rationality, but in the form of the Logos also a *moral* rationality.⁷⁰⁵

This idea, the idea that world carries it rationality within itself, especially its moral rationality, is at the heart of the Platonico-Aristotelian tradition of Hellenic thought. And it was also seen as complimentary to Christian thought by much of the pre-modern Christian tradition, and by many contemporary Catholics.⁷⁰⁶

Yet Luther expressed strong disapproval towards the church's favor towards Aristotelian thought. Of Aristotle, and his presence in the universities, Luther writes:

What else are the universities, if their present condition remains unchanged, than as the book of Maccabees says, *Gymnasia Epheborum et Graecae gloriae*, in which loose living prevails, the Holy Scriptures and the Christian faith are little taught, and the blind, heathen master Aristotle rules alone, even more than Christ. In this regard my advice would be that Aristotle's *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *On the Soul*, *Ethics*, which have hitherto been thought his best books, should be altogether discarded, together with all the rest of his books which boast of treating the things of nature, although nothing can be learned from them either of the things of nature or the things of the Spirit...It grieves me to the heart that this damned, conceited, rascally heathen has with his false words deluded and

⁷⁰⁴ Benedict XVI. "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections" (A lecture given at a meeting with the representatives of science at the University of Regensburg, Regensberg, Germany, September, 12, 2006). In this address, Benedict XVI identifies his position in response to a theological dispute over the "de-Hellenization" of theology. He thinks that this de-Hellenizing trend should be checked.

 ⁷⁰⁵ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Peter Seewald, *God and the World: Believing and Living in Our Time:* A Conversation with Peter Seewald, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 139.
 ⁷⁰⁶ "For the Fathers of the Church, the sequi naturam and the sequela Christi are not in opposition to each

⁷⁰⁶ "For the Fathers of the Church, the *sequi naturam* and the *sequela Christi* are not in opposition to each other. On the contrary, the Fathers generally adopt the idea from Stoicism that nature and reason indicate what our moral duties are. To follow nature and reason is to follow the personal *Logos*, the Word of God. The doctrine of the natural law, in fact, supplies a basis for completing biblical morality. Moreover, it allows us to explain why the pagans, independently of biblical revelation, possess a positive moral conception. This is indicated to them by nature and corresponds to the teaching of revelation." International Theological Comission, "In Search of a Universal Ethic: A New Look at the Natural Law" (2009). Official published English translation in John Berkman and William C. Mattison III, eds., *Searching for a Universal Ethic: Multidisciplinary, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Responses to the Catholic Natural Law Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014), 43.

made fools of so many of the best Christians. God has sent him as a plague upon us for our sins.

...this dead heathen has conquered and obstructed and almost suppressed the books of the living God, so that when I think of this miserable business I can believe nothing else than that the evil spirit has introduced the study of Aristotle. Again, his book on *Ethics* is the worst of all books. It flatly opposes divine grace and all Christian virtues, and yet it is considered one of his best works. Away with such books! Keep them away from all Christians!⁷⁰⁷

And Luther's ideas, at least about Aristotle and about the place of Greek thought in the schools, were enthusiastically mirrored in England by many Protestant and liberal writers, and were resisted by English Catholic writers. St. Thomas More, for example, in his letter to Oxford University, upon realizing that a society called "the Trojans" had been formed for the sake of ridiculing anyone studying Greek, wrote to calm the religious fears of those who would pour scorn on the study of Greek language and writing as a threat against Christianity. At one point he addresses a particular sermon preached by one of the "Trojans" who chose "during Lent to babble in a sermon against not only Greek but Roman literature, and finally against all polite learning, liberally berating all the liberal arts."⁷⁰⁸ More responds:

...there are some who through knowledge of things natural construct a ladder by which to rise to the contemplation of things supernatural; they build a path to theology through philosophy and the liberal arts, which this man condemns as secular; they adorn the queen of heaven with the spoils of the Egyptians!⁷⁰⁹

But the person who bears the most interest to our present topic is surely Thomas Hobbes.

John Rawls, in his *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*, wrote that "Hobbes's *Leviathan* is the greatest single work of political thought in the English language."⁷¹⁰ Rawls is quick to note that its "greatness" does not necessarily derive from its proximity to the truth, but

⁷⁰⁷ Martin Luther, *Works of Martin Luther, with Introductions and Notes*, trans. C. M. Jacobs. (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1916), 146.

⁷⁰⁸ St. Thomas More, *Thomas More Source Book*, ed. Gerald B. Wegemer and Stephen W. Smith (Washington, DC, USA: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 206.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., 208. St. Thoams More's language of constructing a ladder should remind us of the passage from St. Thomas Aquinas that I quoted above in a footnote – in Part II, Section 2 – in which St. Thomas writes: "Since, however, God's effects show us the way to the contemplation of God Himself, according to (Romans 1:20), 'The invisible things of God . . . are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,' it follows that the contemplation of the divine effects also belongs to the contemplative life, inasmuch as man is guided thereby to the knowledge of God. Hence Augustine says (De Vera Relig. xxix) that 'in the study of creatures we must not exercise an empty and futile curiosity, but should make them the stepping-stone to things unperishable and everlasting." *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.180, Art.4. ⁷¹⁰ John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge, MA:

Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 23.

rather that is makes "an overwhelming impression." It is "the most impressive single work" of its kind in the English language.⁷¹¹ In other words, I think it is clear that Hobbes's *Leviathan* casts a long shadow over all subsequent Anglophone moral and political thought. And while Hobbes's work is frequently hailed as a work of "secular moralism", we must recall that it was divided into four parts, the first two being "secular" or dealing with "natural revelation", and the latter two dealing with "Supernatural Revelation." The third Part deals with supernatural revelation requisite for a Christian Commonwealth, but the fourth and final Part of the work is entitled "Of The Kingdome of Darknesse." According to Hobbes, "there is mention in Scripture of another Power, namely, that of the Rulers of the Darknesse of this world, the Kingdome of Satan."⁷¹² Regarding this power. Hobbes writes

the Kingdome of Darknesse, as it is set forth in these, and other places of the Scripture, is nothing else but a Confederacy of Deceivers, that to obtain dominion over men in this present world, endeavour by dark, and erroneous Doctrines, to extinguish in them the Light, both of Nature, and of the Gospell; and so to dis-prepare them for the Kingdome of God to come.⁷¹³

And it becomes quite clear later that "The Authors therefore of this Darknesse in Religion, are the Romane, and the Presbyterian Clergy."⁷¹⁴ In other words, one of the four parts of the "the greatest single work of political thought in the English language" is essentially devoted to an anti-Catholic polemic. And what is the chief tool by which the Catholics aim to proliferate this "darknesse", i.e. the darknesse that impedes enlightenment? The teachings of Aristotle.

Hobbes, like Luther, virulently decries the deleterious effects of reading Aristotle and Greek philosophy. He writes:

I beleeve that scarce any thing can be more absurdly said in naturall Philosophy, than that which now is called *Aristotles Metaphysiques*; nor more repugnant to Government, than much of that hee hath said in his *Politiques*; nor more ignorantly, than a great part of his *Ethiques*⁷¹⁵

And in high polemical fashion, he compares the Catholic church to "the Kindome of Fairies":

For, from the time that the Bishop of Rome had gotten to be acknowledged for Bishop Universall, by pretence of Succession to St. Peter, their whole Hierarchy, or Kingdome of

⁷¹¹ Ibid., 24.

⁷¹² Thomas Hobbes, *Hobbes's Leviathan: Reprinted from the Edition of 1651 With an Essay by the Late W. G. Pogson Smith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 472. Part IV, Ch.44, para. 1.

⁷¹³ Ibid., 472. Part IV, Ch.44, para.1.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid, 539. Part IV, Ch. 47, para. 4.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., 522. Part IV, Ch. 46, para. 11.

Darknesse, may be compared not unfitly to the *Kingdome of Fairies*; that is, to the old wives *Fables* in England, concerning *Ghosts* and *Spirits*, and the feats they play in the night. And if a man consider the originall of this great Ecclesiasticall Dominion, he will easily perceive, that the *Papacy*, is no other, than the *Ghost* of the deceased *Romane Empire*, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof: For so did the Papacy start up on a Sudden out of the Ruines of that Heathen Power.⁷¹⁶

And the most important aspect of the this polemic to note is that Hobbes sees the source of the continuing influence of this "darknesse" as being the universities in which Aristotle and Greek philosophy are taught:

In what Shop, or Operatory the Fairies make their Enchantment, the old Wives have not determined. But the Operatories of the *Clergy*, are well enough known to be the Universities, that received their Discipline from Authority Pontificiall.⁷¹⁷

And again:

the Metaphysiques, Ethiques, and Politiques of Aristotle, the frivolous Distinctions, barbarous Terms, and obscure Language of the Schoolmen, taught in the Universities, (which have been all erected and regulated by the Popes Authority,) serve them to keep these Errors from being detected, and to make men mistake the *Ignis fatuus* of Vain Philosophy, for the Light of the Gospell.⁷¹⁸

Here we can see Luther's protests against Aristotle and Hellenic philosophy not only mirrored in Hobbes, but also wedded to Hobbes's moral and political philosophy.

The reason for my dwelling at length upon these polemical passages is to drive home the idea that the rejection of Aristotle, i.e. the rejection of one of the chief philosophical springs of Hellenic naturalist moral philosophy, was central to the Protestant political and theological agenda. And, as the centuries wore on, and the particularly Protestant, and particularly Christian, elements of this emerging liberalism faded in the background, the rejection of Aristotelian-style naturalism remained at the center. It is for this reason that Murdoch writes that, in England, "the Protestant Christian and the Liberal atheist have, for historical reasons, so much in common."⁷¹⁹ And that commonality is even stronger in America. At least in England there have always remained some opposition to these liberal, Protestant ways of thinking, e.g. there are old traditionalist Torries and Jacobites that, albeit a small minority, still serve, by their very existence, to make the liberal Protestant view discernable as a moral view, and not just a neutral

⁷¹⁶ Ibid., 544. Part IV, Ch. 47, para. 22.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid., 545. Part IV, Ch. 47, para. 29.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid., 540-541. Part IV, Ch. 47, para. 16.

⁷¹⁹ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 56.

framework for doing moral philosophy. In America, however, there is even less historical precedent for such opposition views, such that the anti-naturalist, Liberal, Protestant view stands mostly unopposed, and appears less as a moral view, and more of a neutral framework in which to engage in moral and political dispute. Hence MacIntyre's frustration that I mentioned earlier:

Liberalism...does of course appear in contemporary debates in a number of guises and in so doing is often successful in preempting the debate by reformulating quarrels and conflicts *with* liberalism, so that they appear to have become debates *within* liberalism, putting in question this or that particular set of attitudes or policies, but not the tenets of liberalism...So so-called conservatism and so-called radicalism in these contemporary guises are in general mere stalking horses for liberalism: the contemporary debates within modern political systems are almost exclusively between conservative liberals, liberal liberals, and radical liberals. There is little place in such political systems for the criticism of the system itself, that is, for putting liberalism in question.⁷²⁰

I hope that by quoting some of these sources I have begun to bring the possibility of conceiving an opposing view into focus. And I also hope that the similarities between the Protestant Christian and the Liberal atheist have made it clear that the issue of Hellenism is not an issue that is confined within some insular academic ghetto of Christian theological studies; rather, the historic anti-Hellenic spirit of Protestantism lives on among many purportedly "secular" or selfdeclared atheist academics that are often culturally, or historically, lapsed or otherwise erstwhile Protestant Christians. One does not have to accept Nietzsche's Lamarkian evolutionary beliefs in order realize the grain of truth in his statement that:

One cannot erase from the soul of a human being what his ancestors like most to do and did most constantly...It is simply not possible that a human being should not have the qualities and preferences of his parents and ancestors in his body, whatever appearances may suggest to the contrary.⁷²¹

⁷²⁰ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 392. Emphasis added.

⁷²¹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 213-214. §264. See also Nietzsche, *Beyind Good and Evil*, §213. Robert Solomon writes: "It is not a matter of ironic coincidence that Nietzsche's father was a Lutheran minister and that Nietzsche himself grew up thinking he was bound for the ministry. It is almost impossible to imagine Nietzsche's rage (as well as his insider's knowledge) if he were not attacking and trying to work his way out of his own childhood perspective. Thus when Nietzsche comments that he is an atheist "by instinct" in his autobiography, this should be taken as disingenuous and ironic, at best. One does not find such vicious atheists in the foxholes of mere unbelievers." Robert C. Solomon, *Living with Nietzsche: What the Great "Immoralist" Has to Teach Us* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 36-37. Something analogous, I believe, holds true for most contemporary American philosophers in analytical departments. The distaste for, and near inability to even properly conceive, Aristotelian naturalist moral and political thought is no coincidence. The Protestant distaste for any kind of thinking that is perceived as "Catholic" runs deep.

For the majority of philosophers writing in analytical departments in this country, Protestant anti-Hellenism is "in their blood." I think that this realization alone, if accepted, may be of philosophical service.

With regard to my second aim in this section, there is a difficulty that seems to affect the particularly Protestant branch of Christian thought, and I think that something analogous could be said for secular, liberal moral and political thought. In terms of the problem posed to Protestant Christian thought, we might use the name that some have given the problem i.e. "the gravedigger hypothesis."⁷²² The worry is that Christianity, and Protestant Christianity in particular, by banishing Aristotle and by banishing any Wordsworthian sense of natural piety – which purportedly smacks of pagan religiosity – has actually dug its own grave. By cutting loose all sense of immanent teleology or immanent goodness in nature, "the book of nature" no longer compliments and buttresses "the book of scripture."

This is essentially the lesson I attempted to draw from thinking about Pascal in light of his relation to the prior pre-modern tradition of philosophical thought. According to Pascal, not only does the natural world not point to the existence of God, it even seems to point to His nonexistence: "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me."⁷²³ But this means that belief in God, and the continuance of Christian faith, is essentially only maintained by clinging to the thread of blind faith in scripture. The possibility mentioned by St. Thomas More of "constructing a ladder by which to rise to the contemplation of things supernatural" by means of "knowledge of things natural" has been demolished. This is because it was the Hellenic notion of nature as given by Aristotle - enchanted nature - that allowed the constructions of such ladders. Religious faith, especially for many of those educated at university, now becomes a defiant act that is either totally unwarranted by any contemplation of the natural world, or may even fly in the face of the hegemonic picture of "bald naturalism" that reigns in the schools. And, on the other hand, being a common-sense Christian, or a naturally pious peasant, is also becoming harder and harder to manage in a society dominated by an increasingly large number of individuals who have sought a university education as a means to career advancement, i.e. dominated by those who have unreflectively imbibed the bald-naturalism that structures the

⁷²² See: Craig M. Gay, *The Way of the (Modern) World: Or, Why It's Tempting to Live As If God Doesn't Exist* (Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 16.

⁷²³ Pascal, Pensées, 61. Frag. 206.

university itself – those who, in Pope's words, have had but "shallow Draughts" from "the *Piërian* Spring."⁷²⁴

Many persons have noticed, however, that this problem for Christian thought is much more troubling for those branches of Christian thought that were closely allied with the rejection of pagan or Hellenic thinking, i.e. Protestantism. For Catholics, is seems that some aspect of an enchanted nature is still preserved in their theology, and in particular, in their very liturgies: Charles Taylor, for example, writes:

For the majority of non-philosophical men the sense of being defined in relation to a larger order is carried by their religious consciousness, and most powerfully for most men in most ages by their sense of the sacred, by which is meant the heightened presence of the divine in certain privileged places, times and actions. Catholic Christianity retained the sacred in this sense, both in its own sacraments and in certain pagan festivals suitably 'baptized'. But Protestantism and particularly Calvinism classed it with idolatry and waged unconditional war on it. It is probable that the unremitting struggle to desacralize the world in the name of an undivided devotion to God waged by Calvin and his followers helped to destroy the sense that the creation was a locus of meaning in relation to which man had to define himself. Of course the aim of the exercise was very far from forging the self-defining subject, but rather that the believer depend alone on God. But with the waning of Protestant piety, the desacralized world helped to foster its correlative human subjectivity, which now reaped a harvest sown originally for its creator.⁷²⁵

Taylor's idea that "a harvest" originally sown for the increased devotion to God by Protestant Christians is now being reaped by a secular philosophy that refocuses the center of moral life onto the subjectivity of the choosing subject, this idea, is very similar to what I called above "the gravedigger hypothesis." Protestants originally set about to "help along the disenchantment" of the world *ad maiorem dei gloriam* (for the sake of the greater glory of God), but now secular liberals continue that task of "helping along the disenchantment of the world" for the sake of creating a liberal moral and political order, i.e. one freed from religion, and from the potential for religious threats to political stability, as well as an order freed form naturalist constraints on moral and political constructivism.

Peter Berger also notes something like this; and again, Berger draws a distinction between Catholic and Protestant liturgical practice as the best instance of the disagreement

⁷²⁴ "A *little Learning* is a dang'rous Thing; / Drink deep, or taste not the *Pierian* Spring: / there *shallow Draughts* intoxicate the Brain, / And drinking *largely* sobers us again." Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, Part II lines 15-18.

⁷²⁵ Taylor, *Hegel*, 9.

between Protestants and Catholics over the issue of naturalism, i.e. over the issue of an enchanted nature:

The Protestant believer no longer lives in a world ongoingly penetrated by sacred beings and forces. Reality is polarized between a radically transcendent divinity and a radically "fallen" humanity that, ipso facto, is devoid of sacred qualities. Between them lies an altogether "natural" universe, God's creation to be sure, but in itself bereft of numinosity. In other words, the radical transcendence of God confronts a universe of radical immanence, of "closed-ness" to the sacred. Religiously speaking, the world becomes very lonely indeed. / The Catholic lives in a world in which the sacred is mediated to him through a variety of channels – the sacraments of the church, the intercession of the saints, the recurring eruption of the "supernatural" in miracles – a vast continuity of being between the seen and the unseen. Protestantism abolished most of these mediations. It broke the continuity, cut the umbilical cord between heaven and earth, thereby threw man back upon himself in a historically unprecendented manner. Needless to say, this was not its intention. It only denuded the world of divinity in order to emphasize the terrible majesty of the transcendent God and it only threw man into total "fallenness" in order to make him open to the intervention of God's sovereign grace, the only true miracle in the Protestant universe. In doing this, however, it narrowed man's relationship to the sacred to the one exceedingly narrow channel that it called God's word...As long as the plausibility of this conception was maintained, of course, secularization was effectively arrested, even though all its ingredients were present in the Protestant universe. It needed only the cutting of this one narrow channel of mediation, though, to open the floodgates of secularization. In other words, with nothing remaining "in between" a radically transcendent God and a radically immanent human world except this one channel, the sinking of the latter into implausibility left an empirical reality in which, indeed, "God is dead." This reality then became amenable to the systematic, rational penetration, both in thought and in activity, which we associate with modern science and technology.⁷²⁶

Yet here I want to draw our attention to two deep similarities between Liberal thought and Protestant Christian thought. The first is the rejection of metaphysics as a guide or a grounding: for the Protestant, metaphysics is rejected as a grounding for belief in God's existence, i.e. it is a rejection of the possibility of natural theology; for the liberal, metaphysics is rejected a grounding for any evaluative beliefs that constitute liberal moral and political thought. Just as the Protestant maintains his faith in God solely by the single thread of "God's word", and in defiance of his understanding of the world, so the liberal maintains his faith in certain "values" which he holds *simpliciter*, even if they are unsupported by, or fly in the face of, his bald

⁷²⁶ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), 111-112.

naturalistic conception of nature: e.g. such values as freedom, equality, toleration etc.⁷²⁷ The second similarity derives from what is implied by Berger and Taylor regarding the differences between Protestant and Catholic worship. Catholic worship maintains a strong sense of sacramental presence in its liturgy, which is manifested by a maintenance of the importance of ceremony and liturgical art – an importance manifested most starkly perhaps in the difference between Catholic (and Orthodox for that matter) architecture and adornment, as opposed to that of Protestant architecture and art (or lack thereof). The white-washed walls⁷²⁸ shared by Quaker meeting houses, Mennonite churches, and low-church Episcopalian churches, for example, or the frequent lack of vestments, stained glass, painting etc. found in so many Protestant churches and worship services, is in many ways the analogue of the conventional style of Anglo-American philosophical prose that seeks to ape the prose of the natural sciences:

a style correct, scientific, abstract, hygienically pallid, a style that seemed to be regarded as a kind of all-purpose solvent in which philosophical issues of any kind at all could efficiently disentangled, any and all conclusions neatly disengaged.⁷²⁹

Yet if liberal moral and political values, like many forms of Protestant faith, remain untethered by any metaphysical or philosophical grounding, and if they remain unarticulated except in sterile prose and with little or no ceremony, then there is a worry that these values, like the Protestant faith, are ripe for abandonment. If one believes something *simpliciter*, i.e. without seeing one's belief as grounded in the world in any way, or if one believes something merely on account of his choice to believe it (and this is what religious faith begins to resemble when it is conceived of as utterly independent of reason) – something that could be just as easily rejected if he chose not to believe it – then it seems like the proper response is to reject such beliefs altogether as trivial.

We can see the hostility towards ceremony and communal ritual in Hobbes polemics against the Catholic church. Hobbes, in chapter XLV of *Leviathan*, which is entitled: "Of

⁷²⁷ The kinds of values about which Rawls says: "these are very great values." Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 139, 169, 218. Note that he also refers to his political view as "freestanding," i.e. ungrounded by any sort of "metaphysical" claims about how the world is. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 140.

⁷²⁸ Whitehead, for example, writes: "The Newtonian forces, whatever their ultimate mathematical formulation, are nothing else than the imposed conditions provided by God. This point of view was the working formula of the eighteenth century. God made his appearance in religion under the frigid title of the First Cause, and was appropriately worshipped in white-washed churches." Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 156-157. Ch. 8 "Cosmologies", section iii.

⁷²⁹ Nussbaum, Love's Knowledge, 19.

DÆmonology, and other Reliques of the Religion of the Gentiles", locates some seemingly minor liturgical or ceremonial aspects of the traditional Catholic mass and sharply criticizes them for their similarity to pagan worship. One, in particular, is his criticism of carrying candles in religious processions. With regard to ancient pagan processions, he writes:

To these Processions also belonged the bearing of burning Torches, and Candles, before the Images of the Gods, both amongst the Greeks, and Romans. For afterwards the Emperors of Rome received the same honor; as we read of *Caligula*, that at his reception to the Empire, he was carried from *Misenum* to *Rome*, in the midst of a throng of People, the wayes beset with Altars, and Beasts for Sacrifice, and burning *Torches*: And of *Caracalla* that was received into *Alexandria* with Incense, and with casting of Flowers, and δαδονχίαις that is, with Torches; for Δαδούχοι were they that amongst the Greeks carried Torches lighted in the Processions of their Gods: And in processe of time, the devout, but ignorant People, did many times honor their Bishops with the like pompe of Wax Candles, and the Images of our Saviour, and the Saints, constantly, in the Church it self. And thus came in the use of Wax Candles...⁷³⁰

I choose this example in particular because of its relation to a famous earlier incident that marked

Queen Elizabeth I's coronation:

When Elizabeth Tudor ascended to the throne...she displayed none of her half-sister's reverence toward the clergy or their solemnities. When greeted by the abbot of Westminster who was "robed pontifically, with all his monks carrying lighted torches," she brusquely dismissed them, saying "Away with those torches, for we see very well."⁷³¹

I think that the significance of this act cannot be dismissed. Elizabeth I was seeking to reestablish Protestantism as the religion of England after the brief attempt to restore Catholicism by her half-sister Mary I. Her banishing the torches and the torch bearers in her coronation ceremony was a signal of her Protestant view that nothing in the world was to be held sacred, or at least nothing more sacred than anything else. And it is therefore fitting that Hobbes, who was born on the very year of the sailing of the Spanish Armada that sought to restore Catholicism by deposing Elizabeth I, would have reiterated Elizabeth's rejection of the signs of Catholicism, i.e. the outward signs or ceremonial manifestations of the idea that some things in the world are more sacred, more important, or more valuable than others.

Here lies one of the most profound differences between Catholics and Protestants, and between naturalists and Liberals: Catholics and naturalists tend to see certain things, i.e.

⁷³⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 517. Part IV, Ch. 45, para.40.

⁷³¹ Richard C. McCoy, "'The Wonderfull Spectacle' the Civic Progress of Elizabeth I and the Troublesome Coronation," in *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*, ed. János M. Bak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 219.

especially things in the natural world, as being worthy of reverence due to some concentration of goodness, or sacredness, or numinousness present therein; Protestants and Liberals deny this. The former see the world as hierarchical, as filled with many levels and ranks of goodness.⁷³² Hierarchy is mirrored in heaven and on earth: recall the beginning of Dante's *Paradiso*:

The glory of Him who moves all things pervades the universe and shines in one part more and in another less.⁷³³

The latter, through a kind of leveling act, tend to see all things as equally good, which is to say, they tend to see everything as banal, as ordinary, as commonplace, as just more of the same. Protestants and Liberals share a distaste for kneeling, for deference, for reverend silence, for acknowledging that certain things ought not to be touched; this is because such behaviors are only warranted if the objects towards which they are directed merit them, and, *ex hypothesi*, Protestants and Liberals tend to think that no objects do in fact merit such behaviors. As Nietzsche says, anyone seeking to determine the "value of a soul" will test it for its "instinct of reverence" or its "instinct of rank":

The refinement, graciousness, and height of a soul is tested dangerously when something of the first rank passes by...the baseness of some people suddenly spurts up like dirty water when some holy vessel, some precious thing from a locked shrine, some book with the marks of a great destiny, is carried past; on the other hand there is a reflex of silence, a hesitation of the eye, a cessation of all gestures that express how a soul *feels* the proximity of the most venerable.⁷³⁴

And this instinct, as Nietzsche notes, seems present both in "the masses" or in uneducated

⁷³² "Therefore, as the divine wisdom is the cause of the distinction of things for the sake of the perfection of the universe, so it is the cause of inequality. For the universe would not be perfect if only one grade of goodness were found in things." Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.47, Art.2, corpus. See also, Summa Theologica, I, Art.48, Art.2, corpus.

⁷³³ Dante, *Paradiso*, I.1-3 (trans. Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander. Princeton Dante Project). And of course Dante finds no contradiction or tension in conceiving the Christian God along the lines of Aristotle's *Nous*, i.e. his unmoved mover. Another beautifully moving passage that deals with the question of hierarchy is Paradiso III.64-96 in which Dante asks the soul of Piccarda Donati, when he meets her in the sphere of the Moon, the lowest sphere of heaven, whether she desires a higher place. Piccarda's conclusion is no: "in His will is our peace." See: Peter Kalkavage, "In the Heaven of Knowing: Dante's Paradiso," *The Imaginative Conservative*, August 10, 2014.

⁷³⁴ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, 212-213. § 263. Nietzsche, in a rare act, then gives a compliment to Christianity on this score: "The way in which reverence for the *Bible* has on the whole been maintained so far in Europe is perhaps the best bit of discipline and refinement of manners that Europe owes to Christianity." Yet, as I have noted above, overt acts of ceremony – e.g. candles – and ways of showing such honor have become highly suspect to modern Protestans and Liberals.

peasants, as well as in the nobility, yet seems absent among the middle-class educated persons:

Much is gained once the feeling has finally been cultivated in the masses...that they are not to touch everything; that there are holy experiences before which they have to take off their shoes and keep away their unclean hands – this is almost their greatest advance towards humanity. Conversely, perhaps, there is nothing about so-called educated people and believers in "modern ideas" that is as nauseous as their lack of modesty and the comfortable insolence of their eyes and hands with which they touch, lick, and finger everything; and it is possible that even among the common people, among the less educated, especially among peasants, one finds today more relative nobility of taste and tactful reverence than among the newspaper reading *demi-monde* of the spirit, the educated.⁷³⁵

And "taste", if it is used as I suggested above, as a general ability to discern beauty, – and if we think of the good on the analogy of the beautiful as Murdoch (rightfully) recommends – then the manifestation of this instinct of reverence and of rank will also tend to manifest one's ability to detect or discern those things which are worthy of reverence. Yet it is this ability, this "taste", for beauty, and for goodness, that is uncultivated by the University. And the reason is that the university's organizers – Protestants and erstwhile Protestants, i.e. secular Liberals – tend to believe that there is nothing there to taste, or to discern. The world is, for them, for moral and for religious reasons, desacralized and denuded of value.

We might recall here a certain criticism of the Greeks by Bertrand Russell that I quoted much earlier:

The Greeks, eminent as they were in almost every department of human activity, did surprisingly little for the creation of science...The Greeks observed the world as poets rather than as men of science, partly, I think, because all manual activity was ungentlemanly, so that any study which required experiment seemed a little vulgar.⁷³⁶

In other words, the same attitude towards the world which so nauseated Nietzsche – that "lack of modesty" and that "comfortable insolence" of eye and of hand which permits and encourages one to "touch, lick, and finger everything" – is often the attitude we find at the heart of modern science. And it is no coincidence that modern science, liberalism, and Protestantism essentially had a contemporaneous birth. Yet what permits such a lack of modesty, such a comfortable insolence of the eye and hand, what permits the suppression of the instinct to reverence, is the belief that the world is not sacred, not beautiful, in the way that the Romantic poets still stubbornly believed that it was. As Berger puts the point: "A sky empty of angels becomes open

⁷³⁵ Ibid., 213. §263.

⁷³⁶ Russell, *The Scientific Outlook*, 18. I discussed this passage above in Part I, Section 6.B.

to the intervention of the astronomer, and, eventually, of the astronaut."⁷³⁷ But I am less concerned about astronomy, and more concerned with the ideas of those anatomists of nature, those anatomists of the human being. It is the person who does not spare the anatomist's approach to anything whom Wordsworth warns away from his tombstone:

Physician art thou? one, all eyes, Philosopher! a fingering slave, One that would peep and botanise Upon his mother's grave?⁷³⁸

Nietzsche articulates a similar point on a number of occasions. In the Preface to Beyond Good

and Evil, Nietzsche asks:

Supposing truth were a woman – what then? Are there not grounds for the suspicion that all philosophers…have been very inexpert about women? That the gruesome seriousness, the clumsy obstrusiveness with which they have usually approached truth so far have been awkward and very improper methods for winning a woman's heart?⁷³⁹

In other words, what if the irreverent method of so much philosophical inquiry, a method that apes the sciences, is incapable of getting at certain aspects of the truth? If beauty and goodness

⁷³⁷ Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 113.

⁷³⁸ From Wordsworth's Epitaph, in Thomas Humphry Ward, ed. The English Poets: Vol. IV: Wordsworth to Rossetti (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1919), 25. Compare the following passage from Augustine, in which Augustine acknowledges the potential value of anatomical investigation, yet also criticizes those who, "with a cruel zeal for science" have "inhumanly pried into the secrets of the human body": "Assuredly no part of the body has been created for the sake of utility which does not also contribute something to its beauty. And this would be all the more apparent, if we knew more precisely how all its parts are connected and adapted to one another, and were not limited in our observations to what appears on the surface; for as to what is covered up and hidden from our view, the intricate web of veins and nerves, the vital parts of all that lies under the skin, no one can discover it. For although, with a cruel zeal for science, some medical men, who are called anatomists, have dissected the bodies of the dead, and sometimes even of sick persons who died under their knives, and have inhumanly pried into the secrets of the human body to learn the nature of the disease and its exact seat, and how it might be cured, vet those relations of which I speak, and which form the concord, or, as the Greeks call it, "harmony," of the whole body outside and in, as of some instrument, no one has been able to discover, because no one has been audacious enough to seek for them. But if these could be known, then even the inward parts, which seem to have no beauty, would so delight us with their exquisite fitness, as to afford a profounder satisfaction to the mind-and the eyes are but its ministers-than the obvious beauty which gratifies the eye." Augustine. The Works of Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. A New Translation: City of God, Volume II, trans. Marcus Dods (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871), 527. Bk. XXII, Ch. 24. The trouble here is that the anatomists seems to probe the human form with a "comfortable insolence" and fails to acknowledge the beauty of sacredness of the human form. This Augustinian worry also translates into problems for contemporary medical care insofar as "the technological approach in medicine has often side-lined the kind of care that involves treating the patient as a whole person, with a life story, and not as the locus of a technical problem." Charles Taylor, Ethics of Authenticity, 6.

⁷³⁹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 1.

are truly a part of the fabric of the world, as the naturalist supposes, then perhaps sometimes the appropriate response to them is not touching, licking, and fingering, but rather "silence, a hesitation of the eye" and eventually, a kind of chaste gaze. As Simone Weil puts it: "Distance is the soul of the beautiful."⁷⁴⁰

But beauty, and the attempts to discern it, has fallen through the cracks of the departmental divides of the university, and of specialized knowledge seekers. Hans Urs von Balthasar, the most prolific and influential (Catholic) theologian of the 20th century (the qualification is given in order to leave space for the possibility that the Reformed Karl Bart might vie for the title) has accorded the recognition of beauty a central role in his theological thought. Balthasar also notices that beauty has fallen through the cracks of the university, and he intimates at the consequences of this loss. "Beauty", he says, "is the word that shall be our first." Yet, he writes:

The word...is a word with which the philosophical person does not begin, but rather concludes. It is a word that has never possessed a permanent place or an authentic voice in the concert of the exact sciences, and, when it *is* chosen as a subject for discussion, appears to betray in him who chooses it an idle amateur among such very busy experts. It is, finally, a word from which religion, and theology in particular, have taken their leave and distanced themselves in modern times by a vigorous drawing of the boundaries. In short, this word is untimely in three different senses, and bearing it as one's treasure will not win one anyone's favors; one rather risks finding oneself outside everyone's camp.⁷⁴¹

And the consequences for this loss of focus on beauty are, according to Balthasar, dire. Here he writes:

We no longer dare to believe in beauty and we make of it a mere appearance in order the more easily to dispose of it. Our situation today shows that beauty demands for itself at least as much courage and decision as truth and goodness, and she will not allow herself to be separated from her two sisters without taking them along with her in an act of mysterious vengeance. We can be sure that whoever sneers at her name as if she were the ornament of a bourgeois past – whether he admits it or not – can no longer pray and

⁷⁴⁰ "We want to eat all the other objects of desire. The beautiful is that which we desire without wishing to eat it. We desire that it should be. We have to remain quite still and unite ourselves with that which we desire yet do not approach. We unite ourselves to God in this way: we cannot approach him. Distance is the soul of the beautiful." Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, trans. Emma Crawford and Mario von der Ruhr (London; New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), 149. This is very different than the "comfortable insolence" which seeks to "touch, lick, and finger everything."

⁷⁴¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Volume 1: Seeing the Form*, ed. Joseph Fessio and John Riches, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 17.

soon will no longer be able to love.⁷⁴²

Beauty is, according to Murdoch, something that art and nature share.⁷⁴³ Beauty is "the most obvious thing in our surroundings which is an occasion for 'unselfing'."⁷⁴⁴ In other words, beauty is not something we project, or something made valuable by our choices, but something we receive. Just as Nietzsche says that we have an instinct for reverence, so Murdoch reminds us that "beauty is the only spiritual thing which we love by instinct."⁷⁴⁵ These two "instincts" are not unrelated to one another. I will say more about our ability to see beauty in the next section, but for now, I simply want to examine the moral consequences of denying that we can see beauty, i.e. the moral consequences of denying that there might be aspects of the world that are concentrated with value, and that we must recognize.

There is a particular liberal anxiety that follows from this dismissal of the hierarchy of goodness or of sacredness from the world, and from the subsequent lack of anything approximating a communal sense of worship, or a communal sense of acknowledging some goodness or sacredness that is there to be discovered, there to be seen, and that is susceptible to communal apprehension. Alan Ryan writes:

The fear...is that neither the individual nor society can sustain an adequate way of life without an individual or collective conviction that the world is itself in harmony with our desire and affections. It is the fear that we will find life thin, shallow, and unsatisfying if our individual hopes and fears are not supported by rituals, by festivals, and by what, if backed by a supernatural faith, we would call religious belief, and otherwise might call social poetry.⁷⁴⁶

This is something that the Greeks had, and that the Catholics borrowed from them – suitably baptized – but which Protestants and secular Liberals seemed to have purposefully banished. According to Lowes Dickinson:

The religion of the Greeks, we may admit, did something for them which our religion does not do for us. It gave intelligible and beautiful form to those phenomena of nature which we can only describe as manifestations of energy; it expressed in a ritual of exquisite art those corporate relations which we can only enunciate in abstract terms.⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴² Ibid., 18.

⁷⁴³ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 82.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid., 82.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid., 83.

⁷⁴⁶ Ryan, *The Making of Modern Liberalism*, 78.

⁷⁴⁷ Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, 16. Ch.I, §6.

And Dickinson makes the general claim that

it was in ritual and art, not in propositions, that the Greek religion expressed itself; and in this respect it was closer to the Roman Catholic than to the Protestant branch of the Christian faith.⁷⁴⁸

One of the themes that has run through much of what I have written is the idea that some cognitive content must be restored to the arts. If Murdoch is right (and she is) that much of our moral, as well as our religious, and even our metaphysical thinking, is done through metaphor, and through the constructions of images that make up the "imaginative backgrounds" that guide our philosophical thought, then we should pay more explicit attention to the kind of images we use. If the university enforces the Protestant, Liberal idea that empirical science provides us with our only source of knowledge, and if poetry, and art more generally, is deemed to be a mere "self-expression", then it does not follow that we cease making images or cease allowing images to guide the shaping of our practical and evaluative ideas, but only that we cease doing it consciously. We cease to do so in a critical manner; we cease to do so with any spirit of seriousness. According to G. K. Chesterton:

Philosophy is merely thought that has been thought out. It is often a great bore. But man has no alternative, except between being influenced by thought that has been thought out and being influenced by thought that has not been thought out. The latter is what we commonly call enlightenment today.⁷⁴⁹

In other words, if at the heart of much philosophical reasoning there lies some inescapable fundamental images and fundamental imaginative conceptions of our ideals of the good, it would do us good to think through these and consciously admit their existence, as opposed to making a declaration that philosophy and art are to be reduced to the periphery and relegated to a subjective, and trivial status while all the while guiding ourselves by such unconscious and ill-worked-out images.

Like Protestant Christians, "Liberals" writes Ryan "suffer a self-inflicted wound: they want the emancipation that leads to disenchantment, but want the process that emancipates us to relocate us in the world as well."⁷⁵⁰ The Protestant aims to disenchant the world in order to focus more exclusively on God, but the disenchantment incidentally leaves an empirical reality in

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 12. Ch. I, §5.

⁷⁴⁹ G. K. Chesterton, "The Revival of Philosophy – Why?" in *The Common Man* (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1950), 176. Quoted in Haldane, *Faithful Reason*, 211.

⁷⁵⁰ Ryan, The Making of Modern Liberalism, 78.

which God is dead. For the Liberal, the act of disenchanting the world is supposed to make it free of older teleological goods that might be built into the nature of things and beyond our voluntary control. The act of disenchanting the world is supposed to open it up to the imposition of certain liberal values. But it seems that it might just make it such that people are simply left to cling to whatever more-or-less coherent set of "values" or images they choose to adopt: a scenario in which *all* such "values", even the liberal ones, become banal and trivial.

Section 4. Seeing Different Worlds

A. British Empiricism, Perceptual Intelligence, and Two Moral Arguments Against the Latter

...moral differences look less like differences of choice, given the same facts, and more like differences of vision. In other words, a moral concept seems less like a movable ring laid down to cover a certain area of fact and more like a total difference in Gestalt. We differ not only because we select difference objects out of the same world but because we see different worlds.

- Iris Murdoch 751

How can we make ourselves better?...I think that the ordinary man, with the simple religious conceptions which make sense for him, has usually held a more just view of the matter than the voluntaristic philosopher, and a view incidentally which is in better accord with the findings of modern psychology. Religion normally emphasizes states of mind as well as actions, and regards states of mind as the genetic background of action: pureness of heart, meekness of spirit...Modern psychology here supports the ordinary person's, or ordinary believer's, instinctive sense of the importance of his states of mind and the availability of supplementary energy. Psychology might indeed prompt contemporary behaviouristic moral philosophers to reexamine their discarded concepts of 'experience' and 'consciousness'. Bv opening our eyes we do not necessarily see what confronts us. - Iris Murdoch⁷⁵²

⁷⁵¹ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 40-41.
⁷⁵² Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 81-82.

In this section I want to discuss what Murdoch calls the British Empiricist aspect of the liberal approach to moral philosophy. If the Protestant aspect of the liberal view could be understood as its ontological or metaphysical aspect, we might call this its epistemological aspect – yet it should be emphasized that they are related. I want to set out two alternative conceptions, described by Murdoch, of how it is that we "see", or how it is that our perceptual experiences link us up with the world: Murdoch's account; and what she refers to as the British empiricist account of perception. I then want to argue that there are two distinct but related moral objections to what Murdoch takes to be the true account, i.e. the account that makes naturalism plausible. The result is that we are taught to assume the truth of the British Empiricist account in philosophical inquiry, especially in moral philosophy. I shall then respond, as I did above, first with an empirical objection – empirical psychology and much of the philosophy of mind seem to discredit the British empiricist account – and then with a response to the moral objections.

Iris Murdoch acknowledges a distinction between two ways in which one might understand what goes on when we perceive things, or between two ways in which we might understand visual experience. One we might call the British empiricist conception of vision or of perceptual experience. The other is more difficult to pin down, but I think that we can see versions of it articulated by: philosophers of science who argue about the "theory-laden-ness" of observational experience⁷⁵³; Gestalt psychologists, who think that perceptual experiences are not reducible without loss to the contents of their more discrete constituents; Wittgenstein when he discusses what he calls "noticing an aspect" or "seeing as"⁷⁵⁴; and, perhaps more controversially, Aristotle when he talks about what he calls the perception of an incidental sensible (*aistheton kata sumbebekos*)⁷⁵⁵, or Thomas Aquinas when he speaks of the perception of a *sensibile per accidens*.⁷⁵⁶ According to the British empiricist account, our senses provide us with experience

⁷⁵³ See, for example: Jerry A. Fodor, "Observation Reconsidered," *Philosophy of Science* 51, No. 1 (March, 1984): 23–4; and Paul M. Churchland, "Perceptual Plasticity and Theoretical Neutrality: A Reply to Jerry Fodor," *Philosophy of Science* 55, No. 2 (June, 1988): 167–87.

⁷⁵⁴ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 193ff.

⁷⁵⁵ See, for example: Stanford Cashdollar, "Aristotle's Account of Incidental Perception," *Phronesis* 18, no. 2 (1973): 156–75; and Iakovos Vasiliou, "Perception, Knowledge, and the Sceptic in Aristotle," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 14 (1996): 83–131.

⁷⁵⁶ See, for example: Daniel D. De Haan, "Perception and the *Vis Cogitativa*: A Thomistic Analysis of Aspectual, Actional, and Affectional Percepts," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 88, no. 3 (2014): 397–437; and Jörg Alejandro Tellkamp, "The Sensibilia per Accidens According to Thomas

(*empeiria*). But the experiences in question are supposed to be purely passive and receptive modes of relation to the world. According to this account, the world is understood to impinge upon us, and our senses deliver up the results of the external impingements. Only afterwards do our cognitive powers then set to work on the data rendered up by the senses. Our cognitive powers, on this view, are mostly or exclusively discursive. And, importantly, our cognitive powers only operate on antecedently given sensory experiences, in other words, our cognitive powers are not directly involved in receiving and constituting the sensory experience themselves, but only involved after the fact.

According to the alternative conception of perceptual experience, our perceptual experiences are received by a kind of joint operation of our cognitive powers and our sensory organs. As John McDowell puts it, "when we enjoy experience conceptual capacities are drawn on *in* receptivity, not exercised *on* some supposedly prior deliverances of receptivity."⁷⁵⁷ Some people talk of visual experience being penetrated by cognition. This is close to the truth, but this still implies that there is something antecedent to cognition into which our cognitive powers penetrate. We might think that McDowell comes even closer, however, when he says that: "spontaneity *permeates* our perceptual dealings with the world, all the way out to the impressions of sensibility themselves."⁷⁵⁸ In other words, there is no such thing as perception which is untouched or uncolored by cognition in some way. This means that the tidy distinction between observation and inference, or between sense and reason, collapses. More carefully, if we restrict 'reason' to refer to the exclusively discursive functions of cognition, then a distinction between sense and 'reason' may remain, but a distinction between sense and cognition may dissolve, i.e. insofar as some sort of non-discursive cognition, e.g. Aristotle's *nous*, or Aquinas's *intellectus* or *vis cogitativa*, will permeate and shape one's sense experience. Here it is

Aquinas," in *Intellect and Imagination in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. M. C. Pacheco and J. Meirinhos, 11:1351–61. Turnhout Brepols Publishers, 2006.

⁷⁵⁷ McDowell, *Mind and World*, 10.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid., 69. Emphasis added. "What we share with dumb animals is perceptual sensitivity to features of the environment. We can say that there are two species of that, one permeated by spontaneity and another independent of it." McDowell, *Mind and World*, 69. Compare to Thoms Aquinas: "The cogitative and memorative powers in man owe their excellence not to that which is proper to the sensitive part; but to a certain affinity and proximity to the universal reason, which, so to speak, *overflows into them*. Therefore they are not distinct powers, but the same, yet more perfect than in other animals." (emphasis added) Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia, Q.78, Art.4, ad.5. The analogue of the cogitative power found in non rational animals is what Aquinas calls the "aestimative power." Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia, Q.78, Art.4.

interesting that Murdoch speaks in such a way that her view seems more at home in the Aristotelian development of Platonic ideas, than with Plato himself; this is because Plato wished to keep *nous* (intuitive intellect) and *aisthesis* (sense perception) apart, whereas Aristotle, at times, seems to allow for the distinction between *nous* and *aisthesis* to fade.⁷⁵⁹ St. Thomas even designates a kind of faculty called the *vis cogitativa* or cogitative power which is distinct from both the sense organs and the intuitive intellect (*intellectus*) that deals exclusively with the shaping of perceptual experience.

Up until now, I have said nothing about Murdoch, and nothing directly about ethics. But Murdoch brings out the significance of these two views of perception for moral philosophy. Depending on which view is the correct one, it seems that moral differences will be located in different places. If the first view, i.e. the British empiricist view, is the case, then, according to Murdoch, moral beings "live in the same world." She writes:

There are people whose fundamental moral belief is that we all live in the same empirical and rationally comprehensible world and that morality is the adoption of universal and openly defensible rules of conduct.⁷⁶⁰

In other words, "only carelessness and inattention, that is habitual and traditional attitudes, separate us from 'the facts'."⁷⁶¹ Our real differences do not lie in perception, but in our subsequent voluntary adoption of "openly defensible rules of conduct." Notice that she calls this a "fundamental moral belief", not a neutral philosophical thesis about the nature of perception. Murdoch thinks that this empiricist way of thinking about the locus of moral disagreements is

⁷⁵⁹ James Lesher writes that "Plato drives a wedge between *nous* and sense perception", but "when one remembers that the Platonic nous is closely tied to a special conception of dialectic and a dualistic metpahysics, neither of which Aristotle adopted, it will be especially implausible to think of the Aristotelian *nous* as ineluctably Platonic" James H. Lesher, "The Meaning of NOY Σ in the Posterior Analytics," Phronesis 18, no. 1 (1973): 49, 51. Aristotle writes: "And intuitive reason (nous) is concerned with the ultimates in both directions; for both the first terms and the last are objects of intuitive reason and not of argument, and the intuitive reason which is presupposed by demonstrations grasps the unchangeable and first terms, while the intuitive reason involved in practical reasonings grasps the last and variable fact, i.e. the minor premiss. For these variable facts are the starting-points for the apprehension of the end, since the universals are reached from the particulars; of these therefore we must have perception (aisthesis), and this perception is intuitive reason (nous)." Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, VI.11 1143a35-1143b6 (Ross's translation). There is precedent in ancient Greek usage for Aristotle's permeable boundary between 'aisthesis' and 'nous', i.e. between sense perception and intuitive intellect. See: Lesher, "The Meaning of NOYE," 46-51. This is the same kind of permeable boundary that Wittgenstein sees in our use of words like "see." See: Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, 193, 197, 204, 210, 211.

⁷⁶⁰ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 47.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid., 43.

also a liberal way of thinking about the locus of moral disagreement: it matches, on the one hand, what liberals take to be the ideal or normative manner of resolving moral conflict, and, on the other hand, it seems to be an accurate description of what often goes on in our predominantly liberal society. "We in our society" she writes "believe in...backing up our recommendations by reference to facts, in breaking down intuitive conclusions by argument, and so on."⁷⁶² Elsewhere she writes:

It may be argued that we *ought* always to assume that perfect communication and *disinterested* reflection about facts can precede moral judgment, and it is true that such an attitude may often be desirable. But this is itself a Liberal ideal.⁷⁶³

This is a liberal ideal because it locates moral disagreements not in irreducible intuitions, or in moral visions which "may be deep, ramified, and hard to change and not easily open to argument"⁷⁶⁴ but rather in openly defensible rules of conduct. According to the Liberal, Murdoch says, "morality should be flexible and argumentative."⁷⁶⁵ One should be able to break one's "intuitive" conclusions down into arguments so that any rational person can be led to see why you have made a certain kind of evaluative judgment.

If the second view is true, however, then it is simply not true that one can step back from one's passively delivered sensory data to engage in overt, open, and voluntary acts of inference. Reason, or rather, cognition, is simply not separable from perception in this way. When philosophers talk of "reason" they frequently mean what is active in us as opposed to what is passive.⁷⁶⁶ But, on Murdoch's view of vision, vision is not an entirely passive affair, but rather our "reason" (or, as I would like to say, our non-discursive cognitive power) is operative here as well. Contrary to the empiricist-cum-liberal, there is something that we might call visual intelligence, or insight. Moral differences, on Murdoch's alternative, look like differences in vision, differences in concept, or differences in understanding (where 'understanding' is something broader and more intuitive than 'reason' or '*ratio*'); they are, she says, "difference[s] of *Gestalt*."⁷⁶⁷ We differ because we "see different worlds."⁷⁶⁸ The locus of moral disagreement

⁷⁶² Murdoch, "Metaphysics abd Ethics," 244.

⁷⁶³ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 43.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁶⁶ Christine M. Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, ed. Onora O'Neill (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 236.

⁷⁶⁷ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 41. Recall that the German "*Gestalt*" means something like "form" where this *may* be interpreted in the Platonico-Aristotelian sense.

does not lie in voluntary choice against a shared background of facts.⁷⁶⁹ It is our prior experiences, our various understandings of the relation between certain moral concepts, and our general synoptic "worldviews" that often determine the relevance of the "facts", and may even "render them observable."⁷⁷⁰ In other words, habitual and traditional attitudes, instead of separating us from the facts, may actually render them observable. On this view, our traditions and habits do not blind us to reality, but rather our *Bildung*, our intellectual formation, our having engaged in processes of soul-craft, are what allow us, or make us able, to see reality.

Having given a bare sketch of these two views of the nature of perception, and the relation of perception to our cognitive faculties, and having described the moral significance they have in terms of their respective determinations of the location of moral disagreement – voluntary choice against a background of facts vs. differences in vision, insight, or understanding – I now want to note that there are deep and important moral objections to the latter view. I think that the objections can be roughly divided into a moral objection having to do with equality, and a moral objection having to do with the moral status of leisure. These objections are obviously related insofar as the leisured class has traditionally been the noble or aristocratic class; it follows that defenses of leisure will be perceived as defenses of hierarchical and inegalitarian class structure, and defenses of hierarchical and inegalitarian class structure will be perceived as defenses of leisure. I will try to present each of these objections while noting their relation to one another.

The first objection has to do with equality, in the sense of equality of epistemic access to reality. Murdoch's view – the view that moral differences lie in differences of vision, or differences of understanding – implies that moral knowledge may often be located in vision or something like intuitive apprehension of reality. She notes that there is a kind of normative liberal restriction on the manner in which we may discuss our moral disagreements: we must back up our moral recommendations by reference to facts; we must break down our intuitive

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁷⁶⁹ See Ibid., 40: "It is proposed on the current view that we regard moral differences as differences of choice, given a discussable background of facts." Murdoch refers to the Protestant, Bristish, Empiricistcum-Liberal view as 'the current view.'

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., 54.

conclusions by argument.⁷⁷¹ But Murdoch's point is that, if moral differences are often times differences of vision, then there may not be any equally accessible facts, or any discernable common-ground from which to lever one's interlocutor into agreement with you. If moral disagreements are differences in vision or in understanding, then it may follow that

communication of a new moral concept cannot necessarily be achieved by specification of factual criteria open to any observer ("Approve of this area!") but may involve the communication of a completely new, possibly far-reaching and coherent vision; and it is surely true that we cannot always *understand* other people's moral concepts.⁷⁷²

To use a phrase from a well-known set of lectures by Michael Polanyi, it may be that moral knowledge is often located in what Polanyi has called "the tacit dimension", i.e. it may often be the case that, when it comes to moral knowledge, "*we can know more than we can tell*."⁷⁷³ This is not to say that such knowledge cannot, in principle, be told, but rather only that it cannot always be told in practice, or that it cannot be told in certain ways, i.e. by logical argument and by appeal to mutually apprehended facts. The communication of a new concept may be the only way to make a moral disagreement intelligible, and coming to understand a new concept may not leave the person who comes to understand it unchanged – morally speaking.

If moral knowledge is often intuitive, and if such knowledge is often not easily communicable, or not communicable to one who lacks the relevant tradition and habits, i.e. if moral knowledge itself is only accessible to one after a certain process of *Bildung*, spiritual formation, soul-craft etc., then it follows that Murdoch endorses an idea that she sees implied in the writings of G. E. Moore: namely, when it comes to the good, "to be able to see it [is] in some sense to have it."⁷⁷⁴ This is, in essence, an old idea; one best articulated perhaps by the neo-Platonist, Plotinus:

This alone is the eye that sees the great beauty. But if anyone comes to the sight bleareyed with wickedness, and unpurified, or weak and by his cowardice unable to look at what is very bright, he sees nothing, even if someone shows him what is there and possible to see. For one must come to the sight with a seeing power made akin and like to what is seen. No eye ever saw the sun without becoming sun-like, nor can a soul see

⁷⁷¹ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 244.

⁷⁷² Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 41.

⁷⁷³ Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2009), 4. Polanyi takes himself to be elaborating on a theme of *Gestalt* psychology. It is no coincidence that Murdoch too uses the language of "*Gestalt*" to describe how she conceives of moral differences. And, as I said before, the idea of *Gestalt*, or form, is the central notion of the philosophies of the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions.

⁷⁷⁴ Murdoch, *Sovereignty of Good*, 3.

beauty without becoming beautiful. You must become first all godlike and beautiful if you intend to see God and beauty.⁷⁷⁵

But, and this is the objection, such a view of perception in general, and of moral knowledge in particular, is a form of esotericism. And, as Murdoch anticipates, it is likely that such a view will be interpreted both as non-democratic, and as non-rational.⁷⁷⁶ Murdoch's view, so the objection might go, is objectionably non-democratic insofar as it assumes that morally virtuous or morally excellent persons have a better ability to discern reality by means of their excellence than those who are comparatively lacking, and that, in some sense, moral disagreement is not disagreement between equals, i.e. disagreement always involves the moral inferiority of at least one of the parties to given dispute. But, *ex hypothesi*, the liberal and democratic picture of moral disagreement is one in which persons *do* approach one another as equals. This esoteric view is also objectionably non-rational in the sense that such claims to moral knowledge cannot be defended openly through democratic forms of discursive or logical argument that are aimed at appealing to any rational person. And subsequently such esoteric claims to moral knowledge that are not democratically defensible are (and should be, according to the objector) ignored, derided and disbelieved.⁷⁷⁷

J. B. Schneewind argues that a denial of esotericism in moral philosophy is one of the most important aspects of modern moral philosophy. He writes:

The new outlook that emerged by the end of the eighteenth century centered on the belief that all normal individuals are equally able to live together in a morality of self-governance. All of us, on this view, have an equal ability to see for ourselves what morality calls for and are in principle equally able to move ourselves to act accordingly, regardless of threats or rewards from others. These two points have come to be widely accepted – so widely that most moral philosophy now starts by assuming them. [...] There are many substantive points on which modern moral views differ from what was

⁷⁷⁵ Plotinus, *Ennead*, I.6.9. And it is this idea that Goethe alludes to in the introduction to his *Theory of Colors*. I quoted Goethe earlier – Part II, Section 2 – in my discussion of Aristotle and the Ionian philosophers regarding the saying that "like knows like": "If the eye were not sunny / How could it glimpse the sun? / If God's own power were not in us / How could what is divine enchant us?" Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, xxxix.

⁷⁷⁶ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 49.

⁷⁷⁷ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 60. Whitehead notes that this trio of disregard, derision, and disbelief was the common reaction employed by the adherents of "modern ideas" to any pre-modern philosophical ideas that did not fit within their emerging coherent vision.

widely accepted at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but our assumption of prima facie equal moral competence is the deepest and most pervasive difference.⁷⁷⁸

Notice that this view has a more purely epistemic aspect, as well as a motivational aspect. And the reason for this sea change is that modern moral philosophers, faced by social and political instability due to pluralism (what Rawls has called "the fact of reasonable pluralism"⁷⁷⁹), have tended to see moral disagreement and the resolution of moral disagreement, as the most important issue for moral philosophy. According to Schneewind, Hugo Grotius, and many philosophers writing after him in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

took the central difficulties of life to be those arising from disagreement – disagreement involving nations, religious sects, parties to legal disputes, and ordinary people trying to make a living in busy commercial societies.⁷⁸⁰

And, when it came to the task of resolving moral disagreement between "ordinary people" in "busy commercial societies", he accuses the Aristotelian tradition of virtue ethics of being particularly ill-equipped to deal with the resolution of such conflicts which are purportedly made central due to the circumstances of modernity. And the primary reason for the inadequacy of virtue ethics, he argues, is "its attribution of a privileged epistemic status to the insight of the virtuous agent"⁷⁸¹ or its acknowledging a "special cognitive ability arising from virtue."⁷⁸² Schneewind say that, when it comes to the resolution of moral conflict:

classical virtue theory is of little or no use. Aristotle does not tell us what a virtuous agent (*phronimos*) is to do to convince someone who is not virtuous to agree with him, other than to educate him all over again. He does not suggest criteria which anyone and everyone can use to determine who is a virtuous agent and who is not. He does not discuss the situation in which two virtuous agents disagree seriously with one another. And consequently he does not notice what seems to be an implication of his view: that if two allegedly virtuous agents strongly disagree, one of them (at least) must be morally defective. [...] ...since virtue theory must treat disagreement with the virtuous agent as showing a flaw of character, it discourages parties to a moral dispute from according even prima facie respect to differing points of view. It encourages each, rather, to impugn the character of the other rather than listen to the other's case. And it gives no distinctive guidance about how to analyze a dispute so as to find the common ground from which agreement can be peacefully reached.⁷⁸³

⁷⁷⁸ J. B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 4.

⁷⁷⁹ See: Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, xvii, 36-37, 136-137, 144.

⁷⁸⁰ J. B. Schneewind, "The Misfortunes of Virtue," *Ethics* 101, no. 1 (October 1, 1990): 61.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid., 47.

⁷⁸² Ibid., 48.

⁷⁸³Ibid., 62.

This essentially parallels the moral argument against naturalism that we saw above. Recall that the moral argument against naturalism, as articulated by Murdoch, argued that:

if you start to think morality as part of a general way of conceiving the universe, as part of a larger conceptual framework, you may cease to be reflective and responsible about it, you may begin to regard it as a sort of fact. And as soon as you regard your moral system as a sort of fact, and not as a set of values which only exist through your own choices, you moral conduct will degenerate.⁷⁸⁴

And here we see the moral argument against the attribution of a privileged epistemic status to the insight of the virtuous agent proceeding along similar lines. If one believes that one's intuitive moral insights flow from, and are justified by, one's moral excellence, and that one's interlocutor's purported failure of insight flows from his moral defect, then one will become intolerant and incapable of respecting those with whom one disagrees; ergo, it ought not be believed that any privileged epistemic access or special cognitive ability arises on account of moral excellence.

The second objection against so-called moral esotericism is one that we find Kant articulating alongside the first objection. In a late polemical essay written by Kant in 1796 – after his major critical works – entitled "On a Newly Arisen Superior (*vornehmen*) Tone in Philosophy", Kant attacks the writings of Johann Georg Schlosser, Goethe's brother-in-law, and Count Friedrich Leopold zu Stolberg.⁷⁸⁵ Both Schlosser and Stolberg, neither of whom were

⁷⁸⁴ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 243.

⁷⁸⁵ Peter Fenves and Peter Heath both note that it is difficult to find an appropriate English translation of the German 'vornehm.' It should be noted that the last section of Nietzche's Beyond Good and Evil, to which I have referred on many occasions above, is entitled "Was ist vornehm?" Heath notes that translating vornehm in Kant's essay as 'gentle', 'noble', 'elevated' or 'dignified' "obscures the fact that Kant, so far from commending such a tone, is in actuality deriding and condemning it." Immanuel Kant, Theoretical Philosophy after 1781, ed. Henry Allison and Peter Heath, trans. Gary Hatfield, Michael Friedman, Henry Allison, and Peter Heath (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 428. 'Noble' seems like an appropriate translation in Nietzssche's case, however, insofar as Nietzsche is trying to recover what he takes to be an admirable sense of nobility that he fears has been lost. It should also be noted that many translators - for example W. D. Ross - translate 'kalos' in Aristotle's ethics as 'noble.' While I agree with Joe Sachs and and Richard Kraut that the more obvious 'beautiful' is a preferable translation, Ross is not far from the mark when he chooses 'noble.' Nobility, excellence, and beauty are deeply connectd in the Greek mind. (See above Part I, Section 6). But Fenves chooses to translate 'vornehm' in Kant's essay as 'superior'; he writes "the fact that this word often has sarcastic overtones when applied to so-called distinguished people is not a drawback; indeed, this sarcasm dominates Kant's application of the term vornehm to anyone who is not born into the hereditary nobility – and it does not even stop with such upstarts." Immanuel Kant and Jacques Derrida, Raising the Tone of Philosophy: Late Essays by Immanuel Kant, Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida, ed. Peter Fenves (Baltimore,

academics in the sense of professional scholars or university professors, had produced annotated translations of Plato, and both had advocated a kind of esoteric Christianized neo-Platonism.⁷⁸⁶ It appears that they emphasized and endorsed the same aspects of Platonism that, as I noted above, were emphasized and endorsed by Plotinus, i.e. philosophical esotericism.⁷⁸⁷ When Kant speaks of a noble or a superior tone in philosophy, he means to criticize those who, when it comes to intellectual matters, would "speak in the tone of a lord who is so lofty as to be exempted from the burden of proving the title of his property."788 Anyone who could make it credible that he had apprehended or intuited some piece of knowledge that others had to prove by means of arguments would seem to have an advantage over others, and would seem to warrant some sort of deference, such as the deference owed to someone possessed of a hereditary noble title.⁷⁸⁹ Kant notes that the difference between, on the one hand, knowledge acquired through an immediate and direct intuition, apprehension, or perception of the understanding, and, on the other hand, knowledge acquired through the "Herculean labor" of the discursive reason in analyzing concepts, is directly analogous the difference between, on the one hand, a hereditary noble who "has a living" and, on the other hand, someone who must work for a living. And Kant treats the claim to superiority or nobility, both in the traditional socio-economic sense, and in the intellectual sense, with derision and sarcasm:

It lies not merely in the natural laziness but also in the vanity of human beings (a

MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), x. The trouble is that Kant is essentially speaking of 'nobility' as a term of abuse, whereas Nietzsche and Aristotle see it as a term describing excellence.

⁷⁸⁶ Given the close intellectual ties between Protestantism and Liberalism that I described earlier, it is perhaps not surprising that Stolberg, with some controversy, converted to Catholicism in 1800. Fenves, ed., *Rainsing the Tone of Philosophy*, 74.

⁷⁸⁷ Lamentably, I do not read German, and, as far as I know, the annotations of Schlosser and Stolberg do not exist in English translation. My knowledge of the contents of their writings come from secondary sources and from what is implied by Kant's criticisms.

⁷⁸⁸ Kant, "Superior Tone in Philosophy," AK 8:395. In Fenves, ed., *Raising the Tone of Philosophy*, 58.

⁷⁸⁹ Again, it should be clear that this is no mere "neutral" dispute about how to approach intellectual disagreement. Kant's denial of anything like "privledged insight" in (moral) epistemology is directly correlated with his is championing of the moral and political egalatirianism that was beginning to topple the *Ancien Régime* during the French Revolution. Henry Allison notes that the "philosophical esotericism" – "any view which sees philosophy as containing secret doctrines expressed in mysterious language that are accessible only to a few adepts by means of some special power of intuition" – defended by Schlosser and Count Stolberg was "anathema to Kant's political republicanism." Allison and Heath, ed., *Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*, 23. According to Allison, "Schlosser and his associates were archconservatives and opponents of the French Revolution." Ibid., 464 note 38. And we know, from contemporary accounts of Kant collected by Johann Friedrich Abegg in 1798 that Kant was a champion of the revolution: "Kant 'loved the French undertaking with his entire soul'." Quoted in Manfred Kuehn, *Kant: A Biography* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 392.

misunderstood freedom) that those who *have a living*, whether it be a wealthy or a poor one, consider themselves *superior* [*Vornehme*] in comparison to those who must work. – The *Arab*, or *Mongul*, has contempt for city dwellers and considers himself superior in comparison with them, for driving around in the desert with his horses and sheep is more entertaining than work. A member of the *Tunguses* intends to throw a curse at his brother when he says: "May you rear your own cattle like a *Burait*!" The Brother hurls back this malediction by saying: "May you work in the fields like the *Russian*!" The latter will perhaps, according to his way of thought, give the response: "May you sit at the weaver's loom like the German!" – In a word: all think themselves superior to the degree that they believe themselves exempt from work; and, following this principle, matters have recently gone so far that a purported philosophy announces itself openly and without an effort at concealment; in this philosophy one need not *work* but only listen to and enjoy the oracle within oneself in order to bring all the wisdom envisioned with philosophy into one's possession...⁷⁹⁰

The essence of Kant's criticism, and this is the second objection, is that, according to "the law of reason", "one must work to acquire a possession."⁷⁹¹ And knowledge that claims to be of leisured origin, i.e. knowledge that purports to be obtained through esoteric insight, is immediately suspect on this account.

This idea that work, labor, and effort are required for knowledge also finds an analogue in Kant's moral philosophy when it comes to questions of practical motivation. In a well-known example in the *Groundwork*, Kant claims that morally good actions that spring effortlessly from one's inclinations have little moral worth compared to those which spring from the motive of duty, even if one must obey duty's demands with great effort over against one's inclinations:

To be beneficent where one can is a duty, and besides there are many souls so sympathetically attuned that...they find an inner satisfaction in spreading joy around them...But I assert that in such a case an action of this kind...has nevertheless no true moral worth...[...] and suppose that now, when no longer incited to it by any inclination,

⁷⁹⁰ Kant, "Superior Tone in Philosophy," 52. AK 8:390. Nietzsche likewise acknowledges that there has always been a traditional contempt for working. Yet Nietzsche observes that modernity has brought about a strange reversal of this traditional evaluation – a reversal endorsed and, in part, effected by, thinkers like Kant. Nietzsche, however, unlike Kant, seems to side with "the ancient prejudice": "More and more, *work* enlists all good conscience on its side; the desire for joy already calls itself a 'need to recuperate' and is beginning to be ashamed of itself. 'One owes it to one's health' – that is what people say when they are caught on an excursion into the country. Soon we may well reach the point where people can no longer give in to the desire for a *vita contemplativa* (that is, taking a walk with ideas and friends) without self-contempt and a bad conscience. / Well, formerly it was the other way around: it was work that was afflicted with the bad conscience. A person of good family used to conceal the fact that he was working if need compelled him to work. Slaves used to work, oppressed by the feeling that they were doing something contemptible: 'doing' itself was contemptible. 'Nobility and honor are attached solely to *otium* and *bellum*,' that was the ancient prejudice." Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, §329.

[the philanthropist] tears himself out of this deadly insensibility and does the action without any inclination, simply from duty; then the action first has its genuine moral worth.⁷⁹²

Here again, just like in the theoretical case, effort or work seems to be a kind of badge of honor, whereas effortlessness seems to arouse suspicion.

This Protestant, liberal idea that effort and work are worthy of merit, and that leisure and effortlessness are suspect, is still present in American analytical philosophers as well. Notice this telling passage from William James in which a kind of noble effortlessness in acting well is treated with sarcasm:

Effort feels like an original force. We now see at one view when it is that effort complicated volition. It does so whenever a rarer and more ideal impulse is called upon to neutralize others of a more instinctive and habitual kind; it does so whenever strongly explosive tendencies are checked, or strongly obstructive conditions overcome. The *âme bien née*, the child of the sunshine, at whose birth the fairies made their gifts, does not need much of it in his life. The hero and the neurotic subject, on the other hand, do.⁷⁹³

The "well born soul" here does not have to "work" or expend a great deal of effort to follow his "ideal impulses", rather they are simply second nature to him. It is clear that James is rather suspect of the existence of such persons, and it is clear that James's "Hero" is one who must achieve excellence in action by the Herculean labor of moral effort. In short, any privileged insight of the virtuous moral agent, or any habituated tendencies to act effortlessly in accord with such insight, are objectionable on the grounds that they seemed unmerited, or that they are not work.

B. The Vindication of Perceptual Intelligence

In this section, I would like return to a comment made by Murdoch regarding the nature of her objections to the broad emerging liberal view:

I have simple empirical objections (I do not think people are necessarily or essentially 'like that'), I have philosophical objections (I do not find the arguments convincing), and

⁷⁹² Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 11-12. AK 4:398.

⁷⁹³ William James, *The Principles of Psychology, Vol. II* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1890), 548. Also in James, *Psychology: Briefer Course*, 442.

I have moral objections (I do not think people ought to picture themselves in this way). It is a delicate and tricky matter to keep these kinds of objections separated in one's mind.⁷⁹⁴

Here I want to present – ironically – some "empirical" objections to empiricism. In other words, I want to note that various strands of psychology, the philosophy of mind, moral practice, and art all seem to cut against the plausibility of the empiricist picture of perception, and the resultant norms of moral practice that seem to accompany it. I must emphasize that my treatments here are abbreviated, and not meant to be exhaustive or systematic. Yet I think that they are suggestive. And if Murdoch is right (and she is) that any fruitful attempt to address the kinds of deep moral disagreement that divide the liberal from the naturalist must involve the communication of new moral concepts, and if the communication of new moral concepts might often involve "the communication of a completely new, possibly far-reaching and coherent vision" then it seems that one can only try to do exactly that.

1. Modern Psychology/Philosophy of Mind

No psychologist has ever been able to answer satisfactorily the question where sense-perception ends and thinking commences. - John I. Beare⁷⁹⁵

Now, when I know my acquaintance in the crowd, perhaps after looking in his direction for quite a while, – is this a special sort of seeing? Is it a case of both seeing and thinking? or an amalgam of the two, as I should almost like to say?

The question is: why does one want to say this?

- Ludwig Wittgenstein⁷⁹⁶

Enough has now been said to prove the general law of perception, which is this, that *whilst part of what we perceive comes through our senses from the object before us, another part* (and it may be the larger part) *always comes...out of our own head.*

- William James⁷⁹⁷

⁷⁹⁴ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 9.

⁷⁹⁵ John I. Beare. *Greek Theories of Elementary Cognition from Alcmaeon to Aristotle* (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1906), 260.

⁷⁹⁶ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 197e. II.xi.

⁷⁹⁷ William James, Principles of Psychology, Vol. II, 103.

Murdoch's distinction between the empiricist conception of perception and the conception of perception which she defends is mirrored in many ways by certain debates in philosophical psychology and in the philosophy of science. In philosophical psychology there are a number of debates that aim to determine the relation between thought and seeing, or between cognition and perception. What experiential "contents" should be deemed perceptual and what contents should be conceived as arising from "thinking"? Recall that when philosophers talk about the mind, or reason, or thinking, they tend to think of something active as opposed to passive. They tend to think that we are in control of, or responsible for, the actions of our minds: "the space of reasons is the realm of freedom."⁷⁹⁸ Perception, on the other hand, is often deemed to be something passive, or something that happens to us. McDowell sets up a kind of dilemma that seems to lead us into an "interminable oscillation" between two options: one he calls, following Sellars, "the myth of the given"; the other he calls a kind of mere coherentism.⁷⁹⁹ On the one hand, if we think of our perceptual experience as utterly passive, and if we conceive of it in completely causal terms, then it seems that it will be incapable of being a "tribunal" by which to test our various beliefs. The brute effects of causal impingements cannot possess the intentionality or about-ness that we take perceptual experiences to have. Brute causal effects do not serve as premises for subsequent inferences. In order for such experience to have any epistemic relevance, i.e. in order for such experience to have any bearing on "the space of reasons", such experiences must already have some epistemic or conceptual content. In short, it is somehow incoherent to assume that the relevant experiences are both merely causal (not yet influenced by the mind) and yet also epistemically relevant. On the other hand, if we think that our active or spontaneous cognitive powers exclusively give conceptual shape to all of our experiences, then it is unclear how such experiences could ever truly inform us about the world. It seems that our thoughts are "confined"⁸⁰⁰ or that they are like a "frictionless spinning in a void."801 McDowell's solution, as I mentioned before, is that "we need to recognize that experiences themselves are states or occurrences that inextricably combine receptivity and

⁷⁹⁸ McDowell, Mind and World, 5.

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid., 8-9. Also see: Ibid., 14, 23, 40, 51, 66, 87, 98, 108.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid., 11.

spontaneity.³⁸⁰² In other words, we might break out of the interminable oscillation if we admit that our cognitive powers can be active or spontaneous in the very act of being receptive to the world. This implies a kind of nearly universally present non-discursive cognitive activity that goes on in all of our lookings or perceiving. This view is often labeled as a kind of direct realism. It is not empiricist realism wherein we rely on some sort of epistemic intermediary that is offered up by perception by which we infer the existence of things in the world, nor is it idealism that leaves us spinning in the void and without contact with the world. Rather, it seems that this view would allow that our cognitive activity actually puts us in direct contact with the world.

This direct realist view has some consequences, however, that many people (especially those who hold unto the broad liberal view that I have been describing) find unacceptable. The first consequence, which relates to the Protestant rejection of naturalism, is that this view implies that the conceptual structure of our rational concepts is, in some way, mirrored in the world.⁸⁰³ McDowell writes:

Modern science understands its subject matter in a way that threatens, at least, to leave it disenchanted, as Weber put the point in an image that has become commonplace. The image marks a contrast between two kinds of intelligibility: the kind that is sought by (as we call it) natural science, and the kind we find in something when we place it in relation to other occupants of "the logical space of reasons"⁸⁰⁴

The first kind of intelligibility is that which was said to be "hard-won" and to be distinguished from the second by modern science; it involves understanding nature according to natural laws, and mathematical models, i.e. as devoid of "meaning." The second kind of intelligibility, on the other hand, is the intelligibility of meaning or of reasons. According to McDowell:

In a common medieval outlook, what we now see as the subject matter of natural science was conceived as filled with meaning, as if all of nature were a book of lessons for us.⁸⁰⁵

Yet McDowell essentially suggest that we must reclaim some of this latter kind of intelligibility. It is a consequence of McDowell's direct realism that "what we experience is not external to the realm of the kind of intelligibility that is proper to meaning"⁸⁰⁶ or that:

⁸⁰² Ibid., 24.

⁸⁰³ For an interesting discussion of this consequence in the context of applying McDowell's insights to an interpretation of Aristolte's theory of perception, see: Michael Esfeld, "Aristotle's Direct Realism in '*De Anima*," *Review of Metaphysics* 54, no. 2 (2000): 334-336.

⁸⁰⁴ McDowell, Mind and World, 70.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid., 71.

conceptual capacities, capacities for the kind of understanding whose correlate is the kind of intelligibility that is proper to meaning, are operative also in our perception of the world apart from human beings.⁸⁰⁷

And this raises a question that McDowell somewhat apologetically acknowledges:

The question is how we can take that view without offering to reinstate the idea that the movement of the planets, or the fall of a sparrow, is rightly approached in the sort of way we approach a text or an utterance or some other kind of action.⁸⁰⁸

The apology is required insofar as: "this can look like a call to regress into a pre-scientific superstition, a crazily nostalgic attempt to re-enchant the natural world."⁸⁰⁹ It is clear that McDowell *is* seeking to re-enchant the world, and the recurring question is merely how can we re-enchant the world without becoming "crazy."

The question of what counts as a "crazily nostalgic attempt to re-enchant the natural world" could perhaps be re-phrased in terms of my earlier discussions of Cardinal Schönborn and Alfred North Whitehead. Schönborn, for example, was trying to distinguish "real" science from what might be better thought of as the unconscious philosophical, metaphysical, and ideological (i.e. moral and political) accretions that tend to accompany many so-called scientific claims. The first – "real" science – it would be "crazy" to deny; and the second – the various metaphysical accretions – it would not. Schönborn was attempting to deny the second. McDowell is trying to do something similar in so far as he takes "bald naturalism", i.e. the idea the world is exclusively subject to the intelligibility of mathematical models and natural causal laws, to be a similar "unreflective scientism"⁸¹⁰: "This kind of naturalism tends to represent itself as educated common sense, but it is really only primitive metaphysics".⁸¹¹ It seems, however, that McDowell wishes to leave a great deal of the kind of intelligibility proper to the modern natural sciences untouched, and merely to add a bit of the other kind of intelligibility back into the world. Yet Whitehead, for example, fears that there is an unacceptable dualism that may sneak in if this is done.⁸¹² Whitehead thus suggests changing our fundamental category in

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid., 72.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid., 72.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid., 72.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid., 72.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid., 89 note.

⁸¹¹ Ibid., 82.

⁸¹² Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 80. I discuss Whitehead's criticism of 'vitalism' in Part II, Seciton 4.

metaphysics from atoms in motion according to laws, to organic processes. Whitehead seeks to preserve what is good science, while rearranging its background metaphysical assumptions; he seeks to re-enchant the world without doing so crazily. Whitehead's taking the fundamental ontological category to be organic process governed by internal patterns or regularity, as opposed to atoms in motion according to external or imposed laws, seems to show that the debate over the immanence or exteriority of the natural order (which I discuss in Appendix I) is a metaphysical debate that might occur within the realm of the non-crazy.⁸¹³ Recalling my earlier discussion of H. H. Price, we might regard speculative metaphysical systems as "alternate modes of conceptual arrangement by which the body of empirical data is systematically ordered."⁸¹⁴ As I said before, in this sense, we might think that Wittgenstein's dictum that philosophy "leaves everything as it is" holds up.⁸¹⁵ The speculative metaphysician does not deny empirical data, but neither is his system a *mere* summary of it either. The speculative metaphysician is not "crazy" in the sense of flying in the face of modern scientific findings, but he is critical about how best to interpret them and how best to organize them and give them conceptual shape.

The point of bringing up this consequence is that it shows how the debate regarding the relationship between perception and thought may be related to the metaphysical debate regarding the "enchantment" of the world, i.e. the degree to which the order of the world may be akin to the structures of our own mind. If one finds a certain enchanted picture of the world unacceptable for various reasons – perhaps the reasons expressed by the moral argument against naturalism – then one will be equally predisposed to reject or resist psychological pictures like McDowell's direct realism, which seem to imply that the world is someone "enchanted." Another reason for rejecting this picture, however, comes from something like the moral argument from esotericism. And in order to see this we must look at another consequence of a view like McDowell's.

The second consequence of a view of perception that sees perception as combining spontaneity and receptivity is that observation, even observation in the sciences, or observation of the natural world, becomes "theory-laden" insofar as spontaneous thought penetrates or permeates our perceptual experience. There is long-running debate in the philosophy of science (a debate relate to Thomas Kuhn's discussion of paradigm shifts in the sciences) regarding the

⁸¹³ See Appendix I.

⁸¹⁴ Price, "Clarity of Not Enough", 26.

⁸¹⁵ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 49e. I §124.

relative fixity or plasticity of our perceptual experience and the subsequent relevance this has for the epistemological role of observation in resolving disagreements over theory construction. Jerry Fodor, for example, argues for an understanding of perception that is relatively fixed and theory neutral:

given the same stimulations, two organisms with the same sensory/perceptual psychology will quite generally observe the same things, and hence arrive at the same observational beliefs, however much their theoretical commitments may differ.⁸¹⁶

This view pulls in the direction of the myth of the given. Paul Churchland, however, argues for a comparatively more plastic account of perception in which our perceptions and subsequent observational beliefs are more influenced by our prior theoretical commitments. This view pulls in the direction of a troubling idealist, coherentism that would allows us see "*whatever* we want to see"⁸¹⁷ without any friction from the world. But, as McDowell suggests, I believe that our best course lies in steering towards the idealist view and away from the myth of the given. The myth of the given, with its utterly passive account of perception, is the Charybdis that sinks our entire epistemic endeavor, whereas the acknowledgement of a substantial amount of theory-ladenness seems to be the Scylla that makes trouble for conflict resolution but still lets our epistemic endeavor of getting into contact with world proceed. And, in summarizing Fodor's position, Churchland brings out the obvious similarity between Fodor's position, and that of the empiricist/liberal that Murdoch describes. Churchland summarizes Fodor's position thus:

Fodor's view...is that...[o]ur perceptual processing is ... encapsulated; it delivers outputs to the higher cognitive centers, but it is impenetrable to any inputs from them. The result, according to Fodor, is that all human beings are fated to share a common perceptual experience, an experience whose character is not subject to change as a function of any theories we come to embrace...There is an unchanging perspective, on at least some parts of reality, that all human theorists must share in common.⁸¹⁸

Recall that Murdoch's empiricist/liberal also held that

There are people whose fundamental moral belief is that we all live in the same empirical and rationally comprehensible world and that morality is the adoption of universal and openly defensible rules of conduct.⁸¹⁹

⁸¹⁶ Fodor, "Observation Reconsidered," 24-25.

⁸¹⁷ Samuel Schindler, "Observation and Theory-Ladenness," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Social Sciences*, ed. Byron Kaldis (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013), 2:694.

⁸¹⁸ Churchland, "Perceptual Plasticity," 169.

⁸¹⁹ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 47.

And here Fodor notes that the same kind of worries about conflict resolution that seem to arise from the denial of empiricism/liberalism in moral theory, also arise from the denial of fixed, theory neutral perception in the sciences:

the observational fixation of beliefs plays a special role in the adjudication and resolution of clashes of opinion. When observation is not appealed to, attempts to settle disputes often take the form of a search for premises that the disputants share. There is, in general, no point to my convincing you that belief B is derivable from theory T unless T is a theory you endorse; otherwise, my argument will seem to you merely a *reductio* of its premises. This is a peculiarly nasty property of inferential belief fixation because it means that the more we disagree about, the harder it will likely be to settle any of our disagreements. None of this applies, however, when the beliefs at issue are observational. Since observation is not a process in which new beliefs are inferred from old ones, the use of observation to resolve disputes does not depend on a prior consensus as to what premises may be assumed. The moral, children, is approximately Baconian. Don't think; look. Try not to argue.⁸²⁰

But, of course, the reliance on observation to resolve disagreements is not nearly as successful if we believe that observation itself is not insulated from theoretical assumptions.

Without giving any conclusive arguments on the behalf of perceptual plasticity or the permeation of cognitive processes into perceptual receptivity, I shall give what I take to be some evidence that seems to decide in favor of the latter, more plastic, conception of perception. I shall begin with some comments by William James. Debates in these areas are often hindered by artificial departmental boundaries, which cause academics working in the sciences (including empirical psychology), and in philosophy to artificially confine their methods and assumptions in approaching these topics. James is interesting because, when he was writing, in the early years of empirical psychology, the connections between psychology and philosophy were much more porous (I would consider James a philosopher even in light of his sizable contributions to psychology). In a work entitled *Psychology: The Briefer Course*, which was meant to be an abridgement of James's larger two volume work, *The Principles of Psychology*, James writes the following in the preface:

I have left out all the polemical and historical matter, all the metaphysical discussions and purely speculative passages, most of the quotations, all the book references, and (I trust) all the impertinences, of the larger work...⁸²¹

⁸²⁰ Fodor, "Observation Reconsidered," 24.

⁸²¹ James, Psychology: Briefer Course, iii.

The abridged work is meant to be more along the lines of the product of "a neutral scientific worker"⁸²² (to borrow a phrase from Murdoch). Yet this implies that the larger work was self-acknowledgedly not a neutral scientific work, rather, it was acknowledged by its author to have polemical elements. Like the contemporary writer Alva Noë, who prefaced a work on cognitive psychology by writing:

this book is political. I am writing the book to change the world. Or at least to shake up the cognitive science establishment 823

James too thinks of his work as being "political" in this sense. In particular, I am interested in the following claim by James in *The Principles of Psychology*:

we almost all of us assume that as the objects are, so the thought must be. The thought of several distinct things can only consist of several distinct bits of thought, or 'ideas;' that of an abstract or universal object can only be an abstract or universal idea. As each object may come and go, be forgotten and then thought of again, it is held that the thought of it has a precisely similar independence, self-identity, and mobility. The thought of the object's recurrent identity is regarded as the identity of its recurrent thought; and the perceptions of multiplicity, of coexistence, of succession, are severally conceived to be brought about only through a multiplicity, a coexistence, a succession, of perceptions. The continuous flow of the mental stream is sacrificed, and in its place an atomism, a brickbat plan of construction, is preached, for the existence of which no good introspective grounds can be brought forward, and out of which presently grow all sorts of paradoxes and contradictious, the heritage of woe of students of the mind.

These words are meant to impeach the entire English psychology derived from Locke and Hume, and the entire German psychology derived from Herbart, so far as they both treat 'ideas' as separate subjective entities that come and go.⁸²⁴

Much later in the work, James says a bit more about what he means by "impeaching the entire

English psychology derived from Locke and Hume". He writes:

The truth is that Experience is trained by *both* association and dissociation, and that psychology must be writ *both* in synthetic and in analytic terms. Our original sensible totals are, on the one hand, subdivided by discriminative attention, and, on the other, united with other totals, either through the agency of our own movements, carrying our senses from one part of space to another, or because new objects come successively and replace those by which we were at first impressed. The 'simple impression' of Hume, the 'simple idea' of Locke are both abstractions, never realized in experience. Experience, from the very first, presents us with concreted objects, vaguely continuous with the rest of the world which envelops them in space and time, and potentially divisible into inward elements and parts. These objects we break asunder and reunite. We must treat them in

⁸²² Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, 51.

⁸²³ Noë, Out of Our Heads, xiv.

⁸²⁴ James, Principles of Psychology, Vol.I, 195-196.

both ways for our knowledge of them to grow; and it is hard to say, on the whole, which way preponderates. ...the elements with which the traditional associationism performs its constructions — 'simple sensations,' namely — are all products of discrimination carried to a high pitch...⁸²⁵

What we see here is that James rejects the empiricist idea that we all share in common certain atomic sensory qualities, which are passively given, that lie behind our seemingly more complex perceptual experiences. These 'simple impressions' or 'simple ideas' are already the products of our analytical powers isolating and abstracting things from the more concrete "continuous flow of the mental stream."

This criticism of how it is that we talk about our experience is directly analogous to the criticism made by Whitehead regarding the way in which early modern philosophers and scientists conceived of their ontology. The guiding metaphysical assumption of the seventeenth century was, according to Whitehead, the assumption that the most concrete aspect of reality was atomic parcels of matter defined by simple location. Such atoms were independently intelligible, i.e. intelligible in isolation, and could then be seen subsequently to enter into more complex external relations. But the bottom line is that all the more complex relations were reducible back into their atomic constituents. The atoms were considered to be in some sense prior or more concrete than the aggregates. But, however useful this assumption may have been for the sake of theory construction, Whitehead argues that it involved a misplaced concreteness. Philosophers in the seventeenth century considered these atoms to be the most concrete things, when in fact they were abstractions from a much richer ontology of nature. James is arguing that we have a similar tendency to think that our sensory data, or our perceptual experience, is likewise atomic in its most "concrete" aspects. We are tempted to think that the simple ideas and simple impressions are the most basic components of our perceptual experience, and that all of our other more complex perceptual experiences are built up from these more basic elements. We are tempted to think, James writes, that:

Our first unanalyzed sensation was really composed of these elementary sensations, our first rapid conclusion was really based on these intermediate inferences, all the while, only we failed to note the fact.⁸²⁶

But, James argues, this is a mistake:

⁸²⁵ Ibid., 487.

⁸²⁶ Ibid., 488.

But this is nothing but the fatal 'psychologists fallacy' of treating an inferior state of mind as if it must somehow know implicitly all that is explicitly known about the same topic by superior states of mind.⁸²⁷

And the reason that James thinks this is a mistake is that, introspectively, the evidence simply points in another direction. James thinks that our spontaneous powers of attention cause our mind to carry out various analytic and synthetic operations that give shape and organization to the otherwise undifferentiated stream of perceptual experience. These various analytic and synthetic cognitive acts are not *inferential* or *discursive*; rather, they are *immediate* and *non-discursive*. And the reason that empiricists have been loth to discuss such receptive spontaneity, or such shaping of our experience by attention, is that the existence of such cognitive powers destroys the myth of the given. More importantly, it destroys the possibility that we might all have recourse to refer back to a shared common stock of atomic sense data, underlying our seemingly distinctive perceptual experiences, for the sake of resolving theoretical conflicts. James writes:

Strange to say, so patent a fact as the perpetual presence of selective attention has received hardly any notice from psychologists of the English empiricist school...in the pages of such writers as Locke, Hume, Hartley, the Mills, and Spencer the word hardly occurs, or if it does so, it is parenthetically and as if by inadvertence. The motive of this ignoring of the phenomenon of attention is obvious enough. These writers are bent on showing how the higher faculties of the mind are pure products of 'experience;' and experience is supposed to be of something simply *given*. Attention, implying a degree of reactive spontaneity, would seem to break through the circle of pure receptivity which constitutes 'experience,' and hence must not be spoken of under penalty of interfering with the smoothness of the tale.⁸²⁸

In many ways, James anticipates Sellars's and McDowell's criticism of the myth of the given; and he also seems to anticipate something like McDowell's insistence on spontaneity exercised in receptivity. The difference is that McDowell seems to arrive at these conclusions through philosophical arguments about the epistemological inadequacy of the myth of the given, whereas

⁸²⁷ Ibid., 488.

⁸²⁸ Ibid., 402. The entry for "attention" from an early twentieth century dictionary vindicates James's claim regarding the neglect of the phenomenon of attention: "With some notable exceptions...attention was greatly neglected until more modern times notably by the English empiricists. ...It was considered an un-analyzable attribute of the soul, and direct evidence of the independent activity of the mental principle." James Mark Baldwin ed., *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (The Macmillan company, 1901), 86. Kant is listed as one of the "notable exceptions."

James seems to rely more on the failure of the empiricist myth of the given to hold up to introspective evidence.

William James offers a compelling description of the introspective evidence that would seem to give an alternative picture of perceptual experience than the empiricist one. James argues that there is a certain activity of *attention* – a "reactive spontaneity" – that shapes our perceptual experience:

Millions of items of the outward order are present to my senses which never properly enter into my experience. Why? Because they have no *interest* for me. My experience is what I agree to attend to. Only those items which I *notice* shape my mind – without selective interest, experience is an utter chaos. Interest alone gives accent and emphasis, light and shade, background and foreground – intelligible perspective, in a word. It varies in every creature, but without it the consciousness of every creature would be a gray chaotic indiscriminateness, impossible for us even to conceive.⁸²⁹

James says that without the order bestowed on our sensory experience by conscious attention our experience would be "a gray chaotic indiscriminateness." This implies that an active process of thinking or cognition shapes our sensory perception, and that there is no isolable or separable contribution made by receptivity without the spontaneous shaping powers of attention – i.e. no myth of the given. Kant, anticipating James, likewise says that without some manner of synthesis of ("the manifold" of) our sensory impressions, we would be faced with "mere unruly heaps"⁸³⁰, which would not properly form any experience at all, but would be "less than a dream."⁸³¹ Hence Kant's famous dictum: Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.⁸³² (McDowell also notices his indebtedness to Kant on this point, yet he says that "Kant comes within a whisker of a satisfactory escape from the oscillation"⁸³³ between the myth of the given and an unacceptable coherentist idealism, only Kant's transcendental frame "spoils the insight."⁸³⁴ In other words, Kant acknowledges that our spontaneous cognitive powers are inseparably linked with our receptivity, only he refuses to acknowledge that such receptive spontaneity might put into contact with the world; rather, he maintains that "things in themselves" still elude us.) But the most interesting introspective evidence as to why we should

⁸²⁹ Ibid., 402-403.

⁸³⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 239. A121.

⁸³¹ Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, 235. A112.

⁸³² Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, 193-194. A51/B75.

⁸³³ McDowell, Mind and World, 42.

⁸³⁴ Ibid., 96.

think of our perceptual experience as shaped by a kind of active attention comes from the implicit reliance of James and Kant upon two hypothetical contrast cases: one in which our spontaneous powers give shape to our perceptual experience; and another case in which the spontaneous shaping powers are absent, or, so to speak, "turned off". The hypothesized contrast case in which attention is lacking James calls a "gray chaotic indiscriminateness" and Kant calls "less than a dream." What is clear in each case is that, if we were to conceive of a contribution from receptivity that was free form the ordering spontaneity of the mind, such a contribution would not be given in terms of Hume's simple impressions or Locke's simple ideas, but would be a kind of undifferentiated mess.

James goes a bit further in describing what he means by attention by giving a more vivid account of the implied opposite of attention. At one point he famously says that: "The baby, assailed by eyes, ears, nose, skin, and entrails at once, feels it all as one great blooming, buzzing confusion."⁸³⁵ In other words, James hypothesizes that before an infant develops the requisite skills of attending, and before he builds up a sufficient stock of concepts, his purportedly unconceptualized, purely receptively, or purely *given* experience, assaults him in the way that James and Kant seem to imply that such experiences would, i.e. as "unruly heaps" or "chaotic indiscriminateness." Yet James goes further. James says that attention "is a condition which has a real opposite in the confused, dazed, scatterbrained state which in French is called *distraction*, and *Zerstreutheit* in German."⁸³⁶ James describes the state of *distraction* in the following passage:

We all know this latter state, even in its extreme degree. Most people probably fall several times a day into a fit of something like this: The eyes are fixed on vacancy, the sounds of the world melt into confused unity, the attention is dispersed so that the whole body is felt, as it were, at once, and the foreground of consciousness is filled, if by anything, a sort of solemn sense of surrender to the empty passing of time. In the dim background of our mind we know meanwhile what we ought to be doing: getting up, dressing ourselves, answering the person who has spoken to us, trying to make the next step in our reasoning. But somehow we cannot *start*; the *pensée de derrière la tête* fails to pierce the shell of lethargy that wraps our state about. Every moment we expect the spell to break, for we know no reason why it should continue. But is does continue, pulse after pulse, and we float with it, until – also without reason that we can discover – an energy is given, something – we know not what – enables us to gather ourselves together,

⁸³⁵ James, *Principles of Psychology, Vol. 1*, 488.

⁸³⁶ Ibid., 404.

we wink our eyes, we shake our heads, the background-ideas become effective, and the wheels of life go round again."⁸³⁷

In short, James thinks that occasionally we are able to experience again something like the "blooming, buzzing confusion" of the infant when we allow our minds to utterly relax. He says that we can produce this state "at will," for example, by "fixing the eyes on vacancy."

Perhaps the most vivid description of this kind of purportedly unconceptualized perceptual experience, however, is that given by Jean-Paul Sartre in his novel *La Nausée*. Sartre's protagonist in the novel, Antoine Roquentin, describes in his diary recurring "nauseating" experiences where he seems to catch glimpses of reality unmediated by any conceptual organization. Consider the following passage from Roquentin's diary where Antoine describes his experience of a seat on the tram:

I lean my hand on the seat, but pull it back hurriedly: it exists. This thing I'm sitting on, leaning my hand on, is called a seat. [...] I murmur: "It's a seat," a little like an exorcism. But the word stays on my lips: it refuses to go and put itself on the thing. It stays what it is, with its red plush, thousands of little red paws in the air, all still, little dead paws. This enormous belly turned upward, bleeding, inflated – bloated with all its dead paws, this belly floating in this car, in this grey sky, is not a seat. It could just as well be a dead donkey tossed about in the water, floating with the current, belly in the air in a great grey river, a river of floods; and I could be sitting on the donkey's belly, my feet dangling in the clear water. Things are divorced from their names [*Les chose se sont délivrées de leurs noms*]. They are there, grotesque, headstrong, gigantic and it seems ridiculous to call them seats or say anything at all about them: I am in the midst of things, nameless things. Alone, without words, defenseless, they surround me, are beneath me, behind me, above me.⁸³⁸

Given this description, Sartre implies that we need names, or I think we could say concepts, to place over things in order to make them keep still, so to speak; without any stable concepts or names, we are left defenseless among the flux of our sensory experience. In a similar passage, arguably the climax of the novel, Antoine describes, in his diary, an experience of a tree root:

The roots of the chestnut tree were sunk in the ground just under my bench. I couldn't remember it was a root any more. The words had vanished and with them the significance of things... [...] ...existence had suddenly unveiled itself. It had lost the harmless look of an abstract category: it was the very paste of things, this root was kneaded into existence. Or rather the root, the park gates, the bench, the sparse grass, all that had vanished: the diversity of things, their individuality, were only an appearance, a veneer. This veneer had melted, leaving soft, monstrous masses, all in disorder – naked,

⁸³⁷ Ibid., 404.

⁸³⁸ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions Publishing, 2007), 125.

in a frightful, obscene nakedness. [...] A circle is not absurd, it is clearly explained by the rotation of a straight segment around one of the extremities. But neither does a circle exist. This root, on the other hand, existed in such a way that I could not explain it. Knotty, inert, nameless, it fascinated me, filled my eyes, brought me back unceasingly to its own existence. In vain to repeat: "This is a root" it didn't work anymore. [...] This root, with its colour, shape, its congealed movement was...below all explanation. Each of its qualities escaped it a little, flowed out of it, half solidified, almost became a thing; [...] ...when I drew my heel back, I saw the bark was still black. / Black? I felt the word deflating, emptied of meaning with extraordinary rapidity. Black? The root was not black, there was no black on this piece of wood – there was...something else: black, like the circle, did not exist. I looked at the root: was it more than black or almost black? [...] The simplest, most indefinable quality had too much content, in relation to itself, in its heart. That black against my foot, it didn't look like black, but rather the confused effort to imagine black by someone who had never seen black... [...] I did not simply see this black: sight is an abstract invention, a simplified idea, one of man's ideas. That black, amorphous, weakly presence, far surpasses sight, smell, taste. But this richness was lost in confusion and finally was no more because it was too much.⁸³⁹

Now the question is: what do we make of these contrast cases? What is the difference between Antoine's "normal" perceptual experience of seats and roots (what James calls "the Perception of 'Things'"⁸⁴⁰), and his perceptual experiences when he is in the grip of the nausea? What is the difference, in James's example, between the experience of distraction, and the experience in which the "wheels go round again"?

While we can certainly see similarities between the experience described by James and that described by Antoine, we can also see an important difference. With regard to similarities, James says that in this state of *distraction* "the sounds of the world melt into confused unity" just as Antoine had said about his the distinctions in his visual field:

the diversity of things, their individuality, were only an appearance, a veneer. This veneer had melted, leaving soft, monstrous masses, all in disorder.⁸⁴¹

Yet the difference is more important. James says that the abolition of this condition of distraction "is what we call the awakening of attention." Whereas Antoine describes his state of "Nausea" as the melting of a "veneer" or the "unveiling" of existence. Behind the veil, being is naked – "a frightful, obscene nakedness." With respect to the state of Nausea, Antoine says:

The Nausea had not left me and I don't believe it will leave me soon; but I no longer have to bear it, it is no longer an illness or a passing fit: it is I^{842} .

⁸³⁹ Ibid., 126-131.

⁸⁴⁰ James, *Principles of Psychology, Vol. II*, chapter XIX.

⁸⁴¹ Sartre, Nausea, 127.

In our two contrast cases, James construes us as awaking from distraction, and Antoine as awaking to it. This is because Antoine seems to share Sartre's metaphysical commitments, and these metaphysical commitments seem to shape the experience. Sartre, perhaps somewhat like the medieval nominalists, holds to a view that we might call *universalia post rem* (universals after the thing) in which the particular objects of sensory experience are both temporally prior to and ontologically prior to (i.e. more real than) any universal or general concepts that give shape to them. This is consistent with Sartre's famous definition of existentialism: "existence precedes essence", i.e. that particular things exist prior to being defined or shaped by any universal notions.⁸⁴³ And this belief is not merely something separable, which is added to the experience Antoine describes, but rather it shapes the experience itself. While Antoine finds his "perceptions" of unconceptualized reality or unconceptualized being to be nauseating, he does in fact think that such experiences are veridical. In other words, when he "recovers" from his nausea, he actually feels as if he is just hiding behind his concepts; and that "out there" lurk those unruly heaps of being. We might be put in mind of a famous passage from Schopenhauer that haunted Nietzsche's early writing:

Just as the boatman sits in his small boat, trusting his frail craft in a stormy sea that is boundless in every direction, rising and falling with the howling, mountainous waves, so in the midst of a world full of suffering and misery the individual man calmly sits, supported by and trusting the *principium individuationis*, or the way in which the individual knows things as phenomenon.⁸⁴⁴

To think of the conceptual organization of one's experience in this way, as kind of projection of rationally intelligible order or meaning onto an antecedently existing world that is, in itself, frightful, and obscenely naked, is obviously the source of much of the *angst* of the existentialist. And, for the existentialist, whose ethics, like the Aristotelian or the Platonist, is metaphysically informed, this idea – the idea that God is dead; that the world has no immanent, unconscious, teleological ordering principles; no essences – lends a palpable, visceral, ever-present coloring to his very perceptual experiences and his actions. It is thus the lapsed Protestant/secular liberal who becomes a baffling enigma insofar as he purports to believe, with the existentialist, that God

⁸⁴² Ibid., 126.

⁸⁴³ Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Humanism of Existentialism," in *Essays in Existentialism*, ed. Wade Baskin, 2nd ed. (New York: Citadel Press, 1968), 34.

⁸⁴⁴Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation, Vol. 1*, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), 352-353.

is dead, and that Aristotle is properly ignored, derided and disbelieved, and yet he purports to acknowledge no change in his perceptual experience or in his actions.⁸⁴⁵ But here is not the time to deal with what explains the liberal's failure to feel the existentialist *angst*.

For the meantime, I think that one more example from Rudyard Kipling might bring home how the shift from a state of distraction to one of proper perceptual organization might be described, and how such a change might be deeply connected with one's moral being. In his novel *Kim*, Kipling describes Kim's experience thus:

Then he looked upon the trees and the broad fields, with the thatched huts hidden among crops—looked with strange eyes unable to take up the size and proportion and use of things—stared for a still half-hour. All that while he felt, though he could not put it into words, that his soul was out of gear with its surroundings—a cog-wheel unconnected with any machinery...The breezes fanned over him, the parrots shrieked at him, the noises of the populated house behind—squabbles, orders, and reproofs—hit on dead ears...

He did not want to cry—had never felt less like crying in his life—but of a sudden easy, stupid tears trickled down his nose, and with an almost audible click he felt the wheels of his being lock up anew on the world without. Things that rode meaningless on the eyeball an instant before slid into proper proportion. Roads were meant to be walked upon, houses to be lived in, cattle to be driven, fields to be tilled, and men and women to be talked to. They were all real and true—solidly planted upon the feet—perfectly comprehensible—clay of his clay, neither more nor less.⁸⁴⁶

Here we have something analogous to the description found in James, and in Sartre – analogous

⁸⁴⁵ Sartres was equally baffled by such persons. He writes: "The existentialist is strongly opposed to a certain kind of secular ethics which would like to abolish God with the least possible expense. About 1880, some French teachers tried to set up a secular ethics which went something like this: God is a useless and costly hypothesis; we are discarding it; but, meanwhile, in order for their to be an ethics, a society, a civilization, it is essential that certain values be taken seriously and that they be considered as having an a priori existence. It must be obligatory, a priori, to be honest, not to lie, not to beat your wife, to have children, etc., etc. So we're going to try a little device which will make it possible to show that values exist all the same, inscribed in a heaven of ideas, though otherwise God does not exist. In other words – and this, I believe, is the tendency of everything called reformism in France – nothing will be changed if God does not exist. We shall find ourselves with the same norms of honesty, progress, and humanism, and we shall have made God an outdated hypothesis which will peacefully die off by itself. / The existentialist, on the contrary, thinks it very distressing that God does not exist, because all possibility of finding values in a heaven of ideas disappears along with Him." Sartres, "The Humanism of Existentialism," 40. So while the existentialist and the Aristotelian do not agree, they at least understand each other. They are both naturalists in Murdoch's sense – they each see their ethical views as flowing from their conception of how things are. The Protestant liberal, or the French, humanist reformer, however, holds his values *simpliciter*, and thus is somewhat of a perplexity to both the existentialist and the Aristotelian.

⁸⁴⁶ Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1901), 448-449. John Haldane quotes a slightly shorter section of the book. Haldane, *Faithful Reason*, 277-278.

in the sense that we seem to have something like a transition from a state of unorganized or confused sensory experience to one of conceptually organized perceptual experience – only here it is obvious that when Kim's cognitive powers are properly engaged, they do not separate him from reality, or throw up a veil, or a projection between him and being, but rather, it is the active "wheels of his being" that "lock up on the world without."

In these examples, we can begin to see what Murdoch has in mind when she says that people engaged in moral disputes often "see different worlds." And we can begin to see what Cora Diamond has in mind when she says that Murdoch "had tried to show that a view of *what we are as moral agents* could itself be a moral view; and that a view of *what the world is like* could be a moral view."⁸⁴⁷ Sartre's Antoine seems to be a kind of existentialist, and Kipling's Kim seems, at least in the passage quoted, to be a kind of naturalist of an almost Aristotelian variety. And both of the characters seem to "see different worlds" in the sense that their very perceptual experiences are colored by these outlooks.

We should dismiss what I take to be certain "deflationary" accounts of what this difference amounts to. First, for example, someone might concede that what it's like to have the first kind of experience is different from what it's like to have the second kind of experience, but would then try to explain the difference by saying that the phenomenological difference is located not in one's perceptual experiences, but rather in one's purely doxastic experience, i.e. one has a different experience, but it is the experience of having a different belief, not the experience of *seeing* something different or having a different perceptual experience. But this would mean that the only difference in Antoine's experience before the nausea sets in and afterwards is a different belief. But this is surely false. Holding beliefs does not typically make one nauseous or induce a sense of vertigo. Only a kind of perceptual experience could do this, i.e. only something with the immediacy and non-discursive nature of perception could induce the kind of dizziness and nausea that Antoine's descriptions convey.

Second, someone might try to account for the differences between the two cases in terms of a difference in salience, or a difference in focus. Perhaps, one might say, Antoine has the same basic underlying perceptual state in both experiences, both before and after the feeling of nausea. He simply attends to or focuses on certain features in the one experience and certain other features in the second experience. Again, this objection tries to argue that there is some

⁸⁴⁷ Diamond, "Perpetually Moralists", 89.

shared perceptual basis of perceptual experience that is given to the mind in both cases, but Antoine's mind simply attends to different parts of the experience. But this also seems to give a distortion of the experience described by Sartre. Antoine's experience is not simply one in which the seat or the root is in the margin or the fringe of his focus. Rather, these objects remain in the focus in both experiences, and seem to undergo something like a *gestalt* shift. It is not as if the "spot light" or "zoom lens"⁸⁴⁸ of his focus moves from area to another thus leaving the first in the periphery; rather he simply construes the underlying sensory data differently in both cases. The difference is similar to something like the perceptual instability that one feels in looking at classical *gestalt* psychology images like the duck-rabbit. The underlying lines take on a wholly different appearance when one sees them as a duck, as opposed to when one sees them as a rabbit. And in the experience described as nausea, we might say that Antoine simply does not construe the underlying sensory data at all. To make a parallel with the *gestalt* example, perhaps one fails to *see* the duck or the rabbit, and simply sees a random assemblage of ink marks.

James's (predominantly phenomenal) account of the difference between the two kinds of case seems to be very close to this *gestalt* sense. James *nearly* admits something like the empiricist's "given" when he talks about pure "sensation" as opposed to "perception." James makes the following distinction between 'sensation' and 'perception':

Both of them name processes in which we cognize an objective world; both (under normal conditions) need the stimulations of oncoming nerves ere they can occur; Perception always involves Sensation as a portion of itself; and Sensation in turn never takes place in adult life without Perception also being there. They are therefore names for different cognitive functions, not for different sorts of mental fact. The nearer the object cognized comes to being a simply quality like 'hot,' 'cold,' 'red,' 'noise,' 'pain,' apprehended irrevelatively to other things, the more the state of mind approaches pure sensation. The fuller of relations the object is, on the contrary; the more it is something classed, located, measured, compared, assigned to a function, etc., etc; the more unreservedly do we call the state of mind a perception, and the relatively smaller is the part in it which sensation plays. / Sensation, then, so long as we take the analytic point of view, differs from Perception only in the extreme simplicity of its object or content.⁸⁴⁹

James's point is that, insofar as we are talking about subjective states of mind, the difference between sensation and perception only reflects the complexity of the contents of those states –

⁸⁴⁸ Sometimes the phenomenon of visual attention may just be that of a kind of attention spotlight. See: Elizabeth A. Styles, *Attention, Perception and Memory: An Integrated Introduction* (New York: Psychology Press, 2005), 83ff.

⁸⁴⁹ James, *Principles of Psychology, Vol. II*, 1-2. Emphasis in the original.

perception bearing more of the organizing effects of the mind than sensation. And it may seem as if James is here slipping back into the empiricist tendency to describe sensation as a basic underlying component of perception – a kind of contribution from receptivity that is uncolored by, or antecedent to, the active mind, and a kind of contribution that we may have recourse to for the resolving of disagreements concerning more complex perceptual properties - but it is clear by his comment that "sensation never takes place in adult life without perception also being there" that this is not the case. Sensation and perception are both immediate and non-discursive states. Any act of attention that organizes the experience in one way or another essentially replaces one experience with another.

Perception, according to James, is "the consciousness of particular things present to sense"⁸⁵⁰ or, in a longer definition endorsed by James,

[p]erception may be...defined...as that process by which the mind "supplements a senseimpression by an accompaniment or escort of revived sensations, the whole aggregate of actual and revived sensations being solidified or 'integrated' into the form of a percept, that is, an apparently immediate apprehension or cognition of an object now present in a particular locality or region of space"⁸⁵¹

So while perception may require a certain amount of "processing" at the causal level over and above what is involved in pure sensation, it is clear that both sensation and perception are both phenomenally immediate states. And perceptions are non-derivative in this way; they are not the kind of things that are inferred from other states, or that could be broken down and reduced to simpler parts. Regarding the relation between sensation and perception, James writes:

we certainly ought not to say what usually is said by psychologists, and treat the perception as a sum of distinct psychic entities, the present sensation namely, *plus* a lot of images from the past, all 'integrated' together in a way impossible to describe. The perception is one state of mind or nothing — as I have already so often said.⁸⁵²

In other words, the movement from pure sensation to perception of any kind requires something like a *gestalt* shift from one whole experience to a different whole experience. Even the experience of something like Hume's simple impression or Locke's simple idea involves a replacing of the stream of consciousness with a new discriminated image:

The thing thought of is unquestionably the same, but it is thought twice over in two absolutely different psychoses, – once as an unbroken unit, and again as a sum of

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid., 76.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid., 79.

⁸⁵² Ibid., 80.

discriminated parts. It is not one thought in two editions, but two entirely distinct thoughts of one thing.⁸⁵³

This process is what Wittgenstein calls noticing an aspect, and what is often called "intuition" by many contemporary philosophers.

Wittgenstein's idea of noticing an aspect is helpful in understanding what goes on when we notice higher-order patterns in our sensory experience. He writes

Two uses of the word 'see'.

The one: "what do you see there?" – "I see *this*" (and then a description, a drawing, a copy). The other: "I see a likeness between these two faces" – let the man I tell this to be seeing the faces as clearly as I do myself.

The importance of this is the difference in category between the two 'objects' of sight.

The one man might make an accurate drawing of the two faces, and the other notice in the drawing the likeness which the former did not see.

I contemplate a face, and then suddenly notice its likeness to another. I *see* that it has not changed; and yet I see it differently. I call this experience "noticing an aspect".⁸⁵⁴

These two senses of 'see' roughly track James's distinction between sensation and perception (Wittgenstein uses the special sensory modality of sight in this example, but he allows that some analogous distinction surely holds with, say, hearing as well). Yet, of course, even the first sense of 'see' is a perception, in James's sense, insofar as *pure* sensation is something (*almost?*) wholly absent from adult life (we *may* have seen it in the baby's blooming buzzing confusion, Antoine's nausea, James's description of *distraction*; although even these cases probably still involve *some* formal shape being given to experience by the mind, albeit a minimal shape). Most all of our sensory experiences have already been given some *form* by our minds (*Gestalt* means 'form'). Just as those thinking in terms of hylomorphic or Aristotelian metaphysics will tend to think that everything has *some* form or *some* actuality or other – there being no pure potentiality or pure mater, no *prima materia* – we might think that there are likewise nearly no instances of pure un-formed sensation.⁸⁵⁵ Yet we can often notice certain aspects of forms in our sensory

⁸⁵³ James, Principles of Psychology, Volume I, 489.

⁸⁵⁴ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 193e. II.xi.

⁸⁵⁵ W. E. Johnson makes the following remark about a dispute over the foundations of geometry: "Both parties started with an obscure view, that there was an opposition between intuition and experience; whereas in truth intuition is a *form* of knowledge, in relation to which experience is the *matter*. The intuitionists seem to have held that the intuitive form of knowledge involved no reference to experience; whereas the empiricists forgot, when relying upon experience as the sole factor in knowledge, that *knowing is a mode of activity*, and therefore not of the same nature as *sense-experience which is merely*

experience, and fail to notice others. New aspects can dawn on us. And, when this happens, we seem to experience entirely new perceptual experiences of the same thing. Wittgenstein asks:

Do I really see something different each time, or do I only interpret what I see in a different way? I am inclined to say the former. But why? – To interpret is to think, to do something; seeing is a state.

Now it is easy to recognize cases in which we are *interpreting*. When we interpret we form hypotheses, which may prove false. – "I am seeing this figure as a…" can be verified as little as (or in the same sense as) "I am seeing bright red". So there is a similarity in the use of "seeing" in the two contexts.⁸⁵⁶

He then goes on to say:

The concept of an aspect is akin to the concept of an image. In other words: the concept 'I am now seeing it as...' is akin to 'I am now having *this* image'.⁸⁵⁷

What is clear here is that we seem to have something that is very much like thinking or interpreting in that we seem to have some active control over how it is that we construe or organize things: Wittgenstein says that seeing an aspect is subject to the will; and that there is such as order as "Now see the figure like this" but not "Now see this leaf green."⁸⁵⁸ Yet, at the same time, we seem to be dealing with something non-discursive. In some sense, we tend to think that "thinking" implies inferring, or interpreting, or some sort of mental running about, or some sort of mental assembling or mental manipulation of thoughts or ideas. But seeing an aspect is not like this. Just like an image, aspects are simply and immediately present to us. Wittgestein often tries to describe seeing an aspect as "half visual experience, half thought"⁸⁵⁹ or as "both seeing and thinking"⁸⁶⁰ or as "the echo of a thought in sight."⁸⁶¹ What I suggest is that modern philosophy has tended to neglect non-discursive cognitive abilities, especially as they may be found to be operative in sensory perception. Thinking for us is typically conceived solely as *ratio*, as ratiocination, as discursive reason. We have almost no concept for what

- ⁸⁶⁰ Ibid., 197e.
- ⁸⁶¹ Ibid., 212e.

passive or recipient. The truth is that when we have asserted a predicate of a particular, we have apprehended the universal *in* the particular, in the sense that the adjective is universal and the object of which it is predicated particular." Emphases added. Johnson makes use of the form/matter distinction that I suggested above. W. E. Johnson, *Logic Part II Demonstrative Inference Deductive And Inductive* (Dover Publications, 1924), 191.

⁸⁵⁶ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 212e.

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid., 213e.

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid., 213e.

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid., 197e.

intellectus or *nous* would have conveyed to someone like Aristotle or St. Thomas, or what it might mean for such non-discursive cognitive operations to shape our perceptual experience. The term intuition may be employed here, but with some hesitation.

What James and Wittgenstein are both describing is a kind of sensory perception in which our perceptual experience is shaped by the spontaneous or active operation of some cognitive powers. I have been trying to indicate how this is different from an empiricist conception that sees our perceptions as passively delivered up to us, and upon which we subsequently set to work interpreting. The former understanding of sensory perception is essentially the way that Aristotle, St. Thomas, and Iris Murdoch (and surprisingly not Plato) tended to think about the nature of our sensory experience.⁸⁶² The pre-modern notion of intellection found in Aristotle and later in scholastic Aristotelian thinkers like St. Thomas risks being conflated with modern empiricists thought, however, insofar as Aristotle and St. Thomas are thought to endorse the old Peripatetic axiom: *nihil est in intellectu, nisi prius fuerit in sensu* – "Nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses." But the manner in which the senses come to inform the intellect on the Aristotelian understanding is different than the understanding of the empiricists. Unlike the empiricists, perceptual experience, on this Aristotelian model, is not passively given, but rather spontaneous cognitive powers shape the reception. But if the Aristotelian model risks being conflated with empiricism, it also risks being conflated with a kind of *a priori* intuitionism that sees a stark contrast between sensory perception and pure intellection.

⁸⁶²Paolo Biondi notes that, in terms of Hellenistic thought, Aristotle's understanding of the relation between thought and perception is unique, and has been historically liable to slip back into Platonic intuitionism or skeptical empiricism. Yet it does seem that something like Aristotle's understanding of the relation of thought and perception was resurrected during the golden age of scholasticism by thinkers like Aquinas: "[Hellenistic schools] rejected the intellectual perception of the non-sensible universal in the sensible particular, which is the very essence of the inductive process as Aristotle understood it. With Plotinus and the Neoplatonists some Greek philosophers revert to the Platonic epistemology and metaphysics, with the concomitant duality of the sensible realm perceptible to the senses and the intelligible realm of Forms knowable to the intellect. As a consequence, Aristotle's account in *Posterior Analytics* II.19 turns out to be the only attempt in the history of Greek philosophy to place so much faith in the sense-perception of 'empirical' reality as a source of knowledge and the foundation of scientific explanation." Paolo C. Biondi, "Aristotle's Analysis of Perception," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 66, no. 1 (février 2010): 31–32.

There is an equally strong temptation, especially in moral philosophy, to confuse Aristotle's account of intellection with a form of rational intuitionism.⁸⁶³ And since I am preparing to discuss the role of this view of perception in moral philosophy in the next section, a brief word must be said here to head off any confusion. This temptation arises because ethical intuitionists agree, both among themselves, and with Aristotle, that at least some of our moral knowledge is acquired non-discursively or non-inferentially. This is presumably the heart of any position we might call intuitionism.⁸⁶⁴ This belief is generally denied by what I have been calling empiricism insofar as empiricism tends to think that any moral knowledge must be inferred from more basic sensory impressions or ideas in a discursive manner, since empirical experience is merely given and thus remains in the realm of the causal as opposed to the epistemic – this is the myth of the given. And so while ethical intuitionists agree with Aristotle that some moral knowledge is non-inferential, the agreement stops here. The disagreement between Aristotle and intuitionists lies in at least two points. First, most intuitionists tend to think that the objects of intuition are exclusively general, *a priori*, and necessary, as opposed to particular, a posteriori, and contingent; thus intuition is distinguished from any manner of sensory perception. In other words, there seems to be a disagreement between Aristotle and intuitionists over the contents of sensory perception. And second, most intuitionists tend to think of intuitions as being not only a priori but also innate, in the sense of not being acquired diachronically through experience and observation. In other words, there seems to be a disagreement between Aristotle and the intuitionists over the plasticity or the developmental nature of our ability to non-discursively apprehend knowledge, and the role of training and experience in developing these capacities. This first point runs contrary to Aristotle's claim that discerning the mean in practical deliberation about particular actions requires the use of sensory perception, aisthesis, and the second runs contrary to his claim that experience and training are

⁸⁶³ As evidence of this tempting confusion, consider the following debate which began in *New Scholasticism* and spilled over into *Apeiron*: Bernard H. Baumrin, "Aristotle's Ethical Intuitionism," *New Scholasticism* 42, no. 1 (1968): 1–17; James T. King, "Aristotle's Ethical Non-Intuitionism," *New Scholasticism* 43, no. 1 (1969): 131–142; Lawrence J. Jost, "Is Aristotle an Ethical Intuitionist?" *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science* 10, no. 1 (1976): 15–19; Rex Martin, "Intuitionism and the Practical Syllogism in Aristotle's 'Ethics." *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science* 11, no. 2 (1977): 12–19; Roger A. Shiner, "Ethical Perception in Aristotle." *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science* 13, no. 2 (1979): 79–85.

⁸⁶⁴ For example, see Robert Audi, *The Good in the Right: A Theory of Intuition and Intrinsic Value* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 5.

needed to develop "one's eye." So while Aristotelian or Thomistic intellection shares the nondiscursive or non-inferential nature of intuition, it seems more like perception than intuition – albeit, as was argued above, nothing like empiricist accounts of perception.

If, however, certain thinkers are willing to concede the possibility of an "empiricist intuitionism" then this may be an adequate way of describing the view I have been defending. Jeff McMahan, for example, defines "moral intuitions" in the following way:

A moral intuition is a spontaneous moral judgment, often concerning a particular act or agent, though an intuition may also have as its object a *type* of act or, less frequently, a more general rule or principle. In saying that a moral intuition is a spontaneous judgment, I mean that it is not the result of conscious inferential reasoning. In the first instance at least, the allegiance the intuition commands is not based on an awareness of its relations to one's other beliefs...This kind of spontaneity, I should stress, is entirely compatible with the possibility that a fair amount of cognitive processing may be occurring beneath the surface of consciousness.

Also, to say that intuitions arise spontaneously is not to imply that they must arise instantaneously, in the manner of a sense perception, when one is presented with a certain act or a description of a certain type of act. If for example, a case is described in which there is considerable complexity of detail, one may have to explore it at length in order to distinguish and assimilate its various relevant features – in much the same way that one might have to examine the many details of a highly complex work of art in order to have any aesthetic response at all. Just as it may take time to summon an aesthetic response even when the process of contemplation involves only the assimilation and appreciation of all the elements of the piece, so moral reflection may take time even when it does not involve conscious inferential reasoning.⁸⁶⁵

I welcome the comparison between moral reflection and aesthetic reflection or contemplation, as, I imagine, would Murdoch or Aristotle. When McMahan says that intuitions need not be instantaneous *like sense perception*, then I think this invites confusion insofar as we may not think that all sense perceptions are instantaneous either. If the dawning of an aspect is truly a kind of seeing, i.e. a kind of sensory perception, then this phrasing seeks to confine "sensory perception" to only one of Wittgenstein's senses of 'see.' And it is here that I think that intuitionists get into trouble. If intuitions – even "aesthetic" intuitions! – are not perceptions, i.e. if they are not sensory perceptions, what are they? Intuitionists have often invited the suspicion of positing some sort of arcane, esoteric or occult faculty of apprehension beyond sense perception; and the proper response to these kind of objections should simply be that *seeing*, i.e.

⁸⁶⁵ Jeff McMahan, "Moral Intuition," in *The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory*, ed. Hugh LaFollette (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2000), 93-94.

plain old humdrum seeing, is more occult than empiricists would like to make it out to be. As Wittgenstein writes:

'Seeing the figure as...' has something occult, something ungraspable about it. One would like to say: "Something has altered, and nothing has altered." – But don't try to explain it. Better look at the rest of seeing as something occult too.⁸⁶⁶

And, in fact, one of the most common examples of noticing an aspect, or *Gestalt* shift, involves the perception of meaning in language: something which is utterly ubiquitous, and yet, from an empiricist perspective, likely to seem an occult phenomenon.

James notes that our perception of language is suffused or colored according to our understanding of meaning. He writes:

In many cases it is easy to compare the psychic results of the sensational with those of the perceptive process. We then see a marked difference in the way in which the impressed portions of the object are felt, in consequence of being cognized along with the reproduced portion, in the higher state of mind. Their sensible quality changes under our very eye. Take the already-quoted catch, *Pas de lieu Rhóne que nous*: one may read this over and over again without recognizing the sounds to be identical with those of the words *paddle your own canoe*. As we seize the English meaning the sound itself appears to change. Verbal sounds are usually perceived with their meaning at the moment of being heard. Sometimes, however, the associative irradiations are inhibited for a few moments (the mind being preoccupied with other thoughts) whilst the words linger on the ear as mere echoes of acoustic sensation. Then, usually, their interpretation suddenly occurs. But at that moment one may often surprise a change in the very *feel* of the word.⁸⁶⁷

In another he example he writes:

if we look at an isolated printed word and repeat it long enough, it ends by assuming an entirely unnatural aspect. Let the reader try this with any word on this page. He will soon begin to wonder if it can possibly be the word he has been using all his life with that meaning. It stares at him from the paper like a glass eye, with no speculation in it. Its body is indeed there, but its soul is fled. It is reduced, by this new way of attending to it, to its sensational nudity. We never before attended to it in this way, but habitually got it clad with its meaning the moment we caught sight of it, and rapidly passed from it to the other words of the phrase. We apprehended it, in short, with a cloud of associates, and thus perceiving it, we felt it quite otherwise than as we feel it now divested and alone.⁸⁶⁸

⁸⁶⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 170e. I-966.

⁸⁶⁷ James, *Principles of Psychology, Vol. II*, 80.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid., 80-81.

Wittgenstein also describes the dawning of an aspect by appeal to perceiving the meaning of a

word. He writes:

Aspect-blindness will be *akin* to the lack of a 'musical ear'.

The importance of this concept lies in the connection between the concept of 'seeing an aspect' and 'experiencing the meaning of word'. For we want to ask "What would you be missing if you did not *experience* the meaning of a word?"

What would you be missing, for instance, if you did not understand the request to pronounce the word "till" and to mean it as a verb, - or if you did not feel that a word lost its meaning and became a mere sound if it was repeated ten times over?⁸⁶⁹

And again:

The case of 'meaning experienced' is *related* to that of seeing a figure as this or that. We have to describe this conceptual relationship; we are not saying the same thing is under consideration in both cases.⁸⁷⁰

All of these cases describe the change in our perceptual experience when we hear or see a word or a sentence either with or without understanding.⁸⁷¹ And, like the *gestalt* shift between, say, the rabbit and the duck, our entire perceptual experience is altered in such cases.

The difference, however, is that the duck-rabbit is an image cooked up by *gestalt* psychologists to provoke the perceptual instability, whereas the case of understanding language is simply a ubiquitous human experience. And, more importantly, it is often the case that hearing or seeing language along with the appropriate understanding is taken to be an epistemic success, i.e. one hears or sees something that is clearly there to be seen. The person who hears or reads a language that he understands is generally thought to have, not only different perceptual experiences when apprehending that language, but also some additional cognitive insight over and above someone who does not understand the language. James comments on this phenomenon:

⁸⁶⁹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 214e. II.xi.

⁸⁷⁰ Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, 186e. I-1064.

⁸⁷¹ For another interesting discussion that attempts to relate these matters specifically to moral philosophy, see Robert Roberts's account of what he calls "construals." Robert C. Roberts, *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 69-76. Roberts specifically discusses construals in terms of linguistic meaning: "Say 'table.' Now say it again, thinking of it as a verb. Here you are construing the sound in terms of the category or concept *verb...*the word actually sounds (or looks) different when variously construed...In both construals of 'table,' the purely sensory (auditory or visual) input is not changed by the introduction of new terms of construal; but the perception of the word – the' feel' of it, as we might say – is changed." Roberts, *Emotions*, 70.

Our own language would sound very different to us if we heard it without understanding, as we hear a foreign tongue. Rises and falls of voice, odd sibilants and other consonants, would fall on our ear in a way of which we can now form no notion. Frenchmen say that English sounds to them like the *gazouillement des oiseaux* — an impression which it certainly makes on no native ear. Many of us English would describe the sound of Russian in similar terms.⁸⁷²

The acquired skill of speaking a language fluently grants one epistemic access to a kind of knowledge that remains inaccessible to someone who lacks the requisite skill – a skill that is likely acquired through a long diachronic development that involves training, and experience. One's upbringing is likely going to play a large role in the acquisition of such an ability, and the ability will be subsequently more difficult to acquire for a non-native who lacks that upbringing. And, in less extreme cases, the fluent speaker apprehends or knows something that is inaccessible to the novice: he discerns more and more nuanced aspects, and is less likely to make errors in comprehension.

And finally, one should note that, in early stages of language acquisition, the interpretation of language may be a discursive inferential process. In the early stages of learning ancient Greek, for example, the very letters themselves appear alien to the English speaker. One must look at each letter separately and recall what sound it makes, and add up the sounds in order to pronounce the entire word correctly. At later stages of acquisition, whole words are perceived as units and the letters appear differently: each letter seems to bear an *internal relation* to the word of which it is a part; different letters cease to appear as isolated individuals but rather have the feel of being parts of a larger whole.⁸⁷³ Eventually entire phrases and sentences begin to be apprehended "at a glance" (especially in the case of auditory perception). One no longer has to reason one's way through the word order and the syntax in order to see or hear the meaning. This is a process that contemporary psychologists sometimes call "perceptual

⁸⁷² James, *Principles of Psychology, Vol. II*, 80. Plato seems to deny that our perceptions themselves change when we come to understand language, that is, he seems to deny that we "hear" or "perceive" the meaning of language. Rather we only know it. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 163b-c. Aristotle, on the other hand, does think that we hear or perceive the meaning of language, albeit incidentally (*kata sumbebekos*). Aristotle, *De Sensu*, 437a4-15. I have not the space to argue the claim, but incidental perception in Aristotle seems to share much in common with Wittgenstein's seeing of aspects.

⁸⁷³ Wittgenstein notes that seeing an aspect involves an "internal relation" between the object seen and other objects that the mind relates to it. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 212e. That the particular understanding of perception I have been describing involves an internal relation sets up a particular analytical bias against it insofar as analytical thought has historically been highly skeptical if not outright dismissive of internal relations. See above Part I, Section 4.B.

chunking.^{**874} The important point here is that some bit of knowledge that is initially only accessible by means of a discursive inference, may eventually come to have the non-discursive, imagistic quality of an aspect, and may thus be apprehended at a glance. And it may be the case that certain kinds of knowledge, e.g. the aesthetic impact of a passage of poetry in a foreign tongue, are simply not accessible by discursive means: one must acquire a certain fluency before one can have access to them. The novice remains deaf or blind to these higher aspects, and may have to trust the authority of others until he has attained a certain level of skill in attending and understanding.

Wittgenstein noted that seeing aspects in general has a conceptual similarity to the experience of meaning in language, but the question that now remains is: how might perceiving reality in general be compared to perceiving a text? Recall that McDowell does think that we do indeed experience aspects of nature in general in terms of "the intelligibility proper to meaning." McDowell is certainly right that certain medieval thinkers tended to think of nature as a book. And the question is: how much of that medieval view can we reclaim without lapsing into "a prescientific superstition" or "a crazily nostalgic attempt to re-enchant the natural world"?⁸⁷⁵ I think the answer is, at least potentially: quite a lot.

Now it is clear that the pre-modern Christian tradition did, in some sense, conceive of nature as a book. But this idea is older than the middle ages, and older than Christianity itself. As I have already argued, the best of Greek philosophy though of the natural world as ordered by *logos*, and so the idea that the world bears the "intelligibility proper to meaning" is perfectly at home in Greek thinking – the world might "speak to us" insofar as it is structured according to *logos*. But the old Hebrews, the people of the book, naturally thought of this idea in a more directly textual way; thus the psalmist writes:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.⁸⁷⁶

⁸⁷⁴ See James, *Principles of Psychology, Vol.I*, 405ff. The section is entitled "To How Many Things Can We Attend at Once?" Also see Gobet, et al., "Chunking Mechanisms in Human Learning," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 5, no. 6 (2001): 236–243. And, for a discussion relating these themes to moral philosophy, see: J. Jeremy Wisnewski, "The Case for Moral Perception," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 14, no. 1 (2015): 129–48.

⁸⁷⁵ McDowell, *Mind and World*, 72.

⁸⁷⁶ Psalm 19:1-3. King James Version.

And early Christian writers also adopted the tendency of speaking of nature as a book. St. Augustine, in one of his sermons, writes:

Some people, in order to discover God, read books. But there is a great book: the very appearance of created things. Look above you! Look below you! Note it. Read it. God, whom you want to discover, never wrote that book with ink; instead He set before your eyes the things that He had made. Can you ask for a louder voice than that? Why, heaven and earth shout to you: "God made me!"⁸⁷⁷

And, even today, Christian writers like Cardinal Schönborn, who I discussed earlier, affirm this idea. Part of Schonborn's criticism of certain quasi-scientific beliefs – essentially mirroring McDowell's criticisms of what McDowell calls "bald naturalism" – is that is that these quasi-scientific beliefs place unnecessary limits on what kinds of intelligibility we might expect to find in nature. A few years after the controversial New York Times article, Schönborn writes:

...consider the question of reading the traces of God in creation. Is this not the task of science? The early scientists, from Copernicus through Galileo to Newton, were convinced of this. Next to the book of the Bible, they recognize the book of creation, within which the Creator speaks to us in readable, perceptible language. What is overlooked in a materialistic concept of science is the sense of wonder about the very readability of reality. Scientific exploration of nature is possible only because it gives us an answer. Nature is "built" such that our spirit can penetrate its structure and laws.

As I said [elsewhere] "The natural world is nothing less than a mediation between minds – the unlimited mind of the Creator and our limited human minds." What could be more fundamental to science than the assumption that the explorability and thereby the cognizability of reality arises due to its bearing the handwriting of its author? God speaks the language of his creation, and our spirit, which is likewise his creation, is able to perceive it, to hear it, to comprehend it.

This, in the end, is the reason modern science grew in the nurturing soil of the Judeo-Christian belief in creation. A materialistically constricted science studies the letters but cannot read the text. Exploring and analyzing the material letters is the presupposition for being able to read the immaterial text. But the letters do not constitute the text itself. They are only the material bearer. Science that confines itself exclusively to material conditions is one-handed and thereby one-sided. There is missing from it that which actually marks a human being as human: his gift of elevating himself over material

⁸⁷⁷ Sermo CXXVI.6: "Alius ut inveniat Deum, librum legit. Est quidam magnus liber ipsa species creaturae. Superiorem et inferiorem contuere, attende, lege. Non Deus, unde eum cognosceres, de atramento litteras fecit; ante oculos tuos posuit hae ipsa quae fecit. Quid quaeris maiorem vocem? Clamat ad te caleum et terra, Deus me fecit." Latin text from Angelo Mai and Giuseppe Cozza-Luzi, eds., Nova Patrum Bibliotheca. Tomus Primus: Continens Sancti Augustini Novos ex Codicibus Vaticanis Sermones Item Eiusdem Speculum et Alia Quaedam cum Diversorum Patrum Scriptis et Tabulis XVI (Romae: Typis Sacri Consilii Propagando Christiano Nomini, 1852), 292. Translation from Hugh Pope, O.P., Saint Augustine of Hippo: Essays Dealing with His Life and Times and Some Features of His Work (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1949), 249.

conditions with reason and intuition so as to press ahead to meaning, to truth, to the "message of the Author of the text."⁸⁷⁸

Of course, while Schönborn and McDowell are both arguing for restoring some of "the intelligibility proper to meaning" back to the natural world, McDowell does not necessarily share Schönborn's specifically Christian idea of looking for the "message of the Author of the text." But, one thing that we might think has been excised from the bald naturalist conception of the natural world that both McDowell and Schonborn are seeking to restore, is a better understanding of the aspects of the natural world having to do with life and action.

When it comes to life and action, it seems to be a core Aristotelian claim that ethics is based, in large part, upon knowing what kind of thing man is. In particular, ethics seems to flow from a proper understanding of man's "function" [*ergon*] or his "end" [*telos*]. What does it mean for man to reach his end? This concern with understanding man's end could easily be seen to have relevance to Christian ethics as well, insofar as Jesus does tell us: Be ye therefore perfect ($\tau \epsilon \lambda \epsilon \iota o \iota$), even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect ($\tau \epsilon \lambda \epsilon \iota o \varsigma$).⁸⁷⁹ So, there should be a shared concern to understand what it means reach one's end. And the reason that this question of understanding the nature of things is relevant to the present discussion of perception and its relation to cognition is that something like "seeing an aspect" or something like a perceptual receptivity that is permeated by cognition seems to be required in order to discern the "meaning" of natural things, i.e. to discern the nature, essence, or *telos* of a thing.⁸⁸⁰ As Schönborn writes:

The conscious limitation of its point of view to the coutable and the measurable, to material conditions and interconnections, has permitted formidable advances of the natural sciences, allowing modern man to dominate and control nature for his own needs to an amazing extent. But it would be highly problematic if one wished to declare as simply non-existent everything that is here being methodologically suppressed, starting with the faculties of reason [...] The necessity of trusting the "eyes of the soul" – the

⁸⁷⁸ Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, "Reasonable Science, Reasonable Faith," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion & Public Life*, no. 172 (April 2007): 25.

⁸⁷⁹ Matthew 5:48. King James Version.

⁸⁸⁰ Susanna Siegel argues that we can perceive what she calls "kind properties." In other words, our visual experiences, according to Siegel, include things like natural kinds, and artifact forms etc. And Siegel moves back and forth between the very same kinds of test cases that are mentioned by William James and Wittgenstein. Namely, she moves back and forth between cases in which our perception of language is altered by our learning to read a language, and cases in which we learn to distinguish natural kinds. See Susanna Siegel, "Which Properties Are Represented in Perceptual *Experience*, ed. Tamar Gendler and John Hawthorne (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Siegel, however, does not, as far as I am aware, acknowledge the historical pedigree of this view, or its implications for moral thought.

human intellect in its normal, everyday operation – becomes still clearer when it concerns the question that is today frequently dimisses as unscientific because it lies beyond the purely material: the question regarding essences and substantial form. Overcoming the materialistic vision of evolutionism urgently entails recapturing the concept of form, or gestalt, for science.⁸⁸¹

Obviously a proper retrieval of a robust concept of substantial form for metaphysics or for science would require a great deal of argument and engagement with aspects of the philosophical and scientific literature that I have not addressed and do not intend to address. But part of the reason that I have not addressed such topics head on is that I believe that trying to address such topics is doomed to failure and doomed to unfruitfulness insofar as various patterns of thought and patterns of institutional organization have made it such that conversations about substantial forms lie in a kind of intellectual no-man's land. And one further impediment that I hope to be presently in the process of removing is the empiricist-cum-liberal comittment to something like "the myth of the given." Only after reclaiming a respectful epistemological role for something like visual intelligence will we be in any place to argue for the retrieval a proper concept of substantial form.

Aristotle certainly sees a very close relationship between substantial forms and beauty, insofar as the substantial form of a thing is defined by its *telos*, and the *telos* of a thing is, in turn, directly related to the good of that thing, and, finally, the cognition of the goodness or the form of a thing is directly related to the perception of its beauty. But, as I have argued, and as Balthasar has so eloquently put it, discussions of beauty have fallen thought the departmental cracks of academia. Scientists aim for evaluative neutrality; philosophers aim for discursive, logical, argumentative rigor; and both of these methods create a blindness to beauty. Some persons in the departments of the fine arts might be said to aim at transmitting a knowledge of beauty through their art, but, as I have argued, the fine arts are arguably in the most precarious position of any academic faculty when it comes to the threat of trivialization. So, in this sense, we might see one of the overall aims of this dissertation as that of opening up the relevant intellectual "space" to inquire about goodness or beauty in the Aristotelian or Murodochian

⁸⁸¹ Schönborn, "Reasonable Science, Reasonable Faith," 25. Here two important sayings of Goethe come to mind: (1) "Much is true that cannot be calculated, and much that cannot be shown in a definitive experiment."; and (2) "Insofar as he makes us of his healthy senses, man himself is the best and most exact scientific instrument possible." Goethe, *Scientific Studies*, xviii-xix. Letter to Zelter, 22 June 1808. I alluded to this letter of Goethe above in Part III, Section 3.A.

naturalist sense, i.e. the sense of in which "value" is seen to be a part of the fabric of things.

But what I *have* tried to address with some detail is the idea of recovering a concept of form or *gestalt* for perception. And any recovery of the concept of form or *gestalt* for perception also involves the recovery of that kind of non-discursive cognition or intellection that permeates perceptual experience and allows us discern higher order patterns or forms - that kind of synoptic "eye on the whole" that allows us to see things together, and to see how they hang together. If we are going, in any sense, to "read" the "book of nature" then we will need to trust the "eye of the soul" in order to read it. Although particularly fluent "readers" are rare, this activity itself is actually a quite humdrum and ordinary activity. But various institutional pressures to think like specialists have caused us not to trust our eyes at all. And various moral pressures to believe things about the world, and about our own epistemic powers, i.e. to believe certain things that will be conducive to a certain liberal moral and political order, have not only caused us not to trust our eyes, but have also caused us not to develop our abilities to see. This is why I have included the title of Josef Pieper's essay "Learning How to See Again" in my own dissertation title. Because I agree with Pieper that "man's ability to *see* is in decline."⁸⁸²

Recall that one of the central claims of Pieper's essay, "Leisure, The Basis of Culture," is that modern philosophy has abandoned the pre-modern concept of intellectual vision in favor of an exclusive focus on discursive rationality.⁸⁸³ St. Thomas Aquinas refers to this mental seeing as *intellectus*. And, when it comes to reading the book of nature, i.e. when it comes to discerning the "meaning" of things or discerning their substantial forms, *intellectus* is what is required:

Understanding implies an intimate knowledge, for "intelligere" [to understand] is the same as "intus legere" [to read inwardly]. This is clear to anyone who considers the difference between intellect and sense, because sensitive knowledge is concerned with external sensible qualities, whereas intellective knowledge penetrates into the very essence of a thing, because the object of the intellect is "what a thing is," as stated in *De Anima* iii, 6.

Now there are many kinds of things that are hidden within, to find which human knowledge has to penetrate within so to speak. Thus, under the accidents lies hidden the nature of the substantial reality, under words lies hidden their meaning; under likenesses and figures the truth they denote lies hidden (because the intelligible world is enclosed within as compared with the sensible world, which is perceived externally), and effects

⁸⁸² Josef Pieper, "Learning How to See Again," in *Only The Lover Sings: Art and Contemplation*, trans. Lothar Krauth (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 31.

⁸⁸³ Pieper, Leisure, 11ff.

lie hidden in their causes, and vice versa. Hence we may speak of understanding with regard to all these things. 884

And the commonality or resemblance that Wittgenstein noticed between the general notion of seeing and aspect, and the particular notion of perceptual chunking involved in experiencing the meaning of a word or words, is that both instances involve a kind of synthesis in the mind that allows us see things together that were formally seen as standing apart. Bernard Lonergan describes this synthetic quality of Thomas's conception of understanding:

The psychological fact that insights are not unrelated atoms, that they develop, coalesce, form higher unities, was fully familiar to Aquinas. Repeatedly he spoke of an *intelligere multa per unum*: many acts of understanding cannot be simultaneous in one intellect; but one act of understanding can and does grasp many objects in a single view. Understanding a house is not understanding severally the foundation, the walls, and the roof; it is understanding the whole. The object of judgment is not the several terms but the one proposition.⁸⁸⁵

Later, Lonergan writes that

There is a difference between knowing one thing *in* another, and knowing one thing *from* knowing another; the former involves a single movement of the mind; the latter involves a twofold movement, as in a syllogism where first one grasps principles and then conclusion.⁸⁸⁶

He captures this idea in a metaphor by saying that

The specific drive of our nature is to understand, and indeed to understand everything, neither confusing the trees with the forest nor content to contemplate the forest without seeing all the trees.⁸⁸⁷

⁸⁸⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIaIIae, Q.1, Art.1. See also: Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa-IIae, Q. 173, Art.2.

⁸⁸⁵ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), 52. Recall the following passage from Aristotle that I have already quoted on a number of occasions: "For no one can look at the elements of the human frame – blood, flesh, bones, vessels, and the like – without much repugnance. Moreover, when any one of the parts or structures, be it which it may, is under discussion, it must not be supposed that it is its material composition to which attention is being directed or which is the object of the discussion, but rather the total form. Similarly, the true object of architecture is not bricks, mortar, or timber, but the house; and so the principal object of natural philosophy is not the material elements, but their composition, and the totality of the substance, independently of which they have no existence." Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, 1.5 645a29-36 (trans. William Ogle). Also, for the idea of an intellection of many through one – *intelligere multa per unum*, see Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.11 434a9. There Aristolte says that the particular imaginative act that makes deliberation possible requires us to be able to "make one iamge out of many." Aristotle, *De Anima: Books II and III*, trans. D. W. Hamlyn, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002).

⁸⁸⁶ Lonergan, Verbum, 54-55. Emphasis added.

⁸⁸⁷ Ibid., 53.

And the way in which it is possible to understand one thing in another is by means of the concept of an internal relation. One does not cease to see the roof, or the walls, nor does one simply conflate them, or run them together such that their distinctness is lost; rather, one continues to see the roof and walls, but now ones sees them differently insofar as they are seen to be related to the whole, i.e. the house, of which they are a part.

James, as I noted above, remarked that "we almost all of us assume that as the objects are, so the thought must be."888 But this is a tricky doctrine. In one sense it is true. The seventeenth century geniuses essentially rejected both the Aristotelian ontology of forms, as well as the Aristotelian epistemology of perceiving forms: "as the objects are, so the thoughts must be." According to "the century of genius," apprehension of "forms" is a posterior act of inference from a prior perception of atomic sensory simples; and real "forms" of things are also explained as causally posterior to the prior and more fundamental motion of atomic particles. James on the other hand, denies the common assumption, and essentially says that the Aristotelians might be right about perception – that is presents itself as integrated wholes, not as concatenations of parts - but, as far as I can tell, James still seems comfortable in assuming the Lockean nominalist ontology - universalia post rem. The only thing that keeps James from sliding into Sartrian angst about the utter meaninglessness of things apart from our naming them, is that James is a pragmatist. Had James met Sartre, he probably would have thought of him as a brooding, ineffectual, European effete. James is not worried about the threat of nihilism posed by the thought that existence precedes essence, because James simply thinks that our purposes and interests baptize things with names enough: "classification and conception are purely teleological weapons of the mind. The essence of a thing is that one of its properties which is so *important for my interests.*³⁸⁸⁹ In many ways, although James is rightly critical of empiricist theories of perception, he still possesses that Protestant/Liberal spirit with its no-nonsense, hardheaded focus on work and utility. The Aristotelian position, and the Thomist one, however, is more subtle. It is an old Aristotelian idea that the ordo essendi is different from the ordo

⁸⁸⁸ James, *Principles of Psychology, Vol.I*, 195. I quoted this passage in full earlier in this section, i.e. Part III, Section 4.B.1.

⁸⁸⁹ James, *Psychology: Briefer Course*, 357.

cogescendi (the order of being is different from the order of knowing).⁸⁹⁰ Just because a proper perception or understanding of something as a whole may arise developmentally or diachronically, by looking at what was before seen as a mere assemblage of parts, does not mean that, in reality, the thing just is antecedently an assemblage of parts, and that one has imposed a posterior unity onto it. Rather, in reality, the form of the house was prior to, and a cause of, its walls and roof being built; and our subsequent grasp of the whole, albeit potentially temporally posterior to our perception of the parts individually, now tracks reality in a more authentic way than before. And, in this sense, natural objects, especially living things, and most especially *other* persons, will surely be seen to have real essences, and thereby real *ends*, of their own that may or may not be in harmony with *my* purposes or interests. In other words, a proper insight into the essence of something – even if it is relatively late coming in a temporal sense –is required if we are to think of our scientific inquiries as having any other end aside from that of "render[ing] ourselves the masters and possessors of nature."⁸⁹¹ And we might even think that desire to be master and possessors of nature might in turn be motive to reject the picture of insight I have tried to place on offer.

A telling passage from McDowell articulates an important half-truth here:

Traditional epistemology cannot be vindicated by the sheer possibility of asking, "How do you know that what you are enjoying is a genuine glimpse of the world?"...If someone insists on asking that, on some particular occasion, an appropriate response might start like this: "I know why you think that question is peculiarly pressing, but it I is not." If the question still stands, nothing particularly philosophical is called for in answering it.⁸⁹²

In other words, I think that McDowell, as well as James, and Wittgenstein, have laid the *general* philosophical groundwork for understanding a kind of direct realism, in which the *gestalt* perceptions that are a joint product of receptivity and spontaneity could be understood as allowing us to be truly "open" to the gestalt-laden or form-laden aspects of reality. And if one wishes to deny, in a *particular* case, that someone has not got a good grasp on the nature of things, "nothing particularly philosophical is called for in answering it." In other words, we

⁸⁹⁰ See, for example, Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 71b35-72a1; and *Phsyics* 184a17. For a useful discussion of the distinction as found in Longergan and in St. Thomas Aquinas, see J. Michael Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 19.

⁸⁹¹ Descartes, *Discourse On Method*, Part VI (AT VI 61-62). I discuss this passage above in Part I, Section 6.A; and again in Part II, Section 3.B.

⁸⁹² McDowell, Mind and World, 113.

cannot reject someone's purported claim to have discerned the substantial form of a thing, and to have made some subsequent practical or evaluative judgment in light of that discernment, simply by making a *general* philosophical claim to the tune of "such a form could *never* be a content of your perceptual experience." Rather, we must investigate the substance of the particular claim. Yet here is the reason why I called McDowell's point a "half-truth." This latter activity *is* a philosophical activity, perhaps even the focal meaning of a philosophical activity. Only it is not *at present* a popular conception of philosophical activity. In truth, it might be said that philosophy does not deal exclusively, or even primarily, with general or abstract theories, but rather has the ultimate goal of trying to discern how it is best to live.

But if this is the case, then, in many ways, my task is to show that such a theory of insight cannot be simply discredited by general philosophical objections, but, rather that particular claims to insight must then be approached in the "un-philosophical" way that McDowell suggests.⁸⁹³ One lingering worry is that this picture of insight may still seem occult or mystical beyond anything that contemporary cognitive science or empirical psychology warrants. We might think that Lonergan does not help the case when he says things like:

The summit of such sweep and penetration is the divine intellect; for the divine act of understanding is one, yet it embraces in a single view all possibilities and the prodigal multiplicity of actual beings...it is to such a view of all reality that human intellect naturally aspires...For the spirit of inquiry within us never calls a halt, never can be satisfied, until our intellects, united to God as body to soul, know *ipsum intelligere* and through that vision, though then knowing aught else is a trifle, contemplate the universe as well.⁸⁹⁴

Here Longergan, in interpreting the Thomistic view, has essentially just inverted Tennyson's flower in the crannied wall⁸⁹⁵, and, like Tennyson, has not helped to make a politic case to

⁸⁹³ Although, as I will note below, McDowell does think that evaluative disagreement often involve doing things "apart from the sorts of things we typically regard as paradigms of argument" in order to get someone else to "see" something. And I do not see why we must confine the sense of 'philosophy' to "the sorts of things we typically regard as paradigms of argument." McDowell, *Mind Value and Reality*, 85-86.

⁸⁹⁴ Lonergan, Verbum, 53.

⁸⁹⁵ Recall that I quoted Tennyson's short poem above (Part I, Section 4.B) in a discussion of the Analytical distaste for "Hegelian" internal relations: "Flower in the crannied wall, / I pluck you out of the crannies, / I hold you here, root and all, in my hand, / Little flower—but if I could understand / What you are, root and all, and all in all, / I should know what God and man is." Tennyson seems to imply that, through a very strong reading of the doctrine of internal relations, one would understand the nature of God and man insofar as God and man are both internally related to the flower. Lonergan points out that, on the Thomistic view, the converse is true as well. Once one has come to understand God, then one will

someone who is already prone to an analytical tendency of mind, and who is highly suspicious of the very doctrine of internal relations, i.e. a very impolitic case for convincing nearly any analytical, Anglophone philosopher. But I simply want to note that such a possibility is at least not clearly ruled out by cognitive science, and possibility suggested by it.

Without going into much detail, it seems that some contemporary research in psychology and the philosophy of mind does vindicate this picture of perception. Wittgenstein maintains that, in general, it may very well be the case that "certain psychological phenomena *cannot* be investigated physiologically, because physiologically nothing corresponds to them."⁸⁹⁶ When it comes to the particular phenomenon of seeing an aspect, he says that the question "what is there in this?" is a question that "is not to be answered physiologically."897 Elsewhere he writes that, when it comes to understanding "aspect seeing", "[o]ur problem is not a causal one but a conceptual one."⁸⁹⁸ McDowell argues for something similar when he says that attempts to answer certain kinds of questions about perception, its epistemic role, and its relation to our spontaneous powers of conceptual cognition, in "engineering terms" miss the mark.⁸⁹⁹ To adapt another saying from McDowell, we might say that we are looking to understand what perceptual states and occurrence are for us, as epistemic agents, not about what these look like when someone tackles scientific questions about how our *perceptual machinery* works.⁹⁰⁰ The bottom line is that certain attempts to answer how attention shapes perceptual experience, or how it is that we should explain seeing an aspect, by pointing to which physiological parts of the brain or eye are responsible for which of our cognitive functions, may be a misguided methodology. It asks in reductive causal terms what may not be a causal question.

also know the rest of the universe as well – flower included – insofar as it is reflected in, or internally related to, God.

⁸⁹⁶ Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, 160e. I-904.

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid., 187e. I-1070.

⁸⁹⁸ Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, 203e. II.xi.

⁸⁹⁹ McDowell, Mind and World, xxi-xxii.

⁹⁰⁰ McDowell says this on context of a discussion about animal perception as compared to human perception: "I am rejecting a picture of a mere animal's perceptual sensitivity to its environment: a picture in which the senses yield content that is less than conceptual but already such as to represent the world. What I am rejecting is a picture of what perceptual states and occurrences are *for an animal*. I have said nothing about how things look when someone tackles scientific questions about how an animal's *perceptual machinery* works...I do not mean to be objecting to anything in cognitive science." McDowell, *Mind and World*, 121.

This methodological critique is essentially an attempt to revive a methodology found in Aristotle's investigations of perception and cognition, and to apply it to contemporary debates in psychology. For example, D. W. Hamlyn notes that Aristotle "is intent not just to give the physiological basis of perception, but to understand what perception, the senses, etc., are."⁹⁰¹ Richard Sorabji also notes this feature of Aristotle's approach to questions about perception and cognition:

I can now draw a general conclusion about Aristotle's Philosophy of Mind. He does not try to reduce perception to things at a *different* level, such as physiological states, or behavior, or the performance of functions. Rather he relates it to capacities at the *same* level, such as belief, reason, appearance, memory, experience, and concept formation [...] ...if I were now to compare Aristotle with any contemporary philosophers, I would compare him with those who are distinguishing the content of perception and thought, thus relating capacities at the same level, rather than reducing them to physiology, behavior, or function.⁹⁰²

Rather than treat perception "in engineer's terms" or to give reductivist, causal explanations of perception, Sorabji sees Aristotle as trying to distinguish the conceptual boundaries, say, between perception and thought. And, the fact that this aspect of perception is frequently neglected by what McDowell refers to as "bald naturalist" approaches, leads Sorabji to conclude that this is the most valuable aspect of Aristotle's theory:

The most valuable aspect of Aristotle's theory of sense-perception is, I believe, one which has been relatively neglected. It lies in his redrawing the map in which perception is located in a debate which is still being conducted in contemporary controversy on perceptual content.⁹⁰³

And it seems that the literature in contemporary debates about this issue is heading in a similar direction.⁹⁰⁴

Christopher Mole, in a recent book on attention, notes that the departmental distinctions between empirical psychology and philosophy of mind, and the subsequent compartmentalization of thought that flows from this departmentalization, has lead to the

⁹⁰¹ Hamlyn, trans., De Anima, xii.

⁹⁰² Richard Sorabji, "Intentionality and Physiological Processes: Aristotle's Theory of Sense-Perception," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 208.

⁹⁰³ Ibid., 195.

⁹⁰⁴ See, for example, Katherine Hawley and Fiona Macpherson eds., *The Admissible Contents of Experience* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); and Susanna Siegel, *The Contents of Visual Experience* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011).

ossification of certain thought patterns in each of the respective departments that are detrimental to understanding the phenomenon of attention. According to Mole, by ignoring or failing to engage in debates in psychology regarding attention, philosophers frequently operate with a false picture of psychological processes:

According to this false picture psychology gives us a theory in which cognition is thought of as a set of computations, realized somewhere in the frontal lobes, while the perceptual processes..., located nearer to the back of the head, orchestrate the inputs and outputs for these frontal, cognition-constituting computations.⁹⁰⁵

In other words, philosophers tend think that, in engineering terms, our perceptual machinery operates in the way that the empiricist conceptual distinctions between perception and cognition would seem to imply, i.e. philosophers tend to think that the frontal lobe of the brain handles the spontaneous cognitive functions, and the back of the head simply provides data for that cognition. But, Mole says, "psychology does *not* take the cognitive aspects of the mind to be implemented, separately from perception..., in the...neural centers at the front of the brain."⁹⁰⁶ Rather, the bits of cognition at the front of the brain are "understood to be instinct with the perception...processes at every stage."⁹⁰⁷ And, conversely, he argues that psychologists "have spent the last century blunting ever sharper empirical tools against what is fundamentally a metaphysical problem."⁹⁰⁸ Mole's solution for how to understand attention is essentially the Aristotelian/Thomistic solution suggested by Wittgenstein and McDowell. Rather than trying to identifying particular physiological parts of the brain with the act of attention, Mole suggests that:

the relationship of attention to the cognitive processes executed in various parts of the brain is analogous to the relationship between unison and the individual performances of the members of an orchestra. Just as there is no place in the orchestra where unison sits, so, according to this theory, there is no place in the brain where attention is located.⁹⁰⁹

I call this an Aristotelian/Thomistic conception insofar as Aristotle seems to think that it is also wrong-headed to link perception to an isolated physiological process:

⁹⁰⁵ Christopher Mole, *Attention Is Cognitive Unison: An Essay in Philosophical Psychology* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), vi.

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid., vi.

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid., vi.

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid., vi.

⁹⁰⁹ Ibid., vii.

we may regard anger or fear as such and such movements of the heart, and thinking as such and such another movement of that organ, or of some other; these modifications may arise either from changes of place in certain parts or from qualitative alterations (the special nature of the parts and the special modes of their changes being for our present purpose irrelevant). Yet to say that it is the soul which is angry is as inexact as it would be to say that it is the soul that weaves webs or builds houses. It is doubtless better to avoid saying that the soul pities or learns or thinks and rather to say that it is the man who does this with his soul.⁹¹⁰

And Thomas picks up on this point as well and reiterates it over and over again:

In this sense, the eye or the hand cannot be said to subsist "per se"; nor can it for that reason be said to operate "per se." Hence the operation of the parts is through each part attributed to the whole. For we say that man sees with the eye, and feels with the hand, and not in the same sense as when we say that what is hot gives heat by its heat; for heat, strictly speaking, does not give heat. We may therefore say that the soul understands, as the eye sees; but it is more correct to say that man understands through the soul.⁹¹¹

Man has prior knowledge of singulars through imagination and sense. Consequently, he can apply his universal intellectual knowledge to a particular; for, properly speaking, it is neither the intellect nor the sense that knows, but man that knows through both—as is clear from *The Soul*.⁹¹²

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it must be said that understanding is an activity of the human soul, inasmuch as the soul goes beyond its relation to corporeal matter and consequently understanding does not come about through any corporeal organ. Yet we may say that the composite itself (that is, man) understands, inasmuch as the soul, which is its formal part, has this proper activity, just as the activity of any part is attributed to the whole; for a man sees with his eye, walks with his foot, and in like fashion understands through his soul.⁹¹³

Or, as contemporary philosopher Alva Noë puts it: "Perception is not something that happens to us, or in us. It is something we do."⁹¹⁴ The reason I bring up this idea about the wrong-headedness of trying to answer the question about attention, and about perception's relation to cognition, by appeal to particular organs, or parts of the brain, is to forestall any objections that would aim to discredit the understanding of perception I have been defending my means of a physiological objection. In other words, I think it is wrong-headed to say something like "perception cannot be related to cognition in the way that you suggest because we don't have the requisite machinery."

⁹¹⁰ Aristotle, De Anima, I.4 408b7-15. (trans. J. A. Smith).

⁹¹¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.75, Art.2. ad.2.

⁹¹² St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, II, Art. 6, ad.3.

⁹¹³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, Art. 2, ad 2.

⁹¹⁴ Alva Noë, Action in Perception (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 1.

In the next section, I shall describe how moral practice may be seen to vindicate this understanding of perception. But, for now, I will simply close with the following provocative passage from a book by Donald Hoffmann:

We have long known about IQ and rational intelligence. And, in part because of recent advance in neuroscience and psychology, we have begun to appreciate the importance of emotional intelligence. But we are largely ignorant that there is even such a things as visual intelligence...The culprit in our ignorance is visual intelligence itself. Vision is normally so swift and sure, so dependable and informative, and apparently so effortless that we naturally assume that it is, indeed, effortless. But the swift ease of vision, like the graceful ease of an Olympic ice skater, is deceptive. Behind the graceful ease of the skater are years of rigorous training, and behind the swift ease of vision is an intelligence so great that it occupies nearly half of the brain's cortex. Our visual intelligence richly interacts with, and in many cases precedes and drives, our rational and emotional intelligence. To understand visual intelligence is to understand, in large part, who we are.⁹¹⁵

2. Moral Philosophy

...we recognize betimes that to "put" things is very exactly and responsibly and interminably to do them. Our expression of them, and the terms on which we understand that, belong as nearly to our conduct and our life as every other feature of our freedom; these things yield in fact some of its most exquisite material to the religion of doing.

- Henry James⁹¹⁶

In action as in reasoning, then, the great thing is the quest of the right conception. The concrete dilemmas do not come to us with labels gummed upon their backs. We may name them by many names. The wise man is he who succeeds in finding the name which suits the needs of the particular occasion best.

- William James⁹¹⁷

For each state of character has its own ideas of the noble and the pleasant, and perhaps the good man differs from others most by

⁹¹⁵ Donald D. Hoffman, *Visual Intelligence: How We Create What We See* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), xi-xii.

⁹¹⁶ Henry James, *The Art Of The Novel: Critical Prefaces* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), 347.

⁹¹⁷ William James, *Principles of Psychology, Vol.II*, 531; and James, *Psychology: Briefer Course*, 429-431.

seeing the truth in each class of things, being as it were the norm and measure of them.

- Aristotle⁹¹⁸

I have used the word 'attention', which I borrow from Simone Weil to express the idea of a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality. I believe this to be the characteristic and proper mark of the active moral agent. [...] I would on the whole like to use 'attention' as a good word and use some more general term like 'looking' as the neutral word. Of course psychic energy flows, and more readily flows, into building up convincingly coherent but false pictures of the world, complete with systematic vocabulary...Attention is the effort to counteract such states of illusion.

- Iris Murdoch⁹¹⁹

In the previous section, I have shown that, regardless of the moral objections from esotericism or from leisure, it seems that the psychological phenomenon of attention, or the phenomenon of noticing an aspect, count as evidence for the view that our perception is permeated by, or instinct with, cognition. Furthermore, I argued that such states of perception are a valuable source of knowledge, and, often times, a source of knowledge that may not be accessible by any other means. In other words, I have argued that a certain kind of "esotericism" is in fact quite ordinary, and is to be found by an examination of our perceptual experience; acquired cognitive-cum-perceptual abilities shape our experience and often reveal higher-order patterns or aspects that may not be reducible to inference from lower order patterns or aspects. In this section, I shall show that examining our moral practice also shows that we rely on such insights in moral thinking. And, in particular, I shall look at what goes on in instances of moral confrontation.

In some sense, I take myself to be giving a descriptive account of how it is that people are actually convinced to change their mind on moral issues, and how it is that we go about trying to persuade people to see things differently. Yet, in some sense, I also want to give a recommendation to think about moral questions in a certain way, and a recommendation for how to talk to others regarding moral conflicts. As I have noted, Murdoch sees the "empirical" and

⁹¹⁸ Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, III.4 1113a31-34 (trans. Ross). "καθ' ἑκάστην γὰρ ἕξιν ἴδιά ἐστι καλὰ και ήδέα, και διαφέρει πλεῖστον ἴσως ὁ σπουδαῖος τῶ τάληθὲς ἐν ἑκάστοις ὁρᾶν, ὥσπερ κανὼν και μέτρον αὐτῶν ὥν" ⁹¹⁹ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 33, 36.

the moral arguments running together here, i.e. the descriptions and the recommendations are hard to keep apart.⁹²⁰ In some sense, I want to say, regardless of whether we think that people *ought* to argue for moral conclusions through explicit, public, discursive reason, and by citing facts, that is simply *not* how people do in fact try to persuade others, nor is it how anyone tends to be persuaded. But, at the same time, I also concede that some people do in fact argue and attempt to form beliefs in the aforementioned way, i.e. by exclusive focus on discursive arguments and facts. What I am seeking, however, is a normative account of the facts. And this tendency to conduct moral discussions in exclusively discursive terms without reference to insight, I shall argue, is an instance of that phenomenon described by Alexander Pope, i.e. an instance in which "by false Learning is good Sense defac'd". In other words, university education seems to teach us think in ways that ignore the role of insight or attention that I described in the last section. And the motive for preserving such teaching, we might think, is surely related to the moral objections that I mentioned earlier; and I shall return to address those shortly.

Cora Diamond, more than anyone else that I have read, has explicated and given sharper focus to Iris Murdoch's criticism that modern ethics tends to be blind to the role of insight in moral theory. Diamond also thinks that we cannot *merely* look at how people behave in order to settle the question of what moral thought and moral discussion are like. Recall that Murdoch had said that there is a tendency to confirm the discussive, "fact"-based conception of moral reasoning that accords little role to insight by looking to "our" society. Murdoch writes:

We, in our society, believe in judging a man's principles by his conduct, in reflecting upon our own values and respecting the values of others, in backing up our recommendations by reference to facts, in breaking down intuitive conclusions by argument, and so on...There are, of course, persons and groups among us whose morality is not conceptually simple, but metaphysical and dogmatic (for instance, some Christians and all Communists) – but these people are in the minority.⁹²¹

In other words, the conception of moral philosophy that denies a role to insight "is on the whole a satisfactory representation of the morality most commonly held in England."⁹²² Yet there are some persons, and some groups, that tend conceive of morality differently. I am in some sense

⁹²⁰ See: Ibid., 9, 33ff.

⁹²¹ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 244.

⁹²² Ibid, 244.

writing from the perspective of this minority. But this means that the argument cannot simply be made by "looking at the use." It is for this reason that Cora Diamond writes:

Although I want to argue that we are blind to what moral thought and discussion are like, what we are like in our engaging in them, I do not simply want to say "look at the use." Looking at the use may help us see that ethics is not what we think it must be. But ideas about what it must be have shaped what it is, shaped what we do; and looking at the use it not, on its own, enough.⁹²³

As Murdoch says, "Man is a creature who makes pictures of himself and then comes to resemble the picture."⁹²⁴ And so, in some sense, we must also ask what picture of moral thought is the best one. I am trying to paint us a better picture.

Here I shall focus on one part of an article written by Cora Diamond because I think it kills at least three birds with one stone. The bit I have in mind is an instance in which Diamond discusses a textbook description of Socrates in the *Crito* given by William Frankena. First of all, Diamond criticizes Frankena for endorsing a picture of moral thought that is closely related to the mistaken psychological account of perception I described in the previous section. Second, Diamond argues that this conception of moral thought is a bad interpretation of what Socrates is doing in the *Crito*. This is important in so far as one of the pictures, or models, of good moral thinking that is frequently held up for emulation by defenders the liberal empiricist view is the picture of Socrates. Yet, if Diamond is right, this view is, at least in part, a misreading of Socrates, and thus the defender of the conception of moral thought without insight is deprived of an attempt to give the view a reputable pedigree. And lastly, the fact that Frankena's discussion is found in a textbook that aims to teach people how to think about moral questions drives home the idea that the blindness to the role of insight in moral thinking is a blindness that we teach.⁹²⁵

Diamond points to the section of Frankena's textbook where Frankena describes the scene in which Socrates is trying to explain to Crito why he should not break the laws and escape from prison. Frankena uses his description of the scene from the *Crito* as an example of what goes on, and what should go on, in moral thinking in general. Frankena, according to Diamond, wants to show that moral thinking in general involves a twofold act of, on the one hand,

⁹²³ Cora Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 24. "Introduction II."

⁹²⁴ Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 252.

⁹²⁵ Diamond, *Realistic Spirit*, 25. "Introduction II."

discerning the facts, and then, on the other hand, applying principles to those facts. And so this is what he interprets Socartes to be doing in the *Crito*. Diamond writes:

Frankena is convinced, in advance of actually looking at the *Crito*, that moral thought about a particular case consists of bringing principles and rules to bear on *the facts* of the case. He does not envisage as a possibility that any moral thinking goes on in what one takes to be the facts of the case, how one comes to see them or describe them.⁹²⁶

But Diamond notes that the "fact" that Socrates uses, in arguably his most powerful argument, is the "fact" that he will be disobeying his parent and his teacher if he were to violate the laws and escape from prison. In this argument, Socrates takes it as a premise, or a "fact" of the matter, that the laws of Athens are his parents. And, Diamond writes, incredulously:

That is not a fact unless it is a fact that the Laws of Athens are Socrates's parents. But how is that a fact?

Here, Diamond argues:

it is quite conspicuously the case that terrifically original moral thinking is involved in describing the facts of the case – describing them in such a way that they *can* be connected with familiar principles.⁹²⁷

So, in truth, it seems that the most important part of Socrates's moral thinking is actually going on in the place where Frankena implies that no moral thinking goes on, i.e. moral thinking is going on in Socrates description of the situation where he personifies the laws as his parents and teachers. Diamond describes Socrates insight and his ability to convey this insight as follows:

Socrates...by an exercise of moral imagination involving the personification of the Laws enables Crito to see the situation differently...We see Crito's imagination at work at the beginning of the dialogue. He describes life after Socrates's death, what that will be like for Socarates's friends and his children. Socrates enables him to redescribe that future; he wants to teach Crito and his other friends to see what he is doing, wants to give them a way into his story...[Socrates] enables his friends to read their way into his best possibility. His imaginative description of his situation, including the personification of the Laws, is an exercise of his moral creativity, his artistry. It is as much a significant moral doing as is his choosing to stay rather than to escape, or, rather, it in fact goes to any full characterization of *what* Socrates was doing in staying...⁹²⁸

Using the language of the previous section, we might say that Socrates notices an aspect of the situation that had not dawned upon Crito. Socrates, through an act of attention, or an act of

⁹²⁶ Ibid., 310. "Missing the Adventure: Reply to Martha Nussbaum."

⁹²⁷ Ibid., 310.

⁹²⁸ Ibid., 311.

receptivity permeated by spontaneous conceptual organization, comes to see the situation as ordered in a way that Crito had not yet been able to see.

The relation of Frankena's picture of moral thinking to the picture of perceptual psychology I criticized in the last section are made clear by Diamond's description of the implicit conception of psychology that seems to go along with Frankena's view. Diamond writes:

That view goes with an implicit conception of each of us as having a sort of beliefforming subperson, who uses the data available to him or her to come to beliefs about matters of fact, the minor premises, which can then be handed over to the moral-thinkersubperson for use in arriving at moral conclusions. The belief-forming subperson can be ignorant of straightforward matters of fact, but blindness of the sort Crito exemplifies in his blinkered care for Socrates... – such blindness, such obtuseness, has no place in the philosophical scheme.⁹²⁹

In the criticisms of the empiricist theory of perception I made in the previous section, I argued that our experience does not seem to agree with the picture of perception in which passive sensory equipment renders up sensory data that can then serve as premises for distinct acts of cognitive inference. Rather, I argued that we should understand perception as being permeated with, and shaped by, cognition, which is active or spontaneous. Here, in the specifically moral case, it seems as if the empiricist moral analogue involves, on the one hand, an apprehension of facts, which could only be thwarted by physiological failure, or mistaken inferences, and, on the other hand, the domain of moral thought which involves the responsible, formal, public application of principles to the facts. This idea of a distinct "moral-thinker-subperson" and a "belief-forming sub-person" fragments our mental economy in the same way that Christopher Mole had argued that philosophers tend to operate with mistaken physiological picture that analogously fragments our physiological picture, with distinct and encapsulated operations "in the frontal lobe" and "nearer to the back of the head" respectively. But both of these pictures, the general psychological (even physiological) one, and the specifically moral one, lead us to be blind to the possibility of a certain kind of blindness. They lead us to believe that any failure to be in touch with reality must either be due to an exculpating mechanical or engineering problem, or a faulty inference, or faulty application of a concept, which can be openly addressed by formal arguments. They hide the fact that a proper construal of the "facts" is arguably the most

⁹²⁹ Ibid., 317.

important aspect of a great deal of moral reasoning, and that the failure to be in touch with reality might lie in such faulty construals.

The very word "fact" can be seen to have troubling implications, in so far as it seems to imply that we have some sort of shared, passive, perceptual equipment that simply latches on to pre-packaged pieces of the world. It is this worry that drove McIntyre to write that "facts, like telescopes and wigs for gentlemen, were a seventeenth-century invention."⁹³⁰ MacIntyre writes:

It is of course and always was harmless, philosophically and otherwise, to use the word 'fact' of what a judgment states. What is an was not harmless, but highly misleading, was to conceive of a realm of facts independent of judgment or of any other form of linguistic expression, so that judgments or statements or sentences could be paired off with facts, truth or falsity being the alleged relationship between such paired items.⁹³¹

And, what I would add to MacIntyre's comment here, is that judgments often change the underlying perceptual experience as well: as Wittgenstein says, "So we interpret it, and see it as we *interpret* it."⁹³² The reason that such purported "facts", understood in this peculiar way, are a seventeenth century invention, is that we can already find, in the seventeenth century, a kind of proto-enlightenment project of searching for a unifying picture of mankind grounded either in the common possession of shared (discursive) reason, or in the common possession of shared perceptual or emotional experience. "Facts", which are supposed derived from our shared experiences, are supposed to then provide a common ground for conflict resolution. But to use the word "fact" to describe our knowledge of the world gained through perceptual experience is usually to be, in Whitehead's term, "simple-minded." To assume that all our knowledge gained through perceptual experience is properly captured by the idea of "fact" is to assume that "minimalistic, skeptical, or positivistic attitude" in which it is assumed that "the aim of philosophy is to rid us of illusions, confusions, and unverifiable statements, leaving us with only those forms of knowledge which are clear and testable by interpersonally convincing evidence."⁹³³ To speak of "facts" is, Nietzsche would likely say, to be party to "the universal demand for gross obviousness^{"934} that is so characteristic of the modern liberal view I have been describing. This is why Diamond balks at calling Socrates's claim that the laws of Athens are his

⁹³⁰ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 357.

⁹³¹ Ibid., 357-358.

⁹³² Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 193e.

⁹³³ Hartshorne, "Whitehead's Philosophy of Reality as Socially Structured Process," 60. See above Part I, Section 6.B.

⁹³⁴ Nietzsche, Gay Science, 259. §329.

parents and teacher, and that therefore escaping would be to disobey them, a "statement of fact." There is nothing grossly obvious about this so-called "statement of fact", and it is not clear that there is any neutral "interpersonal evidence" that would convince any rational person to believe it.⁹³⁵

It is worth giving some teeth to MacIntyre's claim that "facts" are "seventeenth century inventions" insofar as I think this claim is directly relevant to my current aim of responding to the "empiricist" aspect of the liberal view of moral thought in general, and the moral argument from esotericism in particular. The idea of a "fact", in that seventeenth century sense, and the idea that some psychological faculty might provide us with "facts", are both ideas that emerged with particular prominence in the seventeenth century because of the changing focus of moral philosophy in that period; as I said above, the focus of moral philosophy in the seventeenth century, and in the following centuries, shifts away from questions of understanding, say, moral excellence, and towards resolving disagreement in increasingly pluralistic societies. I discuss the role of percetion and the idea of moral "facts" among some 17th and 18th century writers in Appendix II.

So according to Cora Diamond, we are taught to be blind to a certain kind of philosophical blindness. But this objection – the objection that attempts to point out an unnoticed or neglected kind of philosophical blindness – implies, in a positive sense, that there is a another kind, or perhaps another aspect, of cognitive contact with the world that is equally unnoticed or neglected. And the blindness to this blindness, or the neglect of this other kind of cognitive contact with the world, also brings with it a inappropriately narrowed conception of the acceptable means we have for trying to persuade people to change their minds on moral matters, i.e. the acceptable means are purportedly limited to rational or dialectical argument. Here I want to suggest that there are other means besides rational, dialectical argument that are acceptable means of convincing others or of persuading others to change their mind.

⁹³⁵ Loraine Code discusses the potentially troubling nature of "statements of fact" in terms of how they feature in our epistemic practice, within our epistemic institutions, and also how they are related to passive conceptions of vision. With regard to the latter see, especially, Lorraine Code, "Statements of Fact: Whose? Where? When?", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 30, Issue Supplement. *Moral Epistemology Naturalized* (2000): 198-199.

At this point, however, I must emphasize that our language fights against us in trying to articulate what this other kind of cognitive contact with reality might be like. H. H. Price describes this phenonmenon of recalcitrant language as follows:

A man may be saying something, even something of fundamental importance, and yet it may be quite impossible for *him* to say it clearly, and impossible equally for any of his contemporaries; and this is not through lack of cleverness on his part or theirs, but simply because the existing terminology is not adequate for the task...There may very well be some things which in the terminology available at the time can only be said obscurely; either in a metaphor, or (still more disturbing) in an oxymoron or a paradox, that is, in a sentence which breaks the existing terminological rules and it in its literal meaning absurd.⁹³⁶

The particular oxymoron that arises in trying to describe the kind of cognitive contact with the world that I have been hinting at is that the best way of describing it would seem to be as a kind of non-rational rationality. The problem is that "reason" and "rationality" both bear the etymological marks of the Latin 'ratio.' As I have said before, at least according to Thomas Aquinas, 'ratio' describes the mind in its discursive operation, whereas 'intellectus' refers to the mind in its non-discursive operation. In other words, Thomas thinks that 'ratio' is simply a description of one aspect our mental powers. There is, according to Aquinas, a different aspect to our mental operations that we might call intellectus. And thus, to say that some mental operation was not an instance of *ratio* leaves the possibility that it might be an instance of *intellectus*. But we – we modern Anglophone philosophers – tend to speak as if all mental activity is best captured by using the term "reason." Thus, to say that something is non-rational is to imply that it is non-mental, or that it is best discussed as falling within the logical space of material-cum-efficient causes, as opposed to falling within the logical space of reasons. It is only within the space of reasons that anything can have intentionality or be *about* something else. It is only within the space of reasons that any sort of correctness or incorrectness between things can be appropriately discussed. Outside the space of reasons, so the thought goes, there are only blind movements in accordance with causal laws. A particular Kantian style slogan says that "the space of reasons is the realm of freedom."⁹³⁷ And it is also frequently maintained that "Reason' refers to the active as opposed to the passive capacities of the human mind."938 In other words, we are free and responsible insofar as we are active. And we are free and active

⁹³⁶ Price, "Clarity is Not Enough", 29-30.

⁹³⁷ McDowell, *Mind and World*, 5. Also see Ibid., Introduciton p.xiv-xvi.

⁹³⁸ Korsgaard, *Sources of Normativity*, 236.

and responsible only insofar as we make discursive inferences. Besides our ability to make discursive inferences, besides our acts of calculation and ratiocination, we are simply sunk in the space of causes.

Here, in McDowell's phrase, "the idea of the Given offers exculpations."939 The "nonrational" aspects of ourselves - our affects, our emotions, our sentiments, our "taste", even our perceptions – are, according to this picture, simply passive. They are not free, they are not active, they are not our responsibility, they are not *about* other things⁹⁴⁰, and therefore they cannot be correct or incorrect. Differences we may have with respect to perception or emotion, or with respect to "taste", are to be excused insofar as they are beyond our control. (Hence Locke's exculpatory language – "the Mind has a different relish"⁹⁴¹ – that attempts to deflect concern over disagreements that were traditionally thought to be central to one's character.) Our realm of responsibility lies in 'ratio', in discursive reason. Only here are we held accountable. Only here can our "reasoning" be put to the question. But this way of thinking, and this way of speaking, leaves us blind to the kind of blindness that I have been trying to describe. If we allow that there might be another way in which our minds can be active besides being engaged in acts of inference, and if we think that our cognition might permeate our receptive dealings with the world, then this opens up a further area of our mental life in which we might be held responsible, or at least a further area of our mental life which might be considered corrigible, i.e. open to a distinction between correctness and incorrectness. It is not a coincidence, then, that Aquinas, who thinks that there are mental operations other than discursive inference, also thinks that there are specific sins which he calls "blindness of mind" (caecitas mentis) and "dullness of sense" (hebetudo sensus).⁹⁴² In what follows, I wish to show that we do acknowledge something like blindness of mind or dullness of sense. And that this implies that we do recognize some active, and responsible mental activities over and beyond discursive activities. And, finally, I want to expose some of the reasons philosophers have for denying the existence of blindness of mind, for

⁹³⁹ McDowell, *Mind and World*, 8, 10, 13, 20, 51.

⁹⁴⁰ Certain empiricist, representationalist views of perception would say that our perceptual states themselves are indeed not *about* anything, i.e. they lack intentionality in themselves. It is only when they are paired with further inferences to the best explanation that they acquire any sort of intentionality. According to such views, perception itself is not a radical open-ness to reality. Rather, reality is something "inferred" from perceptual data that is simply given. See: William Fish, *Philosophy of Perception: A Contemporary Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 19-22.

⁹⁴¹ I discuss the passage in which this phrase occurs in Appendix II.

⁹⁴² Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II-II, Q.15, Art.1-2.

denying the existence of non-discursive cognition's relevance to moral thought, and for thereby denying the relevance of non-argumentative means of persuasion in instances of moral conflict.

John McDowell goes some way towards both, on the one hand, showing the existence of something like blindness of mind, and thereby the existence and relevance of non-discursive cognition in moral thought, and, on the other hand, suggesting a source of some of the reasons for denying such blindness. I am thinking, in particular, of a criticism McDowell makes of a now well-known paper by Bernard Williams – Williams's paper "Internal and External Reasons." In this paper, Williams argues that statements of the following sort:

'A' has reason to ϕ ' or 'There is a reason for A to ϕ ' (where ' ϕ ' stands in for some verb of action) 943

can be interpreted in two different ways. According to the internalist interpretation, "the truth of the sentence implies...that A has some motive which will be served or furthered by his φ -ing, and if this turns out not to be so the sentence is false."⁹⁴⁴ Later Williams says, "the internal interpretation must display a relativity of the reason statement to the agent's *subjective motivational set*, which I shall call the agent's *S*."⁹⁴⁵ According to the externalist interpretation, on the other hand, "there is no such condition, and the reason-sentence will not be falsified by the absence of an appropriate motive."⁹⁴⁶ Williams ultimately concludes that "external reasons statements, when definitely isolated as such, are false, or incoherent, or really something else misleadingly expressed."⁹⁴⁷

The reason Williams comes to this conclusion is because Williams seems to think that the conditions involved in what it would mean to acquire an external reason are impossible to meet. He has us consider a case that purports to be one in which an external reason is given. He writes:

In James' story of Owen Wingrave...Owen's father urges on him the necessity and importance of his joining the army...Owen Wingrave has no motivation to join the army at all, and all his desires lead in another direction: he hates everything about military life and what is means. His father might have expressed himself by saying that *there was a reason for Owen to join the army*. Knowing that there was nothing in Owen's S which would lead, through deliberative reasoning, to his doing this would not make him

⁹⁴³ Bernard Williams, "Internal and External Reasons" in *Rational Action: Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, ed. Ross Harrison (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 17.

⁹⁴⁴ Ibid., 17.

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid., 17.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid., 26.

withdraw the claim or admit that he made it under a misapprehension. He means it in an external sense.⁹⁴⁸

What Owen's father is criticizing is, presumably, Owen's *S* itself. Owen's father is presumably trying to say that joining the army merits Owen's desire, even though Owen does not in fact desire it. Yet Williams thinks that there is no way in which Owen might acquire the motivation to join the army that would count as his coming to see that he had a reason, all along, to do so. He writes:

...of course there are various means by which the agent could come to have the motivation and also to believe the reason statement, but which are the wrong kind of means to interest the external reasons theorist. Owen might be so persuaded by his father's moving rhetoric that he acquired both the motivation and the belief. But this excludes an element which the external reasons theorist essentially wants: that the agent should acquire the motivation *because* he comes to believe the reason statement, and that he should do the latter, moreover, because, in some way, he is considering the matter aright.⁹⁴⁹

In other words, it could not be the case, according to Williams, that, by means of his father's rhetoric, Owen might come to see joining the army as something that merits his desire, and, because of this, come to have a motivation or a desire to do so. Williams thinks that such a change would be a mere change, and not a transition towards considering the matter aright. This is because, when if comes to the external reasons theorist, Williams thinks that

if the theorist is to hold on to these conditions, he will, I think, have to make the condition under which the agent appropriately comes to have the motivation something like this, that he should deliberate correctly.⁹⁵⁰

He continues:

ex hypothesi, there is no motivation for the agent to deliberate *from*, to reach this new motivation. Given the agent's earlier existing motivations, and this new motivation, what has to hold for external reasons statements to be true, on this line of interpretation, is that the new motivation could be in some way rationally arrived at, granted the earlier motivations, yet at the same time that it should not bear to the earlier motivations the kind of rational relation which we considered in the earlier discussion of deliberation – for in that case an internal reason statement would have been true in the first place.⁹⁵¹

⁹⁴⁸ Ibid., 21.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid., 23-24.

⁹⁵⁰ Ibid., 24.

⁹⁵¹ Ibid., 24.

In other words, Williams seems to think that the only way in which one could "appropriately" come to have a motivation is by means of deliberative inference, yet, to come to have a motivation in this way would just be to have an internal reason to act. The external reasons theorist is thus stuck with the contradictory demands of both requiring that a motivation be derived from some other motivation, and, at the same time, requiring that it not be so derived.

What I think is going on here in Williams's argument, however, is that he is equivocating on two senses of 'rational' or 'reason'. In one sense, he is using 'rational' in such a way that 'rational' simply means "considering the matter aright", or coming to have a motivation "appropriately." 'Rational' here just means something like 'cognitive', or subject to the criterion of correctness. In another sense, however, he is using 'rational' to mean "discursive", i.e. that which is arrived at by means of inference from something else. But when we combine these ideas, we get the idea that nothing could be subject to correctness unless it were derived from something else. In other words, we have the idea that nothing could be rational or a reason – in the sense of being corrigible, subject to standards of correctness, or of falling within the space of 'reasons' – unless it was rational or a reason – in the alternative sense of a discursive inference. Here we have the idea that the only kind of cognition is discursive cognition?

Williams admits that certain non-evaluative matters of fact might be arrived at nondiscursively – one might realize that a glass was filled with petrol and not gin simply by tasting it or smelling it. Such beliefs are arrived at, not by inference, but by directly considering the world; and they are nonetheless subject to correctness. But such beliefs could only be indirectly related to any member of one's S, i.e. such purely non-evaluative facts could only be indirectly related to evaluative or practical matters. When it comes to the realm of the evaluative or the practical, Williams seems blind to the possibility that one's perception of a situation might be changed – perhaps in part, say, by hearing some moving rhetoric from an interlocutor – and that such a changed perception might count as coming to consider the matter aright, and that it might also bring along a change of motivation. It is this possibility that McDowell tries to show.

McDowell argues that the "external reasons theorist" needs to show that there are instances of acquiring a "reason" in one sense - i.e. instances of making a transition from considering some situation, say, in a distorted way, to considering it aright – that do not count as

instances of acquiring a "reason" in the other sense – i.e. of arriving making that transition by means of an inference from previously held component of one's S. McDowell writes:

All the external reasons theorist needs... is that *in* coming to believe the reason statement, the agent is coming to consider the matter aright. This leaves it quite open how the transition is effected.⁹⁵²

As McDowell notes, Williams implies that various means of effecting the transition – "being persuaded by moving rhetoric", "inspiration", "conversion" – are not to be counted as "being swayed by reasons." But McDowell's point – which implicitly grasps and keeps separate the two senses of "reason" or "reasonable" – is that these means may very well be reasonable in the sense of effecting a transition that is correct, and perhaps even epistemically warranted, even though they are not reasonable in the sense of being arrived at discursively. McDowell's primary example, rather than an instance of "conversion", is that of a proper upbringing. McDowell writes:

If we think of ethical upbringing in a roughly Aristotelian way, as a process of habituation into suitable modes of behavior, inextricably bound up with the inculcation of suitably related modes of thought, there is no mystery about how the process can be the acquisition, simultaneously, of a way of seeing things and of a collection of motivational directions or practical concerns, focused and activated in particular cases by exercises of the way of seeing things. And if the upbringing has gone as it should, we shall want to say that the way of seeing things – the upshot, if you like, of molding the agent's subjectivity – involves considering them aright, that is, having a correct conception of their actual layout.⁹⁵³

This example, according to McDowell, is chosen because it is not "mysterious". Even though the good upbringing is not itself a rational, i.e. discursive, route to having certain motivations, it is purportedly intelligible as to how such a good upbringing might develop a reasonable, i.e. correct, way of seeing things. The more "mysterious" transition, presumably, involves our understanding of what goes on in someone who has *not* received a good upbringing.

When it comes to such persons, McDowell writes:

What if someone has not been properly brought up? In order to take seriously the idea that someone who has been properly brought up tends to consider matters aright in the

⁹⁵² McDowell, Mind, Value and Reality, 100.

⁹⁵³ Ibid., 100-101. McDowell makes similar comments elsewhere about how we should understand moral education or moral upbringing: "In moral upbringing what one learns is not to behave in conformity with rules of conduct, but to see situations in a special light, as constituting reasons for acting; this perceptual capacity, once acquired, can be excercised in complex novel circumstances…" Ibid, 85. In other words, the goal of moral upbringing is to impart a certain "perceptual capacity."

relevant area, we surely do not need to embrace the massively implausible implication that someone who has not been properly brought up – someone who has slipped through the net, so to speak – can be induced into seeing things straight by directing some piece of *reasoning* at him.⁹⁵⁴

Here McDowell acknowledges the grain of truth in Williams's idea that all reasons are internal reasons. No merely discursive reasoning that does not appeal to already existing motivations is liable to have any truck with someone who has "slipped through the net." Yet the very existence of such persons seems to imply the possibility of a kind of error that it is not susceptible to explanation on the exclusively internalist interpretation of reasons for acting. McDowell continues:

...the trouble with someone who has in some radical way slipped through the net is that there may be no such point of leverage for reasoning aimed at generating the motivations that are characteristic of someone who has been properly brought up. What it would take to get such a person to consider the relevant matters aright, we might plausibly suppose, is exactly the sort of thing that, according to Williams's argument, the external reasons theorist may not appeal to: something like conversion.⁹⁵⁵

Yet here McDowell acknowledges that "it is not straightforwardly obvious how we should think of this." In other words, while "the bare idea of conversion" might play the logical role in an explanatory scheme needed by the external reasons theorists, it is not clear that such a possibility is anything more than a logical possibility. Such a possibility, in order to gain plausibility, would need to be fleshed out by giving more detail to the "specific converting factor."

Those opposed to McDowell's suggestion have criticized it at exactly this point. Simon Blackburn, for example, after citing a list of purportedly virtuous qualities given by David Hume, writes:

Perhaps I can contemplate as a bare possibility that some change should come along and 'improve' me into thinking that these are no after all standards for a good character. But I cannot really see how to take off the inverted commas, or in other words, imagine how any such change would really be an improvement. The possibility remains idle, unreal.⁹⁵⁶

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid., 101.

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid., 101-102.

⁹⁵⁶ Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions: A Theory of Practical Reasoning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 307. Also see discussion in Mark Wynn, *Emotional Experience and Religious Understanding: Integrating Perception, Conception and Feeling* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 23-28.

Blackburn's point seems to be that his outlook on things, and the various concepts he uses to describe the virtues that he takes to constitute good character, are essentially incapable of being improved. Or at least that his outlook is incapable of being improved in an any way that does not make explicit reference to his already existing way of seeing things and his already existing collection of motivational directions or practical concerns. Elijah Millgram suggests a related but slightly different worry when he says that McDowell's idea has a "bolt-from-the blue quality."957 Millgram, unlike Blackburn, does not contest the possibility or plausibility of such a conversion, but rather suggests that such conversions are troublingly outside of our control. Millgram writes:

if you become converted to the right, as opposed to the wrong, way of seeing things, or if you are well, as opposed to poorly, brought up, that is just luck – *pure* luck.⁹⁵⁸

Here Millgram seems to be worrying that we could not be responsible for our change in the requisite way. I think that these worries are related insofar as they both tend to stem from what seems to be a kind of fear of losing control.

Blackburn, for example, contrasts the case in which he purportedly could not imagine his conception of the virtues changing with a different case in which he could imagine his beliefs about the goodness of imposing a mimimum wage cahnging; he allows that various economic facts about the effects of imposing a minimum wage could potentially change his assessment.⁹⁵⁹ In other words, there is nothing problematic about the possibility of coming to discover some new non-evaluative fact. And Millgram seems to allow that "theoretical" or "doxastic" cases of discovering facts, or "literally seeing matters aright", do not pose the same problem that evaluative cases pose.⁹⁶⁰ Both of these instances seem to show a kind of fear of loosing control, or, as Iris Murdoch puts it, a desire to safeguard a certain kind of freedom.⁹⁶¹ Both seem to problematize the idea of some experience changing one's evaluative beliefs, or changing one's evaluative way of seeing, or changing one's motivational directions, in a way that they do not problematize the idea of some experience changing one's non-evaluative beliefs. And the reason

⁹⁵⁷ Elijah Millgram, "Williams' Argument Against External Reasons," Noûs 30, no. 2 (June 1, 1996): 199, 207.

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid., 207.

⁹⁵⁹ Blackburn, Ruling Passions, 307.

⁹⁶⁰ Millgram, "Williams' Argument," 207.
⁹⁶¹ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 52-57.

may be that this keeps one's evaluative judgments firmly in one's own control, or at least keeps one's evaluative judgments from being affected *directly* by the outside world.

By problematizing the idea of a direct and perceptual acquisition of an evaluative belief, one makes it seem as if all changes in evaluative belief and motivational disposition must proceed *via* the agent's choice of a good-making criteria.⁹⁶² Yet Susan Wolf, in a well known article, makes a compelling case that

not all the things necessary for freedom and responsibility must be types of power and control. We may need simply to *be* a certain way, even though it is not within our power to determine whether we are that way or not.⁹⁶³

She says that there is a kind of desirable "sanity" that has little or nothing to do with power or control. The desire for sanity, she writes,

is thus not a desire for another form of control; it is rather a desire that one's self be connected to the world in a certain way – we could even say it is a desire that one's self be *controlled* by the world in certain ways and not in others.⁹⁶⁴

And Murdoch seems to believe that experiences of beauty constitute the clearest kind of example of this phenomenon. Beauty, she writes, "is the most obvious thing in our surroundings which is an occasion for 'unselfing'."⁹⁶⁵ She says that "beauty is the convenient and traditional name for something which art and nature share."⁹⁶⁶ And, when it comes to attending to beauty in this way, she says that "we cease to be in order to attend to the existence of something else, a natural object, a person in need."⁹⁶⁷ "The humble man", she writes "because he sees himself as nothing, can see other things as they are."⁹⁶⁸ In short, experiences of beauty, are a class of experiences that are both ordinary and yet mysterious – Murdoch speaks of an "unesoteric mysticism" – and that seem to offer an instance of the kind of change that the external reasons theorists requires. We find our evaluative dispositions and beliefs changed by experiences of beauty, and yet these changes are not discursive. And neither are they *mere* changes, they seem to be instances in which we are radically open to reality, and instances in which we come to see matters aright.

⁹⁶² Ibid., 52, 53-54.

⁹⁶³ Susan Wolf, "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility," in *Responsibility, Character, and the Emotions: New Essays in Moral Psychology*, ed. Ferdinand Schoeman (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 55.

⁹⁶⁴ Ibid., 55.

⁹⁶⁵ Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good, 82.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid., 82.

⁹⁶⁷ Ibid., 58.

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid., 101.

And, furthermore, they seem to be experiences in which we abandon ourselves to be controlled by something outside of ourselves. And yet this openness to control from outside is not an abdication of freedom or responsibility, but rather an alternate conception of freedom in which it is the truth that makes us free: a kind of freedom of the will found in obedience to something outside one's self. And while this may diminish a certain sense of freedom – freedom in that radical, liberal, ahistorical sense of "withdraw and reflect" – it still leaves a different kind of often overlooked freedom, i.e. the freedom that "goes on all the time at apparently empty and everyday moments", the freedom we experience when we are "looking", and when we are engaged in making "those little peering efforts of imagination which have such cumulative results."⁹⁶⁹ In other words, it leaves in place the often overlooked freedom that we have insofar as our active cognitive capacities structure our perception and our attention to the world. And it is no coincidence, then, that the example McDowell turns to in order to give plausibility to the idea of a non-discursive acquisition of an evaluative-belief-cum-motivational-disposition is an "aesthetic" example.

In order to set up McDowell's example, we must recall that Williams argues that whenever the external reasons theorist tries to level the charge of "irrationality" against someone, the accusation is mere "bluff." Yet here again, it seems as if our word 'reason' is what trips us up here. There is a kernel of truth in Williams accusation that such charges are bluff, and McDowell acknowledges this. McDowell writes

Moralists in particular are prone to suppose that there must be a knockdown argument, an appeal to unaided reason, which, if one could only find it and get people to listen, would force anyone capable of being influenced by reasons at all into caring about the sorts of things one ought to care about.⁹⁷⁰

And he notes a related practice of talking

as if the argument is out in the open and people who do not care about the sorts of things they ought to care about are flying in the face of it.⁹⁷¹

McDowell concedes that "the accusation of irrationality that is supposed to convey something on those lines" truly is "bluff."⁹⁷² But this is because when the external reasons theorist charges

⁹⁶⁹ Ibid., 42.

⁹⁷⁰ McDowell, *Mind, Value and Reality*, 103.

⁹⁷¹ Ibid., 103.

someone with "irrationality" he means to charge them with some kind of cognitive failure. But he need not be understood as charging the person with a "discursive" failure, i.e. a failure to make some obvious inference or connection between "facts" that he already possess. Rather, the charge of "irrationality" is simply a charge of failing to discern or detect important features that really are they to be discerned. A better term might be something like "blindness of mind" or "dullness of sense", but since we tend to think of all cognitive functions as falling under the term 'reason' the externalist (the Anglophone externalist at least) will thus reach for a derivative of that term when trying to describe *any* cognitive failure. Here is McDowell's response:

Perhaps we can even give a sense to the accusation of irrationality...There would now be no question of a bluff, any more than one need be bluffing if one says, to someone who cannot find anything to appreciate in, say, twelve-tone music, "You are missing the reasons there are for seeking out opportunities to hear this music" (It might take something like a conversion to bring the reasons within the person's notice; there is no suggestion that he is failing to be swayed by something that would sway anyone capable of being influenced by reasons at all.) However, it is (at least) difficult to separate calling someone "irrational" from the suggestion that he is missing the force of something in the nature of an argument. (It would be odd to say that a person who finds no reasons to listen to twelve-tone music is irrational, even though one thinks that the reasons are there.)⁹⁷³

Here McDowell begins to acknowledge, in a Wittgensteinian sense, that we are held captive by some picture, or some deep assumption, that is buried deep in our language.⁹⁷⁴ McDowell says that "it is...difficult to separate calling someone "irrational" from the suggestion that he is

⁹⁷² Ibid, 103. Regarding the philosopher's bluff, consider this passage from Robert Nozick: "The terminology of philosophical art is coercive: arguments are *powerful* and best when they are *knockdown*, arguments force you to a conclusion, if you believe the premises you have to or must believe the conclusion, some arguments do not carry much *punch*, and so forth...Though philosophy is carried on as a coercive activity, the penalty philosophers wield is, after all, rather weak. If the other person is willing to bear the label of 'irrational' or 'having the worse arguments', he can skip away happily maintaining his previous belief. He will be trailed, of course, by the philosopher furiously hurling philosophical imprecations: 'What do you mean, you're willing to be irrational? You shouldn't be irrational because...' And although the philosopher is embarrassed by his inability to complete this sentence in a noncircular fashion...still, he is unwilling to let his adversary go. Wouldn't it be better if philosophical arguments left the person no possible answer at all, reducing him to impotent silence?...Perhaps philosophers need arguments so powerful they set up reverberations in the brain: if the person refuses to accept the conclusion, he dies." Nozick is driving towards a kind of reductio here; he wants us to see that searching for an ideal goal of philosophical argument in this direction is ridiculous. Eventually, Nozick simply acknowledges that "I think we cannot improve people that way." Nozick, Philosophical Explanations, 3-4. I will say a bit more about how we might aim to improve people below.

⁹⁷³ McDowell, Mind, Value, and Reality, 107

⁹⁷⁴ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, I.15. (p.48e) "A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably."

missing the force of something in the nature of an argument." In other words, it is difficult to articulate the nature of a cognitive failure that it is not a discursive cognitive failure, i.e. a failure to notice something about a discursive, dialectical argument. McDowell insists that there is some sort of "irrationality" in the sense that there is something the persons is missing, yet he notes that the term "irrational" carries the unwanted yet inescapable implication that "the missing" is a kind of failure to notice something about an argument.

The reason that this kind of error is important is that, in a roughly Aristotelian tradition of moral philosophy, we might think that this is one of the most important sources of moral error. In a different paper, McDowell brings out the similarity between, on the one hand, "aesthetic" cases, and, on the other hand, the moral or practical cases that are actually at issue in debates like that between Williams and McDowell.⁹⁷⁵ Here McDowell is trying to describe the particular way in which the virtuous persons sees a certain situation. McDowell, like Murdoch, believes that, in instances of moral disagreement, it is often the case that "we see different worlds." In other words, McDowell believes that: "one cannot share a virtuous person's point of view of a situation in which it seems to him that virtue requires some action, but see no reason to act in that way."⁹⁷⁶ And so McDowell describes the process of trying to persuade someone to see a situation differently, and subsequently to act differently, as follows:

In urging behaviour one takes to be morally required, one finds oneself saying things like this: "You don't know what it means that someone is shy and sensitive." Conveying what a circumstance means, in this loaded sense, is getting someone to see it in the special way in which a virtuous person would see it. In the attempt to do so, one exploits contrivances similar to those one exploits in other areas where the task is to back up the injunction "See it like this": helpful juxtapositions of cases, descriptions with carefully chosen terms and carefully placed emphasis, and the like. (Compare, for instance, what one might do and say to someone who says "Jazz sounds to me like a mess, a mere welter of uncoordinated noise".) No such contrivances can be guaranteed success, in the sense that failure would show irrationality on the part of the audience. That, together with the importance of rhetorical skills to their successful deployment, sets them apart from the sorts of things we typically regard as paradigms of argument. But these seem insufficient

⁹⁷⁵ The similarity between, on the one hand, "aesthetic" cases of coming to see something that was there along, but that one had heretofore been unable to see, and, on the other hand, moral, or even religious, conversions, is closer than we might think. Probably the most famous account of religious conversion in Western literature – aside from the biblical account of the conversion of St. Paul – is the autobiographical account of St. Augustine. And Augustine describes his conversion in "aesthetic terms", i.e. he describes his conversion in terms of coming to see beauty: "Late have I loved Thee, O Beauty so ancient and so new; late have I loved Thee!" Augustine, Confessions, ed. Michael P. Foley, trans. F. J. Sheed, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2006), 210. Augustine, *Confessions*, 10.27.38. ⁹⁷⁶McDowell, *Mind, Value, and Reality*, 90.

grounds for concluding that they are appeals to passion as opposed to reason: for concluding that "See it like this" is really a covert invitation to feel, quite over and above one's view of the facts, a desire that will combine with one's belief to recommend acting in the appropriate way.⁹⁷⁷

Note that McDowell is urging that certain "non-paradigmatic" forms of persuasion are being used here: "descriptions with carefully chosen terms"⁹⁷⁸, the successful deployment of rhetorical skills. These are means of persuasion, i.e. means of effecting a change in one's interlocutor, that Williams explicitly refused to acknowledge as "rational" means of persuasion. Williams refused to think that these were means of bringing someone around to seeing the matter aright. But while we should think that they are non-paradigmatic in the sense that the paradigm of persuasion is the discursive argument, we should not necessarily think that such means could not be rational in that other sense, i.e. we should not think that they might not be good ways of getting someone to see something correctly. The most important point comes when McDowell urges that, just because something is not a discursive, rational argument, it does not follow that it is a mere appeal to "passion as opposed to reason." Here we see the paradoxical trouble that our

⁹⁷⁷ Ibid. 85-86. Compare this passage from Wittgenstein in which Wittgenstein is describing the phenomenon of seeing an aspect: "...one would like to say: We surely cannot 'see' the expression, the shy behaviour, in the same sense in which we see movement, shapes and colours. What is there in this? (Naturally, the question is not to be answered physiologically.) Well, one does say, that one sees both the dog's movements and its joy. If one shuts one's eyes one can see neither the one nor the other...then one might want to say: 'I see the movement, and somehow notice the joy.'" Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, 1873. I-1070. Wittgenstein is trying to say that something like "shy behaviour" is something that we discern in the same way that we notice other aspects in our perceptual experiences. Here we can see the connection between McDowell's use of this example and my earlier "psychological" discussion of seeing an aspect. ⁹⁷⁸ In Goethe's epistolary novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, the protagonist describes his interactions

⁹⁷⁸ In Goethe's epistolary novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, the protagonist describes his interactions with a certain Prince with whom he is living as follows: "Here I am in the Prince's hunting-box. He is quite agreeable to live with, being simple and sincere. I am often pained, however, when he talks about things that he only knows from hearsay or reading, and always from a second-hand point of view...The Prince has a feeling for Art. Though this would be deeper if he were not limited by the abominations of science and the usual terminology. It often makes me gnash my teeth when, upon my introducing with warmth and imagination topics of Nature and Art, he thinks he is doing quite well as he suddenly blunders in with some conventional technical term." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Goethe Treasury: Selected Prose and Poetry*, ed.Thomas Mann (New York: Dover, 2006), 92. This seems an excellent example of the importance of choosing one's words carefully. The novel probably has some autobiographical elements in it; Goethe himself seems to lament the tendency of persons involved in scientific investigations, say, to replace patient observation and subsequent attempts at articulation with technical vocabulary. Aside from worries about Procrusteanism, such technical terms give no indication that the person using them actually understands them, or has any first hand discernment of the matters at hand. Carefully chosen descriptive terms, however, might actually help to convey an insight, and also help that insight to dawn upon someone else.

language – our term 'reason' – forces upon us. McDowell almost says that these means of persuasion are not paradigms of *rational* argument, yet they are still appeal to reason, i.e. he almost says here that such ways of talking are both not rational, and yet rational.

Without meaning merely to bludgeon the reader with further examples, I simply want to note that articulating this point without contradicting oneself is crucial to articulating a core aspect of Aristotelian ethics, namely, Aristotle's idea that one does not deliberate about ends. Deliberation, for Aristotle, is essentially a practical form of discursive reasoning. And, if we take Aristotle at his word that we do not acquire the ends of action by means of deliberation, then many scholars assume that Aristotle must be endorsing a quasi-Humean theory in which our ends are set or determined not by "reason" but by our desires. Others, wanting to resist the quasi-Human interpretation, have tried to argue that we should not take Aristotle at his word, and that we should interpret Aristotle as holding the quasi-Kantian view that deliberation can indeed bring us to an acquisition of ends for action.⁹⁷⁹ What both of these distorted pictures take for granted is the assumption that "the understanding cannot look upon anything."980 In other words, they fail to acknowledge that the Humean non-cognitive interpretation, and the Kantian discursive interpretation, are not the only options. There is a third option that acknowledges that there is a kind of non-discursive, cognitive, apprehension – a kind of perception, if you will – of such ends that, if not causally and logically prior to the desiderative, is at least not posterior to it (I leave open that there may be a kind of "no-priority" view insofar as one's desires, emotions, or sensibilities may partly constitute the cognitive apprehension of such ends). Yet, in articulating

⁹⁷⁹ See: Thomas M. Tuozzo, "Aristotelian Deliberation Is Not Of Ends," in *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy IV: Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. John P. Anton and Anthony Preus (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991); and Norman O. Dahl, *Practical Reason, Aristotle, and Weakness of the Will*, especially ch.3 "Reason and General Ends."

⁹⁸⁰ Josef Pieper writes: "To Kant, for instance, the human act of knowing is exclusively 'discursive,' which means not 'merely looking.' 'The understanding cannot look upon anything.' This doctrine has been characterized, in brief, as 'one of the most momentous dogmatic assumptions of Kantian epistemology.'" Pieper, *Leisure and the Basis of Culture*, 10. For the quote from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Pieper cites Raymund Schmidt's 1944 German edition. The new Cambridge Guyer/Wood translation renders the passage "The understanding is therefore not a faculty of intuition" Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, 205. A68/B93. Pieper may not be entirely fair. As McDowell notes, Kant "comes within a whisker of a satisfactory" account of non-discursive cognition insofar as he talks about the mind's non-discursive structuring of the manifold of sensory "intuition." But, ultimately, his transcendental frame "spoils his insight" and Pieper's criticism remains intact. The understanding cannot look upon anything – the "thing in itself" still eludes us. For McDowell's discussion, which I have already alluded to earlier – Part III, Section 4.B.1 – see McDowell, *Mind and World*, 42, 96.

this idea, most theorists still risk falling into a paradox over the use of the word "reason." MacIntyre, for example, writes that, according to Aristotle:

We do not deliberate about ends, but only about what conduces to the achievement of ends, although we do indeed *reason* about ends, including our ultimate *telos*.⁹⁸¹

But if deliberation is simply a practical form of discursive reason, then MacIntyre is still paradoxically saying both that we do not reason, and that we do reason about ends.⁹⁸² And he is less clear about what we are to make of the reasoning that goes beyond reasoning, i.e. what we are to make of the non-discursive cognition that Aristotle is talking about. Jacques Maritain, on the other hand, focuses much more intently on what goes on in such instances of non-discursive cognition. Yet even he nevertheless still sometimes falls into the linguistic trouble of trying to articulate the activity in question. Regarding Aristotelian induction, Maritain writes:

Induction is neither an inference properly so-called, nor an argument, nor a proof: it merely leads the mind to a connection of terms whose intelligible necessity it perceives immediately, without reasoning.⁹⁸³

But, as Louis Groarke notes, this mental illumination does involve "reason"; it just does not involve "discursive reason."⁹⁸⁴ The bottom line here is that one must find a way of talking about non-discursive cognition, and its failures and successes, without letting our language about 'reason' and 'argument' trip us up. In order to speak in this Aristotelain idiom, we must reclaim a language of intellection, or of "visual thinking", as opposed to a language of exclusively ratiocinative mental acts.

⁹⁸¹ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 272.

⁹⁸² He is clearer elsewhere when he writes: "because...the move from premises asserted in a dialectical mode to a conclusion concerning some particular first principle is not a deductive inference, something other than logical acumen is required to complete that move successfully, something which provides a grasp of the relevant first principle and which is a 'seeing that,' something to be named 'intuition' perhaps or 'insight'." MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 224. See also his discussion of *epagoge* or "induction" in Aristotle. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 90-93. There he notes that *epagoge* is "that scientific method through which the particular varyingly impure or distorted exemplifications of single form can be understood in terms of that form." He acknowledges his indebetness to Normal Dahl's discussion, which I discuss in Appendix II. And he notes that "*epagoge* involves inference but is more than inference." But it is the cognitive activity that goes beyond discursive inference that is given relatively little discussion by MacIntyre.

⁹⁸³ Jacques Maritain, An Introduction to Logic (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1937), 273-274.

⁹⁸⁴ Groarke, Aristotelian Induction, 292 note 43.

A helpful discussion of this distinction, and one that is specifically focused on how the distinction relates to philosophical discussion of moral disagreements, is found in the writing of Cora Diamond. Whereas, in the two examples I quoted above, McDowell makes an analogy between, on the one hand, the discerning of relevant evaluative or practical properties, and, on the other hand, the discerning of features in works of art (both of his examples were musical), Diamond thinks that works of art (literature in particular) can actually be constitutive means of bringing us around to seeing matters aright when it comes to evaluative or practical matters. First, I shall describe Diamond's view about the persuasive role of literature and art more generally. Then, I shall suggest that Diamond's view (which, like McDowell's, is influenced by Wittgenstein) could be a helpful compliment to McDowell's account of how it is that we discuss moral disagreements. And, finally, I wish to suggest that the reason that art may be helpful in increasing practical discernment has to do with the relation between beauty and goodness, and between beauty and truth. In other words, I wish to suggest that this view of art, and of the expanded sense of cognitive persuasion that goes along with it, may, and indeed should, be seamlessly coupled with a kind of Aristotelian naturalism – a move that, McDowell, at least, is always hesitant to make.

In order to understand why literature, or art in general, my might help us in moral matters, we have to understand a general thesis that Diamond defends. She thinks that there are various "ways in which we go on, in ethics, beyond just saying what we think is so."⁹⁸⁵ One such way, she writes, is by giving arguments, but this is only one such way. In addition, there are other ways, such as the telling of stories. She aims to set out these "various non-argumentative ways of talking *alongside* argument."⁹⁸⁶ In defending this claim, she sees at least two worrisome objections that must be met. First, there is the idea that "the only way of going beyond assertion is going *to* argument", or, to put it another way, "beyond assertion there lies *only* argument."⁹⁸⁷ This objection holds that the only way of "rationally" persuading someone to change his view, is by presenting him with an argument. The objection relies on another distinction, namely a distinction between, on the one hand, being reasonably convinced, and, on the other hand, merely changing one's mind. Behind the idea that the only way of moving beyond assertion is to make arguments

⁹⁸⁵ Diamond, Realistic Spirit, 27. "Introduction II"

⁹⁸⁶ Ibid., 27.

⁹⁸⁷ Ibid., 295. "Anything But Argument?"

is the idea that when someone is *reasonably* convinced of something, the convincing will have to have proceeded by arguments...and the capacities of his head and not of his heart will be all that is involved. Part of this idea is that becoming convinced in any other way is merely a matter of the operation of *causes*. Alternations in someone's heart are carried out not by reasonable convincings but by – mere – persuadings.⁹⁸⁸

Diamond puts the point another way by phrasing it in the form of a question, and then suggesting that many philosophers, i.e. those who defend the monopoly of argument when trying to effect a reasonable convincing, answer this question in a particular manner. The question goes as follows:

There is, after all, a distinction between *convincing* someone of a moral view he has hitherto been inclined to reject and simply *getting him to change* his moral views. At the very least, if he is convinced, he must be led, through the use of capacities as a thinking being, to take a certain change in his moral outlook to be an improvement of some sort, a development for the better. But now what is to *count as* such a development? And what is to *count as* a use of one's capacities as a thinking being in taking a change in moral outlook so?⁹⁸⁹

And, the particular answer given by those philosophers who claim that only argument can be used to proceed beyond assertion is that, on the one hand, our only capacities as a thinking being are "those of the head" and that, on the other hand, the only thing that counts as an improvement in a moral outlook is an increase the internal coherence of one system of moral principles – principles that can then be systematically applied to particular situations.

The first part of the answer, that our only capacities as a thinking being are those "of the head", is one to which I have already given some response. If we think that our only capacities as a thinking being are those of the head, and if we think that the only thing that "the head" does is to engage in ratiocinative inference, then it seems impossible to think that our "heart", or our "eyes", or our sentiments, could have anything to do with such inferences. The heart and the eyes are then relegated to the mere "operation of causes." If, however, we think that "the head" might also have a non-discursive capacity for thought, then it becomes easier to imagine how such capacity may permeate our lookings, and our feelings. In other words, if we think that the head does more than calculate, then it might be that our eyes and our hearts are changed in virtue of the fact that we have heads. As I noted before, we might recall that old Aristotelian adage, which is endorsed by Aquinas, that we are speaking synechdochically when we speak of the eye

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid. 293.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid. 306.

or the heart or the head, namely, that it is not the eye that sees or the head that thinks, but rather the person that does these things.⁹⁹⁰

The second part of the answer, the idea that the only thing that could count as an improvement of our moral outlook is something like further coherence, is related to another issue that I discussed briefly above when I mentioned the objections to McDowell by Blackburn and Millgram, namely, this answer assumes that any other kind of change besides one arrived by argument would have an objectionable "bolt from the blue quality" to it. Diamond uses this very same language when trying to describe the objection herself. She says that we need not commit ourselves to the idea that our moral thought must be as narrow as our initial affections with the sole exception being "a bolt from the causal blue" which then transforms our character.⁹⁹¹ Diamond notes that persons who think this way tend to write

as if the heart as it were simply went whatever way it did, and that serious thought, directed at those whose hearts go initially in some direction which one thinks is the wrong direction, aims for the head and not the heart of its intended audience.⁹⁹²

In other words, the defenders of the exclusive use of argument in attempts to persuade tend to see "the heart" as having a kind of brute inclination towards certain kinds of moral positions and against others, and that any serious moral thought must therefore not be directed at "the heart" insofar as the heart is simply not receptive to convincing in this way. But, according to Diamond, this is simply not the case. She presents counter-examples drawn from literature in which various authors seem to be aiming at convincing us of some moral position, by aiming at our hearts. She gives examples from Dickens, Wordsworth, Henry James, and Jane Austin. These authors, she suggests, are not aiming at "*mere* conversion."⁹⁹³ Just because they do not aim to change our minds by means of argument – where argument is conceived in the narrow discursive sense that is often considered the domain of philosophers – we need not assume that they are simply trying to bring about a *mere* change. Rather, "[t]he appeal is to the intelligence, but does not go via arguments – however hard *that* may be to fit into our philosophical

⁹⁹⁰ In addition to the passages from Aristotle and Aquinas I quoted earlier (see the end of Part III, Section 4.B.1), see: Daniel De Hann, "Perception and the Vis Cogitativa: A Thomisitc Analysis" especially, p.411 note 33.

⁹⁹¹ Diamond, *Realistic Spirit*, 296.

⁹⁹² Ibid., 294.

⁹⁹³ Ibid., 294.

schemes."⁹⁹⁴ And one way of conceiving the way in which some piece of writing or speech may appeal to the intelligence without attempting to go via arguments is by a direct appeal to our moral vision.

And an appeal to our hearts may be, at the same time, an appeal to our moral vision. Any of talk of "the heart" in such matters should point us to a metaphor or an idiom of Hebrew origin, and not of Greek origin. English gets its talk of "the heart", when this is taken to refer to the center of a person's thoughts and emotions, from the biblical Hebraic tradition. The Apostle Paul, for example, even though he writes in Greek, still speaks of "the heart" in this way. And he tends to think of the heart as both cognitive and corrigible. He writes as follows:

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts [$\tau o \dot{v} \zeta \dot{o} \phi \theta \alpha \lambda \mu o \dot{v} \zeta \tau \tilde{\eta} \zeta \kappa \alpha \rho \delta(\alpha \zeta)$] enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe...⁹⁹⁵

Paul speaks of "the eyes of the heart" so as to imply that even if the heart is the seat of emotions, it is still outward-looking; it is still has a sort of intentionality. He also speaks of the eyes of the heart being "enlightened" so as to imply that it is possible for the heart to move to a state of better discernment, i.e. the heart can come to see matters aright. If the heart can indeed do these things, then this would seem to mitigate the objection that such changes are merely bolts from the causal blue. Rather, such changes, even in they involve feeling or emotion, would seem to involve a transition to seeing matters aright, and that transition would seem to be effected by means of our spontaneous thinking capacities.

⁹⁹⁴ Ibid., 301. And here Diamond rightly goes for an English word – 'intelligence' – that derives from the Latin '*intellectus*' and '*intelligere*." Any ear for etymological connotations will hear this as a purposeful avoidance of the ratiocinative paradigm, which derives all words for mental activity from '*ratio*': 'reason', 'rational', etc.

⁹⁹⁵ Ephesians 1:16-19 (Revised Standard Version). Roberts and Wood use this passage as an illustration of several central themes of their book on intellectual virtues. It seems to indicate a more holistic approach to the seat of epistemic goods: such goods are not located "in the head", but rather, by talking of the eyes of the heart, Paul implies that it is the whole person that partakes in such epistemic goods. Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood, *Intellectual Virtues: An Essay in Regulative Epistemology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 53-54. Also, it seems to imply that emotions or affective dispositions may be revelatory, or a means of acquaintance with, certain evaluative truths. This is consistent with Roberts's cognitive theory of emotions in his other writings. Other biblical passages refer to the "heart" in this cognitive way as well. See, for example, Deuteronomy 29:4 "Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive [καρδίαν εἰδέναι/ *cor intellegens*], and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." King James Version, with the Greek Septuagint and Latin Vulgate terms added.

I said that there were two main lines of objection to Diamond's proposal that there were other ways of going beyond assertion than by means of argument. The first objection was a direct attack on the suggestion; the first objection simply denies that there are other means of convincing someone that are not mere changes or mere persuadings. Meeting the first objection involves defending the possibility of making a transition to seeing matters aright that does not occur via argument and that nevertheless is brought about by appeal to our intelligence. The second objection, rather than directly attack the possibility of making such a transition and of having that transition count as a kind of convincing that appeals to our thinking capacities, attempts to relegate any non-argumentative means of making that transition to a secondary and subordinate position in our mental lives. Onora O'Neill, for example, notes that certain "Wittgensteinian accounts of moral deliberation" seem to suggest that "we can deliberate only in so far as we share the practices of those with or about whom we deliberate."996 What this implies, according to O'Neill, is that certain parties to a moral disagreement will be "beyond the pale of moral communication."⁹⁹⁷ O'Neill suggests that there is a certain comfort to this view insofar as certain disputes are then simply placed beyond the hope of resolution by means of "reasoning." When others are deemed beyond the pale, then, we must resort to merely attempting to "convert" them.⁹⁹⁸ Diamond makes it clear, however, that she intends the various non-argumentative ways of talking to be set "alongside argument"; they are not merely "a recourse when argument – or any other sort of communication – has broken down."999 And, in order to defend Diamond's suggestion that we should think of non-argumentative ways of talking, not just as a possible way of moving beyond assertion, but in fact a way that is just as ordinary and just as powerful as giving arguments in that narrow philosophical sense associated with philosophers, I think it is helpful to think of various spheres of intellectual life that do see

⁹⁹⁶ Onora O'Neill, "The Power of Example," *Philosophy* 61, no. 235 (January 1, 1986): 14.

⁹⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁸ Ibid., 14-15.

⁹⁹⁹ Diamond, *Realistic Spirit*, 27. Diamond writes: "Professor O'Neill...takes me to hold that, when we are confronted by cases of incommensurable practices, confronted (that is) with the breakdown of moral communication, we can seek to enlarge or reshape the moral structure or outlook of the other person by such things as telling stories...It is extremely difficult to respond to that with anything short of an oath, but let me simply say that telling stories, or writing novels, is not what people do because communication (moral or other) has broken down...telling a story in the hope of altering someone's way of looking at things is hardly what we do when we regard someone as 'beyond the pale of moral communication.'' Diamond, *Realistic Spirit*, 27.

non-argumentative ways of talking as having this role. At one point, Diamond suggests that mathematics is like this. She writes:

Just as mathematics can be done by proof but also...by drawing something and saying "Look at this," so ethical thought goes on in argument and also *not* in argument but (e.g.) in stories and images.¹⁰⁰⁰

But I think that an even more helpful parallel would be to consider the general method of discussion that goes on in aesthetics. I think that, in aesthetics, it is arguable that non-argumentative ways of talking not only are not relegated to a status below that of argument, but may in fact have a privileged position in aesthetic discourse.

3. Aesthetics

Diamond uses various examples from literature as a way of showing that there are nonargumentative ways of talking, but I think that we can move from literature to a more general statement about all manner of aesthetic judgments. Immanuel Kant, arguably the most influential writer when it comes to modern aesthetics, formulated a certain paradox or antinomy in our common thinking about aesthetic judgments – what he calls "judgments of taste." He notes that there are two sayings that have become proverbial and which both represent common ideas about judgments of taste, and that there is third saying that, while it has not become proverbial, is nevertheless present in common thinking about such judgments. The combination of these common ideas, however, tend to form a kind of paradox that wants resolution. I shall quote Kant at length, and then discuss why it is that Kant's distinctions have relevance for moral discourse. Kant writes:

There are two commonplaces about taste. The following proposition contains the first of these and is used by everyone who lacks taste but tries to escape censure: *Everyone has his own taste*. That amounts to the saying that the basis determining a judgment of taste is merely subjective (gratification or pain), and that such judgments have no right to other people's necessary assent.

The second commonplace about taste, which is used even by those who grant judgments of taste the right to speak validly for everyone, is this: *There is no disputing about taste*. That amounts to saying that, even though the basis determining a judgment of taste may be objective, that basis still cannot be brought to determinate concepts; and hence even proofs do not allow us to *decide* anything about such a judgment, although we can certainly *quarrel* about it, and rightly so. For though *disputing* and *quarrelling* are

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ibid. 9.

alike in that [we] try to produce agreement between judgments by means of the mutual resistance between them, disputing is different inasmuch as here we hope to produce this agreement according to determinate concepts, by basing a proof on them, so that we assume that the judgment is based on *objective concepts*; and in cases where we think that this cannot be done, we judge that disputing is impossible.

It is easy to see that between these two commonplaces a proposition is missing. This proposition is not in common use as a proverb, but everyone still has it in mind. It is this: *One can quarrel about taste* (though one cannot dispute about it.) This proposition, however, implies the opposite of the first proposition above [Everyone has his own taste]. For if it is granted that we can quarrel about something, then there must be some hope for us to arrive at agreement about it, and so we must be able to count on the judgment's having bases that do not have merely private validity and hence are not merely subjective. But the above principle, *Everyone has his own taste*, says the direct opposite.

Hence the following antinomy emerges concerning the principle of taste:

(1) *Thesis*: A judgment of taste is not based on concepts; for otherwise one could dispute about it (decide by means of proofs).

(2) *Antithesis*: A judgment of taste is based on concepts; for otherwise, regardless of the variation among [such judgments], one could not even so much as quarrel about them (lay claim to other people's necessary assent to one's judgment).¹⁰⁰¹

The key distinction is that implied by the second commonplace – the commonplace captured by the proverbial Latin phrase *de gustibus non est diputandum* – namely, the distinction between disputing and quarrelling. Kant uses the terms "*Disputieren*" and "*Streiten*"¹⁰⁰² but, like in English, there is not a very clear ordinary language distinction to mark the difference between the two terms. But the distinction that Kant is trying to articulate and to assign to them is that between what I have been calling argumentative and non-argumentative forms of persuading or convincing.¹⁰⁰³ Kant clearly sees disputation as a kind of more rigorous *species* within a broader

¹⁰⁰¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans.Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 210-211. AK 5:338-339.

¹⁰⁰² The Guyer edition gives the German in the footnotes. See: Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 214.

¹⁰⁰³ Kant's term 'Streiten' is what I take to be the equivalent of what I have been calling 'nonargumentative' ways of talking, whereas his term 'Disputieren' is what I take to be the equivalent of what I have been calling 'argument.' This is because we Anglophone analytical philosophers tend to use 'argument' as a way to refer to what we take to be the characteristic activity of philosophy. This seems to line up with what the Scholastic philosophers would have called Disputatio. Both terms refer to a rigorous, logical, discursive movement from certain carefully defined terms and proposition to further propositions that are supposed to follow logically from these. (I have already discussed why I think this association between late medieval scholastic disputation and contemporary Anglophone analytical philosophy is problematic.) Almost all translators of Kant's Critique of Judgment tend to reach for 'dispute' as a translation of Kant's 'Disputieren', likely because of the etymological similarity and because of the associations with medieval Scholastic disputatio and logical rigor. The Pluhar translation I

genus that might be called "quarrelling" or "contesting." The more rigorous idea of disputation or argument, and the more general idea of a quarrel or contestation both share a common belief in an objective basis for judgment, in a belief in the reality of the disagreement, and a desire that the disagreement be resolved into the sharing of a common judgment. But the difference between disputation and quarrelling is essentially the means by which this transition to shared judgment is to be reached. Disputation assumes that a transition to shared judgment can be achieved by something like a proof, whereas quarrelling assumes that the transition will have to be achieved in some other way.

Kant's particular resolution of the antinomy involves an appeal to his transcendental idealism, and to his idea that the basis of experiences of beauty is the "free play" of our various faculties, i.e. the imagination and the understanding.¹⁰⁰⁴ It is this intersubjective play of our shared faculties that is supposedly communicated in aesthetic discussions, and which serves as the basis of our shared judgment, if and when such shared judgment is reached. While theorists in aesthetics have (rightly) been less quick to adopt Kant's particular solution (regarding our experiences of beauty, Nicholas Wolterstorff, for example, says that "[t]he suggestion that I'm just enjoying the harmonious working of my faculties strikes me as a non-starter!"¹⁰⁰⁵) the idea that judgments of beauty or judgments of taste are not to be communicated by means of formal arguments seems to have had a wider adoption. Kant is dismissive towards the first commonplace – that everyone has his own taste – insofar as this essentially makes any disagreement in matters of taste illusory. Almost all theorists in aesthetics tend to share Kant's dismissive attitude towards this commonplace insofar as to accept it at face value would seem to

have quoted then uses 'quarrelling' to translate Kant's 'Streiten.' The older translation by J. H. Bernanrd translates 'Streiten' as 'quarrelling' or as 'contesting'. But the newer Cambridge translation by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews chooses to translate "*Streiten*" as 'to argue', which, to me, seems misleading insofar as 'argue' is the word often used by analytical philosophers to mean a strict or rigorous form of discursive reasoning that is meant to resemble a proof, complete with carefully defined terms and numbered premises. This is misleading because Kant obviously means to set up '*Streiten*' as something opposed to this.

¹⁰⁰⁴ See Kant, Critique of Judgment, §9. AK 5:217.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Art and the Aesthetic: The Religious Dimension" in *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004), 331. Roger Scruton also notes that it is a platitude about aesthetics that "The judgment of taste is about the beautiful object, not about the subject's state of mind. In describing an object as beautiful, I am describing it, not me." Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5. Kant's formulation of the basis of a judgment of beauty being the free-play of the faculties seems in danger of violating this platitude.

render any debate in aesthetics meaningless. People who write about aesthetics tend not to think that aesthetic discussions are meaningless; ergo, there is a kind non-accidental coincidence that writers in aesthetics (those who think aesthetics is worth writing about) think that there is meaningful disagreement in aesthetics. But the reason that this commonplace remains a commonplace is that it appears to receive a kind of support from the combination of the second commonplace and another often unarticulated premise: namely, the idea that arguments of a formal or quasi-formal variety are the only means of effecting any sort of cognitive transition to a shared judgment between any two interlocutors who initially disagree. In other words, if it is true that one cannot engage in disputation or formal argument regarding matters of taste, it must follow, so the unarticulated premise seems to imply, that there is no possible *cognitive* transition towards a shared judgment. There is no basis, so this thinking goes, for thinking that there is any meaningful sense of "coming to see matter aright"; rather, there are only mere changes. But many writers in aesthetics have also been sympathetic towards Kant's third proposition that one *can* quarrel about matters of taste, that there really are disagreements in matters of taste, and that such disagreements really do demand resolution. In other words, these disagreements are not to be dismissed as instances of persons simply announcing which way their hearts, or their emotions, or their imaginations, merely happen to go. And so theorists in aesthetics have, to some degree, taken up the Kantian problematic, and have tried to articulate the possibility implied by Kant, namely the possibility that we might communicate some cognitive difference regarding aesthetic disagreements without appeal to formal arguments.

It has become somewhat of a commonplace in aesthetic theory, then, that there is such a thing as a direct appeal to our experience that does not go via argument, and that such appeals presuppose the possibility of something like a cognitive transition from disagreement to shared judgment. Clive Bell, for example, writes:

A good critic may be able to make me see in a picture that had left me cold things that I had overlooked, till at last, receiving the aesthetic emotion, I recognize it as a work of art...But it is useless for a critic to tell me that something is a work of art; he must make me feel it for myself. This he can do only by making me see; he must get at my emotions through my eyes. Unless he can make me see something that moves me, he cannot force my emotions...The critic can affect my aesthetic theories only by affecting my aesthetic experience.¹⁰⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰⁶ Clive Bell, Art (New York: Capricorn Books, 1958), 18.

Here it is clear that, according to Bell, a direct appeal must be made to one's subjective experience. But, Bell is quick to note, there is no reason to assume that there is therefore no general validity of aesthetic theories. Rather, he seems to imply that our perceptions are plastic and corrigible. The task of the critic, he might well have said, is to get one to see matters aright. There really are properties there, so the critic believes, such that, if you saw them, they would cause you to appreciate the work of art in question. There are properties there, in other words, that merit your appreciation.

Frank Sibley, for another example, says something similar. Sibley is clear there is something cognitive, or something analogous to perception, that goes on when one is exercising one's taste, or one's ability to make aesthetic judgments. According to Sibley, "[w]hen I speak of taste...[i]t is with an ability to *notice* or *discern* things that I am concerned."¹⁰⁰⁷ Yet it seems clear that we do not use discursive reasoning to apply terms related to our immediate sensory experiences. And so, according to Sibley, neither to we use discursive reason when applying aesthetic terms. Sibley writes:

We do not apply simple color words by following rules or in accordance with principles. We see that the book is red by looking, just as we tell that the tea is sweet by tasting it. So too, it might be said, we just see (or fail to see) that things are delicate, balanced, and the like. This kind of comparison between the exercise of taste and the use of the five senses is indeed familiar; our use of the word "taste" itself shows that the comparison is age-old and very natural.¹⁰⁰⁸

And elsewhere he writes

It is of importance to note first that, broadly speaking, aesthetics deals with a kind of perception. People have to *see* the grace or unity of a work, *hear* the plaintiveness or frenzy in the music, *notice* the gaudiness of a color scheme, *feel* the power of a novel, its mood, or its uncertainty of tone. They may be struck by these qualities at once, or they may come to perceive them only after repeated viewings, hearings, or readings, and with the help of critics. But unless they do perceive them for themselves, aesthetic enjoyment, appreciation, and judgment are beyond them. Merely to learn from others, on good authority, that the music is serene, the play moving, or the picture unbalanced is of little aesthetic value; the crucial thing is to see, hear, or feel. To suppose indeed that one can make aesthetic judgments without aesthetic perception, say, by following rules of some kind, is to misunderstand aesthetic judgment.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Frank Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts," in *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*, ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008), 495.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ibid. 501.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Frank Sibley, "Aesthetic and Nonaesthetic," *Philosophical Review* 74, no. 2 (1965): 137.

But while aesthetic judgments do have much in common with what we might like to call pure sensations (recalling James's *caveat*, of course, they, beyond infancy, we almost never inhabit a state of pure sensation) there are also important differences.

One such difference, Sibley notes, is that many persons with good hearing, and, say, 20-20 vision, may still fail to discern the aesthetic qualities of works of art. Thus, people have brought the accusation that such qualities are "esoteric" insofar as they are different from simple "perceptual" qualities.¹⁰¹⁰ Yet I think that my earlier discussion of Wittgenstein and of James should have thrown significant hesitation on what counts as a "perceptual" quality. As Sibley notes, even though some persons, and all persons some of the time, may miss these qualities, we do still say that we "observe" or "notice" them, when we do. I would even venture to say that such qualities often dawn upon us in the same way that Wittgenstein describes the dawning or noticing of an aspect. So, in this way, such properties are esoteric only in the extremely attenuated sense that they are not noticed solely in virtue of having non-damaged eyes or ears. But, if perception truly is, as I have argued it is, permeated by spontaneous cognitive activity, then such properties are, as we would expect, only noticed, or only dawn upon us, when we attend to them, and when we focus our non-discursive cognitive thinking in the appropriate way. The discerning of such properties, then, will involve various acquired habits and skills of looking; and the reporting and communicating of such properties will require various verbal skills and the mastery of applying certain concepts and terms over and beyond terms for pure sensations and lower-level perceptual properties. But while certain very sophisticated and masterful acts of discernment and communication may seem to disclose esoteric properties, insofar as most people have difficulty discerning them, we should be quite familiar with many such aesthetic properties that most normal individuals are able to discern on a regular basis. Aesthetic properties, therefore, like other kinds of high-level perceptual properties, range from the ordinary to the esoteric, and the esoteric ones should not be suspect merely on account of their being esoteric. Insofar as perceptual is permeated by spontaneous cognition, and in so far as cognitive activities of looking are trainable, we should expect a range competency when it

¹⁰¹⁰ Sibley, "Aeshtetic Concepts," 501. Sibley quotes Margaret Macdonal as saying "works of art are esoteric objects...not simply objects of sense perception." Even though Sibley does occasionally oppose "aesthetic" properties to "perceptual" properties, I do not think that he would wish to defend the implication of this opposition, i.e. that "aesthetic" properties are not perceptual. Rather, I think he is simply trying to articulate a distinction between what James calls sensation as opposed to perception.

comes to seeing: from blindness of mind or dullness of sense, to the man of ordinary ability, up through the most discerning and perspicacious of observers.

Another such related difference, and one that is even more relevant to our current discussion, is that we are able to defend our aesthetic judgments by talking, in a way that we are not able to defend our judgments of pure(r) sensory qualities. Sibley writes:

When someone is unable to see that the book on the table is brown, we cannot get him to see that it is by talking; consequently it seems puzzling that we might get someone to see that the vase is graceful by talking.¹⁰¹¹

Yet, according to Sibley, this is exactly what critics in aesthetics do, i.e. they get others to see what they see by talking. And the reason this is possible is that, because our discernment of aesthetic and other high-level perceptual properties are, insofar as they are conditioned by spontaneous cognition, subject to voluntary control, they are responsive to the direction of others in way that our more passive sensory deliverances are not. This is why Wittgenstein writes:

Seeing an aspect and imagining are subject to the will. There is such an order as "Imagine this", and also: "Now see the figure like this"; but not: "Now see this leaf green".¹⁰¹²

And while many people agree that this is *what* critics do, there is less agreement regarding, or articulate description of, *how* an aesthetic critic achieves this aim. Sibley tries to give some general methodological description of how it is that critics in aesthetic get others to see what they see. Critics, according to Sibley, may: (1) mention or point out non-aesthetic features, i.e. sensory properties and lower-level perceptual properties; (2) mention the aesthetic qualities they want us to see; (3) link remarks about aesthetic and nonaesthetic properties; (4) makes use of helpful similes and metaphors; (5) make use of contrasts, comparisons, and reminiscences; (6) repeat and reiterate the same points in slightly different ways; (7) accompany his talk or his "verbal performance" with "appropriate tones of voice, expression, nods, looks, and gestures."¹⁰¹³ All these things are examples and instances of the kind of non-argumentative

¹⁰¹¹ Ibid., 502.

¹⁰¹² Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 213e. Also, in this context, Wittgenstein writes: "Here it occurs to me that in conversation on aesthetic matters we use the words: 'You have to see it like *this*, this is how it is meant'; 'When you see it like *this*, you see where it goes wrong'; 'You have to hear this bar as an introduction'; 'You must hear it in this key'; 'You must phrase it like *this*' (which can refer to hearing as well as to playing)." Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 202e.

¹⁰¹³ Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts," 504-505. At the time of his writing *After Virtue*, MacIntyre seemed to take such gestures as evidence of a declining sense of the objectivity of one's evaluative judgments. He

talking that critics do in order to get us to see what they see. The appeal is still to the intelligence, yet it does not go via argument. Rather, it seems to aim directly at our vision.

And, if I may beg the pardon of the reader for one more example, I would use an example from Roger Scruton. Not only does Scruton pick up on the general methodological importance of non-argumentative talking as a way of defending aesthetic judgment, but he also gives an example of what this kind of talking looks like in practice. According to Scruton, the following seems to be a platitude or a commonplace about the nature of aesthetic judgments:

...there are no second-hand judgments of beauty. There is no way that you can argue me into a judgment that I have not made for myself, nor can I become an expert in beauty, simply by studying what others have said about beautiful objects, and without experiencing and judging for myself.¹⁰¹⁴

Yet, Scruton notes, there does seem to be a kind of paradox that arises on account of this platitude:

The paradox, then, is this. The judgment of beauty makes a claim about its object, and can be supported by reasons for its claim. But the reasons do not compel the judgment, and can be rejected without contradiction. So are they reasons or aren't they?¹⁰¹⁵

Here Scruton seems to be noting the same kind of paradox that I had suggested was involved in the exchange between McDowell and Williams that I described above. Namely, it seems that aesthetic judgments are reasonable, in the sense that they are cognitive judgments. In other words, they seem to be *about* something, they seem to be corrigible (there is a standard of

almost seems to imply that such gestures only emerge when arguments fail, and that when arguments fail, judgments cease to be plausibly cognitive. When it comes to the gestures of the members of the Bloomsbury group - "Moore's gasps of incredulity and head shaking,...Strachey's grim silences and...Lowes Dickinson's shrugs" - MacIntyre writes that "An acute observer at the time...might well have put matters thus: these people take themselves to be identifying the presence of a non-natural property, which they call 'good'; but there is in fact no such property and they are doing no more than and no other than expressing their feelings and attitudes, disguising the expression of preference and whim by an interpretation of their own utterance and behavior which confers upon it an objectivity that it does not in fact possess." MacIntyre, After Virtue, 17. Yet it seems very plausible that Moore, for certain, took himself to be doing just this, i.e. discerning or, perhaps better, discovering, an evaluative property. Now whether any member of the group had in fact discovered an evaluative property in the instance of any particular judgment is surely up for discussion insofar as people are fallible; but that he uses various gestures, expressions, tones of voice, etc. is certainly not by itself any indication that the person in question was not sincerely purporting to refer to an evaluative quality. If ethical evaluative qualities are anything like aesthetic evaluative qualities – and Moore seems to think that they are – we might think that various gestures and expressions are perfectly legitimate means, among others, of communicating one's discernment of them.

¹⁰¹⁴ Scruton, *Beauty*, 5. ¹⁰¹⁵ Ibid., 7. correctness for them; one can be wrong about them), and they are the kind of judgments about which it is warranted to demand that others agree. And they are reasonable in the sense that one can give defense of them by means of talking. Yet they are not reasonable in the sense that they are defensible by discursive argument, proof, or deductive inference. The paradox, as in the Williams/McDowell exchange, trades on our terms 'reasonable' and 'reason', and it forces the defender of the cognitively of aesthetic discourse into saying, paradoxically, that aesthetic discussions both are, and are not, reasonable. The problem that generates the paradox, as I said above, is the lack of any linguistic resources to describe the kind of non-discurisve cognition required by the defender of the cognitive status of aesthetic discourse. Lacking such linguistic resources, Scruton acknowledges a subsequent temptation for an opponent to think that, because there are no proofs or discursive arguments that can coerce one to accept the judgment of another, it must be the case that, if consensus is achieved, it "arises in some other way, by emotional infection, rather than by reasoning."¹⁰¹⁶ But against this non-cognitivist view, Scruton says:

The judgment of taste is a genuine judgment, one that is supported by reasons. But these reasons can never amount to a deductive argument. If they could do so, then there could be second-hand opinions about beauty. There could be experts on beauty who had never experienced the things they describe, and rules for producing beauty which could be applied by someone who had no aesthetic taste.¹⁰¹⁷

In other words, Scruton is saying that such judgments are reasonable in the sense that they are not merely some non-cognitivist form of "emotional infection", yet, in order to avoid violating the platitude about having to see for oneself, he notes that such reasons cannot be proofs or deductive arguments.

I think it is worth considering an example from Scruton that depicts an aesthetic disagreement between two persons. McDowell seemed to urge us to approach disagreements about ethics in a similar manner to the way in which we might approach disagreements about aeshtetics, yet McDowell does not give much indication about how such discussions might go. And thus Scruton:

...it is worth meditating on what actually happens, when you argue about matters of aesthetic taste. We have been listening to Brahms's Fourth Symphony, say, and you ask me how I like it. 'Heavy, lugubrious, oily, gross,' I say. You pay me the first subject of

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibid., 114.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid., 7.

the first movement on the piano. 'Listen,' you say. And you invert the sixths so that they become thirds, and I hear how the theme goes down one ladder of thirds and up another. You show me how the harmonies are also organized by third progressions, and how the ensuing themes unfold from the same melodic and harmonic cells that generate the opening melody. After a while I understand that there is a kind of minimalism at work here – everything emerges from a concentrated seed of musical material, and after a while I hear this happening and then – suddenly – it all sounds right to me, the heaviness and oiliness vanish in a moment, and instead I hear a kind of breaking into leaf and flower of a beautiful plant.¹⁰¹⁸

It is important to note that Scruton's example, like McDowell's, involves someone saying "See it like this." Scruton generalizes from this case to all such similar cases, and notes that "there is such a thing as reasoning, which has a changed perception as its goal."¹⁰¹⁹ He mentions Wittegenstein's discussion of the duck-rabbit Gestalt image as a more simplistic example of what he described in the Brahms example. And in such cases, the "see it like this" is not the same as the un-Socratic "Well, either you see it or you don't." The difference is that the person who is a lover of Brahms's music is sure that there is beauty there to be seen. And we imagine that the lover of Brahms's music has a desire that his friend see the beauty there as well. Not necessarily because he needs reassurance of his own aesthetic taste (although maybe consensus brings some of this too), but because he sincerely desires the good of his friend for its own sake, and he wants his friend to hear some beauty that he has heretofore been unable to hear. The imperative "see it like this" is presumed to occur within a conversational context in which further ways of non-argumentative talking are meant to help one's interlocutor see what one sees. This non-argumentative talking is presumably the "reasoning, which has changed perception as its goal" that Scruton is talking about. Here "reasoning" and "offering a reason" are clearly not meant to be understood in a discursive manner, but rather in that wide sense of "offering a defense of a cognitive judgment." This is not the case with the response "Either you see or you don't" which is often offered in exasperation, or as a way of ending a conversation.

4. Aesthetics and Ethics

Hopefully this short look at the methodological remarks of some prominent theorists in aesthetics has born out my suggestion that, rather than being a last resort to be appealed to when

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid., 115.

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid., 118.

proper arguments have failed, non-argumentative ways of talking actually take priority to discursive argument in matters of aesthetics. The question of how this may be relevant to ethics is, in part, related to the question of how closely ethics is related to aesthetics. A Kantian like Onora O'Neill, who misinterpreted Diamond as suggesting that non-argumentive ways of talking were clearly an inferior alternative, and a method of last resort for when other argumentative communication has failed, will likely not think of ethics as being very similar to aesthetics at all. (For recall that, while Scruton notes that reasons given in support of aesthetic judgments can be rejected without contradiction, Kant *does* think that one involves oneself in a contradiction when one violates the categorical imperative in practical matters.¹⁰²⁰) But other prominent ethicists and ethical traditions have seen a strong similarity between aesthetics and ethics. And these traditions have also subsequently placed an important emphasis on non-argumentative ways of talking in ethical contexts.

I think it is safe to say that the modern liberal tradition sees very little similarity between ethics and aesthetics. This is because the liberal tradition has tended to see ethics mostly in terms of "the right", i.e. the priority of "the right" over "the good." On the one hand, ethics, or, perhaps better, "morality," is seen as a system of rules that can be given a very clear and determinate description. Such rules are purported to warrant the assent of all rational persons. And, more importantly, it is by using the discursive rational capacities that we all purportedly possess that we should be able to arrive at a shared judgment of such rules. We can purportedly defend these rules by some sort of deductive or scientific reason, i.e. some sort of formal disputation that is quite foreign to matters of aesthetics. These moral rules are then conceived as a kind of juridical, ethical-cum-political system of imperatives that govern conduct. On the other hand, those aspects of conduct that are not clearly governed by moral rules, i.e. those aspects of conduct that are morally permissible and not morally required, may be susceptible to rational defense in the same way that aesthetic judgments are susceptible to rational defense, i.e. shared judgment regarding these matters of conduct cannot be reached by means of clear and determinate rational arguments in the way that the moral laws purportedly can. Rather, we must

¹⁰²⁰ For a brief discussion of Kant on the contradiction involved in the violation of the categorical imperative, see Korsgaard's introduction to Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xvii-xxi. And while Kant does recognize the importance of non-argumentative forms of communication in aesthetic discussions, he think that beauty can be, at most, as symbol of ethical judgment. Ethical judgment is determinate, for Kant, in a way that aesthetic judgment is not. See: Kant, *Third Critique*, §59. (AK 5:351-354).

defend them, if at all, by means of non-argumentative ways of talking that are similar to the ways we speak in matters of aesthetics.¹⁰²¹ But it is clear that such aspects of our conduct are of secondary import. According to the liberal view, as Charles Taylor puts it, beyond questions of "what we ought to do" lie questions about "what it is good to be or what it is good to love"; and these latter questions are seen to lie "in a second zone of practical consideration, lacking the urgency and high priority of the moral."¹⁰²² And thus the similarity of aesthetics and ethics, or the relevance of the kind of thinking, and the kind of defenses one gives of judgments, in aesthetics, to matters of ethics and practical reason, is negligible due to the reduced importance of giving any sort of defense of one's ethical judgments. When it comes to this secondary zone of practical consideration, the liberal tradition tends to think of such considerations in light of Kant's first commonplace about aesthetic judgmenet, namely, everybody has his own taste.

John Locke, for example, says:

The Mind has a different relish, as well as the Palate; and you will as fruitlessly endeavor to delight all Men with Riches or Glory, (which yet some Men place their Happiness in,) as you would to satisfy all Men's Hunger with Cheese or Lobsters; which, though very agreeable and delicious fare to some, are to others extremely nauseous and offensive: And many People would with Reason preferr the gripping of an hungry Belly, to those Dishes, which are a Feast to others. Hence it was, I think, that the Philosophers of old did in vain enquire, whether *Summum bonum* consisted in Riches, or bodily Delights, or Virtue, or Contemplation: And they might have reasonably disputed, whether the best Relish were to be found in Apples, Plums, or Nuts; and divided themselves into Sects upon it.¹⁰²³

This is simply the ethical analogue of Kant's aesthetic commonplace: everyone has his own taste. And the reason that Locke need not be troubled by the kind of subjectivism implied in his remarks above is that Locke does not see the broader moral and political order as being structured around, or grounded in, anyone's conception of the good. It is fine to say that "the mind has a different relish" with regard to what makes for man's good, or man's happiness, so

¹⁰²¹ Henry Sigwick, for example, writes as follows: "I...assumed that rules of duty ought to admit of precise definition in a universal form: and this assumption naturally belongs to the ordinary or jural view of Ethics as concerned with a moral code...But so far as we contemplate virtue as something that goes beyond strict duty...this assumption is not so clearly appropriate: since from this point of view we naturally compare excellence of conduct with beauty in the products of Fine Arts. Of such products we commonly say, that though rules and definite proscriptions may do much, they can never do all; that the highest excellence is always due to an instinct or tact that cannot be reduced to definite formulae." Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, 228. Book III, Ch.ii, section 3.

¹⁰²² Taylor, "Iris Murdoch and Moral Philosophy", 4.

¹⁰²³ Locke, Essay, 269. Book II, Chapter xxi, §55.

long as the order of the state and the relations between one's fellows is kept in place by something else, i.e. by something more objective, and more determinate, and more susceptible to defense by rigorous argument. Presumably this legal-cum-moral order is established by some sort of social contract that is determined prior to and independent of any reflection about the good life. And so it is perfectly harmless to say that people are then left seek out whatever permissible goods for which they happen to have a relish, so long as the legal-cum-moral order is antecedently put in place by some more determinate means. The need to give any rational defense of one's ethical "palate" takes a secondary importance to the point that it ceases to matter much at all.

Kant likewise speaks somewhat dismissively about our concern with happiness or the good life. Happiness, for Kant, involves the satisfaction of our various inclinations provided that they can be brought into some "tolerable system".¹⁰²⁴ In other words, like Locke, Kant thinks of persons as simply having a number of inclinations – as Locke might say, people have various relishes or palates – and that, starting with these somewhat brute inclinations, one can try to satisfy as many as can be satisfied without mutual contradiction. There is no real question of correctness here when thinking of any particular taste or inclination. But, again, as with Locke, there is no real concern either, about a troubling subjectivism, so far as justice and morality have nothing to do with such inclinations. It can be admitted that the differing tastes of men with regard to ethical matters are irreconcilable, and that they can serve as no basis for a moral or legal order. Kant writes:

for, since people differ in their thinking about happiness and how each would have it constituted, their wills with respect to it cannot be brought under any common principle and so under any external law harmonizing with everyone's freedom.¹⁰²⁵

But this is purportedly not ultimately troubling insofar as moral and legal rules are determined prior to and independent of any such inclinations. Kant writes:

¹⁰²⁴Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*. trans. Mary J. Gregor and Allen Wood (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 199. AK 5:73. John Rawls also tries to give an account of various "counting principles" and other instrumental principles of rationality that one can use to bring one's desires into what Kant might call a "tolerable system," but this still does not answer and merely pushes back the question of whether any of one's consistent sets of desires is worth pursuing in the first place. See: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice, Revised Edition* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 358-372.

¹⁰²⁵ Kant, "On the Common Saying: That May be Correct in Theory, But It Is of No Use in Practice", in *Practical Philosophy*, 291. AK: 8:290.

The concept of external right as such proceeds entirely form the concept of freedom in the external relation of people to one another and has nothing at all to do with the end that all of them naturally have (their aim of happiness) and with the prescribing of means for attaining it; hence too the latter absolutely must not intrude in the laws of the former as their determining ground.¹⁰²⁶

Such an intrusion of considerations about man's end or his happiness into the determining ground of "the right", or of the moral law, would, for Kant, destroy the dignity and force of the moral law, "just as anything at all empirical as a condition in a mathematical demonstration degrades and destroys its dignity and force."¹⁰²⁷ And here we can see quite clearly that Kant thinks of moral rules as being defensible in terms of strictly determinate and discursively rational arguments in ways in which considerations about the good and about happiness are not.¹⁰²⁸

What I might call the Nietzschean, or the post-modern tradition of moral philosophy, however, takes issue with the liberal view. In particular, Nietzsche takes issue with the liberal tradition's use of strictly discursive or dialectical reason in defending moral claims. Nietzsche, on the other hand, sees his philosophical views more generally, and his ethics in particular, as being thoroughly aesthetic in character. Kai Hammermesteir, for example, describes Nietzsche's mature philosophical outlook as

¹⁰²⁶ Kant, "Theory and Practice", AK 8:289-290. These passages, and their similarity to the contemporary writings of John Raws are discussed by Michael Sandel. See: Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, Second Edition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 5ff, 18ff. ¹⁰²⁷ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *Practical Philosophy*, 158. AK 5:25.

¹⁰²⁸ John Rawls also thinks (at least at the time of his writing *Theory of Justice*) that, in defending moral principles, "[w]e should aim for a kind of moral geometry with all the rigor which this name connotes." Rawls, Theory of Justice, 105. Even though he recognizes that his own account has "intuitive" elements, Rawls strives for a fully deductive account of the principles of justice that emerge from the original position. And he thinks of the original position itself as being justified by appeal to something like neutral scientific accounts of psychology and game-theory, and common beliefs. See also Cottingham, Philosophy and the Good Life, 19, who notes the significance of Rawls's metaphors for what he takes himself to be doing: a moral geometer, a moral grammarian. Rawls here falls into a tradition of modern liberal thinking summarized by the following remarks from Frederick Copelson: "It is obvious that the rationalist philosophers were influenced by the model of mathematical reasoning. That is to say, mathematics provides a model of clarity, certainty and orderly deduction. The personal element, subjective factors such as feeling, are eliminated, and a body of presuppositions, the truth of which is assured, is built up. Could not philosophy attain a like objectivity and certainty, if an appropriate method, analogous to that of mathematics, were employed? The use of the right method could make metaphysical philosophy, and even ethics, a science in the fullest sense of the word instead of a field of verbal wrangling, unclarified ideas, faulty reasoning and mutually incompatible conclusions. The personal element could be eliminated, and philosophy would possess the characteristics of universal, necessary and impersonal truth which is possessed by pure mathematics." Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy. Vol. IV: Modern Philosophy From Descartes to Leibnitz (New York: Image Books, 1994), 17-18.

a radical aesthetization of philosophy at large in which artistic creation becomes paradigmatic for each and every philosophical discipline...aesthetics replaces metaphysics as the *prima philosophia*.¹⁰²⁹

Another pair of scholars, Ruben Berrios and Aaron Ridley, write

Art became for Nietzsche a principle informing the whole of his philosophy. Relatively inconspicuous because of its very ubiquity, the aesthetics in his later works functions as the site on which Nietzsche's extra-aesthetic concerns are contested.¹⁰³⁰

Part of what this means is that, like in aesthetics, Nietzsche sees a certain kind of nonargumentative talking as a better way of advancing moral claims (and philosophical claims more generally – even metaphysical claims) than purportedly neutral appeals to discursive reason. Nietzsche often holds up Socrates for criticism as a personification of someone who uses dialectical reason in the way that he finds inappropriate. With the wisdom of hindsight, Nietzsche writes that one of the most important innovations of his first philosophical work – *The Birth of Tragedy* – was his understanding of "socratism":

Socrates is recognized for the first time as an instrument of Greek disintegration, as a typical decadent. "Rationality" *against* instinct. "Rationality" at any price as a dangerous force that undermines life.¹⁰³¹

Later, in Twilight of the Idols, Nietzsche elaborates on what he means by this. He writes:

§5. With Socrates Greek taste undergoes a change in favor of dialectics: what is really happening when that happens? It is above all a defeat of a *nobler* taste: with dialectics the rabble gets on top. Before Socrates, the dialectical manner was repudiated in good society: it was regarded as a form of bad manners, one was compromised by it...all such presentation of one's reasons was regarded with mistrust...

§6. One chooses dialectics only when one has no other expedient. One knows that dialectics inspire mistrust, that they are not very convincing. Nothing is easier to expunge than the effect of a dialectician, as is proved by the experience of every speech-making assembly. Dialectics can be only a *last-ditch weapon* in the hands of those who have no other weapon left.¹⁰³²

Recall that Cora Diamond had defended a place for non-argumentative talking *alongside* argument – hers we might say, is a kind of "no-priority view" between, on the one hand,

¹⁰³¹ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 271. "The Birth of Tragedy," §1.

¹⁰²⁹ Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 137-138.

¹⁰³⁰ Ruben Berrios and Aaron Ridley, "Nietzsche," in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (London: Routledge, 2001). 75.

¹⁰³² Nietzsche, Twilight, 41-42.

discursive, argumentative reason, and, on the other hand, non-argumentative ways of talking. And recall that she made this clear because Onora O'Neill – a Kantian liberal – had essentially tried to argue that if non-argumentative ways of talking had any relevance whatsoever, they must be a kind of last-ditch weapon against those with whom communication had nearly broken down.¹⁰³³ But here we can see that Nietzsche inverts O'Neill's suggestion and says that, in fact, it is dialectics, i.e discursive, "philosophical" arguments of the Socratic variety, that are, if relevant at all, the last-ditch weapon. And it is for this reason, we might think, that Nietzsche often chooses to convey his ideas by means of aphorisms, maxims, rhymes, and a generally lyrical and non-argumentative prose.

Nietzsche's point is that much of what *purports* to be pure, philosophical, discursive argument is actually just a masked attempt to persuade others. He writes:

What provokes one to look at all the philosophers half suspiciously, half mockingly, is...that they are not honest enough in their work, although they all make a lot of noise when the problem of truthfulness is touched even remotely. They all pose as if they had discovered and reached their real opinions through the self-development of a cold, pure, divinely unconcerned dialectic...while at bottom it is an assumption, a hunch, indeed a kind of "inspiration" – most often a desire of the heart that has been filtered and made abstract – that they defend with reasons they have sought after the fact. They are all advocates that resent that name...¹⁰³⁴

He then offers some harsh words towards certain philosophers of the modern liberal tradition. Of Kant, for example, he writes:

The equally stiff and decorous Tartuffery of the old Kant as he lures us on the dialectical bypaths that lead to his "categorical imperative" – really lead astray and seduce – this spectacle makes us smile, as we are fastidious and find it quite amusing to watch closely the subtle tricks of old moralists and preachers of morals.¹⁰³⁵

Iris Murdoch had implied something similar when she essentially accused various liberal philosophers of disguising their moral commitments as a logical theory.¹⁰³⁶ She then suggested that the solution was a policy of honesty: to try to place one's cards on the table.¹⁰³⁷ And Cora Diamond also notes a similar phenomenon when she writes that "the requirements we lay down"

¹⁰³³ See the end of Part III, Section 4.B.2.

¹⁰³⁴ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 12. §5.

¹⁰³⁵ Ibid., 13. §5.

¹⁰³⁶ See: Diamond, "We are Perpetually Moralists," especially p.86.

¹⁰³⁷ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 58.

- such as the requirement that any true convincing must take place by means dialectical argument -

stop us seeing what moral thought is like; further they lead us to construct stupid or insensitive or crazy moral arguments, arguments which are capable of hiding our own genuine ethical insights from ourselves and of giving others good grounds for identifying philosophical argument in ethics with sophistry.¹⁰³⁸

In other words, if we would not decide ahead of time that the only way we may aim to persuade someone else of some ethical claim is by means of a discursive argument, then we might actually do better job conveying our ethical insights. And if the majority of liberal philosophers in the academy write and speak as if they believed that discursive and dialectical argument are the only permissible means of convincing others, and if this spectacle, like Nietzsche says, sometimes makes us smile, i.e. if we recognize that there is no such thing as "pure" discursive argument free from intuitive evlautive insight, then we are very likely to "identify philosophical argument in ethics with sophistry." And this – the identification of ethical argument in philosophy with sophistry – I would argue, simply reinforces the already strong tendency to trivialize philosophical activity.

But there is something different about the point that Murdoch and Diamond are making, and the point that Nietzsche is making. They are all critical of a certain modern liberal conception of dialectical reason, or at least the sufficiency of such reason to communicate moral ideas. But beyond this there is an important difference. I said above that we might think of Nietzsche as a post-modern thinker, and in saying this, I was thinking of a certain definition that David Bentley Hart uses to describe the essence of what he calls post-modern thought. He writes:

...one conveniently oversimple definition (or aspect) of the postmodern is the triumph of (in classical terms) rhetoric over dialectic, or at least the recognition that the dialectical is always essentially rhetorical...¹⁰³⁹

What Hart means bb "rhetoric (in classical terms)" seems very similar to what Cora Diamond means by non-argumentative ways of talking. And Hart welcomes this post-modern shift away from the priority of dialectic insofar as believes that, unlike the Enlightenment liberal tradition, Christian theology "has no stake" in the priority of dialectic. Rather, he thinks that Christian

¹⁰³⁸ Diamond, *Realistic Spirit*, 23.

¹⁰³⁹ David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 3.

theology should always understand itself as primarily rhetorical as opposed to dialectical. And this is welcome insofar as rhetoric, according to Hart, unlike dialectic, is at least *potentially* non-violent:

One may concede from the outset that dialectic (especially when conceived as a Socratic discipline of "rational" disputation, in the course of which the authority of reason is invoked to persuade and gain an advantage over another) is often a kind of violence, insofar as it seeks to conceal its own reliance on rhetoric. The art of dialectic, assuming the aspect of a "neutral" rationality, dissembles its purely suasive intervals by submerging them within the sequence of its style; it achieves the appearance of seamless logic by way of a rhetorical effect, a ploy that makes all its unspoken premises and semantic instabilities invisible to its audience. Rhetoric, *as such*, however, is (one could argue) transparently persuasive and consequently cannot *deceive*; it aspires to only a more compelling and fruitful fullness of style; it measures itself against a certain unattainable perfection of form; it overcomes distance simply by filling it with ornament, inveiglement, and invitation.¹⁰⁴⁰

Of course rhetoric often, just like dialectic always, is violent. And Hart acknowledges this; he writes:

"rhetoric" refers as often as not to a game of conquest; its glory is all too frequently the false or monstrous glory of power, destiny, or empire.¹⁰⁴¹

But his point is simply that what he is calling rhetoric, as opposed to dialectic, is at least potentially non-violent. The plausibility of Christian theology, he thinks, lies in the possibility of conceiving of "a rhetoric that is peace, and a truth that is beauty."¹⁰⁴² And here is where I think that philosophers like Diamond or Murdoch get off board with Nietzsche's project. They share in Nietzsche's criticism of the priority of dialectic championed by the Enlightenment liberal tradition, but they do not seem to share in Nietzsche's particularly violent rhetoric. And part of the reason that Nietzsche cannot conceive of a rhetoric that is peace, and a truth that is beauty, is that Nietzsche seems to believe that the truth is ugly:

For a philosopher to say, "the good and the beautiful are one," is infamy; if he goes on to add, "also the true," one ought to thrash him. Truth is ugly.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid., 5-6. With regard to the idea that philosophy, insofar as it is identified with Scoratic dialectic, is violent, consider again this passage from Nozick that I cited earlier in a footnote back in Part III, Section 4.B.2: "The terminology of philosophical art is coercive: arguments are *powerful* and best when they are *knockdown*, arguments *force* you to a conclusion, if you believe the premises you *have to* or *must* believe the conclusion, some arguments do not carry much *punch*, and so forth…" Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*, 4.

¹⁰⁴¹ Hart, *Beauty of the Infinite*, 6.

¹⁰⁴² Ibid., 6.

We possess *art* lest we *perish of the truth*.¹⁰⁴³

Thus, for Nietzsche, there is no possibility of using something like rheotoric in order to help someone else see the beauty of something that is there to be found, i.e. a beauty that is truth. There is no possibility of coming to a mutual apprehension of something that is discovered to be "there anyway." Rather, all attempts to convey aesthetic judgments must just be attempts to coerce one's interlocutor to feel the same way as one does. And here I wish to talk of one more moral tradition.

The tradition I have in mind here is the one that has its roots in ancient Greece and that, like Nietzsche, conceives of ethics as primarily aesthetic, but, unlike Nietzsche, does not see this as being an essentially violent affair. To understand what I mean, consider this passage from Roger Scruton:

In a democratic culture people are inclined to believe that it is presumptuous to claim to have better taste than your neighbor...Each of you exists in his own enclosed aesthetic world, and so long as neither harms the other, and each says good morning over the fence, there is nothing further to be said. / But things are not so simple, as the democratic argument already implies. If it is so offensive to look down on another's taste, it is, as the democrat recognizes, because taste is intimately bound up with our personal life and moral identity. It is part of our rational nature to strive for a community of judgment, a shared conception of value, since that is what reason and the moral life require. And this desire for a reasoned consensus spills over into the sense of beauty.¹⁰⁴⁴

Scruton rightly observes that the quickness with which democratic persons take offense at the very idea of comparing taste indicates that they acknowledge that "taste is intimately bound up with our personal life and moral identity"; recall Ruskin: "Tell me what you like, and I'll tell you what you are."¹⁰⁴⁵ Yet the liberal democrat tries to keep such disagreements isolated within a number of small insulated, individualistic, aesthetic worlds. Society, the liberal democrat, must be based on something else: a social contract. And such a contract is supposed to be something that is not based on taste, but rather is based upon "reason." Both Nietzsche and the ancient Greek tradition stand in sharp criticism to any such taste-free conception of a social contract as the glue of a society. Yet where Nietzsche's alternative is necessarily violent, the Greek one is not. Regarding the formation of societies, Nietzsche writes with remarkable imagery:

¹⁰⁴³ Nietzsche, Will to Power, 435. §822.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Scruton, *Beauty*, 112.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ruskin, "Traffic," in *The Crown of Wild Olive*, 64. Quoted above in Part III, Section 3.A.

the welding of a hitherto unchecked and shapeless populace into a firm form was not only instituted by an act of violence but also carried to its conclusion by nothing but acts of violence - that the oldest "state" thus appeared as a fearful tyranny, as an oppressive and remorseless machine, and went on working until this raw material of people and semianimals was at last not only thoroughly kneaded and pliant but also formed. / I employed the word "state": it is obvious what is meant - some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conquerer and master race which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unhestitatingly lays its terrible claws upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad. That is after all how the "state" began on earth: I think that sentimentalism which would have it begin with a "contract" has been disposed of. He who can command, he who is by nature "master," he who is violent in act and bearing – what has he to do with contracts! One does not reckon with such natures; they come like fate, without reason, consideration, or pretext; they appear as lightning appears, too terrible, too sudden, too convincing, too "different" even to be hated. Their work is an instinctive creation and imposition of forms; they are the most involuntary, unconscious artists there are¹⁰⁴⁶

There are some contemporary philosophers who claim to conceive of moral philosophy in "aesthetic" terms, and some even acknowledge a Nietzschean pedigree for the idea, yet, for most of these philospher, this implies that ethics should be "light-hearted."¹⁰⁴⁷ But there is nothing much light-hearted in the above description about blond beasts of prey laying their terrible claws on a populace. The idea that conceiving of moral philosophy in aesthetic terms results in light-heartedness is due to the idea that such an "aesthetic" ethics is still conceived as following within that secondary realm carved out by the liberal social contract. The contract, which is independent of taste, keeps "aesthetic" ethics light-hearted insofar as disagreements of taste are relegated to a secondary zone within a sphere of justice. But Nietzsche thinks that the idea of suh a contract, conceived independently of any "taste" is bogus. He thinks that "taste" is all there is. Nietzsche writes:

Nothing is beautiful, only man...nothing is ugly but *degenerate* man – the domain of the aesthetic is therewith defined...The effect of the ugly can be measured with a

¹⁰⁴⁶ Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, 86. Second Essay, §17. Walter Kauffman makes frequent pleading cases that we should not think of Nazi race science, and *Blitzkrieg* when Nietzsche talks of "blond beasts of prey" that "appear as lightning appears." Presumably part of the motivation for "whitewashing" Nietzsche in this way is that it makes him a more appropriate object of study in liberal academic philosophy scholarship. But what this implies is that there is already a desire to study Nietzsche anyway, regardless of whether we find him fitting for liberal sensibilities. And I think that this is due to the attractiveness of his deep criticisms of modern liberal thought. But in order for those criticisms to be of value to us, we cannot simply whitewash them away or trivialize them. For the whitewashing trend, see: Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality* (London: Routledge, 2015), 233.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Robert Edward Norton, *The Beautiful Soul: Aesthetic Morality in the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 1-5.

dynamometer. Whenever man feels in any way depressed, he senses the proximity of something 'ugly.'...A feeling of *hatred* then springs up; what is man then hating? But the answer admits no doubt: the *decline of his type*. He hates then from out of the profoundest instinct of his species...¹⁰⁴⁸

Roger Lundin notes that we should find such language "haunting after Auschwitz."¹⁰⁴⁹ It is clear that Nietzsche's aesthetic conception of ethics is not light-hearted. But while the "light-hearted" modern attempts to conceive of ethics on the model of aesthetics simply wind up collapsing back into liberal models, I think that there is a way of conceiving ethics on the model of aesthetics that neither relies on some other form of taste-less social contract, nor on the sheer violence of a minority imposing forms upon a populace. It is the Greek model, according to which Arsitotle says that "the political association is for the sake of beautiful actions and not for the sake of living together."¹⁰⁵⁰ As Scruton wrote above "it is part of our rational nature to strive for a community of judgment." And elsewhere, Scruton is, like Nietzsche, critical of the liberal idea of the social contract. He writes:

Theorists of the social contract write as though it presupposes only the first-person singular of free rational choice. In fact it presupposes a first-person plural, in which the burdens of belonging have already been assumed...Only where people have a strong sense of who 'we' are, why 'we' are acting in this way or that, why 'we' have behaved rightly in one respect, wrongly in another, will they be so involved in the collective decisions as to adopt them as their own. Thr first person plural is the precondition of democractic politics, and must be safeguarded at all costs, since the price of losing it is social disintegration.¹⁰⁵¹

Unlike Nietzche, Scruton does not necessarily see a polity as arising by violence, yet he does imply that there must be something prior to the contract to establish a 'we' in the first place. And, combining Scruton's insight about our tendency to strive towards a community of shared judgment in ethical and aesthtic matters with the idea that parties to social contracts must already have something in common, we can infer that the thing which they have in common is a community of "taste" or evaluative judgment. And, unlike Kant, and unlike many liberals, the Greeks simply thought that the world itself offered up beauty or goodness that could serve to

¹⁰⁴⁸ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, 90.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Roger Lundin, "The Beauty of Belief," in *The Beauty of God: Theology and the Arts*, ed. Daniel J. Treier, Mark Husbands, and Roger Lundin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 202.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*. trans. Joe Sachs (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2012), 1281a2-5.

¹⁰⁵¹ Roger Scruton, *A Political Philosophy: Arguments for Conservatism* (London: Continuum International Publishing, 2006), 8-9.

anchor a community around a shared apprhension or shared taste. Such a community need not be a sheer violent imposing of some upon others because of the possibility of changing one another's perceptions, of getting one another to see matters aright, by means of talking. And the process is still potentially democratic insofar as neither interlocutor needs to count as the absolutely better judge on all occasions; rather, improvement of taste may be a collaborative effort.¹⁰⁵² And we might think that art and practices of aesthetic discernment play a part in the development of such a community of judgment. And here we can locate one of the deep disagreements between, on the one hand, the liberal, and the Nietzschean, and, on the one hand, the Greek.

And the difference, I believe, is to be located in a different conception of the aesthetic and a different conception of the artist's task and of the purpose of art. The ancient Greeks conceived the artist as someone who engages in *mimesis*, i.e. someone who aims to convey some aspect of nature to us in his work. This means that there is a kind of two-fold activity in any artistic act: the artist must discern some aspect or form in nature or in reality; and then he must act so as to impose that form onto the materials with which he works. In the moral analogue, each person becomes an artist and his materials are his own body and soul. The person must first look to nature to discern the relevant form, and then must seek to impose it upon himself.

We find the second act, that of molding the body and soul in an artistic fashion, in many writers in this Greek tradition. Aristotle, for example, compares "the mean" found in moral virtue to that at which the artist aims in his work:

If it is thus, then, that every art does its work well – by looking to the intermediate and judging its works by this standard (so that we often say of good works of art that it is not possible either to take away or to add anything, implying that excess and defect destroy the goodness of works of art, while the mean preserves it; and good artists, as we say, look to this in their work), and if, further, virtue is more exact and better than any art, as nature also is, then virtue must have the quality of aiming at the intermediate. I mean moral virtue; for it is this that is concerned with passions and actions, and in these there is excess, defect, and the intermediate.

Plato also conceives of virtue in the soul along the lines of artistic or aesthetic excellence, i.e. he conceives of moral excellence or virtue as a kind of harmony of beauty of the soul. "The best way in which the excellence of each thing comes to be present in it" Plato writes

¹⁰⁵² See: Wiggins, "Sensible Subjectivism," 196.

¹⁰⁵³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II.6 1106b8-17. (trans. Ross)

whether it's that of an artifact or of a body or a soul as well, or of any animal, is not just any old way, but is due to whatever organization, correctness, and craftsmanship is bestowed on each of them.¹⁰⁵⁴

And when it comes to the soul in particular, he compares justice in the soul to the harmony formed by the notes of a scale:

One who is just does not allow any part of himself to do the work of another part or allow the various classes within him to meddle with each other. He regulates well what is really his own and rules himself. He puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts of himself like the three limiting notes in a musical scale – high, low, and middle. He binds together those parts and any others there may be in between, and from having been many things he becomes entirely one, moderate and harmonious. Only then does he act.¹⁰⁵⁵

And where Plato uses a musical analogy of a harmony, Plotinus uses an analogy form the plastic

arts – that of the sculptor:

Go back into yourself and look; and if you do not yet see yourself beautiful, then, just as someone making a statue which has to be beautiful cuts away here and polishes there and makes one part smooth and clears another till he has given his statue a beautiful face, so you too must cut away excess and straighten the crooked and clear the dark and make it bright, and never stop "working on your statue" till the divine glory of virtue shines out on you, till you see "self-mastery enthroned upon its holy seat."¹⁰⁵⁶

And here Nietzsche appears right at home in this tradition; he writes:

One thing is needful. - To "give style" to one's character - a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed – both times through long practice and daily work at it...In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident how the constraint of a single taste governed and formed everything large and small.¹⁰⁵⁷

Yet the immediately following sentence shows his divergence from this tradition; he writes: "Whether this taste was good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a

¹⁰⁵⁴ Plato, Gorgias, 506d. (trans. Zeyl).

¹⁰⁵⁵ Plato, Republic, IV 443d-3. (trans. Grube/Reeve). See: Dickinson, Greek View of Life, 142-150, 201-206

¹⁰⁵⁶ Plotinus, *Ennead I*, 259. I.6.9. (trans. Armstrong). See: Robert Edward Norton, *The Beautiful Soul:* Aesthetic Morality in the Eighteenth Century (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 136. And generally Ch. 3 "The Eighteenth Century and the Hellenic Ideal of *Kalokagathia*." ¹⁰⁵⁷ Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 232. §290.

single taste!"¹⁰⁵⁸ In other words, Nietzsche shares the idea of thinking of ethics and character formation in term of the artistic act of giving form to one's character, but he does not share the equally, if not more important, belief that such acts of formation should occur only after a discernment of the appropriate standard. The ability – the strength! – to bring one's entire character and actions in line with a single overriding taste, Nietzsche thinks, is to be praised regardless of the quality of such a taste.

To put the difference in clear perspective, we might consider the elaborate myth in the *Phaedrus* in which Socrates describes the rank-ordering of re-incarnated souls and the kinds of persons in whom they will be planted. The souls that have seen the most in the realm of forms shall enter, he says, "into the birth of man who is to be a philosopher or a lover of beauty, or one of a musical or loving nature."¹⁰⁵⁹ The soul that is sixth down in this list will find itself entering into the birth of a man who is to be "a poet or some other imitative artist."¹⁰⁶⁰ And Nehamas makes it clear that "the 'musical' . . . is not the artist, but the gentleman who patronizes the artists and knows what to take from them."¹⁰⁶¹ What Plato is saying here is that the ability to discern and love beauty is more important than the ability to create works of mimetic or fine art. Nietzsche, being aware of this tradition of thought, takes the opposite approach. Nietzsche writes:

Our aesthetics hitherto has been a woman's aesthetics to the extent that only the receivers of art have formulated their experience of "what is beautiful?" In all philosophy hitherto the artist is lacking $-^{1062}$

Nietzsche places more value on the act of creating or imposing forms than on the act of discerning or coming to know forms. In all his descriptions of the artistic act, and of the act of moral artistry, i.e. character formation, he speaks almost exclusively of the imposition of forms upon material, and almost never of discerning things in nature. In *Twilight of the Idols*, he writes:

\$8. Towards a psychology of the artist. – For art to exist, for any sort of aesthetic activity or perception to exist, a certain physiological precondition is indispensible:

¹⁰⁵⁸ Ibid., 232.

 ¹⁰⁵⁹ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 248c-d. In Plato, *Loeb Classical Library. Plato I: Euthyphro. Apology. Crito. Phaedo. Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914).
 ¹⁰⁶⁰ Ibid., 248e.

¹⁰⁶¹ Nehamas quoted in discussion found in Christopher Janaway, "Plato," in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (London: Routledge, 2001), 11.

¹⁰⁶² Nietzsche, Will to Power, 429. §811.

intoxication...From out of this feeling one gives to things, one *compels* them to take, one rapes them – one calls this procedure *idealizing*...

§9. ... The man in this condition transforms things until they mirror his power – until they are reflections of his perfection. This *compulsion* to transform into the perfect is – art.¹⁰⁶³

And in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, he speaks of "the artist's cruelty" and the "the delight of imposing a form."¹⁰⁶⁴ And lest there be any possibility of seeing this as simply a difference in emphasis, he explains the reason for his neglect of the act of discernment:

Man believes that the world is filled with beauty – he *forgets* that it is he who has created it. He alone has bestowed beauty upon the world – alas! Only a very human, all to human beauty...Man really mirrors himself in things, that which give him back his own reflection he considers beautiful.¹⁰⁶⁵

And here we can detect a kind of sea change in the understanding of the artist's creative act that breaks with the prominent ancient Greek tradition that I am now considering. This shift in the understanding of the artists activity is older than Nietzsche, but we see it embodied very clearly and unashamedly in Nietzsche's writing.

According to Nicholas Wolterstorff, "[i]t was apparently in the late fifteenth century that the artist was first compared to God the Creator...Before that, the analogy was always explicitly resisted as impious. Now it is commonplace."¹⁰⁶⁶ The Christian tradition conceives God as creating *ex nihilo*. God does not look to anything outside of himself antecedent to his creative acts because, *ex hypothesi*, there is nothing there. God simply brings forth created things from a superabundance of his out-flowing love. Man, on the other hand, in all his acts of making or composing – artistic or otherwise – must first confront a world not of his own making. The mimetic artist's task is first one of discernment. He must understand his materials and his

¹⁰⁶³ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, 82-83.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 87. Second Essay, §18.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Nietzsche, Twilight, 89.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Art in Action: Toward a Christian Aesthetic* (Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 51. Wolterstorff cites: Tigerstedt, E. N. "The Poet as Creator: Origins of a Metaphor." *Comparative Literature Studies* 5, no. 4 (December 1, 1968): 455–88. Tigerstedt's article opens with a famous passage from Shaftesbury in which Shaftesbury recognizes this trend of comparing the poet to God, and Shaftesbury purposefully qualifies the image by calling the poet "a second *Maker*: a just *Prometheus*, under *Jove*." Shaftesbury is in some sense one of the heros of the story that emerges from the pages of this disseration insofar a he is one of the few prominent writers in the early modern period who resists many of what I take to be wrong-headed ways of thinking common to that period. As Gilbert Ryle suggests, it seems to have been Shaftesbury's business to "Anglicise" much of what was good in Arstotle, and, I might add, in Greek thought generally. Gilbert Ryle, "Jane Austen and The Moralists," in *Critical Essays: Collected Papers Volume 1*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 300.

subject. Only then can he bring forth his "creations." But in the early modern period the prominent image of the artist shifts towards one in which the artist – like the Christian God – creates *ex nihilo*.

And, as Nietszsche is an excellent example of this, this has parallel implications for ethics. Charles Taylor argues that something he calls "authenticity" lies at the heart of most modern conceptions of ethics. According to Taylor, Herder is the major early articulator of this idea of authenticity:

Herder put forward the idea that each of us has an original way of being human. Each person has his or her own "measure" is his way of putting it. This idea has entered very deep into modern consciousness. It is also new. Before the late eighteenth century no one thought that the difference between human beings had this kind of moral significance. There is a certain way of being human that is *my* way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's...Not only should I not fit my life to the demands of external conformity; I can't even find a model to live by outside myself. I can find it only within.¹⁰⁶⁷

But since, according to this new modern idea, one cannot find any external guidance or models by which to guide one's life choices, one must have a different account of how one finds or discovers this original way of being human – it cannot be by means of discernment. Taylor observes that modern moral theorists come to model authentic ways of being by analogy with artistic creation; but, it is very important to recognize, as Taylor does, that this analogy between authenticity and artistic creation goes hand in hand with the radical shift in our understanding of art and of the artist's activity:

The notion that each one of us has an original way of being human entails that each of us has to discover what it is to be ourselves. But the discovery can't be made by consulting pre-existing models, by hypothesis. So it can be made only by articulating it afresh. We discover what we have it in us to be by becoming that mode of life, by giving expression in our speech and action to what is original in us. The notion that revelation comes through expression is what I want to capture in speaking of the "expressivism" of the modern notion of the individual. / This suggests right away a close analogy, even a connection, between self-discovery and artistic creation...Artistic creation becomes the paradigm mode in which people can come to self-definition. The artist becomes in some way the paradigm case of the human being, as agent of original self-definition... / But of course, along with this has gone a new understanding of art. No longer defined mainly by imitation, by *mimesis* of reality, art is understood now more in terms of creation. These two ideas go together. If we become ourselves by expressing what we're about,

¹⁰⁶⁷ Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity*, 28-29.

and if what we become is by hypothesis original, not based on the pre-existing, then what we express is not an imitation of the pre-existing either, but a new creation.¹⁰⁶⁸

The two ideas that Taylor notes as going together are, on the one hand, the ethics of authenticity and, on the other hand, the theory of art which understands art primarily in terms of original creation as opposed to *mimesis* of reality. And what is the result of both of these parallel shifts is the elimination of receptive discernment, the elimination of trying to look before acting, the elimination of the importance of perception.

Ancient Greek ethics, although it did share the idea of thinking of action and character formation along the lines of artistic creation, also thought that discernment was the more important aspect of the artistic analogy. Plato, as I noted above, talked about bringing the parts of one's soul into a harmony, like that of a musical scale. But the idea of a harmony – the harmony like that, for instance, of a musical scale – that he uses when ordering his soul is presumably something that he has learned and been taught to discern, probably from a young age. Plato's ideal education involves persons being brought up in the presence of beautiful things, and having an extensive training in music and poetry – both of which help one to develop an ability to discern beauty. Socrates speaks thus:

Let our artists rather be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful and graceful; then will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the good in everything; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear, like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason.

There can be no nobler training than that, he replied.

And therefore, I said, Glaucon, musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul of him who is rightly educated graceful, or of him who is ill-educated ungraceful; and also because he who has received this true education of the inner being will most shrewdly perceive omissions or faults in art and nature, and with a true taste, while he praises and rejoices over and receives into his soul the good, and becomes noble and good, he will justly blame and hate the bad, now in the days of his youth, even before he is able to know the reason why; and when reason comes he will recognise and salute the friend with whom his education has made him long familiar.¹⁰⁶⁹

Shortly after this, Socrates makes a general summarizing statement; he says

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ibid., 61-62.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Plato, *Republic*, III 401c-402a. (trans. Benjamin Jowett). In Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns, eds. *Philosophies of Art and Beauty: Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

But to love rightly is to love what is orderly and beautiful in an educated and disciplined way...for the object of education is to teach us to love what is beautiful.¹⁰⁷⁰

And here I think it might be apt to echo an insightful comment made by W. W. Fortenbaugh. In discussing Plato's theory of emotions, Fortenbaugh writes that "[p]sychological theory lagged behind educational theory."¹⁰⁷¹ In other words, Fortenbaugh implies that Plato's educational theory seemed to have some priority in his thinking, and his tripartite emotional psychology was simply his groping about to give theoretical underpinning to the education theory. That underpinning, Fortebgaugh argues, was later perfected by Aristotle. I wish to say something similar about Platonic epistemology and, in particular, the role of perception in such an epistemology. According to the Platonic doctrine of recollection, such an extensive education in music and poetry, and the need to be surrounded with beautiful sights and sounds, is, strictly speaking, unnecessary. The ideas of beauty are already there, so to speak, in the mind; all one need to do is recollect them. The external stimulation is simply an occasion for recollection, a mere goad towards revelation that could be had, in principle, without such education. But here I think that Aristotle makes a welcome improvement.

I see Aristotle's view as simply the development of Platonism and not its opposite.¹⁰⁷² And one thing that Aristotle does is to give an account of intellectual vision, or an account of perception that is sufficiently instinct with cognition to serve as a source of knowledge. Plato seems to suppose as much in his theory of education, but his epistemology and his understanding of the role of perception do not seem to bear this out. Aristotle seems to offer his account of perceptual induction (*epagoge*), conceived as a way of directly perceiving the natures of things, as an alternative to the mystical doctrine of recollection. He writes that "in the process of induction we acquire knowledge of particular things just as though we could remember them."¹⁰⁷³ And in raising the importance of perception and of perceptual induction in his

¹⁰⁷⁰ Plato, *Republic*, 403a-c. In Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Sir Henry Desmond Pritchard Lee, Second Edition, (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 100.

¹⁰⁷¹ William W. Fortenbaugh, Aristotle on Emotion: A Contribution to Philosophical Psychology, Rhetoric, Poetics, Politics and Ethics (London: Duckworth, 2002), 45.

¹⁰⁷² This seems to have been the view of much of the ancient tradition as well. See Groarke, *Aristotelian Induction*, 281-283.

¹⁰⁷³ Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, II.21 (67a21-27). (trans. Tredennick). In Aristotle, *Loeb Classical Library*. *Aristotle I: Categories. On Interpretation. Prior Analytics*, trans. Harold. P. Cooke and Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 503. See Groarke, *Aristotelian Induction*, 292.

priority of dialectic in philosophical inquiry.

Recall from my earlier discussion of Socrates's initial excitement, upon hearing of the philosophy of Anaxagoras, how Socrates initial hopes were dashed when he began reading the actual works of Anaxagoras, and how Anaxagoras failed to actually make use of his concept of Mind when he went about explaining natural things. Socrates then vows that, having been disappointed by Anaxagoras, he will adopt a different method of inquiry into things. He says:

After this, he said, when I had wearied of investigating things, I thought that I must be careful to avoid the experience of those who watch an eclipse of the sun, for some of them ruin their eyes unless they watch its reflection in water or some such material. A similar thought crossed my mind, and I feared that my soul would be altogether blinded if I looked at things with my eyes and tried to grasp them with each of my senses. So I though I must take refuge in discussions and investigate the truth of things by means of words.¹⁰⁷⁴

But it is Aristotle that seeks to undue this retreat. Aristotle seeks to pick up where Anaxagoras failed, and to conduct an inquiry of the natural world that makes extensive use of the senses and of perception, as well as dialectic. And he attempts to show that the intelligibility of Mind really is present in the workings of natural things. In some ways, it is Aristotle that seeks to do what Socrates initially wished Anaxagoras had done. And, in order to do this, Aristotle must defend the importance of experience and perceptual thinking *alongside* argument and dialectic. Aristotle writes:

Lack of experience diminishes our power of taking a comprehensive view of the admitted facts [$\tau \dot{\alpha} \dot{\alpha} \mu o \lambda o \gamma o \dot{\mu} \epsilon \nu \alpha \sigma \sigma v o \rho \tilde{\alpha} \nu$]. Hence those who dwell in intimate association with nature and its phenomena grow more and more able to formulate, as the foundations of their theories, principles such as to admit of a wide and coherent development: while those whom devotion to abstract discussions has rendered unobservant of the facts are too ready to dogmatize on the basis of a few observations. The rival treatments of the subject now before us will serve to illustrate how great is the difference between a 'scientific' [$\phi \nu \sigma \iota \kappa \tilde{\omega} \varsigma$] and a 'dialectical' [$\lambda o \gamma \iota \kappa \tilde{\omega} \varsigma$] method of inquiry.¹⁰⁷⁵

In the words of Louis Groarke,

Aristotle substitutes sense perception for language. In Plato, philosophical conversation – in Aristotle, sense perception – triggers *noesis*. Plato presents Socrates as the personification of philosophy, the midwife who induces labor by his persistent questioning. In Aristotle, nature herself is the midwife stimulating the mind to a new

¹⁰⁷⁴ Plato, *Phaedo*, 99d-e.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Aristotle, On Generation and Corruption, I.2 316a5-11. (trans. Joachim). See Terence Irwin, A History of Western Philosophy: 1 Classical Thought (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 119-121.

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Now Groarke's description may be somewhat unfair to Socrates and to Plato. But, for the sake of drawing out a distinct difference, at least, in emphasis, it may be valuable.

As Diamond had noted above, it seems that Socrates *does* engage in rhetorical acts of redescription as well as in dialectic. Socrates may not, in Harts language, dissembles his purely suasive intervals by submerging them within the sequence of its style; Socrates does not even always aim at achieving the appearance of seamless logic by way of a rhetorical effect, a ploy that makes all its unspoken premises and semantic instabilities invisible to its audience. Rather, it may be, as Murodch thinks, that "Plato's myths," often put in the mouth of Socrates, "cover' and (often) clarify intuitive leaps which in other philosophers are also required but not (for better or worse) similarly adorned."¹⁰⁷⁷ But I think the moral to draw here is that Socrates was a complicated character and that many of the descriptions of him are caricatures.

Socrates was the father of many philosophical movements. Many people have seen Scorates's closest pupil Plato as supplying the metaphysical and epistemological grounding to justify Socrates's own search for knowledge of ethical terms. The Stoics saw their ancestor in Socrates's claims, for example, in the *Apology*, that a good man cannot be harmed. The Skeptics saw their ancestor in Socrates claim that he his wisdom stemmed from his self-acknowledged ignorance. And the modern day liberal sees in Socrates a prime example of the man who questions tradition with philosophical reason, and who is willing to engage in dialogue with anyone, and who always supports his assertions with arguments. But, except for perhaps Plato, I would say that most of these traditions are caricatures of certain features of Socrates. Just like the various men Nietzsche described climbing up the mountain to meet Zarathustra, each of these traditions seems to exaggerate elements of Socrates and to neglect others. The inwardness and renunciation of passions found in the Stoic retreat to the "inner citadel" neglects Socrates's concern for public life and his concerns for bettering the citizens of Athens. The skeptic's purely negative view of the Socratic *elenchus* neglects the idea that dialectical questioning may lead to knowledge. But, most importantly, the liberal seems to neglect Socrates the myth-maker in favor of Socrates the dialectician, and to neglect Socrates the defender of piety - both towards state authority and towards the gods – in favor of the Socrates who embarrasses the purportedly wise.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Groarke, Aristotelian Induction, 294.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Murodoch, Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals, 236.

The liberal takes Socrates to be a dialectician who does not believe anything unless he is able to give rational arguments for it, and who expects the same from others. In some ways this may involve a principle of charity that has run rampant. Most of the modern interpreters of Socrates – whose moral views are likely liberal, according to Murdoch's distinction, as opposed to naturalist – tend to neglect the various myths and stories that Socrates tells and to focus on his more overt dialectical and discursive arguments insofar as this, i.e. the dialectical arguments, is what they take to be real moral philosophy or to be of any philosophical value. The myths and stories are not seen to add anything to the dialectical arguments aside form a kind of rhetorical umph. If Socrates is to be interpreted charitably, we can imagine people like Frankena thinking, then he must be engaged in philosophical arguments, and his various stories, or myths, or images, must be interesting albeit non-necessary to the arguments.

But while I think the purely dialectical Socrates is a distorted liberal caricature that is to be resisted, and while I think that resisting this caricature does rob certain liberal thinkers of a purported model of what they take to be an ideal of philosophical activity, it does still seem that Socrates, and Plato, place a heavier emphasis on the role of dialectical reason than Arisrtolte, and it does seem that they are somewhat neglectful of perception as a source of knowledge. Thus it still may be the case that Aristotle has better epistemological and psychological tools to make a proper place for the kind non-argumentative talking that takes place in the presence of some object, and which has changed perception as its goal. And, aside from non-argumentative talking, Aristotle also therefore has a ready place in his epistemology for simply looking, and for experience.

And so Aristotle echoes Plato's theory of education, but unlike Plato, Aristotle's theory of perception, and its place in his epistemology, no longer lags behind his theory of education. Aristotle holds that

each state of character has its own ideas of the noble and the pleasant, and perhaps the good man differs from others most by seeing the truth in each class of things, being as it were the norm and measure of them.¹⁰⁷⁸

But the way in which the good man attains his ideas of beauty and his ability to see things aright is by means of a good upbringing. Argument or dialectic alone, Aristotle makes very clear, can

¹⁰⁷⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III.4 1113a30-33. (trans. Ross).

never by itself bring about such a "taste for beauty."¹⁰⁷⁹ He writes:

any one who is to listen intelligently to lectures about what is noble and just, and generally, about the subjects of political science must have been brought up in good habits. For the fact is the starting-point, and if this is sufficiently plain to him, he will not at the start need the reason as well.¹⁰⁸⁰

And again:

argument and teaching, we may suspect, are not powerful with all men, but the soul of the student must first have been cultivated by means of habits for noble joy and noble hatred, like earth which is to nourish the seed... The character, then, must somehow be there already with a kinship to virtue, loving what is noble and hating what is base.¹⁰⁸¹

And such a character is developed through a long period of habituation and experience that, in optimal situations, begins from early childhood.

And the whole business of modern ethics trying to make sense of some people who are purportedly "left cold" by reasons that move the virtuous person can likely be made sense of by thinking of reasons for action as being tied closely to evaluative perceptions. Such perceptions, just as aesthetic judgments, must be something that the person actually possesses himself. As McDowell argues, no one who actually shares the virtuous man's judgment of a situation is ever left cold by it. The purported instances of being left cold in this way involve someone reporting, in words, the same kinds of things that a virtuous persons might say without actually having the perceptual experiences that the virtuous person has. Just as Scruton had argued that there are no second hand judgments of beauty in aesthetic cases, so Aristotle notes that merely saying the words that a virtuous person might say to describe a situation is no proof that one shares the virtuous person's judgment:

Saying the words that come from knowledge is no sign [of fully having it]. [...] And those who have just learned something do not yet know it, though they string the words together; for it must grow into them, and this takes time.¹⁰⁸²

¹⁰⁷⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.9 1179b17.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.4 1095b4-8. (trans. Ross).

¹⁰⁸¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.9 1079b23-31. (trans. Ross).

¹⁰⁸² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII.3 1147a19-23. (trans. Irwin). Also, see Peter Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 29. Goldie describes a case of someone "piggybacking" off of the normal use of an experiential term.

And if we take Aristotle at his word that all virtuous actions aim at the beautiful (and I think that we should), then it follows that Scruton's claims about the necessity of making one's own aesthetic judgments translate almost directly to the ethical case. Scruton writes:

I may swear by a certain music critic, whose judgments of pieces and performances I take as gospel. Isn't that like adopting my scientific beliefs from the opinions of experts, or my legal beliefs from the judgments of the courts? The answer is no. When I put my trust in a critic, this is tantamount to saying that I defer to his judgment, even when I have made no judgment of my own. But my own judgmnent waits upon experience. It is only when I have heard the piece in question, in the moment of appreciation, that my borrowed opinion can actually become a judgment of *mine*.¹⁰⁸³

If one thinks of ethical or moral judgments as many liberal theorists do, as being based upon some categorical imperative of reason, or as being based upon the outcome of some hedonic calculus, then one could in theory trust someone who has reasoned the matter out and simply act on the borrowed judgment. But if ethical judgments are more like judgments of aesthetics, then it seems that one's acting or not acting will often be due to how one sees the situation. As Aristotle writes:

Since the last premise [of the practical syllogism] is a belief about something perceptible, controls action, this is what the incontinent person does not have when he is being affected. Or [rather] the way he has it is not knowledge of it, but, as we saw, [merely] saying the words, as the drunk says the words of Empedocles.¹⁰⁸⁴

And it is due to the importance of experience in coming to have one's own evaluative judgments that Aristotle repeatedly says that even natural philosophy, and *a fortiori* moral philosophy, must be conducted by persons who have built up enough experience to possess their own judgments about such matters.¹⁰⁸⁵

And it is this idea of a long attention to details, a habit of looking and attending to things and building up a familiarity or a intimate acquaintance with them, that gives rise to the experience that drives the Aristotelian epistemology. And this is how I believe we should think of the artist's activity as well. Ever since the new conception of artistic creation – the conception that understands the artist as creating *ex nihilo* like unto his divine master – has emerged there

¹⁰⁸³ Scruton, *Beauty*, 5.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII.3 1147b10-13. (trans. Irwin).

¹⁰⁸⁵ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.8 1142a12ff; VI.11 1143b11ff. Also, see above Part I, Section 6. Notice that Scruton assumes that modern scientific findings can be taken second-hand. But for Aristotle, who sees evaluative notions and ideas of final causation to be a part of natural philosophy, it is not so obvious that judgments about natural philosophy can be taken second-hand in this way.

have always been great artists who have fought the tendency to think of their activity in this way. Around the same time that Wolterstorff noted the emergence of this new creative paradigm, we can see one great artist fighting a temptation to think in this way, and instead siding with a more Aristotelian paradigm that situates imposing forms as posterior to a long period of attention to nature. The artist I have in mind is Albrecht Dürer. In an early draft for the introcution to the *Book on Human Proportions*, Dürer writes:

Many centuries ago the great art of painting was held in high honor by mighty kings, and they made the excellent artists rich and held them worthy, accounting such inventiveness a creating power like God's. For a good painter is inwardly full of figures, and were it possible for him to live forever he would always have from his inward "ideas," whereof Plato writes, something new to pour forth by the work of his hand.¹⁰⁸⁶

Here we see that new paradigm of the artist as seeking to create as God creates. But, by the time this work saw its published form as part of the "Aesthetic Excursus" in the *Four Books on Human Proportion*, it was revised to read as follows:

It is not to be wondered at that a skillful master beholds manifold differences of figure, all of which he might make if he had time enough, but which [for lack of time] he is forced to pass by. For such ideas come very often to artists, and their mind is full of images which it were possible for them to make. Wherefore, if to live many hundred years were granted unto a man, who makes skillful use of such art, and were gifted therefore, he would (through the power God has granted unto men) have wherewith daily to pour forth and make many new figures of men and other creatures, which had not been seen before nor imagined by any other man. God therefore in such and other ways grants great power unto artistic men.¹⁰⁸⁷

Notice that the reference to Plato is gone, and the artist is no longer compared directly to God, but, rather, in Shaftesbury's famous phrase, is presented as a kind of "Just Prometheus, under Jove." And the reason for the change, we discover a few pages later, is not simply that Dürer has shifted into a more pious or theocentric idiom, it is rather that Dürer has come to conceive of his activities in a more Aristotelian manner, and in a manner that emphasizes the need for the artist to spend a great deal of time contemplating and attending to nature *before* he begins his work. Dürer writes:

Life in nature shows forth the truth in these things. Wherefore regard it well, take heed thereto and depart not from nature according to your fancy, imagining to find aught better by yourself; else would you be led astray. For verily "art" is embedded in nature, he who

¹⁰⁸⁶ Holt, Elizabeth Gilmore, ed., *A Documentary History of Art. Volume I: The Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957), 314. ¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibid., 319-320.

can extract it has it. If you acquire it, it will save you from much error in your work...Wherefore nevermore imagine that you could or would make anything better than God has given power His created nature to produce. For your might is powerless as compared to the creation of God. Hence it follows that no man shall ever be able to make a beautiful figure out of his own [private] imagination unless he has well stored his mind by much copying from life. That is no longer to be called private but has become "art" acquired and learnt by study which seeds, waxes, and bears fruit after its kind. Thence the gathered, secret treasure of the heart is openly manifested in the work, and the new creature, which a man creates in his heart in the form of the thing.

Hence it arises that a well-practiced artist has no need to copy each particular figure from the life. For he sufficiently pours forth that which he has for a long time gathered within him from without.¹⁰⁸⁸

No longer does the artist simply pour forth ideas, which originate in his own head. Rather, the *appearance* of a *creatio ex nihilo* is explained by the fact that the artist is drawing on his past experience – drawing on "the gathered, secret treasure of the heart" which was "gathered within him from without."

Iris Murdoch places herself in this ancient Greek naturalist tradition. And she wishes to draw a very close relation between aesthetics and ethics. Yet she realizes that the naturalist must understand aesthetics, i.e. he must understand the artist's activity, as one of careful attention to nature, not as one of pure self-expression, or as one of *creatio ex nihilo*. And, given the intellectual climate in ethics and in aesthetics, this calls for a sort of dual motion of return. She writes:

One of the great merits of the moral psychology which I am proposing is that it does not contrast art and morals, but shows them to be two aspects of a single struggle...In one of those important movements of return from philosophical theory to simply things which we are certain of, we must come back to what we know about great art and about the moral insight which it contains and the moral achievement which it represents. Goodness and beauty are not to be contrasted, but are largely part of the same structure. Plato, who tells us that beauty is the only spiritual thing which we love immediately by nature, treats the beautiful as an introductory section of the good. So that aesthetic situations are not so much analogies of morals as cases of morals. Virtue is *au fond* the same in the artist as in the good man in that it is a selfless attention to nature: something which is easy to name but very hard to achieve.¹⁰⁸⁹

¹⁰⁸⁸ Ibid., 325-326. For discussion, see: Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, 4th ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1955), Ch. VIII "Dürer as a Theorist of Art," especially 273-284.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 40.

The link between aesthetics and ethics is made insofar as works of art both convey insights, and manifest certain achievements in insight. And thus, not only should we surround ourselves with and aim to contemplate works of art in order to receive the insights contained therein, but we should also ourselves aim to create such works of art insofar as the act of creating such works manifests achieved insights. In trying to depict nature in art, we are forced to engage in the same kind of attention that is needed in ethics. I took as part of my title for this dissertation a phrase from the title of a short essay by Joesf Pieper. In that essay, Pieper observes that "Man's ability to *see* is in decline." I have given some reasons for why this might be. Most recently I have described the now common conception of both the artist and the ethical agent as being involved in acts of creation that are severed from acts of attention or discernment. And Pieper suggests as a remedy to the decline in man's ability to see that one be active oneself in some manner of mimetic artistic depiction. He writes:

Nobody has to observe and study the visible mystery of a human face more than one who sets our to sculpt it in a tangible medium. And this holds true not only for a manually formed image. The verbal "image" as well can thrive only when it springs from a higher level of visual perception. We sense the intensity of observation required simply to say "The girl's eyes were gleaming like wet currants" (Tolstoy). / Before you can express anything in tangible form, you first need eyes to see. The mere attempt, therefore, to create an artistic form compels the artist to take a fresh look at the visible reality; it requires authentic and personal observation. Long before a creation is completed, the artist has gained for himself another and more intimate achievement: a deeper and more receptive vision, a more intense awareness, a sharper and more discerning understanding, a more patient openness to all things quiet and inconspicuous, an eye for things previously overlooked. In short: the artist will be able to perceive with new eyes the abundant wealth of all visible reality, and, thus challenged, additionally acquires the inner capacity to absorb into his mind such an exceeding rich harvest. The capacity to *see* increases.¹⁰⁹⁰

Thus, in order to arrest the decline in our ability to see, we should both spend time in contemplating great works of art, and also spend time in trying to create such works ourselves. And one way of bringing this about will involve setting philosophy and the fine arts *alongside* the empirical sciences both in our own thinking, and in an institutional setting, as various means by which to come to know reality as it is.

Before I close this section, I wish to place before you one final example of an artist working in this Aristotelian realist tradition. It is not always the case, and in fact it may be rare,

¹⁰⁹⁰ Pieper, "Learning How to See Again," 35-36.

that an artist is able, not only to work in his selected medium, but also to speak eloquently about his work. When we hear artists speak, we are sometimes reminded of Socrates supposed encounter with the poets as described in the Apology: "Almost all the bystanders might have explained the poems better than their authors could."¹⁰⁹¹ But in the case that I present to you here, I think that this is not the case. I wish to present a piece of a dialogue recorded by Paul Gsell in which Gsell speaks with August Rodin about his sculpting. Gsell is a student of Rodin's and has been visiting Rodin in his atelier, or his workshop, and watching Rodin work. One night, when the darkness has caused Rodin to cease working, Gsell engages in the following discussion with Rodin:

"What astonishes me in you," said I, "is that you work quite differently from your confrères. I know many of them and have seen them at work. They make the model mount upon a pedestal called the throne, and they tell him to take such and such a pose. Generally they bend or stretch his arms and legs to suit them, they bow his head or straighten his body exactly as though he were a clay figure. Then they set to work. You, on the contrary, wait till your models take an interesting attitude, and then you reproduce it. So much so that it is you who seem to be at their orders rather than they at yours."

Rodin, who was engaged in wrapping his *figurines* in damp cloths, answered quietly:

"I am not at their orders, but at those of Nature! My confrères doubtless have their reasons for working as you have said. But in thus doing violence to nature and treating human beings like puppets, they run the risk of producing lifeless and artificial work.

"As for me, seeker after truth and student of life as I am, I shall take care not to follow their example. I take from life the movements I observe, but it is not I who impose them.

"Even when a subject which I am working on compels me to ask a model for a certain fixed pose, I indicate it to him, but I carefully avoid touching him to place him in the position, for I will reproduce only what reality spontaneously offers me.

"I obey Nature in everything, and I never pretend to command her. My only ambition is to be servilely faithful to her."

"Nevertheless," I answered with some malice, "it is not nature exactly as it is that you evoke in your work."

He stopped short, the damp cloth in his hands. "Yes, exactly as it is!" he replied frowning.

"You are obliged to alter--"

"Not a jot!"

"But after all, the proof that you do change it is this, that the cast would give not at all the same impression as your work."

He reflected an instant and said: "That is so! Because the cast is less true than my sculpture!"

¹⁰⁹¹ Plato, *Apology*, 22c.

"It would be impossible for any model to keep an animated pose during all the time that it would take to make a cast from it. But I keep in my mind the ensemble of the pose and I insist that the model shall conform to my memory of it. More than that, - the cast only reproduces that exterior; I reproduce, besides that, the spirit which is certainly also a part of nature.

"I see all the truth, and not only that of the outside."

"I accentuate the lines which best express the spiritual state that I interpret."

As he spoke he showed me on a pedestal nearby one of his most beautiful statues, a young man kneeling, raising suppliant arms to heaven. All his being is drawn out with anguish. His body is thrown backwards. The breast heaves, the throat is tense with despair, and the hands are thrown out towards some mysterious being to which they long to cling.

"Look!" he said to me; "I have accented the swelling of the muscles which express distress. Here, here, there – I have exaggerated the straining of the tendons which indicate the outburst of prayer."

And, with a gesture, he underlined the most vigorous parts of his work.

"I have you, Master!" I cried ironically; "you say yourself that you have *accented*, *accentuated*, *exaggerated*. You see, then, that you have changed nature."

He began to laugh at my obstinacy.

"No" he replied. "I have not changed it. Or, rather, if I have done it, it was without suspecting it at the time. The feeling which influenced my vision showed me Nature as I have copied her.

"If I had wished to modify what I saw and to make it more beautiful, I should have produced nothing good."

An instant later he continued.

"I grant you that the artist does not see nature as she appears to the vulgar, because his emotion reveals to him the hidden truths beneath appearances."

"But, after all, the only principle in Art is to copy what you see. Dealers in aesthetics to the contrary, every other method is fatal. There is no recipe for improving nature.

"The only thing is *to see*.

"Oh, doubtless a mediocre man copying nature will never produce a work of art; because he really looks without *seeing*, and though he may have noted each detail minutely, the result will be flat and without character. But the profession of artist is not meant for the mediocre, and to them the best counsels will never succeed in giving talent.

"The artist, on the contrary, *sees*; that is to say, that his eye, grafted on his heart, reads deeply into the bosom of Nature.

"That is why the artist has only to trust to his eyes."¹⁰⁹²

Here we see the anti-Nietzsche: the man of natural piety. Faithful and obedient to Nature, where Nature is understood in the Aristotelian sense, which includes the spirit, the *psyche*, as well as the body. Rodin denies that the cast reproduces the whole of reality – "the cast is less true than

¹⁰⁹² Auguste Rodin, *Rodin on Art and Artists: With 76 Illustrations of His Work*, trans. Mrs. Romilly Fedden (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1983), 10-11. "Realism in Art."

my sculpture!" Such a mechanical reproduction only reproduces "the exterior." We should hear Goethe's frustration in Rodin's remarks:

Insofar as he makes use of his healthy senses, man himself is the best and most exact scientific instrument possible. The greatest misfortune of modern physics is that its experiments have been set apart from man, as it were; physics refuses to recognize in anything not shown by artificial instrument, and even uses this as a measure of its accomplishments.¹⁰⁹³

"I see all the truth," says Rodin. Why should we take the cast to be the standard of truth in nature? "The artist *sees*," says Rodin, "his eye, grafted on his heart, reads deeply into the bosom of nature." And Rodin copies what he sees. Why should he not be the standard of truth in nature? We should hear William James's frustration here also;

I *can*, of course, put myself into the sectarian scientist's attitude, and imagine vividly that the world of sensations and of scientific laws and objects may be all. But whenever I do this, I hear that inward monitor of which W. K. Clifford once wrote, whispering the word "bosh!" Humbug is humbug, even though it bear the scientific name, and the total expression of human experience, as I view it objectively, invincibly urges me beyond the narrow "scientific" bounds.¹⁰⁹⁴

In short, Rodin seems to produce in his work a manifestation of a desirable insight: what Whitehead calls "concrete fact with a high light thrown on what is relevant to its preciousness."¹⁰⁹⁵

And the relation to ethics should become clear here. It is not the work of art alone that has value. Aristotle writes:

Indeed, it would be strange if mimic representations of [any member of the animal kingdom] were attractive, because they disclose the mimetic skill of the painter or sculptor, and the original realties themselves were not more interesting, to all at any rate who have eyes to discern the causes.¹⁰⁹⁶

We can easily imagine that if Aristotle read the sentence from Clive Bell's *Art* that reads "Does anyone feel the same kind of emotion for a butterfly or a flower that he feels for a cathedral or a

¹⁰⁹³ Goethe, *Scientific Studies*, xviii-xix. Letter to Zelter, 22 June 1808. I mention this letter of Goethe at the beginning of Part III, Section 3.A and again in connection with Schönborn towards the end of Part III, Section 4.B.1.

¹⁰⁹⁴ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience : A Study in Human Nature : Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion Delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), 519.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 199-200. I quote this passage at length in Part II, Section 4.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, I.5 645a11-15. (trans. Ogle).

picture?"¹⁰⁹⁷ he would answer in the same manner as the character Sebastian from Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisted*, namely: "Yes. *I* do."¹⁰⁹⁸ And I hope that these various examples have gone some of the way towards making the "speaking part" that Aristotelian eudaimonism attributes to Nature more convincing.

C. Response to the Moral Arguments: A Defense of Leisure and Inequality

Here I would like to say, as St. Thomas sometimes does, *Et per hoc patet responsio ad obiecta* - This suffices for the answers to the objections. But I feel I must say something brief towards each of the two objections that I raised earlier.

The first objection to the anti-empiricist view of moral perception I have been defending stated that the view was objectionably esoteric, that it did not make it clear how conflicts were to be resolved, and that it did not preserve a certain kind of equality among persons when it comes to moral the capacity for moral judgment. Now a great deal of my answer is that, if to avoid these worries we have to think of perception exclusively as the use of a kind of passive common-equipment that we all share, then we simply cannot avoid them insofar as perception simply does not seem to be this way. But here I want to speak more directly to the moral concern.

Josef Pieper writes to forestall a very similar worry and I think that what he says in response is able to be transferred to the present case.¹⁰⁹⁹ The worry he is responding to is that practical wisdom – conceived in the way that Aristotelians and Thomists tend to conceive it – is simply too much to ask of the average person. And in response, he gives two answers. His first answer is that, even thought the moral agent is ultimately responsible for his own actions, practical wisdom is a communal endeavor. One must be open to teaching, and one must be ready to accept advice. I have been concerned specifically with the perceptual aspect, or the kind of discernment involved in practical reason, and here I think something similar can be said. Acquiring an eye to discern moral qualities requires a good upbringing. A good upbringing involves being brought up within a coherent moral tradition. If, as I have argued, the contemporary university not only does not help to do this, but in fact actively thwarts the

¹⁰⁹⁷ Bell, Art, 20.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder* (London: The Folio Society, 1995), 19.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Josef Pieper, Anthology, 52-53.

process, then this is a problem. If one is simply bombarded by various fragments of intellectual and moral traditions, then one must become one's own kind of intellectually autonomous philosophical expert. One must try to piece together a coherent moral tradition from the fragments on offer. And this *is* an unreasonable task. But the solution here is not to pretend that perceptual capacities are other than they are, but rather to amend our educational institutions to give help in the formation that improves the capacity to see.

The second part of Pieper's response is that to be practically wise is not equivalent to being "highly educated" or "learned." Herbert McCabe, another Thomistic thinker, puts the point this way

Unreasonableness, pig-headedness, bigotry and self-deception are all in themselves blameworthy, and they are constitutive of the kind of stupidity that is a vice. That is why no stupid person can be good. In case anyone should think that this gives academics and intellectuals a moral advantage over ignorant peasants, let us remember that what is in question is not theoretical thinking and the handling of concepts and words, but practical shrewdness and common sense in matters of human behaviour. In this matter I think the 'ignorant' peasant may often have the edge over the professor. One of the hindrances to acquiring the virtue of good sense is living too sheltered a life. There is, of course, a sense of 'education' (rather different from one in common use) in which the educated person does indeed have a moral advantage over the uneducated; if this were not so, education would not be a serious human activity.¹¹⁰⁰

In other words, erudition is not what is called for in the discernment of moral qualities. And so even if there is a sort of "esotericism" involved in the perception of moral qualities, those "in the know" will not necessarily be who we might think. It is not necessarily the most educated or the wealthiest persons that possess the best capacity to *see* here. It will be those who have spent the most time attending to the world and trying to make sense of it. When Whitehead called for the need of an "aesthetic education" he said that:

There is something between the gross specialised values of the mere practical man, and the thin specialised values of the mere scholar. Both types have missed something; and if you add together the two sets of values, you do not obtain the missing elements...When you understand all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset.¹¹⁰¹

And so we can imagine that the person who possess the right general values here might just as easily be a relatively "uneducated" person. Consider, for example, the epitaph of William

¹¹⁰⁰ Herbert McCabe OP, "Aquinas on Good Sense," *New Blackfriars* 67, no. 798 (October 1, 1986): 422-423.

¹¹⁰¹ Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 199.

Wordsworth, in which Wordsworth imagines various persons approaching his grave. He turns many of them away: a politician, a lawyer, a doctor, a scientist, a moralist, etc. Yet last he welcomes a common peasant:

But who is He, with modest looks, And clad in homely russet brown? He murmurs near the running brooks A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew, Or fountain in a noon-day grove; And you must love him, ere to you He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shows of sky and earth, Of hill and valley, he has viewed; And impulses of deeper birth Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie Some random truths he can impart,— The harvest of a quiet eye That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak; both Man and Boy Hath been an idler in the land; Contented if he might enjoy The things which others understand.

--Come hither in thy hour of strength; Come, weak as is a breaking wave! Here stretch thy body at full length; Or build thy house upon this grave.¹¹⁰²

Although the peasant is not wealthy, his having been "an idler in the land" has provided him solitude and quiet enough to contemplate nature. And although he is not learned, he still possess "the harvest of a quiet eye."

And this brings me to the second objection, namely, that the cultivation of an appropriate taste for moral qualities, just like developing a taste for aesthetic qualities, requires a sufficient

¹¹⁰² Wordsworth, "A Poet's Epitaph." In Thomas Humphry Ward, ed. *The English Poets: Vol. IV: Wordsworth to Rossetti* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1919), 25.

amount of leisure, and, since this is not available to everyone, there is an objection to placing significant importance on such an ability. There is also a general moralized skepticism towards any ability that seems to be exercised without work. In order to respond to this sort of objection, I think it important to show two things: that leisure is important and the necessary condition of the cultivation of evaluative taste, and that the lack of leisure is harmful to human flourishing insofar as it prohibits the cultivation of such taste; and secondly, that modern industrial society should make leisure more widely available, and that continued unavailability of leisure stems less from brute scarcity but from moral decisions.

I am not now going to give any comprehensive defense of leisure and its importance for developing taste. But I will at least point to various disparate philosophers from very different moral traditions that all seem to see a great value in leisure. As I mentioned earlier, Aristotle and the Greek tradition certainly saw leisure as required for the cultivation of practical reason and taste for beauty. A lack of such leisure, according to Aristotle, made one incapable of properly engaging in civic life.¹¹⁰³ Nietzsche too sees our contemporary lack of leisure as disturbing. He sees the "breathless haste with which [we Americans] work" to constitute "the distinctive vice of the new world" – and he thinks that this vice, even at the time of his writing, is spreading to Europe as well.¹¹⁰⁴ He writes that "one no longer has time or energy for ceremonies"¹¹⁰⁵, and even though Nietzsche is no friend of Christianity, he ironically finds and ally in Joseph Pieper on this point. According to Pieper:

Culture depends for its very existence on leisure, and leisure , in its turn, is not possible unless it has a durable and consequently living link with the *cultus*, with divine worship.¹¹⁰⁶

Bertrand Russell, representing the secular liberal tradition, also commends leisure and protests against the ethics of constant work. He writes:

I want to say...that a great deal of harm is being done in the modern world by belief in the virtuousness of work, and that the road to happiness and prosperity lies in an organized diminution of work.¹¹⁰⁷

¹¹⁰³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1277b3-6, 1319a26-28, 1328b40-1329a2, 1337b4-21. See above Part I, Section 4.A.

¹¹⁰⁴ Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 258-259. §329.

¹¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 259.

¹¹⁰⁶ Pieper, Leisure, xiv.

¹¹⁰⁷ Bertrand Russell, "In Praise of Idleness" (Harper's Magazine, October 1932), 553.

And one of the principle reasons that leisure is valuable is that it allows for the cultivation of an ability to appreciate value. And if this is true, then everyone, regardless of his means, should strive to obtain some amount of leisure in which to cultivate such taste. John Haldane, for example, writes

The argument for devoting as much time, effort, and money as is possible, even at a time of general financial restraint, to art education is powerful and compelling. The study of art at every level is a training in perception; more particularly it educates one's responses to the presence of value in others and in the world. Thus we ought to try to introduce children to examples of work of high quality and to instruct them in its appreciation, as well as to encourage them in their own efforts to translate their understanding into material form. To do the latter, however clumsily, is to begin to construct, and to express, a point of view in a value laden world. That is to say, it is to become a mature and reflective human being. Artistic activity is important for the development of the self.¹¹⁰⁸

And so, even in a time of "financial restraint", Haldane argues, leisure is worth pursuing. It is in this spirit that Emily Dickinson once wrote in letter to a friend who had recently given birth: "Let me commend to Baby's attention the only Commandment I ever obeyed – 'Consider the Lilies'."¹¹⁰⁹

And given our high degree of industrial and technological sophistication, it would seem that practical necessities of various sorts would be far reduced from what they once were. Yet people seem to work just as much or more now than they did in times past. Bertrand Russell was troubled by this and suggested that, even in 1932, everyone in industrialized western societies, such as the United States or Britain, could reduce their working hours to four hours a day, and still have all the practical necessities they required. And I think some thought such as this would be a helpful thought not only in society at large, but in the academy in particular. Brian Leiter

¹¹⁰⁸ John J. Haldane, "Art's Perspective on Value," Art Education 36, no. 1 (January 1, 1983): 9.

¹¹⁰⁹ To Mrs. Frederick Tuckerman (June 1884). The Letters of Emily Dickinson, #904.

< http://www.emilydickinson.it/l0901-0930.html> "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Mathew 6:25-33 (King James Version).

notes that, when it comes to acquiring positions in philosophy, "the kinds of skills needed to land a entry-level post are now the kinds of skills someone thirty years ago would have acquired after three years as a tenure-track assistant professor!"¹¹¹⁰ This seems to be a frightening example of Nietzsche's idea that, in our culture, "one thinks with a watch in one's hand," and that "virtue has come to consist in doing something in less time than someone else." I have argued that a certain mentality of professionalism and work are destructive to the philosophical act and contrary to the aims of philosophy. And similar things could likely be said for other liberal arts disciplines. I hope that my very writing itself shows an attempt to resist this trend.

Conclusion

In my preface, I said that I had originally set out to write a dissertation on the topic of political philosophy. Although I have not made these initial political questions – questions about neutrality and the formation of principles of political justice – the focus of my writing in this dissertation, they have certainly been ever-present in the periphery. And, in some ways, what I have written here may serve as a kind of propaeduetic for a subsequent return to address those political questions directly.

In the third Part of the dissertation, I tried to give an account of what Murdoch calls the Protestant, and the Empiricist aspects of the common liberal view, and I tried to develop alternatives to these along the lines in which Murdoch develops them. And as Murdoch says, "different accounts of moral freedom, which would need to be explained at length, go with these two views."¹¹¹¹ But I did not give any detailed account of what I believe she takes to be the heart of the liberal view, namely, its account of freedom. Nor did I focus on developing an alternative to the liberal conception of freedom. I do believe, with Murdoch, that an alternative account of moral freedom is needed. And I believe that such an alternative is implicit in, and flows from, what I have said about beauty, about perception, and about the problematic elements associated with a disenchanted conception of nature. Painting a detailed picture of the liberal conception of moral freedom, noting its defects, and painting a picture of a compelling

¹¹¹⁰ Brian Leiter, "A Realistic Perspective on Graduate Study," *The Philosophy Gourmet Report*. ¹¹¹¹ Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 57.

alternative would be the next logical step in my future work, and such a project would build upon what I have written here. The completion of that project would begin to bring my inquires back full-circle to approaching the initial questions that sparked the present dissertation.

But what I have written here – a kind of excavation of first principles, or a kind of attempt to portray the inside of the inner citadels of certain opposing conceptions of mind and world – should not be thought of as a *mere* propaeduetic to some more important political questions. Doubtless our having a better understanding of our own inner citadel and our attempts to articulate its contents might support the answering of certain kinds of political questions. But it is in fact the political realm that ought to subserve our philosophical activity, and not the other way round. It is this thought that has lead me to look away from the overtly political sphere and towards the university. Rawls' call to apply the principle of toleration to philosophy itself has been taken to heart by many persons, and has translated to an application of certain liberal moral ideas – ideas that are held *simpliciter* – to the institutional structure of the university and thereby to the topology of knowledge. Yet regardless of the value of certain liberal principles in the political sphere. Thus, any future return to the initial political questions that sparked the dissertation will be a return to investigate the intellectual community of the university and the initiation of persons into that community, i.e. the teaching of students.

Appendix I. Immanent v. Imposed Teleology

One might find talk of teleology and of Murdoch's naturalism jarring in the same breadth. Some people, like Murdoch, are averse to the language of "teleology." Murdoch often slides between calling her view, on the one hand, a naturalist view, and on the other hand, a "Natural Law" view.¹¹¹² And while the traditional Thomistic conception of natural law, or what philosophers nowadays sometimes refer to as the "Old Natural Law", is perfectly at home with the language of teleology, Murdoch, on other occasions, denies the existence of a human "*telos*". For example, in her essay "The Sovereingty of Good Over Other Concepts", she writes:

That human life has no external point or *telos* is a view as difficult to argue as its opposite, and I shall simply assert it. I can see no evidence to suggest that human life is not something self-contained. There are properly many patterns and purposes within life, but there is no general and as it were externally guaranteed pattern or purpose of the kind for which philosophers and theologians used to search...This is to say that there is, in my view, no God in the traditional sense of that term; and the traditional sense is perhaps the only sense...And if there is any kind of sense or unity in human life, and the dream of this does not cease to haunt us, it is of some other kind and must be sought within a human experience which has nothing outside it.¹¹¹³

Yet, later in that same essay, Murdoch advocates a Platonic conception of the Good, and a Platonic conception of morality, in which experiences of beauty are the starting point for the good life. She writes:

We use our imagination not to escape the world but to join it, and this exhilarates us because of the distance between our ordinary dulled consciousness and an apprehension of the real. The value concepts are here patently tied on to the world, they are stretched as it were between the truth-seeking mind and the world, they are not moving about on their own as adjuncts of the personal will. The authority of morals is the authority of truth, that is of reality. We can see the length, the extension, of these concepts as patient attention transforms accuracy without interval into just discernment. Here too we can see it as natural to the particular kind of creatures that we are that love should be inseparable from justice, and clear vision from respect for the real.¹¹¹⁴

¹¹¹² In some places, Murdoch refers to the view she defends as a "naturalist" view, and she opposes her view to a "liberal" view. See, for example, Iris Murdoch, "Vision and Choice in Morality," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society: Dreams and Self-Knowledge*, Supplementary Volumes, Vol. 30 (1956): 52, 55, 57. In other places, she is happy to call the view she defends by "an old name", namely, "Natural Law morality." See: Murdoch, "Metaphysics and Ethics," 245, 247, 248.

¹¹¹³ Murdoch, *Sovereignty of Good*, 77.

¹¹¹⁴ Ibid., 88.

Here it is clear that experience of value, be they experiences of beauty or of goodness, are clearly experiences of reality; they have "the authority of truth" and they claim to ties us to the world. So the question is: what is the difference between speaking about nature, and about man, insofar as he is a part of nature, in terms of a *telos*, as opposed to speaking about nature, and about man, in terms of beauty, goodness, or "value"?

Contemporary scholar D. C. Schindler makes a helpful distinction here; he writes:

It should be noted that the term 'teleology' is an ambiguous one; typically it is contrasted to mechanism...In fact, however, teleology can be conceived mechanistically if one thinks of nature as serving an extrinsic purpose, which would make nature a mere instrument...Iris Murdoch and those like her...seek to reject teleology precisely *in order* to affirm the inherent goodness of nature.¹¹¹⁵

Schindler is essentially saying that we might consider teleology, i.e. the idea that natural things are ordered towards ends, either as immanent or as imposed.¹¹¹⁶ If teleological principles or

¹¹¹⁵ D. C. Schindler, "An Aesthetics of Freedom: Friedrich Schiller's Breakthrough Beyond Subjectivism," Yearbook of the Irish Philosophical Society (2008): 99 footnote 40. Schindler notes an accusation made by Friedrich Schiller that modern natural science makes use of a kind of imposed teleology that blinds it to being receptive to nature, and, we might assume, a fortiori blind to the goodness of nature. Schiller writes: "One of the chief reasons why our natural sciences make such slow progress is obviously the universal, and almost uncontrollable, propensity to teleological judgments, in which, once they are used constitutively, the determining faculty is substituted for the receptive...we are seeking nothing in her but what we have put into her; because instead of letting her come in upon us, we are thrusting ourselves out upon her with all the impatient anticipations of our reason." Friedrich Schiller, On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters, trans. Elizabeth Mary Wilkinson and Leonard Ashley Willoughby (Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press, 1967), 89 footnote. In a similar way, Josef Pieper writes: "if knowing is work, exclusively work, then the one who knows, knows only the fruit of his own, subjective activity, and nothing else. There is nothing in his knowing that is not the fruit of his own efforts; there is nothing 'received' in it." Pieper, Leisure, 14. Finally, see Hannah Arendt's discussion, which relies on an observation of Whitehead, namely, that "Cartesian reason is entirely based 'on the implicit assumption that the mind can only know that which it has produced..." Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 283. The common thread here is that "teleology", conceived in an imposed manner, is antithetical to being receptive towards nature, and towards the goodness in nature.

¹¹¹⁶ Whitehead discusses the distinction between thinking of laws of nature as imposed, versus thinking of them as immanent. Of some importance is a connection Whitehead sees between the distinction, on the one hand, between "internal relations" and "external relations", and on the other hand, the distinction between "immanent" and "imposed" conceptions of natural laws. The immanent conception of natural laws "involves the negation of 'absolute being' and presupposes "the essential interdependence of things" (142). In other words, we can discover the nature of things by a study of their relations, and we can discover the laws of the relations by studying the things. The doctrine of "imposed law", on the other hand, deals exclusively in "external relations": "you cannot discover the natures of the relata by any study of the Laws of their relations. Nor, conversely, can you discover the laws by inspection of the natures" (144). Recall, from my earlier discussion, that a denial of "internal relations" lies at the heart of the founding of the tradition of analytical philosophy. And that an affirmation of "internal relations" is

teleological laws are understood to be immanent in nature, then this would imply that individual natural things have their own internal principles of motion, and, just as importantly, that the criteria by which we judge their goodness or beauty would be based upon their own internal essences. With this conception of teleology, Murdoch does not object. But we might conceive of teleological principles that are imposed from the outside, such that natural things do not move themselves according to their own internal principles, but rather are simply moved by externally definable forces. And, more importantly, on this conception, the criteria by which we judge natural objects would be likewise external as opposed to internal. It is to this latter conception that Murdoch objects. She says that humans have no "*externally* guaranteed pattern or purpose", and that value must be sought "*within* human experience."¹¹¹⁷ But when she says that this is basically just another way of saying that "there is…no God in the traditional sense of that term", and that there is no other sense beyond the traditional sense, I think that she has, perhaps without blame, overlooked an older Christian conception of God.

To speak of a single Christian tradition of conceiving of God is perhaps to engage in a kind of troubling collectivism; "the traditional sense of God" is too blunt an instrument and leaves out important nuances. The conception of the Christian God that Murdoch calls *the* traditional sense of God is perhaps the predominant *modern* way of conceiving God, but it is not the *only* way of conceiving God. This modern way of conceiving God as imposing laws or external principles upon an otherwise lawless or unprincipled nature has everything to do with the modern scientific notion of "The Laws of Nature." Francis Oakley notes that, speaking historically, the idea of nature as possessed of immanent laws (teleological or otherwise) is typically a Greek or Hellenic idea. The Greeks "conceived the material world as impregnated with reason, and regarded natural law as universally valid and as inherent in the very structure of things."¹¹¹⁸ The idea of nature as obedient to external laws imposed upon it is typically a

required to make sense of the Aristotelian account of the relation between a particular and its "speciesform" as is made clear by Michael Thompson. (See Part I, Section 5.B). But this means that a conception of the immanence of natural laws is especially invisible from the point of view of analytical philosophy which aims methodologically to understand things by anatomically dissecting them into parts that carry their intelligibility around with them regardless of their relations to broader wholes. The parenthetical references to Whitehead in this note are from: Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937). Ch. VII "Laws of Nature", Sections v, vi.

¹¹¹⁷ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 77. Emphases added.

¹¹¹⁸ Francis Oakley, "Christian Theology and the Newtonian Science: The Rise of the Concept of the Laws of Nature," *Church History* 30, no. 4 (December 1, 1961): 436.

Semitic, and more particularly, a Jewish idea. According to this view, "the God of the Old Testament gave to Moses the Ten Commandments and 'to the sea his law, that the waters should not pass his commandment'."¹¹¹⁹ The traditional Thomistic Christian idea is, according to Alfred North Whitehead, "a compromise between the immanence of law and imposed law due to the Platonism of Christianity."¹¹²⁰ Of the medieval Christian view of Thomas Aquinas, Oakley writes:

His God is, admittedly, a Christian God, omnipotent and transcendent, but his eternal law, which orders to their appointed ends all created things, irrational as well as rational, is undoubtedly immanent in the universe. Thus although God is not thought of as being immanent in the world, it should noted that the eternal law finds its ultimate foundation in the intellect, and, therefore, in the very being of God, so that Aquinas can at one point say that the eternal law is nothing other than God.¹¹²¹

But, as Oakley notes, "after so many centuries of almost total submersion in Greek ideas of immanent law...the Semitic concept of imposed laws of nature burst into prominence in the seventeenth century."¹¹²²

This new conception of nature is described by R. G. Collingwood under the slightly misleading title of "The Renaissance View of Nature":

The Renaissance view of nature began to take shape as antithetical to the Greek view in the work of Copernicus (1473-1543), Telesio (1508-88), and Bruno (1548-1600). The central point of this antithesis was the denial that the world of nature, the world studied by physical science, is an organism, and the assertion that it is devoid both of intelligence and life. It is therefore incapable of ordering its own movements in a rational manner, and indeed incapable of moving itself at all. The movements which it exhibits, and which the physicist investigates, are imposed upon it from without, and their regularity is due to 'laws of nature' likewise imposed from without. Instead of being an organism, the natural world is a machine: a machine in the literal and proper sense of the word, an arrangement of bodily parts designed and put together and set going for a definite purpose by an intelligent mind outside itself. The Renaissance thinkers, like the Greeks, saw in the orderliness of the natural world an expression of intelligence: but for the Greeks this intelligence was nature's own intelligence, but for the Renaissance thinkers it was the intelligence of something other than nature: the divine creator and ruler of nature. This distinction is the key to all the main differences between Greek and Renaissance natural science.1123

¹¹¹⁹ Ibid., 436.

¹¹²⁰ Ibid., 436. See Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 156, 165, 173. Ch. VIII "Cosmologies", sections iii, v, vii.

¹¹²¹ Oakley, "Laws of Nature," 436.

¹¹²² Ibid., 437.

¹¹²³ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press, 1945), 5.

Collingwood recognizes this title to be slightly misleading insofar as the Renaissance may be taken to refer to an earlier period, at least in Italy. But the thinkers Collingwood mentions, mostly writing in the 16th century, can be seen as embers that came to a full blaze in the seventeenth century – the century that Whitehead calls "The Century of Genius."¹¹²⁴ This "Renaissance View of Nature", what Whitehead calls the "The doctrine of Imposed Law", suggests, according to Whitehead, "a certain type of Deism, and conversely it is the outcome of such a Deistic belief if already entertained."¹¹²⁵ In other words, the doctrine of Imposed Law both compliments and is in turn complimented by a Deistic conception of God. This view of Imposed Law goes hand in hand with a voluntarist conception of God and a nominalist conception of nature: a God who imposes external laws by means of his omnipotent will on a nature that lacks *internal* or *immanent* principles to characterize itself. This is why Whitehead wrote that Paley's particularly modern teleological argument for God's existence was problematic: the God presupposed by an orderly mechanism is simply a mechanic.¹¹²⁶ Such a mechanic-god is not the God of the medieval, Thomistic Christian tradition. The Medieval, Thomistic Christian conception of God is similar to the Aristotelian conception of God: a God whose Mind permeates all of nature; a God who awakens beings into existence and calls them to himself.¹¹²⁷

Murdoch, I believe, was blind to the possibility of conceiving the Christian God as compatible with an immanent conception of teleological order in the way that Aquinas did. But I think that this inability was likely do, in part, to the invisibility of this distinction between two very different ways of conceiving of the laws of nature that I have been describing. And the invisibility of this distinction, a distinction that philosophers like Whitehead, Collingwood, and Oakley have tried to bring out, is due to the professionalized separation of "scientists" and "philosophers" within the academy. Collinwood notes that:

In the nineteenth century a fashion grew up of separating natural scientists and philosophers into two professional bodies, each knowing little about the other's work and having little sympathy with it.¹¹²⁸

¹¹²⁴ See: Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, Ch.III "The Century of Genius".

¹¹²⁵ Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, 144. Ch. VII "Laws of Nature", section vi.

¹¹²⁶ Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 77.

¹¹²⁷ See the end of Part II, Section 2.

¹¹²⁸ Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature*, 3.

He urges that the "scientific" study of particular natural phenomena must go hand in hand with the "philosophical" reflection on principles, and that these tasks cannot be delegated to distinct persons in differing professionalized roles. And I think that we can go even further than Collingwood to say that moral philosophers in particular must reflect on these scientific and theological questions about the relation between nature, reason, and "the Law of Nature." It is a common theme of Murdoch's that "we are creatures who use irreplaceable metaphors in many of our most important activities."¹¹²⁹ Murdoch writes:

The development of consciousness in human beings is inseparably connected with the use of metaphor. Metaphors are not merely peripheral decorations or even useful models, they are fundamental forms of our awareness of our condition: metaphors of space, metaphors of movement, metaphors of vision. Philosophy in general, and moral philosophy in particular, has in the past often concerned itself with what it took to be our most important images, clarifying existing ones and developing new ones.¹¹³⁰

And, what I shall go to say shortly, and what is most important about this idea of philosophical metaphor, is that philosophical metaphors "often carry a moral charge."¹¹³¹ Yet, when it comes to such "image play", I think that Murdoch perhaps does not tap a valuable source of "naturalist" image-play that comes to us from medieval Christian thought: a valuable source of metaphorical images about movement and about the good that certainly carry a moral charge.

Since I believe that Murdoch neglects this valuable nest of images and metaphors of motion and the good, I want to quote a few passages from a work by C. S. Lewis. Collingwood had made the observation that the "psychical and intellectual kinship" between ourselves and the broader natural world, which is presupposed in Greek natural science, "is strange to us", and, further, that it "constitutes a difficulty in the way of our understanding the relics of Greek natural science which we find in their literature."¹¹³² Lewis observed a similar problem when it came to understanding, or making sense of, the relics of Hellenic natural science in medieval literature; and so he wrote a book with the attempt to rectify the problem entitled *The Discarded Image*. In this book, Lewis tries to help the modern reader to enter into the *Weltanschauung* of a medieval person for the sake of understanding medieval literature. Yet I believe that, in so doing, he does

¹¹²⁹ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 91.

¹¹³⁰ Ibid., 75.

¹¹³¹ Ibid., 76.

¹¹³² Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature*, 4.

an invaluable service to philosophers like myself who are attempting to recover some of that discarded image.

The section of Lewis's book that is most relevant to the distinction I have been discussing begins as follows:

The fundamental concept of modern science is, or was till very recently, that of natural 'laws', and every event was described as happening in 'obedience' to them. In medieval science the fundamental concept was that of certain sympathies, antipathies, and strivings inherent in matter itself. Everything has its right place, its home, the region that suits it, and, if not forcibly restrained, moves thither by a sort of homing instinct:

Every kindly thing that is Hath a kindly stede ther he May best in hit conserved be; Unto which place every thing Through his kindly enclyning Moveth for to come to.

Thus, while every falling body for us illustrates the 'law' of gravitation, for them it illustrated the 'kindly enclyning' of terrestrial bodies to their 'kindly stede' the Earth, the centre of the Mundus, for

To that centre drawe

Desireth every worldes thing.

Such was the normal language in the Middle Ages, and later. 'The see desyreth naturely to folwen' the Moon, says Chaucer. 'The iron', says Bacon, 'in particular sympathy moveth to the lodestone.'¹¹³³

Lewis then remarks that, simply because they spoke this way, we need not think that the medievals all believed in "full-blown Panpsychism" or any "doctrine of universal sentience." But as to the question of why they spoke this way, even if they did not literally believe such ways of speaking to be true, Lewis gives a striking response that, I believe, would please a philosopher like Murdoch:

If we could ask the medieval scientist 'Why, then, do you talk as if they did,' he might (for he was always a dialectician) retort with the counter-question, 'But do you intend your language about *laws* and *obedience* any more literally than I intend mine about *kindly enclyning*? Do you really believe that a falling stone is aware of a directive issued to it by some legislator and feels either a moral or a prudential obligation to conform?' We should then have to admit that both ways of expressing the facts are metaphorical. The odd thing is that ours is the more anthropomorphic of the two. To talk as if

¹¹³³ Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 92-93. The first two passages Lewis quotes come from Chaucer and from Gower. Lewis, in a footnote, also directs us to the beautiful first Canto of Dante's *Paradiso*. Whitehead likewise notices that Bacon still adheres to the old immanentist way of speaking. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 42.

inanimate bodies had a homing instinct is to bring them no nearer to us than the pigeons; to talk as if they could 'obey laws' is to treat them like men and even like citizens.

But though neither statement can be taken literally, it does not follow that it makes no difference which is used. On the imaginative and emotional level it makes a great difference whether, with the medievals, we project upon the universe our strivings and desires, or with the moderns, our police-system and our traffic regulations. The old language continually suggests a sort of continuity between merely physical events and our most spiritual aspirations.¹¹³⁴

Indeed, such an imaginative and emotional difference seems to be what Henry Sidgwick has in mind when he articulates what he takes to be the principle difference between ancient and modern moral philosophy, and our difficultly in understanding, or even seeing or registering, this difference:

§1. We have hitherto spoken of the quality of conduct discerned by our moral faculty as 'rightness,' which is the term commonly used by English moralists. We have regarded this term and its equivalents in ordinary use, as implying the existence of a dictate or imperative of reason, which prescribes certain actions either unconditionally, or with reference to some ulterior end.

It is, however, possible to take a view of virtuous action in which ... this notion of rule or dictate is at any rate only latent or implicit, the moral ideal being presented as attractive rather than imperative."

• • •

This ... was the fundamental ethical conception in the Greek schools of Moral Philosophy generally; ... [T]he chief characteristics of ancient ethical controversy as distinguished from modern may be traced to the employment of a generic notion instead of a specific one in expressing the common moral judgments on actions. Virtue or Right action is commonly regarded as only a species of the Good: and so, on this view of the moral intuition, the first question that offers itself, when we endeavor to systematize conduct, is how to determine this species of the good to the rest of the genus. It was on this question that the Greek thinkers argued from first to last. Their speculations can scarcely be understood by us unless with a certain effort we throw the quasi-jural notions of modern ethics aside, and ask (as they did) not "What is Duty and what is its ground?" but "Which of the objects that men think good is truly Good or the Highest Good?" or, in the more specialized form of the question which the moral intuition introduces, "What is the relation of the kind of conduct and character which men commend and admire, to other good things?"¹¹³⁵

As Sidgwick notes, this distinction is "scarcely understood" unless we, "with a certain effort" "throw off" our more juridical and legalistic understanding of moral philosophy. And, as I have been saying, this legalistic and juridical model of moral philosophy corresponds to the legalistic

¹¹³⁴ Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 93-94.

¹¹³⁵ Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics, Seventh Edition* (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), 105-106. Bk. I, Ch.IX, §1.

and juridical model of modern science's imposed laws of nature. We cannot help but think of morally virtuous actors as unwaveringly following external laws; we cannot quite make sense of morally virtuous actors who seem to act from an internal impulse of love – love of the *kalon*, as Aristotle would say: a kind of rational "homing instinct" that tracks the good. I think that, in order for the Hellenistic or "naturalist" moral model to make any sense to us, we must not only "throw off" our juridical and legalistic understanding of moral philosophy, but we must also "throw off", with an even greater intellectual and imaginative effort, our legalistic and juridical model of natural science and the laws of nature, i.e. our legalistic and juridical model of "that whence motion comes." Only then can we begin to understand what Aristotle means when he says that the cause of beauty and the cause of motion are the same.¹¹³⁶ Love of perceived beauty causes motion; and to see beauty is, in some sense, to have it. Like moves like; like knows like.

¹¹³⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.3 984b20-22. (trans. Ross): "there is a principle of things which is at the same time the cause of beauty (*tou kalos*), and that sort of cause from which things acquire movement (*hothen he kinesis*)." See above Part II, Section 2.

Appendix II. "Facts" and Passive Perceptual Equipment

It is worth giving some teeth to MacIntyre's claim that "facts" are "seventeenth century inventions" insofar as I think this claim is directly relevant to my current aim of responding to the "empiricist" aspect of the liberal view of moral thought in general, and the moral argument from esotericism in particular. The idea of a "fact", in that seventeenth century sense, and the idea that some psychological faculty might provide us with "facts", are both ideas that emerged with particular prominence in the seventeenth century because of the changing focus of moral philosophy in that period; as I said above, the focus of moral philosophy in the seventeenth century, and in the following centuries, shifts away from questions of understanding, say, moral excellence, and towards resolving disagreement in increasingly pluralistic societies. John Locke, for example, denied that we have any shared stock of "innate" principles, especially in the domain of moral theory, but he did affirm that we do share the same perceptual equipment, and thereby the same empirical experience of the world. Our shared perceptual equipment and the resulting shared experience were presumably supposed to give us a stock of various "facts" by which to adjudicate moral disagreement. But Shaftesbury, in the letter I quoted earlier, expressed doubts about Locke's ability to keep his view from simply sliding into a skeptical relativism - how can we arrive at moral consensus by inference from shared perceptual experience if our perceptual experience is limited to that desiccated empiricist sense of colors and shapes, i.e. conceived in terms of the myth of the given? And even if some "facts" were derivable from such experiences, how could we arrive at any moral consensus from such "facts"?¹¹³⁷ Rather than helping us to reach moral consensus, Locke's citation of empirical anthropological observations of foreign cultures seems to erode the idea that there is any deep moral commonality between cultures, or that any one moral culture has any particular warrant to its moral claims.¹¹³⁸

¹¹³⁷ Schneewind writes that Locke "promises a science of morality", but that he "never gave us the science of morality whose foundations he claims to have worked out." Schneewind, *Invention of Autonomy*, 144-149. Ch.8, ii-iii.

¹¹³⁸ See Shaftesbury's letter to Ainsworth, quoted above in Part III, Section 3.B; as well as Locke, *Essay*, 70-71. Bk.I, Ch.iii, §9.

Shaftesbury, on the other hand, like Aristotle¹¹³⁹, had argued that our very nature contains the seeds for the development of virtue, i.e. that virtue was innate in the sense of connatural, but that such seeds may grow well or ill depending on upbringing, education, and habit. In terms of our having a natural end, Shaftesbury writes:

We know that there is in reality a right and a wrong State of every Creature; and that his right-one is by Nature forwarded, and by himself affectionately sought. There being therefore in every Creature a certain *Interest or Good*; there must be also a certain END, to which every thing in his Constitution must *naturally* refer. To this END, if any thing, either in his Appetites, Passions, or Affections, be not conducing, but the contrary; we must of necessity own it *ill* to him.¹¹⁴⁰

And, in terms of our possession of an ability to discern our good, Shaftesbury is clear that, while we must actively develop such a "taste", its acquisition is still nonetheless natural in the sense of perfecting our nature:

If *Civility* and *Humanity* be a TASTE; if *Brutality*, *Insolence*, *Riot*, be in the same manner a TASTE; who, if he cou'd reflect, wou'd not chuse to form himself on the amiable and agreeable, rather than the odious and perverse Model? Who wou'd not endeavour to *force* NATURE as well in this respect, as in what relates to a *Taste* or *Judgment* in other Arts and Sciences? For in each place the *Force on* NATURE is us'd only for its Redress. If a

¹¹³⁹ Aristotle writes: "none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature... Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit." [έξ οὖ καὶ δῆλον ὅτι ούδεμία τῶν ἡθικῶν ἀρετῶν φύσει ἡμῖν ἐγγίνεται: οὐθὲν γὰρ τῶν φύσει ὄντων ἄλλως ἐθίζεται... οὕτ' ἄρα φύσει οὕτε παρὰ φύσιν ἐγγίνονται αἱ ἀρεταί, ἀλλὰ πεφυκόσι μὲν ἡμῖν δέξασθαι αὐτάς, τελειουμένοις δὲ διὰ τοῦ ἔθους.] Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, II.1 1103a19-25. (trans. Ross). In other words, nature is not neutral to the acquisition of the virtues, rather our nature is completed, perfected – literally "brought to its end" -by the habitual development of the virtues. And to hear this Aristotelian point in an early modern voice, Thomas Burnet, called by some "Locke's Greatest Opponent", also wrote: "You will not now say, I believe, That if there was such a Natural Principle in the Soul of Man, Infants or young Children would be able to distinguish Moral Good and Evil: For you might as well expect, that in a Seed, there should be Leaves, Flowers, and Fruit; or that in the rudiments of an *Embrvo* there should be all the Parts and Members of a compleat Body, distinctly represented; which, in continuance, are fashioned and brought to perfection. This is the case we represent: Such a Principle as Natural Conscience, we say, is seated in the Soul of Man, as other original Principles are; which shew themselves by degrees, in different times, and differently according to other circumstances." Thomas Burnet, Third Remarks Upon An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding in a Letter Address'd to the Author (London: Printed for M. Wotton, at the Three Daggers in Fleet-Street, 1699), 8. See also: Ernest Tuveson, "The Origins of the 'Moral Sense'," Huntington Library Quarterly 11, no. 3 (May, 1948): 247.

¹¹⁴⁰ Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Douglas Den Uyl, 3 vols (Indianapolis, Ind: Liberty Fund, 2001), Vol. II, 9. "An Inquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit," Bk.I, Part, ii, section 1, p.15. I will subsequently cite the volume and pages of the Den Uyl edition, followed by the location in Shaftesbury's original; the volumes in the Den Uyl edition correspond to Shaftesbury's original.

natural *good* TASTE be not already form'd in us; why shou'd not we endeavour to form it, and become *natural*?— 1141

the Taste of Beauty, and the *Relish* of what is decent, just, and amiable, perfects the *Character* of the GENTLEMAN, and the PHILOSOPHER. And the Study of such a Taste or *Relish* will, as we suppose, be ever the great Employment and Concern of him, who covets as well to be *wise* and *good*, as *agreeable* and *polite*. – *Quid* VERUM *atque* DECENS, *curo*, & *rogo*, & *omnis in hoc sum*.¹¹⁴²

According to Shaftesbury, our "taste" for, or our ability to discern, the good or the beautiful, in some sense, *just is* to possess them; as Murdoch said of G. E. Moore regarding the good "to be able to see it was in some sense to have it."¹¹⁴³ But in this, Shaftesbury took his lead from the ancients, and, in doing so, he did not, like the moderns, conceive of moral philosophy's primary aim as that of the resolution of moral differences in a pluralistic society. Rather, moral philosophy's primary is to discern the good or the beautiful, and, in so doing, to become good and beautiful oneself – beautiful in body and in soul. In other words, the primary aim of moral philosophy was perfection or moral excellence.

Shaftesbury's idea of a moral-cum-aesthetic taste or relish is essentially what I have been describing as a kind of attention. In a different letter to the same Michael Ainswoth, the student at university, Shaftesbury writes: *"Feel* goodness, and you will see all things fair and good."¹¹⁴⁴ We should understand Shaftesbury and his "moral sense" more along the idea of Murdoch's cognitive, outward-looking, "loving gaze"¹¹⁴⁵, and less along the lines of Hume's non-cognitivist

¹¹⁴¹ Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, Vol. I, 208. "Soliloquy or, Advice to an Author," Part III, sec. 3, p.339.

p.339. ¹¹⁴² Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, Vol. III, 100. "Miscellaneous Reflections," Miscellany III, Ch.1, p.162. The Latin is from Horace: "I care about and I ask what is true and fitting and I am completely occupied in this." I have benefitted from reading Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, Ch.3 "Shaftesbury's Ethical Theory".

¹¹⁴³ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 3.

¹¹⁴⁴ Anthony Ashley Cooper 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, *Letters to a Student at the University. First Printed in MDCCXVI* ([London?], [1790?]. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale. University of Virginia Library. 16 Apr. 2015), 62. Letter VI.

¹¹⁴⁵ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 33. This is important insofar as Murdoch's phrase "loving gaze" shows that she sees no trouble with saying that love and understanding go hand in hand. In other words, the cognitive/connative distinction is not to be cashed out as corresponding to the distinction between "mind-to-world" and "world-to-mind" directions of fit. Rather, our loving gaze, i.e. our love, or our affects, might reveal something about the world. (see above Part I, Section 2). MacIntyre, on the other hand, sees Shaftesbury's talk about role of affect in discerning the good as constituting a break form the Aristotelian tradition. He, interestingly, cites no primary texts from Shaftesbury to back up this view. And while it is right that perhaps Hutcheson, and certainly Hume, come to read Shaftesbury in this way, i.e. in a way that connative or affective states seem to have an exclusively world-to-mind direction of fit, I

idea of the mind's "spreading itself on external objects"¹¹⁴⁶, "gilding or staining all natural objects with the colours, borrowed from internal sentiment,"¹¹⁴⁷ and Hume's subsequent recommendation to "turn your reflection into your own breast."¹¹⁴⁸ The language of sight, unlike the language of *mere* feeling, carries with it cognitivist implications, i.e. implications that there is something out there for one to see; and, as opposed to merely looking, 'seeing' also carries the implications of being a success term, i.e. when one sees that something is the case, one is typically thought to have a good grasp on reality, as opposed to being deceived by an illusion, hallucination etc. And so just because Shaftesbury says that we are made aware of the good by means of our sentiments or emotions, or by means of a kind of "taste" or "relish", this does not mean that such a "taste" cannot also track the good. And, the bottom line, is that such taste or relish, such an ability to discern value and construe evaluative situations, is a plastic ability, which is able to be developed by looking, and by habit. We are responsible for developing our moral "taste" and its development should be forefront in all of our formative activities.

But it is later philosophers – like Hutcheson, who adopted and developed Shaftesbury's idea of a "moral sense" – that reverted to conceiving the moral sense as a kind of shared passive equipment, and not as a kind of taste or discernment that must be developed through habit and through looking. In his book on Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson, Daniel Carey writes:

Francis Hutcheson's influential contribution was to attempt a synthesis of two deeply opposing figures – Locke and Shaftesbury. Like Shaftesbury he wanted to embed moral feelings or 'affections' in human nature, seeing morality as natural and instinctive rather than purely external, prudential, or socially constructed and artificial...However, Locke's prestige was such that Hutcheson could not deny the critique of innateness...The challenge was to devise an alternative structure for moral reactions. Hutcheson delegated them to the 'moral sense', understood as *common equipment for mankind*...he described its operation by using Lockean terminology for knowledge acquisition...He looked for a *democratic expansion* of the moral sense...Shaftesbury had remained surprisingly

do not think that Shaftesbury himself thought that his view that affect is required to discern the good made such discernment any less revelatory of teleological features of the world. See MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 262, 268-272, 285. In opposition to what is implied in MacIntyre's criticism of Shaftesbury, John McDowell writes: "Perhaps with Aristotle's notion of practical wisdom in mind, one might ask why a training of the feelings...cannot *be* the cultivation of an ability...to spot...the fittnesses of things." McDowell, *Mind, Value, and Reality*, 147. Also see David Wiggins, "A Sensible Subjectivism?" in *Needs, Values, Truth: Essays in the Philosophy of Value* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1987), 207. ¹¹⁴⁶ Hume, *Treatise*, 167. Bk. I, Part iii, sec. xiv.

¹¹⁴⁷ David Hume, *Enquiries: Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1902), 294.

¹¹⁴⁸ Hume, *Treatise*, 468-469. Bk.III, Part. i. sec.i.

untroubled by the possible absence of common consent but, his *aristocratic account* of the highest levels of moral and aesthetic appreciation was unavailable to Hutcheson.¹¹⁴⁹

Hutcheson, taking the primary task of moral philosophy as that showing a road to common consent between parties to moral conflict, conceived of the moral sense as a kind of "common equipment" for mankind that should yield shared moral experience to serve as common ground amidst the fray of moral conflict. And yet, Hutcheson's theory has the opposite problem of Locke's.

Locke's problem is that he cannot explain how we could ever *agree* about moral matters in such a way that our agreement was not simply based upon the parochial laws of the state, or the unspoken "laws" of society, or on the parochial laws of a voluntarist (g)od revealed through our catechism. According to Carey, "Locke had come to rely increasingly on Scripture to remedy the deficiencies of human reason."¹¹⁵⁰ Locke, for example, writes:

§5. ...*Morally Good and Evil* then is only the Conformity or Disagreement of our voluntary Actions to some Law, whereby Good or Evil is drawn on us by the Will and Power of the Law-maker; which Good and Evil, Pleasure or Pain, attending our observance, or breach of the Law, by the Decree of the Law-maker, is that we call *Reward* and *Punishment*.¹¹⁵¹

and:

§6. Of these *Moral Rules*, or Laws, to which Men generally refer, and by which they judge of the Rectitude or Pravity of their Actions, there seem to me to be *three sorts*, with their three different Enforcements, or Rewards and Punishments. [...]1. The *Divine* Law. 2. The *Civil* Law. 3. The Law of *Opinion* or *Reputation*, if I may so call it. By the Relation they bear to the first of these, Men judge whether their Actions are Sins or Duties; by the second, whether they be Criminal or Innocent; and by the third, whether they be Vertues or Vices.¹¹⁵²

Thus Locke embodies what I have been calling the Protestant aspect of the liberal view, i.e. his morality appears *simpliciter*, either from Scripture, or from positive law etc., and is not derived from, or grounded in, a broader metaphysical understanding of nature. The very point of Shaftesbury's naturalism, however, is that such moral rules and laws, even the laws of Scripture,

¹¹⁴⁹ Daniel Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁵¹ Locke, *Essay*, 351. Bk. II, Ch. Xxviii.

¹¹⁵² Ibid., 351-352.

are grounded in, and justified by, the very nature of things. Shaftesbury writes to Ainsworth, the student at university:

Time will be, when your greatest disturbance will arise from than ancient difficulty $\pi \delta \theta \epsilon v$ $\tau \dot{o} \kappa \alpha \kappa \dot{o} v$. But when you have well inur'd yourself to the precepts and speculation, which give the view of its noble contrary ($\tau \delta \kappa \alpha \lambda \delta v$;) you will rest satisfied. [...] Let it be your chief endeavor to make acquaintance with what is *good*; that by feeling perfectly, by the help of reason, what good is, and what *ill*; you may prove whether that, which is from revelation, be not perfectly good and conformable to this standard. For if so, the very end of the gospel proves its truth. And that, which to the vulgar is only knowable by miracles, and teachable by positive precepts and commands, to the wise and virtuous, is demonstrable by the nature of the thing.¹¹⁵³

And, as to the question $\pi \dot{\theta} \epsilon v \tau \dot{v} \kappa \alpha \kappa \dot{v} - whence evil? - part of Shaftesbury's answer is that it$ comes from poor habituation, i.e. from immersing oneself amongst various harmful influences that would stunt the growth of that natural seed of moral excellence that would, under good conditions, bloom into actualized excellence. In other words, as Shaftesbury had all but said in the letter quoted earlier, the source of evil comes from reading too much Locke!

But if Locke's problem is that he cannot give an account of our moral agreement that avoids relativism and skepticism, then Hutcheson's problem is that he cannot explain why we would ever *disagree*, aside from a kind of non-culpable physiological failure of our passive equipment, i.e. a failure of the moral sense, or aside from a faulty inference from propositions purportedly delivered up from the generally infallible moral sense.¹¹⁵⁴ MacIntyre argues that many later enlightenment thinkers in the Scottish tradition try to argue that something like a moral sense, or a common sense, should supply some sort of common ground both between cultures, and within a culture, by which to adjudicate moral differences. But, as MacIntyre notes, this left these enlightenment thinkers in the uneasy position of trying to give deflationary accounts of the extent of moral disagreement. MacIntyre writes:

[Dugald] Stewart thus followed Hutcheson, and such other followers of Hutcheson as Smith, Beattie, and indeed Hume himself, in holding that the appearance of variation and disagreement in moral judgment between different cultural and social orders is an illusion.1155

¹¹⁵³ Shaftesbury, Letters to a Student at the University, Letter, 61-63. Letter VI.

¹¹⁵⁴ See MacIntyre, Whose Justice, Ch. XIV "Hutheson on Justice and Practical Rationality", especially, p.278. ¹¹⁵⁵ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, 330.

By conceiving of the moral sense as a passive piece of physiological equipment, as opposed to a trained ability to achieve a certain kind of insight, these thinkers cut themselves off from appeal to a *kind* of moral failure that would aid in making sense of the source of such widespread and intractable disagreement. And MacIntyre notes that, historically, it was the inability of these types of theories to make sense of the debate of slavery in the United States – a debate in which members of the same culture were not able to find a common moral ground – that ultimately discredited them in the eyes of thinkers in the United States.¹¹⁵⁶

It is this way of conceiving our psychology, and our moral philosophy, that leaves us blind to the very kind of blindness that Cora Diamond was trying to describe. The existence of a kind of active, spontaneous, and therefore trainable, kind of insight into moral questions provides an additional *kind* of moral error that might help to explain the extent of moral disagreement. And, as MacIntyre argues, such blindness, if taught, might lead to the more or less systematic mis-education of students in general, and, if such education is implemented by the government of a state, of citizens in general. It is this possibility - i.e. the possibility that "the wrongness of a whole class of actions may cease to be evident to us" or that there are "prohibitions which a whole culture may infringe without recognizing that it is so doing" – that constitutes a crucial disagreement between, on the one hand, those modern liberal writers that Shaftesbury calls "free writers", and, on the other hand, defenders of views more akin to the pre-modern naturalist views of Aquinas or Aristotle.¹¹⁵⁷

It seems that there are three broad views that aim to account for, and to explain or make sense of, the phenomenon of moral diversity. One, the one adopted by thinkers like Hutcheson who posit a moral sense conceived as a shared passive faculty, essentially aims to explain diversity solely in terms of faulty inferences, or ignorance about "non-moral" matters of fact, while leaving intact a kind of shared common ground of moral facts delivered by a moral sense. This view sees diversity or pluralism as a problem, insofar as it threatens to cast doubt on the existence of the infallible moral sense, and seeks to downplay the extent of pluralism and diversity in moral matters. The inability to give a plausible account of the nature of moral diversity as illusory is what makes this view arguably the least plausible.

¹¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 332.

¹¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 331.

The second kind of view is closer to the view held by Locke. The Lockean view accepts it as a kind of neutral fact that there is diversity or pluralism between cultures when it comes to a great many moral issues. The Lockean solution to the potential problem stemming from such diversity or pluralism is, in many ways, the Protestant theological ancestor of today's more secular, liberal political theories. Locke sees the diversity of moral (and religious views) and essentially argues that such differences can be seen as "indifferent" so long a common core of moral values remain intact to manage conflict between citizens that hold various of the indifferent views. In other words, the diversity of moral views ceases to be a problem so long as we can manage the violent conflict that threatens to result from it. In his letters on toleration, for example, variations among kinds of Protestant worship are to be tolerated insofar as they are indifferent with respect to salvation, as are the various kinds of non-Christian worship, e.g. that of Muslims, while atheists and Catholics are sharply excluded from such toleration.¹¹⁵⁸ And the reason for excluding certain persons and beliefs from toleration is derived from moral principles that are held *simpliciter*, either on the basis of contractual law (Catholics are not tolerated insofar as they give their allegiance to a foreign prince) or on the basis of Scripture (since Locke denies the innateness or naturalness of belief in God, he tends to rely on Scripture alone to support the idea of Christian belief).

But the Lockean view, which sees a diversity of variations among Protestant Christian worship, and proceeds to label them "indifferent" to salvation, also sees a moral analogue in which the majority of questions traditionally asked by pre-modern moral philosophers – the questions that Shaftesbury thinks are the most important questions of moral philosophy – are likewise labeled as simply matters of indifference, so long as one can manage conflict between citizens who disagree regarding them. Thus Locke writes:

The Mind has a different relish, as well as the Palate; and you will as fruitlessly endeavor to delight all Men with Riches or Glory, (which yet some Men place their Happiness in,) as you would to satisfy all Men's Hunger with Cheese or Lobsters; which, though very agreeable and delicious fare to some, are to others extremely nauseous and offensive: And many People would with Reason preferr the gripping of an hungry Belly, to those Dishes, which are a Feast to others. Hence it was, I think, that the Philosophers of old did in vain enquire, whether *Summum bonum* consisted in Riches, or bodily Delights, or Virtue, or Contemplation: And they might have reasonably disputed, whether the best

¹¹⁵⁸ John Locke, *Locke on Toleration*, ed. Richard Vernon, trans. Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 35-37.

Relish were to be found in Apples, Plums, or Nuts; and divided themselves into Sects upon it.¹¹⁵⁹

This Lockean view seems to imply that "the Taste of Beauty" and "the *Relish* of what is decent" - i.e. those things upon whose development Shaftesbury says we should expend the greatest amount of our intellectual and contemplative energy – are relatively fixed, not plastic, and that there is no sense of disputing about them. First, this has the effect of trivializing such moral beliefs. Recall from my earlier discussion that Richard Rorty has noted the analogy between the liberal treatment of religious disputes and the treatment of disputes in moral philosophy more generally. And recall that I argued that the subsequent dwindling of the perceived value of, and of concern felt over, such religious questions is likely to be mirrored in people's attitude towards moral questions, and thereby trivialize the very practice of philosophy in general, and moral philosophy in particular, in the eyes of most people. And, second, not only is there no sense in disputing over such moral questions in the Lockean view, there is also no sense in the government or in any other institution attempting to "coerce" persons to change them. As Jeremy Waldron argues, the crux of Locke's argument for toleration is that it is instrumentally irrational, i.e. the state simply cannot bring about a certain end – a change in religious belief – by a certain means – "coercion".¹¹⁶⁰ This is because "coercion works on the will" and "belief cannot be affected by the will."¹¹⁶¹ But here it is important to notice that the arguments against coercion – whether it is coercion aimed at bringing about religious belief, or some moral belief more generally – are based upon the assumption that our perceptual capacities are relatively fixed, passive, and involuntary.

Locke, in the *Essay*, writes:

Our knowledge, as in other things, so in this, has so great a conformity with our sight, that it is neither wholly necessary, nor wholly voluntary [...] what he does see, he cannot see otherwise than he does. It depends not on his will to see that black which appears yellow; nor to persuade himself, that what actually scalds him, feels cold. The earth will not appear painted with flowers, nor the fields covered with verdure, whenever he has a mind to it: in the cold winter he cannot help seeing it white and hoary, if he will look abroad. Just thus is it with our understanding: all that is voluntary in our knowledge, is the employing or withholding any of our faculties, from this or that sort of objects, and a

¹¹⁵⁹ Locke, *Essay*, . Book II, Chapter xxi, §55

¹¹⁶⁰ Jeremy Waldron, "Locke: Toleration and the Rationality of Persecution," in *Justifying Toleration: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Susan Mendus (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 67-69.

¹¹⁶¹ Ibid., 80.

more or less accurate survey of them: but they being employed, our will hath no power to determine the knowledge of the mind one way or other; that is done only by the objects themselves, as far as they are clearly discovered.¹¹⁶²

In other words, Locke limits the voluntary aspect of our belief formation to the application of our discursive faculty to the data received from the senses. But, if what I have been arguing is true, then it seems as the voluntary aspect of belief formation will extend further than Locke allows so as to structure the "uptake" of sensory data prior to any application of the discursive mental faculties. Such active, or spontaneous, structuring of our sensory data is not liable to voluntary change at any one moment, but it is liable to voluntary change over a period of time due to the cultivation of one's "Taste of Beauty". For example Murdoch writes:

We are not free in the sense of being able suddenly to alter ourselves since we cannot suddenly alter what we can see and ergo what we desire and are compelled by. In way, explicit choice seems now less important: less decisive (since much of the 'decision' lies elsewhere)...¹¹⁶³

And when it comes to where that decision lies, she says:

The task of attention goes on all the time and at apparently empty and everyday moments we are 'looking', making those little peering efforts of imagination which have such important cumulative results.¹¹⁶⁴

And it is this plasticity of perception that adds an extra dimension of voluntariness, and an extra dimension of responsibility, to belief formation that is not acknowledged by Locke, i.e. it adds an extra way in which we might culpably go wrong. And this added dimension of volutariness in belief formation opens up additional dimensions of concern for public policy regarding education and for the didactic aspects of the law that go beyond what Locke considers.

To see the stark contrast between the view of Locke, the Protestant empiricist, and the plastic view of perception I have been defending, consider this famous statement by Ignatius Loyola, the Catholic founder of the Jesuit order:

To attain the truth in all things, we ought always to hold that we believe what seems to us white to be black, if the Hierarchical Church so defines it.¹¹⁶⁵

¹¹⁶² Locke, *Essay*, Bk. IV, Ch. Xiii, §1-2. Quoted in Locke, *On Toleration*, 50.

¹¹⁶³ Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good, 38.

¹¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 42.

¹¹⁶⁵ Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *The Text of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, 4th ed., rev. (London: Burns and Oates, Limited, 1908), 123-124.

Implicit in what Loyola says is the idea that, if one trusts in the church, one may come to see as black what one formerly saw as white. While this may be, literally speaking, false, the hyperbolic character of the statement is meant to emphasize the degree to which our very perception of things may be in error.¹¹⁶⁶ It also implies that, generally speaking, there is a potential inequality between persons when it comes to the reliability of their insight, and that it may be the case that one must rely on some authority, or teacher, if one cannot (yet) see for oneself. As Aristotle says, quoting Hesiod:

Far best is he who knows $[vo\dot{\epsilon}\omega]$ all things himself; Good, he that hearkens when men counsel right; But he who neither knows $[vo\dot{\epsilon}\omega]$, nor lays to heart Another's wisdom, is a useless wight.¹¹⁶⁷

It is no surprise that contemporary Jesuits still practice "Ignatian Spirituality" which involves reading scripture and meditating in such ways as to stimulate the senses and the imagination.¹¹⁶⁸

He who cannot see the truth for himself, nor,

Hearing it from others,

store it away in his mind, that man,

is utterly useless.

¹¹⁶⁶ It would seem that even if what I am saying is true, i.e. that cognition permeates our perceptual experience, it may very well be that certain basic aspects of perception, such as the perception of colors, may be, in Jerry Fodor's term, "encapsulated" from cognitive processes. To say that perception is plastic, or that it is theory laden, is not to say that one can see "whatever one wants to see." Rather it is to say that one may "interpret" the underlying perceptual data in ways that give a different appearance to the whole. Yet one's perceptions, however they are shaped by cognition, must still be based on the underlying perceptual data.

⁵⁷οὗτος μὲν πανάριστος ὃς αὐτὸς πάντα νοήσῃ,

έσθλὸς δ' αὖ κἀκεῖνος ὃς εὖ εἰπόντι πίθηται.

ὃς δέ κε μήτ' αὐτὸς νοέῃ μήτ' ἄλλου ἀκούων

έν θυμῷ βάλληται, ὃ δ' αὖτ' ἀχρήιος ἀνήρ.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.4 1095b10-12. Notice that how one translates the verb 'vo ω ' is telling as to how one conceives the role of *nous*, i.e. intuitive intellect, and its relation to sight. Richmond Lattimore, for example, has no trouble in translating the last two lines of Hesiod thus:

⁽Emphasis added). And Martin Oswald uses Lattimore's translation of the quote from Hesiod in his translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. See: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Ostwald (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999), 8. A quick look at the Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon shows that the first meaning given for 'voé ω ' is "*perceive by the eyes, observe*." Then follows "*perceive by the mind, apprehend*." The Intermediate Lexicon by Liddle and Scott ("the Middle Liddle") gives a most telling gloss. It first lists "*to perceive by the eyes, observe, notice*" and then gives the gloss "distinguished from *mere* sight." Again, see James H. Lesher, "The Meaning of Nous in the Posterior Analytics," 46-51, which I cited above towards the beginning of Part III, Section 4.A.

¹¹⁶⁸ Ignatius writes, in his *Spiritual Exercises*: "The fifth contemplation will be to apply the five sense to the first and second contemplation. After the preparatory prayer, and the three preludes, it will be profitable to bring the five senses of the imagination to the first and second contemplation in the

The importance of training ourselves to see is forefront in their understanding of spiritual conversion.

Now I wish to turn to the third manner of explaining and making sense of diversity or pluralism among moral views, namely, the pre-modern one. As Daniel Carey writes, from a historical perspective, "diversity...has always been recognized. The question is whether it constitutes a 'problem'."¹¹⁶⁹ For the thinkers like Hutcheson, who posited an infallible moral sense, diversity is a problem insofar as it seems to disconfirm the existence of such a sense. For thinkers like Locke, diversity is a problem insofar as thinkers like Hutcheson and thinkers like Shaftsbury think that there is no way for such a position like Locke's to keep from sliding into relativism and skepticism. Here the problem for the Lockian view is not recognized by the Lockian himself, but rather by others who find its implications troubling.¹¹⁷⁰ Since many of the dominant forms of pre-modern thought, however, adhered to some teleological understanding of nature, they had normative resources at their disposal to deal with the kind of skeptical objections raised by observations of differences between cultures. In other words, they

following manner: The first point is to see the persons with the eyes of the imagination, meditating on contemplating in particular, their circumstances, and deriving some fruit form the sight. The second is to hear what they are saying, or might say; and by reflecting on oneself, to take some fruit from this..."Loyola, Spiritual Excercises, 40-41. See also, David L. Fleming SJ., What Is Ignatian *Spirituality?* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), 55-59. ¹¹⁶⁹ Carey, *Contesting Diversity*, 3.

¹¹⁷⁰ In a similar manner, John Rawls, like Locke, acknowledges a "fact of reasonable pluralism." Yet Rawls claims that such pluralism is not "unfortunate" or "a disaster", rather such pluralism, assuming that it is reasonable, i.e. that the diversity of views are ones that can live in peaceful and stable proximity to one another, emerges as an achievement (See: Rawls, Political Liberalism, xvii, 36-37, 136-137, 144). This is why Daniel Carey notes that we are liable to see Hutcheson's and Shaftesbury's concerns about Locke's attitude towards moral diversity as unintelligible – because we, like Rawls, have come to see such diversity both as inevitable, and as "an achievement," not as a problem. See: Carey, Contesting Diversity, 5-6. But Leif Wenar notes that the "we" in question does not account for everyone. Wenar writes: "Certainly a Catholic might be excused for looking on the emergence of 'reasonable pluralism' with something less than enthusiasm...Catholic doctrine seems to imply that evil forces had a role in the Reformation and subsequent religious fragmentation...The progress of human reason under free institutions does not enter into the Catholic version of the rise of pluralism, since a Catholic may well see this as "progress" away from the truth. / And why should one not see reasonable pluralism as at least unfortunate - even if one is not a Catholic? ... isn't it disappointing that human reason under free institutions divides people from each other by multiplying mutually exclusive comprehensive doctrines? And isn't this particularly wrenching since it becomes very likely that those on all sides of the dispute hold comprehensive doctrines that are substantially false? Could one not reasonably see modern history as the diversification of error and illusion, or at least as the intensification of tragic conflicts of value?" Wenar, "An Internal Critique," 47-48. Here we hear that Catholic "minority" voice that Murdoch spoke of. This is the voice that I have been trying to amplify, so that it might be heard over the generally prevailing Protestant, Liberal, Anglophone din.

recognized diversity, but diversity was not a problem. As Carey notes, thinkers like Aristotle or Plato emphasized a distinction between Greeks and barbarians that prevented stories like those found in Herodotus from leading to skeptical conclusions about moral matters. These answers are also heard in the early modern period as well, for example, by those who objected to Locke's citing anthropological observations as evidence against the innateness or natural-ness of moral virtue. Yet these writers are not the ones typically read in undergraduate courses on early modern thought; it is almost as though such writers, to borrow James's phrase, "must not be spoken of under penalty of interfering with the smoothness of the tale."¹¹⁷¹ And the tale in question is the quasi-Lockean liberal one that refuses to see the diversity of moral views as a problem, and simply sees the diversity of moral views as an achievement. Thomas Burnet, for example, who has been called "Locke's greatest opponent", objects to Locke thus:

You seem to make account, that if Conscience was an Innate Principle, it should be *invincible* and inextinguishable, and *universally received without doubt or question*. Then to prove that it is not so, you bring in several barbarous or semi-barbarous People as your Witnesses; *Mengrelians, Tonoupinambo's,* and such others. Gentlemen that are not of my acquaintance: These are your Witnesses, to prove that there are no practical Innate Principles or Natural Conscience in Mankind. This is like searching Gaols and Prisons, to find Witnesses for a bad Cause. But I except against your Witnesses, as *Personae Infames,* whose Testimony is of no force or validity. 'Tis as if a Man should produce two or three Monsters, or Men of monstrous shapes, and from them pretend to prove, that the Shape of Man is not naturally regular. In the mean time, *Sir,* as your Plea is weak, in my opinion, so methinks you have an ungrateful Office, To rake up all the dirt and filth you can from barbarous People, to throw in the face of Humane Nature.¹¹⁷²

And what is implicit in these disagreements, like the one between Burnet and Locke, is the recognition or lack thereof, of a certain kind of logical judgment – the kind that Michael Thompon calls a natural-historical judgment or an Aristotelian categorical. In other words, what is lacking on the part of the Lockist is any plausible idea of the very logical form that a naturalist, teleological judgment would have – the Lockist fails to even acknowledge the logical space for such a judgment.

As Philippa Foot says "We start from the fact that there is a basis for the Aristotelian categorical that does not come from the counting of heads."¹¹⁷³ Someone like Locke does not

¹¹⁷¹ James, *Principles of Psychology, Vol.I*, 402.

¹¹⁷² Burnet, *Third Remarks*, 10. See also: Tuveson, "Moral Sense," 248. For the passages in Locke describing "barbarian stories", see: Lock, *Essay*, 70-71. Bk.I, Ch.iii, §9.

¹¹⁷³ Foot, Natural Goodness, 31.

see the logical possibility of a judgment that does not fall under a Fregean form. Either all cultures (and all individuals) must recognize a shared moral code, or *none* of them do, or, what seems to be born out be anthropology, *some* do and others do not. All these forms, the strictly categorical, the negation, and any version of the merely empirical "head-counting" variety, are the ones specifiable in Fregean logical notation. They are also the kind of judgments that are purported to be judgments of "facts." It is simply a "fact", say, that the Mengrelians bury their children alive without scruple, or that that the Tonoupinambos eat their enemies. But Thompson's point is that we have another kind of judgment that is somewhat ubiquitous in our daily speech, especially our speech about living things, that is not captured by these forms. As Burnet notes, the inability to recognize the possibility of a judgment that is not like any of these Fregean logical judgments would render one incapable of recognizing that a particular specimen of some natural kind was a "monster" - a judgment that seems perfectly warranted in some cases. The recognition that a particular biological specimen is a "monster" can never arise from "a mere survey of the class", but must arise from "an understanding of the life-form."¹¹⁷⁴ In other words, it cannot arise merely from stating a bunch of statistical facts. As Thompson writes:

Consider that we might attempt to explain a conception of, say, oddness, with some such rule as follows: *from*: "Most A's are F," *and*: "This A is not F," *to infer*: "This A is odd in that it is not F." If someone then asks, "But what does 'what most of them do' have to do with what *it* does?" the answer will have to be "Not much, really." But if, in the other case, someone asks, "What bearing does 'what they do' have on what *it* does or is doing?" the answer will have to be "Everything."¹¹⁷⁵

Likewise, Burnet argues, there is a vast difference between, on the one hand, a mere survey of the supposed "facts" of the practices of human cultures, and, on the other hand, a true understanding or insight into the nature of human cultures – where the study of human cultures is understood on the model of Aristotelian biological ethology, i.e. human ethology. And, if we ask how it is that we arrive at judgments about natural kinds or substantial forms, I have already suggested that it is by means of a cognitively laden perception, or by means of what we might call perceptual induction. And, someone like Burnet seems to argue, these kinds of observations are transferable from animal forms to human forms, and to human behavior. Yet the insight that does the work is not simply the apprehension of an empiricist "fact."

¹¹⁷⁴ Thompson, *Life and Action*, 73.

¹¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 81.

Norman Dahl notes how this idea of perceptual induction, or insight, is what Aristotle relies on, not only in general biological inquires, but also in ethical inquiries in particular. And, it seems that the ability to induce the existence of a universal, a natural kind, is only explained by means of something similar to noticing an aspect. For example, when it comes to this kind of perceptual induction, Dahl writes:

To see just what kind of induction it is that can contribute to the acquisition of general ends, it will be useful to look at what Aristotle would say is involved in determining what other living organisms are aiming at as an end. Take, for example, a tree. Aristotle would say, I think, that it is the nature of certain tress to grow straight and tall. How do we known this? *By looking* at various specimen trees *and seeing* how they grow. When trees have sufficient sunlight and room they grow straight and tall. Even when on is faced with a tree that is crooked and gnarled, *one can view* the twists and turns of the trees *as* manifestations of the tree's attempt to grow straight and tall. They are, for example, attempts to reach toward the sun in spite of dense and shady surroundings. By examining specimen trees, one can discover what trees are aiming at. Even among those that don't achieve this end, *the end is discernable in the unsuccessful attempts*.¹¹⁷⁶

He then makes an analogous case for what goes on in the particularly ethical case, i.e. the human case:

According to Aristotle, people aim at something by nature – the good. Not everyone consciously aims at this object. Some people only aim at the apparent good. Only the good person has the natural object of desire as the object of his conscious desires. The good person, like the tall straight tree, is the best indication of what people aim at by nature. But I think Aristotle would maintain that even among those who do not consciously aim at what is good, *a person with a discerning eye can see that their strivings after whatever ends they do have are just mistaken and unsuccessful attempts to secure the good.*¹¹⁷⁷

In both of these cases, the most important thing to note is that "a discerning eye" *sees* or *discerns* the striving after an end, even among the unsuccessful attempts. It is by *looking* and *seeing*, and by "viewing" *all* the activities of a creature *as* aiming at some end that gives the activities of creatures their intelligibility. The kind of perception required here is the kind of moral perception that is already "*nous*-like"¹¹⁷⁸, i.e. a kind of perception that is instinct with cognition, or permeated by spontaneous cognitive activity.

¹¹⁷⁶ Norman O. Dahl, *Practical Reason, Aristotle, and Weakness of the Will.* Minneapolis (MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 48. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 48. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁷⁸ See: Dahl, Practical Reason, 44.

In this sense, if we see, or take at face value, Locke's anthropological account of, say, a Caribe fattening his child for the purpose of eating it, then we may, on the one hand, don that peculiar anthropological fact-finder's hat, and see it simply as an isolable fact to be subsequently statistically compared with the practices of other cultures. We might say, "This practice is odd, insofar as most people, and most cultures, do not engage in it." If someone then asks, "But what does 'what most people and most cultures do' have to do with what that Caribe is doing?" the answer will have to be "Not much, really." According to this mode of viewing the situation, it is not so much that the particular act in question is deemed "natural" or "unnatural", but rather, there is no conceivable sense of what some act's being "natural" could even mean.¹¹⁷⁹ We may subsequently deem the act "wrong" by appeal to a contractual, constructivist theory of justice, or by appeal to sacred scripture, but the act itself simply is what it is. But we could, on the other hand, don the imminently more sensible Aristotelian hat – the hat of rustic common sense – and see this act as a failed instance of someone trying to secure the human good. Like the crooked and gnarled tree, we would see someone striving to secure the human good, i.e. we would see the human end as a goal, even in this unsuccessful attempt. Our induced concept of human nature, and the human end, acquired from experience - from "the harvest of a quiet eye"¹¹⁸⁰ - would supply an immanent critique of the act in question. Particular human acts, or even particular human cultures, insofar as they involve practices that encourage or discourage certain kinds of human acts, from this perspective, are not seen simply as isolated facts. Rather, individual acts are always seen as internally related to (whatever partial and hazy grasp we may have of) the human substantial form, and the human end contained therein. And while I compared this ability, i.e. the ability to see a particular act as an instance of a failed attempt to reach the human good, to Wittgenstein's notion of seeing an aspect – for example, seeing the duck-rabbit as a rabbit - we should recall that the language of "seeing as" is not the normal way of speaking. We only say "I am seeing the act as a failure" if we are in doubt about it, or if we are giving a philosophical analysis. In other words, we would normally simply use the objective language of

¹¹⁷⁹ Daniel Carey writes: "When confronted by diversity Locke declined a number of familiar explanations: he refused to treat it as the outcome of the Fall and the effect of custom acting against a determinate norm supplied by nature...his strategy for unseating innateness – by citing evidence of diversity – placed him in a long philosophical tradition associated with skepticism." Carey, *Contesting Diversity*, 8.

¹¹⁸⁰ See Wordsworth's Epitaph.

perception: "He was aiming at *that*, but he missed the mark" or, in the natural historical tone "People do not do *that*; there must be something wrong with this fellow."¹¹⁸¹

And this ability to discern the natural end of some living thing, both in non-rational animals, and in human beings, is heavily reliant upon the ability to see that end even in the striving of unsuccessful attempts. After all, nobody's perfect. And so the pre-modern tradition tended to see diversity amidst human moral practices, both within a culture and between cultures, as not only *not* a threat to moral objectivity or the natural-ness of moral virtue, but even as a feature to be expected insofar as the possibilities for error were manifold in comparison to the possibility of success. For example, Jesus of Nazareth says, in the famed Sermon on the Mount:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.¹¹⁸²

And Aristotle writes:

Now virtue is concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success; and being praised and being successful are both characteristics of virtue. Therefore virtue is a kind of mean, since, as we have seen, it aims at what is intermediate. / Again, it is possible to fail in many ways (for evil belongs to the class of the unlimited, as the Pythagoreans conjectured, and good to that of the limited), while to succeed is possible only in one way (for which reason also one is easy and the other difficult – to miss the mark easy, to hit it difficult); for these reasons also, then, excess and defect are characteristic of vice, and the mean of virtue; For men are good in but one way, but bad in many.¹¹⁸³

In other words, it is to be expected that we will observe more relatively unsuccessful attempts to reach the human end than relative successes. Yet, just as in instances in the world of non-rational creatures, this should not cause us to conclude that there is no natural end present in such

¹¹⁸¹ See: Roberts, *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology*, 72-73; Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 194e-195e; Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.3, 428a12-14.

¹¹⁸² Matthew 7:13-14. King James Version.

¹¹⁸³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II.6 1106b24-35. (trans. Ross). For the image of hitting or missing the mark, see also: "If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake...and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else...clearly this must be the good and the chief good. Will not the knowledge of it, then, have a great influence on life? Shall we not, like archers who have a mark to aim at, be more likely to hit upon what is right? If so, we must try, in outline at least, to determine what it is, and of which of the sciences or capacities it is the object." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.2 1094a18-27; and "In all the states of character we have mentioned, as in all other matters, there is a mark to which the man who has the rule looks, and heightens or relaxes his activity accordingly, and there is a standard which determines the mean states which we say are intermediate between excess and defect, being in accordance with the right rule." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.1 1138b20-25.

failures. Any story about the nature, or the natural end, of some living thing is "consistent with a really vanishing rate of realization among, past, present, future bearers of the life form in question."¹¹⁸⁴ For example, it does not matter that, statistically speaking, *most* adult humans do not have 32 teeth, or that *most* acorns and most dandelion seeds simply fall on infertile soil and fail to produce oak trees or dandelions; it is still the case that humans have, by nature, 32 teeth, or that acorns and dandelion seeds, by nature, grow into oak trees and dandelions. Likewise with the human good. This is why so many pre-modern conceptions of moral philosophy have an "aristocratic" flavor, in which "the good" are distinguished from "the many." It is not that success in life is limited, in principle, to the few. Rather, it is simply that the possibilities for error are essentially unbounded, as opposed to the possibilities for success, which are bounded; and thus, hitting the target is more difficult than missing it.

And, to bring this Appendix to and end, I would simply state that one important reason for the expanded sense of the possibility of human practical error in pre-modern views, as opposed to modern ones, is, in addition to the more robust and teleological sense of human success or flourishing, the additional possibility of a certain kind of moral blindness that goes beyond the ability to notice "facts" – where "facts" are understood in that seventeenth century sense. Aristotle, for example, writes:

Now if arguments were in themselves enough to make men good, they would justly, as Theognis says, have won very great rewards, and such rewards should have been provided; but as things are, while they seem to have power to encourage and stimulate the generous-minded among our youth, and to make a character which is gently born, and a true lover of what is noble, ready to be possessed by virtue, they are not able to encourage the many to nobility and goodness. For these do not by nature obey the sense of shame, but only fear, and do not abstain from bad acts because of their baseness but through fear of punishment; living by passion they pursue their own pleasures and the means to them, and the opposite pains, and have not even a conception of what is noble and truly pleasant, since they have never tasted it.¹¹⁸⁵

Here it is clear that a certain "taste" is required, - a taste for beauty (kalon) – in addition to arguments, in order to be in possession of moral virtue. And elsewhere Aristotle says that perception is required for acting virtuously. With regard to hitting the mean between two vices, he writes:

¹¹⁸⁴ Thompson, *Life and Action*, 72. Also see: Ibid. 52, 68.

¹¹⁸⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.9 1179b4-16. (trans. Ross)

It is not easy to determine by a formula at what point and for how great a divergence a man deserves blame; but this difficulty is, after all, true of all objects of sense perception: determinations of this kind depend upon particular circumstances, and the decision rests with our (moral) sense.¹¹⁸⁶

In the first passage, Aristotle's Greek does indeed simply say that the many lack a "taste for beauty". In the second, however, I have purposefully chosen a provocative translation by Ostwald that translates "*aisthesis*" as "moral sense." The reason is to show Aristotle's agreement with Shaftesbury, and thus to put Aristotle – via Shaftesbury – indirectly into conversation with other moderns like Locke and Hutcheson. Aristotle believes that we must rely on our "moral sense" or our "taste for beauty" in order to succeed in practical matters.

And, finally, in order emphasize that this moral sense, or this taste for beauty, is, according to Aristotle, not possessed by everyone as a kind of shared passive equipment, and that it must be acquired and developed by training and habit, I will cite a telling passage from the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Here Aristotle describes not only the close relation between cognition (*nous*) and perception (*aisthesis*), but also the developmental acquisition of a kind of trained insight:

Now all things which have to be done are included among particulars or ultimates; for not only must the man of practical wisdom know particular facts, but understanding and judgement are also concerned with things to be done, and these are ultimates. And intuitive reason is concerned with the ultimates in both directions; for both the first terms and the last are objects of intuitive reason and not of argument, and the intuitive reason which is presupposed by demonstrations grasps the unchangeable and first terms, while the intuitive reason involved in practical reasonings grasps the last and variable fact, i.e. the minor premiss. For these variable facts are the starting-points for the apprehension of the end, since the universals are reached from the particulars; of these therefore we must have perception, and this perception is intuitive reason.

This is why these states are thought to be natural endowments – why, while no one is thought to be a philosopher by nature, people are thought to have by nature judgement, understanding, and intuitive reason. This is shown by the fact that we think our powers correspond to our time of life, and that a particular age brings with it intuitive reason and judgement; this implies that nature is the cause. (Hence intuitive reason is both beginning and end; for demonstrations are from these and about these.) Therefore we ought to attend to the undemonstrated sayings and opinions of experienced and older people or of people of practical wisdom not less than to demonstrations; for because experience has given them an eye they see aright.¹¹⁸⁷

¹¹⁸⁶ Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, II.9 1109b21-23. (trans. Ostwald)

¹¹⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.11 1143a32-1143b13. (trans. Ross)

Here, as elsewhere, Aristotle notes the temptation to think of one's possession of a superior insight as a kind of "natural endowment" or passive equipment, yet he resists this temptation. Earlier in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, Aristotle had also raised the potential objection that such insight is innate in the sense of "fixed" and beyond voluntary control:

the aiming at the end is not self-chosen but one must be born with an eye, as it were, by which to judge rightly and choose what is truly good, and he is well endowed by nature who is well endowed with this. For it is what is greatest and most noble, and what we cannot get or learn from another, but must have just such as it was when given us at birth, and to be well and nobly endowed with this will be perfect and true excellence of natural endowment.¹¹⁸⁸

But there again he rejects this objection as inconsistent with our understanding of voluntary action. Over and over again, Aristotle maintains, against Locke, that our acquisition of the virtues, and the required insight that goes with the possession of the virtues, is natural, in the sense that nature is not neutral with regard to our acquisition of the virtues; and, at the same time, he maintains, against those like Hutcheson, that such an insight is *not* natural, in the sense of something that is fixed and beyond our voluntary control. Acording to Aristolte:

And moral virtue, and the requisite "eye of the soul" that goes along with it, are natural in the latter sense:

none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature... Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.¹¹⁹⁰

¹¹⁸⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III.5 1114b6-12.

¹¹⁸⁹ Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, II.8 1224b30-34. (trans. H. Rackham)

¹¹⁹⁰ Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, II.1 1103a19-25. See also, St. Thomas Aquinas: "In like manner with regard to sciences and virtues, some held that they are *wholly from within*, so that all virtues and sciences would *pre-exist in the soul* naturally, but that the hindrances to science and virtue, which are due to the soul being weighed down by the body, are removed by study and practice, even as iron is made bright by being polished. This was the opinion of the Platonists. Others said that they are *wholly from without*, being due to the inflow of the active intellect, as Avicenna maintained. Others said that sciences and virtues are *within us by nature*, so far as we are adapted to them, *but not in their perfection*: this is the teaching of the Philosopher (Ethic. ii, 1), and is nearer the truth." Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q.63, Art. 1. Emphasis added.

And thus we should not think that Wordsworth's idea that it is "the Youth" who "still is Nature's Priest" need be at odds with Aristotle's remark that age and experience are required for acquiring "an eye" to see aright. Aristotle is right that the mature and properly educated and habituated state of practical wisdom is superior, with regard to insight, to the merely seminal state of the inexperienced; yet, if we are concerned, as are Wordsworth and Pope, that "false learning" has "defac'd" good sense, or that "custom" and "earthly freight" lie upon one's sight "heavy as frost", then perhaps we may catch better glimpse of the ideal insight by looking at the "seeds of judgment" or in the bloom of youth, rather than in a thrawn and stunted mature growth.

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