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LEGE

Staff

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Why "*Tolle Lege*"?

The title of this journal is a reference to an extraordinary moment of conversion in the life of St. Augustine, the great philosopher and theologian of the early medieval period. The story begins with St. Augustine sitting beneath a fig tree, weeping in distress over his inability to leave his life of sin behind and follow God faithfully. Amid his tears he hears the distant voice of a child chanting the words "*Tolle, lege!*" or "Take up and read!" Aroused from his pitiable state and taking this as a sign from God, he goes to his house, picks up the first book he finds, and reads the first chapter. The book contained the letters of St. Paul, and the verse that Augustine read spoke to his heart with such force that he was convinced beyond any doubt of the truth of God; he was converted on the spot.

This journal of philosophy and theology is meant to embody a spirit of truth-seeking—on the part of both the contributors and you, the reader. Like St. Augustine, we are all faced with the choice between complacency and a continual conversion toward truth. We hope that this journal will serve as an aid in the discovery of truth, and we thus exhort you in all earnestness to "Take up and read!"

Editors' Note

Now in its fifth year of publication, our journal continues to hold the seeking of truth as its central mission. Each passing year brings an ever-increasing number of changes in our society, generating new problems and raising new questions that call for thoughtful examination. As the editors of this journal, we hope to bring at least a few of these matters to your attention for reflection. After all, as Socrates memorably noted in his *Apology*, "The unexamined life is not worth living."

This year's top essay is a prime embodiment of our journal's mission to pursue truth. From the eight essays published in this issue—not to mention the sixty-six others we received for consideration—we selected Patricia Lester's paper "*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Liturgical Reform, and the Translation of the Mass" as our prizewinner because of the lucidity and timeliness of its explanation of the New Roman Missal. Much as we ourselves attempt to answer the question "Why '*Tolle Lege*'?" we felt that an explanation of the Catholic Church's new translation of the Mass would be appreciated by those who are still asking "Why?"

We would like to thank our undergraduate editors for the time and dedication they put into selecting this year's essays. We especially thank our advisors, Drs. David Cloutier and Thane Naberhaus, for continuing to sponsor and guide us. Additionally, we extend our gratitude to Ms. Katie Soter in the Philosophy Department for all she does to help this journal. Finally we are indebted—literally and figuratively—to the university provost, Dr. David Rehm, the dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Dr. Joshua Hochschild, and the chairs of the Theology and Philosophy Departments, Fr. James Donohue and Dr. Richard Buck, for their financial support for this endeavor.

We also thank all those who submitted their essays to us, and we once again congratulate those whose essays were selected for publication. We hope that all Mount students will consider submitting their excellent work in philosophy and theology for future issues.

Mandee Grote and Sara Reams
Co-Editors-in-Chief

Contributors

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Sacrosanctum Concilium, Liturgical Reform, and the Translation of the Mass
Patricia Lester

P romulgated on December 4, 1963, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, was the first official document produced by the Council. The document that called for a renewal of the Sacred Liturgy was a very fitting "first fruit" of the council, as "a very close and organic bond does exist between sound liturgical renewal and the renewal of the whole life of the Church."[1] As *Sacrosanctum Concilium* itself reminds us, the liturgy is the source of the Church's life and power, as well as the summit toward which its life is directed.[2] It follows that the graces from the renewal of this source and summit would flow in a life-renewing way into every aspect of the Church. In this way, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* has played an indispensable role in the realization of the goals of the entire council to "impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian lives of the faithful; to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions which are subject to change; to encourage whatever can promote the union of all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever serves to call all of humanity into the church's fold."[3] In an Apostolic Letter issued on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the document's promulgation, John Paul II observed that "for many people the message of the Second Vatican Council has been experienced principally through the liturgical reform."[4]

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[1] Francis Cardinal Arinze, "Highlights of the Liturgical Renewal Initiated by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*," address to Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions national convention, Oct. 2003 (http://www.adoremus.org/Arinze-FDLC-Liturgy.html), 1.

[2] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, in Austin Flannery, ed. *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents* (Northport, NY: Costello Publications, 1996), 10.

[3] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1.

[4] John Paul II, *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*: On the 25th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Dec. 1988 (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost _letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_04121988_vicesimus-quintus-annus_en.html), 12.

The implementation of the liturgical reform inspired by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* has been a long process that is still very much at work almost a half-century later. One of the most difficult but certainly one of the most fruitful liturgical reform processes initiated by Vatican II is the translation of the Mass from Latin into the common languages of the people. In connection with the latest translation, which is to be used in Masses beginning in Advent 2011, we will examine what this process of translation has entailed and why the current changes are being made.

A look at the liturgy as it stood before the Council sheds some light on the need for a reform that would renew the life of the Church. A widespread understanding of the people's interior participation in the Mass was lacking. Members of the congregation often engaged in their own private devotions without understanding what was being said or following what was going on in the Mass itself. In the time leading up to the Council, the gravity of this circumstance was certainly recognized. In 1947, Pope Pius XII reminded the Church that "'all the faithful should be aware that to participate in the Eucharistic sacrifice is their chief duty and supreme dignity, and that not in an inert and negligent fashion,' but rather with 'earnestness and concentration.'"[5] Substantial liturgical reform and renewal was necessary, however, before the earnest participation of the faithful could be more fully realized.

The work of the formation of the document began with the formation of a preparatory commission composed of pastors and scholars from all over the world, divided into thirteen subgroups to work on the various parts of the document.[6] Questions of sacred music and the usage of the vernacular in the liturgy proved to be the most contentious topics while the drafts were being composed.[7] Indeed, the issue of language remained perhaps the most difficult subject throughout the whole process. The document that the preparatory commission prepared was the first thing on the agenda of the council, and fifty hours of debate were devoted to it, with much of that debate in the area of the language of the liturgy.[8]

Through the debate it became clear that scholars agreed that "there is no basis for arguing that Latin is divinely sanctioned or

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[5] Cited in Rita Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 9.
[6] Ibid., 13.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.,14.

intended by God as the sole and eternal tongue of the liturgy," especially in light of the fact that Latin was not the language used in the earliest liturgies of the ancient Church.[9] Rather, "Latin was adopted in the West as a *living* language for the liturgy."[10] Still, many worried that such a drastic change as the translation of the liturgy into the living languages of the modern day could only result in significant changes in dogma. The debate eventually moved in the direction of the allowing of the usage of the vernacular in certain circumstances for pastoral reasons to aid the worship of the people.[11]

After a number of revisions and amendments, the final version of the document passed favorably with a vote of 2,147 for and only 4 of the Council fathers against. Interestingly, the date on which *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was promulgated, December 4, 1963, was exactly four hundred years after a decision was made at the Council of Trent which led to the Tridentine reform of the liturgy.[12]

Much of the final document is devoted to laying out general principles for the renewal and promotion of the Mass. The document goes on to address the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, and the liturgical calendar, as well as sacred music and art. John Paul II summarizes the guiding principles of the Constitution from which the guidelines for the renewal of the liturgy were derived as being the reenactment of the Paschal Mystery, the reading of God's Word, and the Church's self-manifestation.[13] We are reminded that it is Christ Himself, in Word and saving actions, who is absolutely central to the liturgy, and further that it is a liturgy of the whole Church, not something private to be changed according one's own will but rather renewed by the Church through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.[14]

An overarching theme of the document, and certainly a phrase for which it is most famous, is the entreaty to "full, conscious, and active participation" of the faithful in liturgical celebrations.[15] The document states that the Church "earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should

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[9] Ibid., 16.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., 17.
[13] *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, section titles.
[14] *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 18–19.
[15] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14.

take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration."[16] The active participation of the faithful is to be first and foremost interior. Francis Cardinal Arinze reminds the faithful, in his commentary on the liturgical renewal that began with *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, that "[i]t is important to realize that the internal aspect of participation is indispensable as a basis, a requirement, and the aim of all external participation."[17] By virtue of the common priesthood of their baptism, the faithful are called to pray so as to offer the sacrifice with the priest and to offer their very selves to be drawn more deeply into union with God.[18] This interior participation is to be fostered by an active exterior participation of the faithful in the liturgy, through the "complete sharing in all the words, music, gestures, and actions of the Mass that are proper to the people," including participation in many liturgical ministries. Periods of silence for prayerful reflection on the gifts that have been received are encouraged. The people are to be truly nourished by Word and Sacrament at the Mass.

The usage of the vernacular is another way that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* encourages the active participation of the faithful, by helping them to better understand the prayer of the Church in which they are participating. A timeline of the Roman Missal explains, "The fathers of the Council invited consideration of the use of the vernacular [for at least some parts of the Mass], and in the years leading up to a new Roman Missal, it was determined that the vernacular could be used for the entire liturgy."[19] It is important to note that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the teachings that followed it did not abolish the use of Latin in the liturgy. Cardinal Arinze states, "It would be good that occasionally a parish sings the more popular parts of the Mass in Latin: think of what this means in terms of preserving and respecting our patrimony, showing the Church as a community that has a memory, and facilitating international Eucharistic celebrations."[20] Still, the benefits foreseen from praying the Mass in the native languages of the people were significant enough for the Church to embark on the long and challenging process of working on new liturgical books and acceptable

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[16] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48.
[17] Arinze, "Highlights," 5.
[18] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48.
[19] "Historical Timeline of the *Missale Romanum*," Proceedings of Roman Missal Seminar: The New English Translation, Prayers of the People (http://www.blessed-sacrament.org/RomanMissal.pdf).
[20] Arinze, "Highlights," 4.

translations. Some of the difficulties faced in the translating included "producing translations which are faithful to the Latin original, which are excellent literary productions, which can be set to music, which will stand the test of time and which will nourish the piety and spiritual sensitivity of the people."[21]

To help with the important tasks facing the Church in renewing the liturgy following *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, a commission comprised of 50 bishops and 150 liturgy consultants was formed in order to enact the document's directives.[22] Reactions of the people ranged from those who over-exuberantly took the liberty of enacting their own reforms to those who refused to acknowledge the validity of reform at all. For the most part, though, the reforms were rightfully accepted and implemented. The liturgical commission, known as the Consilium, worked hard to produce new liturgical books. A commentator on *Sacrosanctum Concilium* remarks that "the simplicity and clarity that all the liturgical rites of the church now enjoy was the fruit of careful pruning, each instance carefully researched."[23]

Other commissions were also formed to help carry out the reforms of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in various places, especially for the translation of liturgical texts into the vernacular. Eleven conferences of English-speaking bishops worked together to form the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) in order to produce proper English translations of the Latin texts.

In 1969, right before the Consilium promulgated the new Roman Missal which was to serve as the authoritative text from which translations were to be based, they put forth official guidelines for translators of the missal in a document called *Comme le Prevoit*. The principle that *Comme le Prevoit* endorsed for the translations is what is known as "dynamic equivalency." This principle favors a "thought for thought" translation rather than a "word for word" translation, seeking to "convey the essential meaning of the original text in the idiom of a modern target language."[24] With the dynamic equivalency principle it is not necessary to maintain the phraseology or style of the original text, as long as the meaning is the same. As one explanation states, "The original words and form are important

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[21] Ibid., 4.
[22] Ferrone, *Liturgy*, 51.
[23] Ibid., 54.
[24] "Roman Missal Translation Highlights: 1963–2010" Diocese of Springfield (http://www.diospringfield.org/romanmissal/Translation%20Highlights.pdf).

only as a vehicle for the meaning; therefore it is the meaning alone that is truly important in the translation."[25] Those who advocate for this dynamic type of translation argue that it serves to make the texts easier for the faithful to understand, while others claim that this type of translation involves "subjective judgments . . . influenced by the translator's theological presuppositions" which could compromise or limit the full meaning of the text.[26]

As the Roman Missal and the new Order of Mass were put forth in 1969, the ICEL began work on the dynamic English translations. The translation of the Missal to be used in the United States was officially approved by the Holy See in 1974. Shortly thereafter, a second edition of the official Roman Missal was issued and the ICEL began its work again. Ten years later, the second edition of the U.S. Sacramentary was published, but the existing texts were not changed much. The ICEL began a more thorough revision, but the Holy See never approved it because by the time it was completed the Vatican already had plans to put out the third edition of the official Missal. This edition was published in 2002 and the work of translation began yet again.[27]

Before this third edition was published, though, the Vatican put forth another document with official guidelines for its translation, just as it had issued guidelines in *Comme le Prevoit* for the first edition. This document, *Liturgiam Authenticam*, was intended to "set forth anew, and in light of the maturing of experience, the principles of translation to be followed in future translation."[28] The "maturing of experience" in the Church inspired a significant change in the guidelines for translation. Instead of the dynamic equivalency that had been the guiding principle since Vatican II, the methodology used for the new translation was to be formal equivalency. Formal equivalency aims for the most exact translation possible, word for word instead of meaning for meaning. *Liturgiam Authenticam* states that "it is permissible to arrange the wording, the syntax and the style in such a way as to prepare a flowing vernacular text suitable to the rhythm of popular prayer," but it cautions that

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[25] "Historical Timeline of the *Missale Romanum*."
[26] Msgr. James P. Moroney, "Background on and Changes in the New Translation of the Roman Missal," *Catechetical Sunday*, 2011 (http://www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday/2011/catsun-2011-doc-moroney.pdf), 1.
[27] "Historical Timeline of the *Missale Romanum*."
[28] *Liturgiam Authenticam*, Congregation for Divine Worship, March 2001 (http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20010507_liturgiam-authenticam_en.html), 7.

"the original text insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner, without omissions or additions in terms of their content, and without paraphrases or glosses."[29]

Avery Cardinal Dulles explains that the goal of formal equivalency as explained in *Liturgiam Authenticam* is the transmission of the teachings of Revelation to the people in the most faithful way possible "by its dual emphasis on literal accuracy and on language conducive to reverence."[30] These emphases, Cardinal Dulles argues, serve to safeguard both the content and the attitude of the faith. There is a common axiom in the Church that is very relevant to the issue of translation: *lex orandi, lex credenda*—the way that we pray is the way that we believe. Thus, it is extremely important that the Mass faithfully express the faith of the Church, as it very directly influences the beliefs and understandings of the people. Bishop Allen Vigneron further explains that through literal accuracy and the use of reverential language, the translated texts of the liturgy will "advance rather than hinder the basic end or *telos* of the liturgy: that is, the communication of the divine realities made present to us through God's acts of revelation and appropriated by our acts of faith."[31]

In addition to safeguarding the faith, formal equivalency also seeks to foster the unity of the Church. Although the liturgy should be "consonant with the qualities and traditions of particular Churches," it is of utmost importance that it be consonant with the liturgy of the Church as a whole so that, despite the varied languages, the one holy Catholic Church is praying the same liturgy.[32] Further, the formally-equivalent translation of the Latin texts will not only serve to foster a deeper communion in the whole Church of our age, but also a deeper communion with the whole Church throughout time.[33]

Another principle that *Liturgiam Authenticam* sets for translators of the Missal is that the language used should be "easily understandable" but still "preserve the texts' dignity, beauty and doctrinal precision."[34] Although it should take into consideration the

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[29] *Liturgiam Authenticam*, 20.
[30] Avery Cardinal Dulles, cited in Bishop Allen H. Vigneron, "The Art of Pastoral Translation: At the Service of Communion," address to Gateway Liturgical Conference, Nov. 2008 (http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal/vigneron1.shtml), sec. 1.
[31] Ibid.
[32] *Liturgiam Authenticam*, 7.
[33] "The Art of Pastoral Translation," sec. 6.
[34] *Liturgiam Authenticam*, 25.

ways of expression that a language has, it "should be free from an overly servile adherence of prevailing modes of expression," and should not alter texts even if they do not seem to fit with our current sensibilities.[35] Words that may seem somewhat outmoded should not be quickly rejected, but can rather serve to increase the reverential tone. The Sacred Liturgy, the source and summit of our faith and the place where Christ feeds His people in Word and Sacrament, is so sublime that it certainly should sound different than our everyday language to some degree. The transcendent wording points to the transcendent reality.

Since the third edition of the Roman Missal was published in 2002, the ICEL and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops have worked diligently to produce English liturgical texts that follow the norms set forth by *Liturgiam Authenticam*, seeking through literal accuracy and reverential tone to impart God's revelation to the people as faithfully as possible. After a long and meticulous process, the English translation that they produced was officially approved by the Holy See in March of 2010. It is to be used in Masses across the United States starting at the beginning of the liturgical year on November 27, 2011. This translation, it is hoped, will serve to further implement the vision set forth by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, fostering the "full, conscious, and active participation"[36] of the faithful in the liturgy by providing the clearest presentation of the "saving activity of God, which is made present through the words of the texts" that we celebrate together throughout the world in every Divine Liturgy.[37]

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[35] *Liturgiam Authenticam*, 27.

[36] *Sacrosanctum Concilium,* 14.

[37] "The Art of Pastoral Translation," sec. 6.

Understanding the Responsibility to Protect in Light of Catholic Social Teaching

Nancy Abu-Bonsrah

The crisis in Libya and the subsequent involvement of the international community, particularly the enforcement of the no-fly zone and the air strikes, presents an instance when the intrinsic autonomy of a state is undermined. While it may be argued that the actions of the anti-Gaddafi forces—in their quest for a democratic government—and the rampant human rights abuse occurring in the nation call for immediate intervention, it is possible that the autonomy of the state, and more specifically, that of the ruling authority, is subverted. The questions that arise in this case revolve around the validity of the steps taken by the international community. Are their actions warranted or do they employ measures that are far from being reasonable? An analysis is presented here concerning the issues posed by these measures and their possible justifications as viewed through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching. The Catholic perspective will be drawn from an examination of papal documents, which will allow for the delineation of the duties of the state, what qualifies as a legitimate authority, and in what instances that authority may be overridden. A discussion of the United Nations' implementation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is also presented, shedding light on instances when the international community may deem it necessary to stage an intervention in the affairs of another state.

Pope Leo XII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891), the first modern Catholic social encyclical, while dealing extensively with the plight of workers in modern industrial societies, remarks upon the nature of the state and its duties, more specifically, the duties of those who govern the state. Pope Leo emphasizes that the first duty "of the rulers of the State should be to make sure that the laws and institutions, the general character and administration of the commonwealth, shall be such as to produce of themselves public

well-being and private prosperity."[1] By this he means that the state is to ensure that it produces an environment that fosters the rights of the persons in the state, while providing for their welfare. This idea of the fitting duty of the state, which is ensuring the proper development of its people, is further developed by later Church documents, particularly *Pacem in Terris*[2] and *Gaudium et Spes*.[3] *Pacem in Terris* is primarily an appeal to respect an array of social, economic, political, and religious rights of all people, and by extension, those of all states that make up the global community. Like *Rerum Novarum,* it posits that the "whole reason for the existence of civil authorities [is] the realization of the common good," which is defined as that which "embraces the sum total of those conditions of social living whereby men are enabled to achieve their own integral perfection more fully and more easily."[4]   This entails the implementation of socio-economic measures that see to the provision of essential services like health care, education, and the maintenance of the infrastructure of the state. *Gaudium et Spes* deals with the question of the duties of the state in a similar manner, remarking that "the political community exists for that common good in which the community finds its full justification and meaning, and from which it derives its pristine and proper right."[5] For these two documents, the function of the state is presented in terms of its acknowledgement of the intrinsic dignity of the human person and the rights that belong to all persons by virtue of their being human; i.e., the state is "to safeguard the inviolable rights of the human person, and to facilitate the fulfillment of his duties."[6] For the state to properly perform its activities, it has to realize that which is needed for the integral development of the person, i.e., "it has to promote the good of every man and the whole man."[7]   This form of development, as espoused by the Catholic Church, is not limited to the economic advancement of the people, but also includes the spiritual and the social aspects as well. In so doing, the state has done what is needed for the ultimate fulfillment of the person.

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[1] Leo XII, *Rerum Novarum*, 26. All magisterial texts, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the collection *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, ed. David O'Brien and Thomas P. Shannon (New York: Orbis, 1992).

[2] John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*.

[3] Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*: The Church in the Modern World.

[4] *Pacem in Terris*, 54, 58 (citing Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, 65)

[5] *Gaudium et Spes*, 74.

[6] *Pacem in Terris*, 60 (citing Pope Pius XII, Radio Message, Pentecost 1941).

[7] Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 14.

The legitimacy of the state is also addressed in these documents. The issue here is that for the state to function as outlined in the paragraph above, it has to possess some form of authority that can be justified. *Pacem in Terris* deals with the question of the nature of the authority with which a state is governed by civil authorities. It posits that "Authority comes from God alone."[8] To further explain this potentially controversial statement, Pope John XXIII provides a logical train of thought that derives from the assumption that "since God made men social by nature, and since no society 'can hold together unless someone be over all, directing all to strive earnestly for the common good, every civilized community must have a ruling authority, and this authority, no less than society itself, has its source in nature, and has, consequently, God for its author.'"[9] In this sense the state is not to flaunt its authority in any manner it sees fit but is rather to order its activities according to natural law. Pope John XXIII further qualifies his statement with the caveat that the "authority must derive its force from the moral order," with this moral order being in accord with the will of God as it seeks to promote the common good of all men.[10] *Gaudium et Spes* nuances the idea of the divine derivation of public authority in stating that "[at] the same time, the choice of government and method of selecting leaders are left to the free will of citizens."[11] The addition of the latter remark implies an understanding of the intrinsic dignity of the person and the free will it entails, whereby the actions of the state, i.e. the public authorities, must be in accord with what the people believe to be essential for their well-being or otherwise be found wanting.

It can be said without a doubt that the state has a necessary and positive function. However, in what sense are the activities of the state deemed detrimental to the persons comprising the state, so that actions which seek to depose or subvert the ruling power are found justifiable? Once again, the papal documents provide guiding principles that delineate instances when this might be the case, the most basic, if rather broad, of which is that any such authority that does not see to the achievement of the public good can be considered as unfit. *Pacem in Terris* provides a more concise starting point by stating that "if any government does not acknowledge the

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[8] *Pacem in Terris*, 46 (citing Pope Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*; Romans 13:1–5).
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., 47–48.
[11] *Gaudium et Spes*, 74.

rights of man or violates them, it not only fails in its duty, its orders completely lack judicial force," meaning that the people can choose to defy the dictates of the state if their existence has somehow been placed in jeopardy.[12] *Gaudium et Spes*, while suggesting caution in going against the state, nonetheless allows that it is "lawful for [citizens] to defend their own rights and those of their fellow citizens against any abuse of . . . authority, provided that in so doing they observe the limits imposed by natural law and the Gospel."[13] The reasons given above deal primarily with internal conflicts that may be resolved without international intervention; however, these same reasons may call for steps to be taken from the outside. Indeed, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, in its *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, states that the "right to use force for purposes of legitimate defense is associated with the duty to protect and help innocent victims who are not able to defend themselves from acts of aggression . . . . [As] the good of the human person must take precedence over the interests of the parties to the conflict . . . [the] international community as a whole has the moral obligation to intervene on behalf of those groups whose very survival is threatened or whose basic human rights are seriously violated."[14] Pope John Paul II, in his 2000 World Day of Peace address, also states, in a similar vein, that "[clearly], when a civilian population risks being overcome by the attacks of an unjust aggressor and political efforts and non-violent defense prove to be of no avail, it is legitimate and even obligatory to take concrete measures to disarm the aggressor."[15] This idea, in a sense, recognizes that "there might be times when defensive, armed conflict might be necessary and neutrality must be abandoned to protect vulnerable populations."[16] The assumption here is that in instances where gross abuse of power exists to the detriment of the population, cautious measures should be taken to diffuse the situation, with military action being the last resort.

In *Pacem in Terris*, and to some extent in *Gaudium et Spes* and Pope Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate*, a universal public authority,

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[12] *Pacem in Terris*, 60.

[13] *Gaudium et Spes*, 74.

[14] *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Washington: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004), 504, 506.

[15] Ibid., 11.

[16] Scott Kline, "The Responsibility to Protect Vulnerable Populations: A Catholic Perspective," *Project Ploughshares*, March 18, 2009 (http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/Reduce/InterventionPaperKline.htm).

equipped with a breadth of power not found in individual states, is proposed which would safeguard the security of all people in the global community, promote regard for justice, and ensure a respect for human rights, as it strives for the achievement of the universal common good.[17]   Pope Benedict XVI provides a more contemporary context, particularly with respect to the economic decline of the past few years, for the duties of this universal public authority by suggesting that it is "[to] manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment; and to regulate migration."[18] In so doing, this global public authority is not to usurp the power of the individual or nation-state, but rather, is meant to augment its efforts when necessary, according to the principle of subsidiarity whereby the appropriate function is done at the appropriate level. It will then be through the initiatives of this public authority that actions which call for the involvement of the international community will be executed, if the situation calls for it. In this sense, the UN's implementation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) closely parallels the actions implied by Pope John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council, and Pope Benedict XVI's suggestion of a universal public authority.

R2P first appeared in a 2001 report by the Canadian government's International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty as a result of its reflection on humanitarian interventions, or lack thereof, during the 1990s in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo. It was later endorsed at the 2005 at the World Summit.[19] It is a complex moral, political and legal issue that rests on the assumption that

> states have a responsibility to protect individuals, communities, and institutions from violent and dehumanizing trends in the world's political, economic, and social structures. When individual states are unable or unwilling to do so, then, it is the

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[17] *Pacem in Terris*, 132–35; *Gaudium et Spes*, 82; Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 67. For Benedict's encyclical, see http://www.vatican.va/ holy_father/ benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html.
[18] *Caritas in Veritate*, 67.
[19] Tobias Winright, "The 411 on R2P," *Catholic Moral Theology*, March 31, 2011 (http://catholicmoraltheology.com/the-411-on-r2p).

> responsibility of the "universal authority" to
> empower citizens, groups, and other agencies to
> create the necessary structures and conditions for
> peace to flourish.[20]

It nuances and qualifies national sovereignty by presenting the idea
that state sovereignty entails responsibilities on the part of the state
to its citizens, which if unmet may require outside intervention. R2P
seeks to prevent four crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against
humanity, and ethnic cleansing. This entails three primary
obligations: the responsibility to prevent, react, and rebuild.[21] The
most important of these is the responsibility to prevent, which
requires that diplomatic resolutions be proposed before the
situations are too far gone to handle by such means. The next step is
to react, initially with sanctions that seek to firmly deter the authority
from wreaking havoc. The last resort, in this case, is military
intervention when the abuse of power is found to be too much and
the people are in danger of forfeiting their lives. The military action
is to be appropriate and not indiscriminate, i.e. the action must be
within reason and must discriminate between those to be protected
and those to be attacked. The act of rebuilding calls for giving
opportunities that allow for the people to redeem their lives while
rebuilding the infrastructure. In all these measures, the watchword is
the protection of human life and dignity in as effective a manner as
possible.

While the implementation of R2P is noble—indeed, Pope
Benedict XVI expressed his support for it in his address to the UN
General Assembly in 2008 and called for its implementation in his
encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*[22]—it still presents a host of questions.
Some of these were rightly acknowledged in a recent letter to the
United States National Security Advisor Thomas Donilon from the
Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard, Bishop of Albany, concerning
the Libyan crisis, but they may also be applied to other similar
situations. Bishop Hubbard presented the following questions for
consideration:

> How is the use of force protecting the civilian
> population of Libya? Is the force employed
> proportionate to the goal of protecting civilians? Is

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[20] Kline, "The Responsibility to Protect."
[21] Winright, "The 411 on R2P."
[22] Ibid. See also *Caritas in Veritate*, 67.

> it producing evils graver than the evil it hopes to address? What are the implications of the use of force for the future welfare of the Libyan people and the stability of the region? ... Is force being used in ways that protect civilian lives? Are civilian casualties being avoided? Is the destruction of lives and property proportionate to the good being achieved in terms of saving civilian lives?

The issues highlighted by the letter concern the caution that must be inherent in such measures. Not only must the situation be recognized as dire, but the actions taken should not result in an exacerbation of the circumstances. For the measures to be implemented, then, the international community must properly analyze the situation, judging whether other, less "invasive" solutions might exist before putting military intervention on the table to be considered. In this way, the good of the people involved in the crisis may be placed ahead of all manner of intervention.

The idea of the state, and therefore of the civil authorities who run it, as a body that seeks the well-being of all persons it governs sounds logical. It provides a framework within which the people can achieve their ultimate fulfillment. In so doing, it recognizes the intrinsic dignity of the citizens, as well as the rights they possess. Difficulties arise when the state fails to do as it should, resulting in situations where the lives of the people are put in peril. The response from the international community may seem intrusive in the sense that the actions are taken by those not of the affected state. From the writings that underpin Catholic Social Teaching, it is evident that these actions may be justified in so far as the international community carefully surveys the situation, notes that people are in danger, and implements measures that have the interest of the people at heart. R2P, which was implemented by the UN, seeks to do just that. The assumption made is that violence against innocent persons is not to be condoned, under any circumstances, if the global community can do something to avert it.

While the idea behind the use of R2P sounds plausible, and is quite laudable, it can still be difficult to take in, particularly in terms of what qualifies as a dire situation that needs intervention and what does not. How long must the perceived atrocities against a certain people continue before intervention is staged and how are the decisions to be made concerning which regions require international involvement? Stated in these terms, the method of determining the

answer to such questions appears somewhat ambiguous in the sense that there is no hard and fast rule by which these methods are implemented. It seems that the situations that call for R2P are stated in such broad and extreme terms that the actions of the international community may be deemed to have come too late (perhaps in the case of the recent Ivorian crisis and in that of the escalating violence in Syria) or to have been made rashly (e.g. the Iraq invasion). While it may be difficult to state, in succinct terms, which situations should require intervention, specifically, military intervention, and which do not, R2P may be further validated by providing concrete guidelines for intervention. With that said, the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of men and women suggests a need to protect, as much as possible, all innocent peoples when they are threatened.

"This at Last" As a Cry of Wonder: A Comparative Exegesis of Genesis 2:23–24

Martino Choi

> Then the man said, This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.
>
> -Genesis 2:23–24[1]

In Genesis 2:23, Adam's first encounter with Eve leads to a cry of wonder as he realizes that he has finally met a suitable companion. This verse declares the natural origin of marriage in which a man leaves his father and mother and becomes one with his wife. For many of the Jewish commentators, the two verses independently serve as the foundation for many of the laws regarding marriage, divorce, and family life. Similarly, many of the Church Fathers saw this passage primarily as an explanation of the relationship between husband and wife, especially as an image of the relationship between Christ and the Church. In short, both the early Jewish and the Christian interpretations approached Genesis 2:23–24 as a basis for commentary on marriage as an institution.

Marriage as an institution, however, is not identical to human love. The element of human love is certainly addressed by early exegetes and commentators, especially with regard to the unique bond of love that Adam formed with Eve, a bond nonexistent between Adam and any other of God's creatures. The early exegetes interpret Genesis 2:23 as a cry of wonder that indicates the fulfillment of a need; Genesis 2:24 formalizes that fulfillment through the institution of marriage. However, the analyses of the early Jewish and Christian scholars does not pay much attention to the passage as a cry of true wonder or as a response of admiration that provides insight into the nature of human love; by contrast, Pope John Paul II's own analysis clearly

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[1] Unless noted otherwise, all biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition.

develops this theme as the central idea of Genesis 2:23–24, exploring the notion of human love in light of divine love.

An exegesis of these verses cannot occur without a discussion of the nature of the Book of Genesis, particularly the beginning chapters. The beginning of the Book of Genesis cannot be interpreted strictly as a historical text or as a scientific text. Rather, the opening chapters of Genesis (often categorized as the first 11 chapters) tend toward an etiological dimension, "an unusually sustained 'philosophical' and 'theological' explanation of the human race."[2] Nonetheless, the Church teaches that the first chapters of Genesis, "although properly speaking not conforming to the historical method used by the best Greek and Latin writers or by competent authors of our time, do nevertheless pertain to history in a true sense."[3]

Genesis 2:23–24 takes place after the creation of woman at the end of what is known as the "second creation account" found in Genesis 2:4b–24. This second creation account differs from the first account (Genesis 1:1–2:4a), which focuses upon creation of the entire universe, by emphasizing man and treating "other aspects of creation only insofar as they directly related to man."[4] After the creation of the man, God decides that "It is not good that the man should be alone" and creates a series of animals, none of which is the "helper fit for him" (Gen. 2:18–20). Thus God made the woman, not "out of the ground" as other animals but "from the man" (Gen. 2:19, 22). While the animals were rejected by the man as foreign to himself, the "woman is accepted precisely because of the intimate relationship in her creation from man's bone."[5] With this progression of events, Genesis 2:23–24 can be understood as recounting the man's reaction to meeting the woman.

This context provides an insight into the formal structure of the passage. Verse 23 is understood primarily to be the speech of Adam, as the introductory clause states, "Then the man said." What follows is therefore spoken by Adam, the first instance of speech by the man. The speaker of the following verse, however, is unclear; some think it is a commentary by the narrator, while others see it as

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[2] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Raymond E. Brown and Roland E. Murphy, *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 8.

[3] Pius XII, *Humani generis*, 38.

[4] Reginald C. Fuller, *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1969), 177.

[5] George W. Coats, *Genesis, with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 53.

a continuation of verse 23 and thus part of Adam's discourse. Indeed, Christ's own reference to these verses in Matthew 19:4ff. does not resolve the question but only seems to highlight that the statement is divinely inspired.[6] However, understanding Adam's encounter with Eve as a truly wondrous event gives credence to considering both verses 23 and 24 as constituting Adam's speech; the spirit of awe could certainly inspire what many exegetes consider a prophetic dimension to his speech. Thus, St. Augustine, whose reading of Matthew is that Christ declares God to be the speaker of verse 24, maintains that "because of the ecstasy which Adam had just experienced he was able to say this as a prophet under divine guidance."[7]

In their literal and literary analyses of the passage, many commentators identify three elements as particularly striking: (1) the use of the phrase "this at last"; (2) the use of the words "flesh" and "blood"; and (3) the use of the Hebrew words *'îš* and *'iššâ*, meaning "man" and "woman" respectively. These three elements provide a general context in which the passage is frequently understood, namely as identifying the institution of marriage as the solution for human loneliness.

For many early interpreters, the phrase "this at last" seems to suggest that Adam waited for Eve. According to Genesis, God first created Eve "full of discharge and blood," whereupon Adam rejected her; God created Eve a second time, resulting in Adam's exclamation that "This at last is bone of my bones."[8] Similarly, St. Ephrem the Syrian takes Adam's exclamation to indicate a difference between Eve and the animals that precede her; the animals "came from the earth, but she is 'bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.'"[9] The implication is that there is something essentially different about Eve, as she provided the companionship

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[6] "The New Testament Scriptures, which quote this verse as the word of God (e.g. Matt. 19:4 sq.) do not decide the question; the statement is the word of God as being a component part of the inspired Scriptures." Franz Delitzsch, *A New Commentary on Genesis* (New York: Scribner & Welford, 1889), 145.

[7] St. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 9.19.36. See Delitzsch, *New Commentary*: "[Adam] also predictively reads in [Eve's] countenance the nature of marriage, he penetrates the Divine idea realized in the creation of woman."

[8] "At first He created her for him and he saw her full of discharge and blood; thereupon He removed her from him and recreated her a second time. Hence he said: This time she is bone of my bone." *Genesis Rabbah* 18.4.

[9] St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Commentaries on Genesis*, 2.13.2.

that the preceding animals could not.[10] Another facet in this notion of waiting is found in the repetition of the word "this" (זֹאת) in the Hebrew text; each use of the word builds up "to the woman, on whom [Adam's] eye gladly and admiringly rested with the whole power of first love".[11] The very solitude that led God to declare that "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18) is addressed by the creation of the woman, and results in companionship for the man "at last" (Gen. 2:23).

The use of the phrases "bone of my bones" and "flesh of my flesh" also requires attention, especially in light of the expression "one flesh" later in the passage. In the literal sense, Adam simply makes an observation; Eve, being created from one of Adam's ribs, is literally bone of Adam's bones and flesh of Adam's flesh. This phrase, however, can also be understood as an idiom denoting a relationship or kinship.[12] Indeed, the ancient Jews did not distinguish between body and soul, so "'bone from my bones' can thus be understood in the relational sense, like 'being from being.'"[13] The two senses can be understood together as highlighting the fact that the woman, being created literally from the man, also "possesses the same nature with man."[14] It is also interesting that, after Adam declares Eve to be flesh of his flesh in verse 23, man and woman are one flesh in the very next verse, as emphasized here: "the yearning of the two, originally one, to become one again."[15]

A third interesting element of this passage is the use of and introduction of the terms *'îš* (אִישׁ) and *'iššāʰ* (אִשָּׁה) for man and

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[10] "When reviewing the animals the man found himself again and again disappointed, he fell asleep longing for a companion; his desire was now suddenly fulfilled." Delitzsch, *New Commentary*, 143–44.

[11] Ibid., 144. In the Hebrew text, the word זֹאת appears three times: "*This* at last is bone of my bones . . .", "*this* one shall be called woman . . .", "out of man, *this* one was . . . ."

[12] "'Flesh' can denote a relationship in such phrases as 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,' meaning kinsman (Gen. 2:23), 'one flesh,' i.e., husband and wife (Gen. 2:24), 'my bone and my flesh,' i.e., kinsman (Gen. 29:14)." F. Brent Knutson, "Flesh," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, 313–15.

[13] Footnote 15 from John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), 8:4. Carl Anderson and Fr. José Granados also comment that the word "flesh" does not refer to "merely the physical side of man" but rather that "the whole man is 'flesh' insofar as he exists in relationship with nature and his fellow human beings." *Called to Love* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), 27.

[14] Fuller, *New Catholic Commentary*, 178.

[15] Bernard F. Batto, "The Institution of Marriage in Genesis 2 and in *Atrahasis*," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62, 4 (Oct. 2000): 622.

woman, respectively. Early Hebrew commentators focused primarily on the seemingly related etymology of the words, declaring that "the Torah was given in the Holy Tongue" and "so was the world created with the Holy Tongue."[16] While this is an interesting etymological note, Adam did not speak Hebrew; what is more relevant is the thought "that the woman is acknowledged as an offshoot of the man, as coming into existence after him, but of like nature with him."[17] Also important is the introduction of the word *'iš*, since the word *'aḏām* (אָדָם) was previously used to refer to the man, tying him to the ground from which he was made. The shift occurs after the creation of *'iššāʰ*, the woman, "as if Adam, hitherto a stand-in for 'man' in the generic sense, had suddenly woken up to the fact that he is a *male*, whose existence makes sense only because he has a *female* counterpart."[18] Thus the use of the terms *'iš* and *'iššāʰ* not only draws a distinction between male and female but also illustrates a certain similarity and relationship between the two.

Early Jewish commentaries on Genesis 2:23–24 drew upon that similarity and difference to treat the verses as the basis of Jewish laws, especially those regarding marriage and related matters. Generally, verse 23 is understood to explain both the difference between man and woman and the naturalness of marriage, while verse 24 provides a more legal basis for marriage as a divine institution. The passage is often cited to defend the fitting nature of marriage within the Jewish culture, as shown by numerous citations from the Talmud. Thus the Yevamoth, a tractate on the topic of marriage, declares: "The Jew that has no wife abideth without joy, without a blessing, and without any good";[19] and "The Jew that has no wife is not a man."[20] Further, the Kethuboth, another tractate on prenuptial agreements, states that "From the age of twenty, if a man remains in a state of celibacy, he lives in constant transgression."[21]

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[16] *Genesis Rabbah* 18.5. The text continues, "Have you ever heard one say, *gini*, *ginia*; *itha*, *ittha*; *anthropi*, *anthropia*; *gabra*, *gabretha*? But *ish* and *ishah* [are used]: why? because one form corresponds to the other." The first and third refer to "man" and "woman" in Greek; the second and fourth refer to the same in Aramaic.

[17] Delitzsch, *New Commentary*, 144.

[18] Anderson and Granados, *Called to Love*, 45. Emphases in original.

[19] *Yevamoth*, fol. 62, col. 1. Quoted in Paul Isaac Hershon, *Genesis with a Talmudic Commentary* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1883), 123.

[20] *Yevamoth*, fol. 63, col. 1. Quoted in Hershon, *Talmudic Commentary*, 123.

[21] *Kethuboth*, fol. 29, col. 2. Quoted in Hershon, *Talmudic Commentary*, 124.

Aside from being a basis for establishing marriage as an institution, this passage is also used as a basis for making distinctions between man and woman. Because the woman came from the man, the law regarding a woman's purification following childbirth depends upon the sex of the child. Because the man had been in the Garden of Eden before the woman, the woman remains in the state of uncleanliness for a shorter time after bearing a son.[22] Likewise, because the woman was brought to the man and not vice versa, a woman "may be divorced with, or without, her consent; but the man can never be compelled to divorce the woman."[23] Similarly, the Yevamoth declares that "a woman is more desirous of entering the state of matrimony than a man."[24] All of these comparisons between the man and the woman regarding marriage and family life have their foundations in the passage.

The early Christian exegetical analyses differ from the Jewish analyses by moving away from the strictly legal aspect of marriage. Nonetheless, early Christian commentators were still concerned with the institution of marriage. The New Testament contains two major references to Genesis 2:23–24: Ephesians 5 and Matthew 19. Some commentators take Ephesians 5 as the foundation for their commentary on Genesis 2:23–24, focusing on the relationship between Christ and the Church. Others emphasize Christ's teachings, recorded in Matthew 19, resulting in a discussion of the morality surrounding marriage, divorce, and the state of marriage "from the beginning" (Matt. 19:8).

Foremost among early Christian commentators on Genesis 2:23–24 is arguably St. Paul, who writes in his Epistle to the Ephesians that the great mystery of Christ and the Church is found in Genesis 2:24 (Eph. 5:32). According to St. Paul, wives are to be subject to their husbands "as the Church is subject to Christ," and husbands are to love their wives "as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her" (Eph. 5:24–25). It is in light of this

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[22] "And for this reason the commandment is written on the heavenly tablets in regard to her that gives birth: 'if she bears a male, she shall remain in her uncleanness seven days according to the first week of days, and thirty and three days shall she remain in the blood of her purifying, and she shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor enter into the sanctuary, until she accomplishes these days which (are enjoined) in the case of a male child. But in the case of a female child she shall remain in her uncleanness two weeks of days, according to the first two weeks, and sixty-six days in the blood of her purification, and they will be in all eighty days.'" *Book of Jubilees* 3:10–12.

[23] *Guittin*, fol. 49, col. 2. The *Guittin* is a tractate of the Talmud dealing with divorce. Quoted in Hershon, *Talmudic Commentary*, 125.

[24] *Yevamoth*, fol. 113, col. 1. Quoted in Hershon, *Talmudic Commentary*, 124.

explanation by St. Paul that St. Augustine declares Adam to have spoken a prophecy, a view echoed by Tertullian.[25] St. John Chrysostom also follows St. Paul's lead in connecting Genesis 2:23–24 to Christ and the Church, writing that, just as Eve is created from the rib of Adam's side, so the Church is created from the blood and water of Christ's side.[26] Venerable Bede even makes a connection to the wordplay between *'iš* and *'iššāʰ* by noting that, as woman derives her name from man, "our Lord Jesus Christ also gave a share in his name to the Church, which he redeemed at the price of his body and blood and chose as a bride for himself, so that it was called 'Christian' from Christ."[27] In this school of early Christian exegesis, Genesis 2:23–24 can be seen as a way to explore the mystical marriage between Christ and the Church.

While early Christian exegesis of the passage differs from the strictly legal early Jewish interpretation, many early Christian commentators view Christ's reference to this passage in Matthew 19:1–11 as the model for reading the passage in a moral sense. Christ not only quotes Genesis 2:23–24 but also expands upon it, declaring that "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" for "from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:6, 8). Tertullian notes (though as a Montanist by this point) that, once a man and a woman have been joined into one flesh, it is sinful for either to remarry at all, even after the death of the other.[28] St. Jerome, who never fell into the Montanist heresy, agrees that the Scriptures "teach us to reject more marriages than one."[29] The

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[25] St. Augustine, *Literal Interpretation*: "For, inasmuch as Adam straightway predicted that 'great mystery of Christ and the church,' when he said, 'This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall become one flesh,' he experienced the influence of the Spirit. For there fell upon him that ecstasy, which is the Holy Ghost's operative virtue of prophecy." Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, chap. 11.

[26] "It was from his side that Christ fashioned the Church, as he had fashioned Eve from the side of Adam. Moses gives a hint of this when he tells the story of the first man and makes him exclaim: 'Bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh!' As God then took a rib from Adam's side to fashion a woman, so Christ has given us blood and water from his side to fashion the Church." St. John Chrysostom, *Catecheses*, 3:18.

[27] Venerable Bede, *On Genesis, Book 1*, 2:23.

[28] "Adultery is (this): when, the two having been—in whatsoever way—*dis*joined, other—nay, rather alien—flesh is mingled (with either): flesh concerning which it cannot be affirmed, 'This is flesh out of my flesh, and this bone out of my bones.' For this, once for all done and pronounced, as from the beginning, so now too, cannot apply to 'other' flesh" (emphasis original). Tertullian, *On Monogamy*, chap. 9.

[29] He continues, "There was but one Adam and but one Eve; in fact the woman was fashioned from a rib of Adam. Thus divided they were subsequently joined together in marriage; in the words of scripture 'the twain shall be one flesh,' not two or three.

Apostolic Constitutions likewise declare a prohibition against multiple marriages and adultery by citing the same idea that "two shall be one flesh."[30] St. Gregory the Great writes that it is against divine law to "say that marriages should be dissolved for the sake of religion" (when one chooses to leave the other and enter religious life) for "one and the same flesh on the one part passes to continence and on the other part remains in pollution."[31] Genesis 2:23–24 is thus understood to be normative in nature, the force of which is highlighted by Christ when He explains the state of things "from the beginning."

For both Jewish and Christian exegetes, then, the primary approach to Genesis 2:23–24 focuses on the institution of marriage. The early Jewish commentators tend to analyze the passage legalistically. The early Christian commentaries divide into two main camps; one draws an analogy between human marriage and the mystical marriage between Christ and the Church, while the other analyzes the divinely intended nature of marriage and establishes moral norms from that analysis. While these interpretations provide insight into the *content* of Adam's exclamation, they do not delve very deeply into the *circumstance* that leads to this exclamation, namely the wonder that Eve inspires in Adam. The three elements discussed earlier—the repeated use of "this," the significance of the expression "flesh from my flesh," and the connection between *ʾîš* and *ʾiššâ*—are explored but not illuminated or quite explained in any of the above commentaries, which view Genesis 2:23–24 as primarily related to marriage. The passage is undeniably related to marriage, but those elements can only be coherently explained by understanding the passage in the context of a cry of wonder, an exclamation of human love, with its roots in divine love for man.[32]

'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife.' Certainly it is not said 'to his wives.'" St. Jerome, *Letter to Ageruchia*, 12.

[30] "But such marriages as are beyond the third are manifest fornication, and unquestionable uncleanness. For God in the creation gave one woman to one man; for 'they two shall be one flesh,'" *Apostolic Constitutions*, 3.2; "Thou shalt not commit adultery: for thou dividest one flesh into two. 'They two shall be one flesh': for the husband and wife are one in nature, in consent, in union, in disposition, and the conduct of life; but they are separated in sex and number." St. Jerome, *Letter to Ageruchia*, 7.2.

[31] St. Gregory the Great, "Letter to Theoctista," *Registrum Epistolarum*, book XI, letter 45.

[32] This emphasis on marriage is certainly not restricted to the early Jewish and Christian exegetes. Batto states that "the Yahwist surely intended v. 24 . . . as a universal law regulating the normative behavior of the sexes within a community of marriage. The leaving of one's mother and father to join with one of the opposite sex so that the two

This wonder, accompanied by joy and love, is the central emotion that John Paul II identifies in his exegesis of Genesis 2:23–24. This joy, this exultation, "dominates in the words the man (male) speaks on seeing the woman (female)."[33] In John Paul II's analysis, Genesis 2:23–24 contains much more than simple foundations for legal or moral deductions; it contains the language of human love, which is an image of divine love. Man is in a relationship of love with God, a relationship that manifests itself in what John Paul II terms "original solitude," and this relationship of love is mirrored in a relationship of human love, a relationship that John Paul II calls an "original unity." Man, by being created "in the image of God" (Gen. 1:27), is "set into a unique, exclusive, and unrepeatable relationship with God himself."[34] This relationship of love—for it is out of love that God created man—manifests itself in man's hungering for his God; his original solitude is "not a mere deficit that is subsequently filled out by the creation of the woman" but rather "man's special relationship with his Creator."[35] Thus man's original solitude reflects the ongoing relationship of love between man and God.

What, then, is the woman's purpose, if not to fulfill the man's solitude, as thought by earlier exegetes? According to John Paul II, the woman joins the man's quest for God, "with each being a suitable helpmate for the other on their shared journey."[36] Adam's exclamation "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" is a recognition that the woman is searching for God, too. This exclamation is not signaling that Adam's solitude is gone but rather "affirming *Eve*'s original solitude."[37] The joint journey toward God in turn produces human love, because the sharing of the journey results in a sharing of life.[38] Thus the original unity expressed by Genesis 2:23–24 is one that looks beyond the scope of matrimony and extends toward divine love.

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become 'one flesh' can hardly be seen as anything other than a reference to marriage." Batto, "Institution of Marriage," 629.

[33] *Theology of the Body*, 8:4.

[34] Ibid., 6:2.

[35] Anderson and Granados, *Called to Love*, 27.

[36] Ibid., 46.

[37] Ibid.,, 45. Emphasis in original.

[38] "This bodily openness in turn makes love possible, for to love is to share your world with another person who is flesh of your flesh and bone of your bones." Also, "For it is precisely *in* other persons, and in our *relationship* to them, that we find the presence of God. We don't make our journey to God away from other persons, then, but together with them" (emphases original). Ibid., 40, 58.

John Paul II's exegesis of Genesis 2:23–24 takes a unique turn when he compares the passage to the Song of Songs, an idea mentioned as early as the ninth General Audience on the Theology of the Body.[39] The thread of wonder found in Genesis 2:23–24, according to John Paul II, "runs in fuller form through the verses of the Song of Songs."[40] In Genesis 2:23–24, the wonder is rooted in Adam's meeting a suitable companion who shares his original solitude and therefore can journey to God with him. This translates to the sexual difference between man and woman, for the difference between masculinity and femininity provides "two complementary ways of experiencing the body as openness to God" which "shape how each partner journeys toward full understanding of his vocation to love."[41] Indeed, it is because God creates humanity as male and female (Gen. 1:27) that man and woman are able to become one flesh (Gen. 2:24). This sexual difference is further explored in the Song of Songs, which for John Paul II conveys "man and woman's participation in the covenant of grace and love offered by God to man."[42]

Thus, it is clear that the early Jewish and Christian commentaries on Genesis 2:23–24 have a different focus than the analysis offered by Pope John Paul II. The early Jewish and Christian commentaries focus upon marriage as an institution. The passage is often thought to provide justification for certain moral or legal norms about marriage or divorce. Some Christian exegetes deviate by reading the passage in light of the relationship between Christ and the Church. Nonetheless, marriage as an institution is the primary lens through which Genesis 2:23–24 is read by the early Jewish and Christian exegetes. Pope John Paul II, however, approaches the passage from the point of view of love, both interpersonal love and divine love for man. While the early Jewish and Christian scholars provide helpful commentary on the institution of marriage, John Paul II's analysis of Genesis 2:23–24 provides an essential insight into the mystery of love and emphasizes divine love as the source of life and love.

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[39] "The concise text of Genesis 2:23 . . . can be considered the biblical prototype of the Song of Songs." *Theology of the Body*, 9:1.
[40] Ibid., 108:4.
[41] Anderson and Granados, *Called to Love*, 47–48.
[42] *Theology of the Body*, 108:3.

Akrasia and Mortal Sin

Angela Craig

Within every intentional action is an implied choice; sometimes the options are simple, as in, "to have dessert" or "to forego dessert," and sometimes the options are more complicated, as in, "to break a promise of secrecy with a friend" or "to lie about an evil situation." Even in the smallest of actions, though, we are virtually always choosing at least between action and non-action.

Furthermore, it seems that when a person is aware of a choice, although explicit deliberation may not occur, the person bases his decision to act on some inclination or underlying intention. The actual action executed by the person is the outcome of the implicit or explicit deliberation. It is what the person has decided is the best choice—except in cases when it is not.

Why ever would a person choose to perform an action which he has ruled to be less than the best action to perform that lies within his power? Even more fundamental than this, is it even possible? It may be tempting to think not—that for an agent to perform a particular action just is to show that the agent believes it to be the best action. Many people, considering this line of thought, have ruled that this kind of action, called *akrasia*, *incontinence of action*, or *weakness of will*, is either impossible or can only be explained by redefining certain aspects of our description.

However, not only is *akrasia* possible, but it seems that it is part of the condition of every instance of mortal sin if we understand mortal sin as the Catechism of the Catholic Church defines it. And, if this is true, then it is essential that we study it in order to better understand (and avoid) mortal sin.

I. Mortal Sin

Before we attempt to understand what mortal, as opposed to venial, sin is, an understanding of sin in general is necessary. This is "sin" in the Christian, and more specifically, Catholic, sense.

Very generally, a sin is an act which somehow goes against God. Of course, the natural question this definition raises is, "What

does it mean to *go against* God?" Some might say that sin is an act that is not in accordance with God's law. However, this does not necessarily do the term justice, for even a basic understanding of Christianity allows that God is not a force that has established arbitrary laws, as that definition could imply.

> Article 1849 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church states:
> Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is a failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as "an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law."[1]

So it might be true that a sinful act is an act which is not in accordance with God's law, but this is only a secondary kind of description. To sin is to choose something else instead of God; it is an act which untruthfully says that God is something less than what we need, and of course, for the Christian, this simply reveals an incorrect perception of God.

Sins can be classified as mortal or venial based on the seriousness of the act. Although both types of sin are offensive, venial sins are less serious than mortal ones. The Catechism tells us, "*Mortal sin* destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law. . . . *Venial sin* allows charity to subsist, although it wounds and offends it."[2] An often-used explanation is that grave sin fully severs the sinner from God, while venial sin moves the sinner farther away, though the connection remains.

Furthermore, article 1857 spells out three conditions which must be met in order for an action to be counted as the kind of sin in question: "Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent." A grave matter is matter which is addressed in the Ten Commandments (murder, adultery, theft, etc.) and will not be relevant in the discussion of *akrasia*, so I will deal only with the second and third conditions: that the action is committed with full knowledge, and that the action is committed with deliberate consent. An act of mortal sin, then, would look something like this: An agent

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[1] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing Services, 2006), 1849.
[2] Ibid., 1855.

knows that he can x or y; both are viable options. Having full knowledge of his potential acts, he judges x to be a grave violation of God's law, and judges y to not be a grave violation of God's law. Then, the agent proceeds to do x.

The fundamental question is now, "Does having full knowledge of an act's being a grave violation of God's law entail that we judge it to be an inferior choice to an act that is not a grave violation of God's law?" The most obvious way to answer this is to examine what one may infer about a grave violation of God's law. "Grave" has already been defined as something which has to do with a matter addressed in the Ten Commandments. A violation of a law seems simple enough; this would be an act that is contrary to a command. It seems that the locus of our struggle to understand mortal sin will be with the word "God."

Mention to any Christian the name "God," and he will most certainly understand to what, or whom, is being referred. In addition, not many will dispute that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and the creator of the universe; these are essential qualities of a being that most will say must belong to God, and they will say that any being which possesses these qualities is the being we know as God. However, this is merely the "philosopher's God," or the being which philosophy (by some schools) can determine, through reason, exists—but this definition allows God to remain a distant God indifferent to humans. On the other hand, the Christian God requires there be a much more personal relationship with human beings; after all, the word "Christian" contains the word "Christ"— God who became human, who suffered and was crucified in order to save all people. This understanding of God may imply more about what it means to violate God's law.

It has been briefly mentioned that to act in a way that is not in accordance with God's law could mean that arbitrary laws have been set by God. However, a deeper understanding will reveal that this is not necessarily so. If we may accept more basic Christian beliefs about the nature of God and man, we find that all "laws" and "commands" are better defined as instructions or guidelines which describe a way of life devoted to God. Furthermore, to wish to devote one's life to God is also not an existential choice; it means that one recognizes that to be in communion with God is the most orderly way to be, or the way things were intended to be. Someone who had a complete understanding of the nature of God and man could deduce the laws; he would also understand that to break the

law would be to separate himself from God. A total Christian understanding of God includes an understanding that God is not just good, but the *source* of goodness, or what makes goodness possible. In this sense, to choose anything other than God, to choose to violate God's law, is (arguably) irrational.

This is certainly an appealing account of what it is to have *full* knowledge of a grave violation of God's law. If this kind of knowledge is necessary, then a mortal sinner would have to know that God is the source of goodness, that he was created to be united with Him, and that his action was a complete betrayal of what he knows to be the best. Furthermore, if he had anything less than this understanding, then his sin was not mortal, for it was not committed with full knowledge.

This might make it seem nearly impossible to commit a mortal sin. Who, with this total understanding, with the full knowledge of what it means to violate God's law, would freely do so? Indeed, it seems that a more plausible explanation for most cases of mortal sin is to say that the sinner, while having a rudimentary understanding that it violated some law he learned at Mass or in Catholic school, did not have *full* knowledge of what his action truly meant. Is it actually possible that someone may be fully aware that God is the greatest good—from which all good things come and to which all good things are directed—and that man was created to be in communion with Him, and yet choose to do something contrary to His law?

Akrasia is a phenomenon which has been explored by many philosophers and may explain some instances of mortal sin. In order to determine if it can provide an answer to the apparent contradiction of mortal sin, the concept of *akrasia* will need to be outlined first. If *akrasia* is indeed one way for mortal sin to occur, then it must be shown that it is an act which is committed with full knowledge and also that it is freely committed, in order to fulfill the second and third conditions of mortal sin.

II. *Akrasia*: What It Is and What It Isn't

Imagine that a person is presented with (and is aware of) at least two choices of action: *x* and *y*. *X* and *y* are both within the person's power to commit. *Akrasia* is, in its most basic definition, an instance when the person considers these options, rules *y* to be the best choice, and then proceeds to do *x*. (Note that when a hypothetical person decides or believes that a particular action is

better than another, it is not necessary that his belief be *objectively true*.)

There have been many different specifications of akratic action which seem to fit the standard definition, and different views, depending on the account, of whether or not it is even an intelligible thing. Some have claimed that it is not, that an intentional action is simply the answer to an agent's question, "Which action is the best?" On this view, the way to figure out which action an agent has ruled to be the best is simply to look at what the agent does; an agent's choosing a particular action x as opposed to y entails that the agent has ruled it to be the best action. To say this is to say that it would be impossible for an agent to have ruled y to be better than x if he did indeed do x.

It will be useful to define akratic action more precisely, in order both to show that it is possible and also to ensure that our understanding is clear enough that we might not, in the end, rule an action to be a mortal sin when it really is not. A helpful way to illustrate akratic action will be to show first what it is not.

One very important distinction to make is that "a person believes that y is the best action in a given situation" does not mean "a person believes that y is the most closely aligned with some external standard," such as custom, ethics, or social guidelines. If this were true, then any case in which someone did something considered socially unacceptable would be a case of akratic action, and this is obviously false.

Consider the following case. It is socially unacceptable to answer a call on a cell phone in class. John is in class, and notices that his phone is vibrating. John knows that it is socially unacceptable to answer his phone, but he sees that it is his wife, who is, or at least was that morning, nine months pregnant. He weighs his options—to pick up the phone or not to pick up the phone?—and decides that it would be better to answer, although he is aware that this is a socially unacceptable action. If John follows through on this decision, this is clearly not a case of *akrasia*, because John has simply acted on what he has decided is the best action: to pick up the phone rather than to abide by the guidelines for social conduct. Therefore, we cannot equate "believing to be the best action" with "believing to be the most closely aligned with some external standard"; in these situations, the agent is actually choosing between an action which is aligned with an external standard and an action which is not. It is not an akratic action, so long as the agent acts

according to whether or not he thinks it is best to act in alignment with the external standard.

Another account that may be tempting says that akratic actions are often just cases of choosing incorrectly due to an overwhelming emotion. In these cases, if the person had been "in his right mind," he clearly would have ruled *y* to be the best action; it was because he was in a highly emotional state that he chose *x* instead. Sarah would never have chosen to murder under any normal circumstances, but when she found out that her husband had fathered a child with another woman, she flew into a rage and killed him—something she knew was not the best action.

But this, too, cannot be called *akrasia*. One could say that under other circumstances, she would judge the action of murder to be a worse choice, but considering her passions at the time, she sincerely felt that satisfying her desire to extinguish the life of her husband was better than doing nothing (remember, we have already said that judging something to be "good" does not mean judging it to be "ethical" or "acceptable by some external standards"). Perhaps her appetitive side caused her to judge *x* to be better at the time than *y*, so we cannot with certainty call this kind of action akratic.

Furthermore, we should be wary of calling an action akratic when underlying psychological issues of which the person is not aware come out in his action. Perhaps Tom is a very healthy person and has made a commitment to always opt for vegetables over junk food. One day, Tom is very hungry, and for a snack he is presented with a choice between Boston crème pie and steamed kale. He thinks about all of the sugar and empty calories in the cookie and all of the iron and fiber in kale, and determines that the kale is obviously the better choice. However, Tom has an aversion to kale that he has not realized, because of a traumatizing event that happened during his childhood which he has understandably suppressed. Tom consciously rules that kale would be the better choice, but his hand reaches anywhere but for the bowl of kale. Tom is puzzled, and proceeds to enjoy the cookie.

There is a danger in calling this action akratic, because, although Tom did not have conscious awareness of it, one might propose that he has nevertheless judged the cookie to be a better choice than reliving the trauma that the kale would certainly cause. In fact, skeptics of *akrasia* may want to say that it is never the case that an agent can simply choose to act on the action which he deems to not be the best, and that there is always some subconscious issue

at play. However, it seems highly unlikely that *every* potential instance of *akrasia* can be explained away this way. As Donald Davidson says:

> There is in fact a very great temptation, in working on this subject, to play the amateur psychologist. We are dying to say: remember the enormous variety of ways a man can believe or hold something, or know it, or want something, or be afraid of it, or do something. . . . We can desire things and tell ourselves we hate them. These half-states and contradictory states are common, and full of interest to the philosopher. . . . But we ourselves show a certain weakness as philosophers if we do not go on to ask: does every case of incontinence involve one of the shadow-zones where we want both to apply, and to withhold, some mental predicate? Does it never happen that I have an unclouded, unwavering judgement that my action is not for the best, all things considered, and yet where the action I do perform has no hint of compulsion or of the compulsive? There is no proving such actions exist; but it seems to me absolutely certain that they do.[3]

Keeping these stipulations in mind, we should define akratic action to exclude the kinds of cases which involve choosing an act based on what is acceptable by some external standard, fits of passion, and underlying or subconscious issues, because, as has been shown, the agent in these cases is indeed choosing the action that he has deemed best.

The akratic actions we will consider first in order to define *akrasia*, then, will be the ones that are coolly calculated and calmly executed. The moral consequences of both options will not be counted except for what the agent himself is considering about them. What kind of actions would these be like? Davidson presents a fine example when he describes a situation where he exhaustedly climbs into bed after a day of work before realizing he has not brushed his teeth:

> On the one hand, my teeth are strong, and at my age decay is slow. It won't matter much if I don't

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[3] Donald Davidson, "How Is Weakness of the Will Possible?" in Joel Feinberg (ed.), *Moral Concepts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 29.

brush them. On the other hand, if I get up, it will
spoil my calm and may result in a bad night's sleep.
Everything considered I judge I would do better to
stay in bed. Yet my feeling that I ought to brush my
teeth is too strong for me: wearily I leave my bed
and brush my teeth.[4]

This example illustrates the point that the akratic action may be
deemed inferior by the agent both rationally, as the agent reasons
that there is no danger to the health of his teeth by not brushing
them, and passionately, as the agent's desires actually make him
inclined to stay in bed. With multiple facets considered, *y*, going to
bed without brushing his teeth, is the better option, and yet the agent
chooses *x*.

Now we can conclude that *akrasia* is when an agent has
considered all the reasonably relevant factors, weighing their
importance, deciding that *y* is better than *x*, and then doing *x*.

III. *Akrasia* and Free Will

Perhaps our first instinct when considering true cases of
akrasia is to say that if a person judges *y* to be a better choice of
action than *x*, the only possible explanation for why the person
would intentionally *x* is because he has a compulsion to do so
despite or beyond reason. He has deliberated and believes *y* to be
the best course of action, but cannot carry *y* out because of some
force unbeknownst to him and out of his control. Wright Neely is
among the people who hold this view, saying, "a desire is irresistible
if and only if it is the case that if the agent had been presented with
what *he took to be good* and sufficient reason for not acting on it, he
would still have acted on it."[5] In other words, if an agent judges *y* to
be better, but does *x* anyway, then the akratic action (*y*) was
irresistible. Therefore, on this view, the agent would not be free in
his choice, for when something is *irresistible* by its literal meaning, it is
unable to be resisted, even though it affronts his best judgment. If this
is true, it would mean that akratic action could never be a mortal sin;
the agent would not be free in his action, thereby rendering the third
condition of mortal sin inapplicable.

Neely might have written this with the understanding that
the *akrate* may apply "resistance" like a tool with a constant force.

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[4] Ibid., 30.
[5] Ibid., 47.

When the *akrate* is presented with two competing choices, he may rule *y* to be a better choice than *x*, although *x* is also tempting. In order to ensure that he commits himself to *y*, a person will employ resistance against *x*; the application of resistance is part of his decision to *y* because *y* is better. Then, in the case of the *akrate*, Alfred Mele cites David Pugmire as saying:

> If the available resources for resistance failed, it would be arbitrary to insist that the desire was resistible on the occasion and his action clearly voluntary. ... [A]s everything stood the desire does seem to have been as good as irresistible by him then, [for it defeated] his best efforts.[6]

When *y* is chosen by the *akrate*, resistance has failed him; thus, he cannot be blamed, for *y* clearly must have been irresistible. If this is true, it would mean that akratic action could never be a mortal sin; the agent would not be free in his action, which thereby renders the third condition of mortal sin inapplicable.

However, Mele shows that akratic action is free. "The crucial flaw in the argument is that it depends upon the false premise that there is nothing more that the agent could have done by way of resistance."[7] Mele begins his defense of *akrasia* as a free action by presenting an idea of what it means for an action to be freely made. In the case of an agent being motivated by an allegedly irresistible desire, he says, we should ask "whether it was in his power to bring it about that the bulk of his motivation lay on the side of his better judgment."[8] Here, he is distinguishing between the belief that the agent holds about which choice is better, and the motivation or will with which he acts. On this account, it is not enough that he knows which is better; the agent must make an effort to carry the action out.

Mele's position becomes clearer when he explains two kinds of resistance. The first is skilled resistance, in which the person is aware of the potential of weakness of will and takes precautions to ensure that either the opportunity to choose what he judges to be worse is not presented to him, or, if the choice is presented to him, that his disposition will be such that his motivation is already inclined to lie on the side of the action he believes to be better. For example,

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[6] Alfred R. Mele, "Is Akratic Action Unfree?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46 (1986): 675.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., 676.

a recovering alcoholic may need to use skilled resistance by disposing of all the alcohol in his house, severing contact with friends who drink, and even altering the route he takes to get to work so he does not pass any bars. On the other hand, brute resistance is when "the agent simply forms or retains an intention, in the face of competing motivation, to perform the action he judges best."[9] In this case, an agent is able to be presented with a choice and successfully resist it in the moment; brute resistance is generally more successful in those with a "stronger" will.

Pugmire would say that the akratic actions of the weaker-willed person are not free, because the akratic choices he made were irresistible. However, by Mele's account, the failure to choose the action that the agent believes to be best is often the result of a failure to use the right kind of resistance (in addition to having a weak will). The action must be considered free because the *akrate* is free to employ skilled resistance. If the agent has truly ruled y to be the better action, then he should employ whatever resistance is necessary to make sure he performs y. *Akrasia*, in this account, can take this more specific form of judging y to be better and failing to apply the right kind and amount of resistance to x (resulting in the choice of acting on x instead).

No doubt there are many times when an agent fails to use skilled resistance; however, it is not necessary to conclude that this failure is also unfree. Mele addresses this when concluding his discussion of free akratic action:

> When we act akratically our problem is, in part, that, at the time of action, the balance of our motivations lies on the side of the akratic action performed. But, in at least some instances of incontinent action, it is open to the agent to prevent his being in this motivational condition by exercising his powers of self-control. *While* he is capable of preventing the condition in question from obtaining, an agent plainly is not under the sway of irresistible desires.[10]

Skilled resistance can be put to use when the agent is removed from the tempting choice. It is the possibly akratic action which is in question as being "irresistible"; if the choice for that action is not

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9 Ibid., 678.
10 Ibid., 679.

immediately present, then the irresistibility is also removed, and there should be no question that the agent is free.

IV. *Akrasia* and Mortal Sin

An act of *akrasia*, we have established, occurs when an agent knows that x and y are two actions that are both reasonably within his power to do. After deliberation, he judges that x is a worse choice than y; he then freely does x. Similarly, an act of mortal sin occurs when an agent knows that he can reasonably x or y; having full knowledge of his potential actions, he judges x to be a grave violation of God's law, and judges y to not be a grave violation of God's law. Then, the agent proceeds to do x. The correlation between the two kinds of actions is evident.

Section I also explicates why it might seem nearly impossible to commit a "grave violation of God's law" with *full knowledge*; our account of *akrasia* seems to be at least one way it could occur. Perhaps an agent has full knowledge of why it is a mortal sin to use the Lord's name in vain. He understands that this commandment is not an arbitrary law, but that to use the Lord's name in vain dishonors God; furthermore, he understands why dishonoring God is gravely disordered and wrong. He is not overcome by passion, nor are any underlying psychological issues at play; he calmly blasphemes, all the while aware that in doing so he is completely severing his relationship with God, the source of all things good. This kind of event seems almost incoherent; *akrasia* is an account of how it is feasible. If it is possible that Davidson's intellect and feelings were telling him that it was best to stay in bed but that he got up and brushed his teeth anyway, then we must admit that a grave violation of God's law, committed with full awareness of its wrongness, also is possible. The occasion of *akrasia* is at least one door that opens to mortal sin.

Of course, the heart of the issue is in the treatment of the term "full knowledge." The account given in Section I seems to be the fullest knowledge one can have of God and sin; however, the danger in maintaining that position is that certain acts which we might intuitively call mortally sinful no longer fit the description. Would we be comfortable saying that a serial killer who didn't have knowledge of what a "grave violation of God's nature" really is has not sinned mortally? Somehow, this conclusion is not satisfying.

Clearly, it would be incredibly beneficial to delineate exactly what is meant by "full knowledge." As we can see, the consequences

of the different senses of the term create a marked difference in the judgment of actions. Even in the strictest sense of the term, mortal sin is still possible through *akrasia*; if we use a looser definition, mortal sin becomes more probable. Perhaps the next element which should be examined is "full knowledge," because for those who desire salvation, the conclusion could be the difference between eternal life and death.

In All Things, In No Things: The Essence–Energy Distinction in Eastern Christian Theology

Daniel Lewis

This paper concerns the essence–energy distinction, a doctrine of Eastern (i.e. Greek) Christian theology. In particular, this paper will chart the development of the essence–energy distinction in the Eastern Christian tradition, and then define the doctrine and enumerate its implications. I will first explicate the Neoplatonic philosophy and terminology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, whose influence on subsequent Greek theologians is manifold. This explication will focus on Dionysius' understanding of being and causality, and his concern with the issue of God's authentic presence (henceforth to be referred to as "immanence") in and interaction with created beings without His ceasing to be transcendent from created beings. I will then connect Dionysius' theology with the theology of St. Maximus Confessor. Here the focus will be on Maximus' maintenance and elaboration of Dionysius' definitions of God, as well as on Maximus' doctrine of deification as an elaboration of Dionysius' concern with God's authentic immanence and transcendence. I will lastly explicate the theology of St. Gregory Palamas, who makes the most explicit formulation of the essence–energy distinction. Here I will focus on Gregory Palamas' definition of the essence–energy distinction, as well as on how the doctrine continues and fulfills the theologies and concerns of Dionysius and Maximus. I will conclude this paper by arguing that the essence–energy distinction answers a critical concern of Christian theology: how God can be truly immanent ("in all things") and truly transcendent ("in no things"), or, put another way, how God can remain God by His transcendence, and how intelligible, created reality can at the same time achieve salvation by God's immanence. The answers to these questions begin with Dionysius the Areopagite.

Dionysius the Areopagite was a Neoplatonic Christian. To understand him, therefore, it is vital to understand a number of Neoplatonic doctrines. The most important of these is their

equating of being with intelligibility. As Eric D. Perl states, "[t]he foundational principle of Neoplatonic thought is the doctrine that to be is to be intelligible."[1] According to Perl, this identification of being with intelligibility is integral to Greek philosophy: "[t]he philosophical enterprise . . . always already presupposes that being as such is able to be grasped by thought."[2] That is, to conceive of an unconceivable being is a contradiction in terms: if a being can be conceived, it is a conceivable being, not an unconceivable being. In the words of the Greek philosopher Parmenides, "For you could not know that which is not, for it is impossible, nor express it; for the same is for thinking and for being."[3] Likewise, as per Perl, "[t]o think being is to think it *as thinkable*."[4] This identification of being with intelligibility becomes a cornerstone in Plato's metaphysics, and leads particularly to Plato's formulation of the Good "as that which 'provides' being."[5] Given that the Good is that which "provides" being, and given that being is that which is intelligible, the question arises of whether the Good is a being—that is, of whether the Good is intelligible. According to Plato, the Good is not part of reality and is thus not a being: "the Good is not reality, but excels beyond reality in seniority and power."[6] From this it follows that because the Good is not a reality (i.e., it is not a being), and because only that which is a being is that which is intelligible (and vice versa), the Good is not intelligible.

The Neoplatonist Plotinus expands on Plato's definition of the Good, arguing that any terms used to describe the Good—or the "One," as per Plotinian terminology—only describe beings in relation to the Good. Perl explains, "when he speaks of the One as the cause of all things, Plotinus is not attributing being and causality to the One, but is merely indicating the secondary, derivative status of being."[7] Hence no positive statements can be made about the One. Even terms such as "One" are ultimately negative: "[The One] contains only a denial of multiplicity."[8] This emphasis on negative language does not entail that it is possible to truly describe the One

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[1] Eric D. Perl, *Theophany: The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 5.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., 6.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 7.
[6] Ibid., 9.
[7] Ibid., 12.
[8] Ibid.

in purely negative terms, since even negative language "still represents conceptual definition and intellectual apprehension."[9] As a result, "[i]n the end, Plotinus says, we must negate even such negative definitions."[10] Thus, the Neoplatonic conception of the Good/One is that of provider of being that is itself beyond being, and so cannot be truly defined using either positive or negative descriptions. If, however, one is to have a full picture of Neoplatonic (and thus Dionysian) divinity, this detailing of the transcendence of the Good/One must be followed by a detailing of the immanence of the Good/One.

The Neoplatonic conception of causality builds on Neoplatonism's equating of being with intelligibility. Of the Neoplatonic conception of causality, Perl states, "the determination of any thing, the totality of features by which it is what it is, by which it is itself as distinct from anything else, is the cause of being to that thing."[11] Plotinus formulates this in terms of the One, describing the One as the cause of all beings, and he furthermore uses this as another means of explaining the One's transcendence: "[a]s the universal principle of determination whereby all beings are beings, the One itself has no determination and hence is not anything intelligible, any being."[12] This conception of causality finds its most explicit roots in Plato's conception of participation in the Forms: "[t]he causation in question, therefore, is nothing other than Platonic participation . . . Plato frequently refers to the forms as that 'by which' their instances are such as they are, and, therefore, describes a form as the cause which makes its instances such."[13] Plato's Forms are both immanent and transcendent—"[a] Platonic form is the intelligible nature, present in many things, by which they are such things . . . it is at once immanent in and transcendent to the instances that participate in it"[14]—and yet this distinction does not entail that the Forms and the participants are distinct as two different types of reality, one transcendent and the other immanent. Rather, they are distinct as the difference "between reality and appearance."[15] That is, the Form in itself is transcendent to its sensible instances, and in its appearances (i.e. its sensible instances) it becomes immanent.

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., 17.
[12] Ibid., 18.
[13] Ibid., 19.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., 20.

Plotinus continues this participation-based causality, addressing it in terms of individuals' modes of apprehension. The One as Form is present in its singularity, but it appears divided into multiplicity to sense experience. As per Plotinus, "it is not then divided into parts, but seems to be so divided to the recipient."[16] Thus, because recipients cannot fully grasp the Form in itself but are able to perceive a differentiated Form through sense experience, the Form "is all present, but is not all seen in everything, because of the incapacity of what underlies it. But it is present, numerically identical everywhere."[17] Hence, insofar as the One is intelligible as Intellect (i.e. the differentiation of the One as it appears in sensible reality), the One is immanent, and is equivalent to being. Perl states regarding this that "all beings are appearances of the One" and that "the entire content of being is the differentiated appearance of the One in Intellect."[18] In the system of Plotinus' successor Proclus, the One even is itself the appearance, or production, of differentiation. Thus the production of differentiation is not the making of additional beings but is the manifestation of the One as being: "all reality . . . is nothing but the unfolding, the differentiated presentation, of the One."[19]

Given the Neoplatonic understanding of causality, it has followed that being is the appearance of the One, and in the thought of Proclus it is identifiable with the One. Combined with the Neoplatonic understanding of being as intelligibility, it follows that the One is both being (insofar as being is the appearance of the One) and beyond being (insofar as the One is in itself). This understanding of the One is integral to Dionysius the Areopagite's theology, and having now explained it, I will turn to Dionysius' theology as it concerns the divine transcendence and immanence.

Dionysius the Areopagite begins his work *On Divine Names* by reiterating the Neoplatonic understanding of the Good/One, though Dionysius correlates the Good/One with the God of the Christian faith. He describes God as "being after the manner of no existing being, and Cause of being to all, but Itself not being, as beyond every essence."[20] This follows the Neoplatonic understandings of being and causality: Dionysius' description of God

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[16] Ibid., 21.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., 28.
[20] Ibid., 11.

comprises God's transcendence and unintelligibility insofar as He is "Itself not being," as well as God's immanence insofar as He is "Cause of being to all." Additionally, Dionysius elaborates on the Plotinian understanding of God as beyond affirmation and negation. With his statement that God is "beyond every essence," Dionysius argues that God, as "beyond being," is not merely God as "a 'superessentiality,' lying above or outside of reason."[21] Rather, for Dionysius, "God is simply not anything, not 'there' at all."[22] Similarly to Plotinus' exposition of the inapplicability of negative language to the One, Dionysius maintains that God is "not merely unknowable but beyond unknowing, not merely ineffable but beyond ineffability,"[23] though even these statements "are still words, names, conceptual definitions, and must be transcended."[24] In this light, Dionysian theology consists not merely in apophatic (i.e. negative) theology as opposed to kataphatic (i.e. positive) theology, but in an opposition to both theological methods as improper to God's transcendence.

Yet in following the Neoplatonic understanding of causality, Dionysius presses the immanence, and hence the intelligibility, of God. As Perl explains, God "is present to all beings as being, the universal character common to all beings such that they are beings."[25] In *On Divine Names* Dionysius describes God as Cause of all intelligible reality, as Cause of "the life of the living, and essence of things that be; of all life and essence, origin and cause; because Its goodness produces and sustains things that be, in their being."[26] Dionysius conjoins this conception of God as immanent Cause with his conception of God as transcendent beyond being, stating that God "neither was nor will be nor came to be nor comes to be nor will come to be; rather, he is not. But he is being to beings."[27] And so God is that which defines intelligible beings, that which makes beings what they are: "God is thus present in each being as its determining or defining λόγος, by which it is itself and so is."[28]

Perl summarizes Dionysius' conception of God as simultaneously beyond being and serving as the principle of being as

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[21] Ibid., 13.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., 14.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 29.
[26] Dionysius the Areopagite, *Works* (London: James Parker and Co., 1897), 12.
[27] Perl, *Theophany*, 29.
[28] Ibid.

follows: "Dionysius' God . . . is at once transcendent and immanent. He is transcendent . . . in that he is not a being at all . . . . And he is immanent in that he is immediately present in all things as their constitutive determinations."[29] In greater detail: "[w]herever we look, we are not seeing God, in that every being, every object of thought, is not God; and wherever we look, we are seeing God, as he appears, for every being, every object of thought, is nothing but a presentation of appearance of God."[30] Hence Dionysius' schema is neither apophatic nor kataphatic, but "theophanic," comprising the simultaneous and complete transcendence of God in Himself, and the immanence of God in His appearances as being. This "theophanic" theology, with its seeming paradox of God's total transcendence and total immanence, raises a concern: what are the implications of such a system as regards humanity, the cosmos, and salvation? I will now address this concern by turning to the theology and philosophy of St. Maximus Confessor.

St. Maximus Confessor retains the Neoplatonic definitions of God prevalent in Dionysius. In his *Chapters on Knowledge*, Maximus states, "God is not essence . . . nor is he potency . . . he is not act . . . But he is a principle of being who is creative of essence and beyond essence, a ground who is creative of power but beyond power."[31] In the same text, Maximus maintains that God "is known only to a certain extent through his activities. The knowledge of himself in his essence and personhood remains inaccessible . . . and he can in no way be known by anyone."[32] Thus Maximus agrees with Dionysius' conception of God's transcendence. Furthermore, in his treatise *The Church's Mystagogy*, he affirms Dionysius' conception of God's immanence as well as God's transcendence when describing God as He "who is and becomes all for all beings, through whom everything is and becomes but who by himself never is nor becomes in any way anything that ever is or becomes in any manner."[33] This is a reiteration of Dionysius' description of God as the being of beings, as well as beyond all being and nonbeing. From here, Maximus applies the Dionysian understanding of God to his Christocentric soteriology (i.e. study of salvation), developing one of Maximus' most important doctrines: deification through Christ.

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[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., 34.
[31] Maximus Confessor, *Selected Writings* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985), 129.
[32] Ibid., 164.
[33] Ibid., 185.

In terms of Christian theology, Maximus makes many more explicit references to Christ than Dionysius. This is especially the case in Maximus' conception of God's immanence as the λόγος, or Logos, the principle of reality "by whom [someone moved according to the Logos] was created and in whom all things will ultimately be restored."[34] That is, the Logos is the cause of being, and is thus God Himself as immanent in the cosmos: "Through this Logos there came to be both being and continuing to be, for from him the things that were made came to be in a certain way and for a certain reason, and by continuing to be and by moving, they participate in God."[35] Maximus equates the Logos with Jesus Christ ("God's becoming human had already arrived through the very incarnation of the divine Logos ")[36] and further defines the Logos as the means by which man achieves deification, the state in which an individual "by constant straining towards God . . . becomes God and is called a 'portion of God' because he has become fit to participate in God."[37]

By participating fully in the Logos (i.e. Christ), man is able to become deified; that is, become God: "man is made God by divinization and God is made man by hominization."[38] For Maximus, deification is the purpose of the Incarnation: "The plan was for him to mingle, without change on his part, with human nature . . . so that he might become a man . . . and so that he might deify humanity in union with himself."[39] And yet when Maximus describes man's becoming divine through the Logos and deification, he speaks not of man's assuming the divine essence. Maximus explicitly states that in deification God "will also completely fulfill the goal of his mystical work of deifying humanity in every respect, of course, short of an identity of essence with God."[40] This follows from Maximus' continuity of Dionysius' conception of God's transcendence, but it also raises another concern: how man becomes God if man does not attain identity with the divine essence. This concern is answered in the work of St. Gregory Palamas, specifically with a culminating doctrine: the essence–energy distinction.

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[34] Maximus Confessor, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 56.
[35] Ibid., 55.
[36] Ibid., 116.
[37] Ibid., 56.
[38] Ibid., 60.
[39] Ibid., 115.
[40] Ibid., 116.

St. Gregory Palamas defines the essence–energy distinction in his *Triads* when he states, "For just as there is only one single essence without beginning, the essence of God . . . in the same way, there is only one single providential power without beginning, namely that of God . . . . It is thus not true that the essence of God is the only unoriginate reality, and that all realities other than it are of a created nature."[41] For Gregory Palamas, God's power (henceforth to be referred to as "energy")—that is, God's activities as intelligible to sensible reality—is an uncreated reality like God's essence, but is not God's essence, does not stem from God's essence, and is truly distinct from God's essence. Vladimir Lossky explains, "[w]e are therefore compelled to recognize in God an ineffable distinction . . . according to which He is, under different aspects, both totally inaccessible and at the same time accessible. This distinction is that between the essence of God . . . and the energies or divine operations."[42] Thus when God is described or named, it is always according to His energy and not His essence, as Gregory Palamas maintains: "Thus, neither the uncreated goodness, nor the eternal glory, nor the divine life nor things akin to these *are* simply the superessential essence of God . . . . But we say He is life, goodness and so forth, and give Him these names, because of the revelatory energies and powers of the Superessential."[43] This, then, is the essence–energy distinction. I will now seek to explicate the doctrine in greater detail.

As I have explained in relation to Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus Confessor, one of the chief concerns of the Neoplatonic theological tradition is the transcendence of God, the absolute "beyond being" to which neither positive nor negative statements may be aptly applied. The essence–energy distinction maintains this total transcendence, as Gregory Palamas explains: "The superessential essence of God is thus not to be identified with the energies . . . from which it follows that it is not only transcendent to any energy whatsoever, [but] that it transcends them 'to an infinite degree and an infinite number of times', as the divine Maximus says."[44] God, insofar as He is His essence, is infinitely transcendent, with no means by which His essence may be seen or comprehended

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[41] Gregory Palamas, *The Triads* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1983), 94.
[42] Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976), 70.
[43] *Triads*, 95.
[44] Ibid., 96.

in any fashion: "For how can what is beyond all intellect be called intelligible? In respect of its transcendence, it might better be called ignorance than knowledge. It cannot be a part or aspect of knowledge."[45] Hence the essence–energy distinction answers the concern of how God can be truly transcendent. I will now address how the essence–energy distinction answers how God can be truly immanent while also being truly transcendent, and how it relates to deification as Maximus formulates it.

In his paper on Gregory Palamas' metaphysics, Eric D. Perl states that God's energies are God: "They are in God, are God, prior to creation, but they are revealed and known only in their created effects."[46] Perl further states, "Thus God truly is Good, Being, Life, Beauty, and so on, but he is all of these not in his own essence but in his activities . . . in relation to creatures. The divine activities . . . are God-for-us."[47] And in even further detail: "The divine activities are not a separate 'level' or even 'aspects' of God. They are, quite simply, God: God the Creator, God the Lord, God relative to us."[48] Given this, when humanity interacts with God's energy, humanity is interacting with God Himself. Furthermore, man is able to truly become God in the sense explained by Maximus Confessor: by participating in the divine energy, which is God, man is defined by the divine energy, resembles the divine energy, and becomes the divine energy. Thus man truly becomes God, since to become the divine energy is to become God.

This does not collapse, however, into a monist metaphysics, where all things are identifiable with God in essence. Rather, if the transcendence of the divine essence is maintained, it follows that all things not possessing the divine essence are infinitely distinct from God in essence. As Perl recognizes, without the transcendence of the divine essence (and the essence–energy distinction as a whole), "the attempt to preserve ontological participation . . . leads to an unmitigated immanentism in which God and creation are ultimately identified."[49] It is also the immanence of the divine energy that prevents the transcendence of the divine essence from collapsing into a dualist metaphysics, where there are ultimately two principles:

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[45] Ibid., 64.
[46] Eric D. Perl, "St. Gregory Palamas and the Metaphysics of Creation," *Dionysius* 14 (Dec. 1990): 113.
[47] Ibid., 113–14.
[48] Ibid., 127.
[49] Ibid., 115.

that-which-is-God, and that-which-is-not-God. The immanence of the divine energy theologically enables intelligible reality to be identifiable with God (as per Perl: "[c]reation has no being but God"),[50] so that God is truly present in intelligible reality as intelligible reality itself.

Taken separately, the notions of the divine essence's transcendence and the divine energy's immanence might seem acceptable. Together, though, they appear an antinomy: God is completely distinct from, unrelated to, and transcendent to intelligible reality, and God is completely identifiable with, interacting with, and immanent in intelligible reality. This looks contradictory so long as one thinks of God as either His essence or His energy. With the essence–energy distinction, God as Persons is both His essence and His energy, both totally transcendent and totally immanent. This may not fully resolve the antinomic quality of a metaphysics based on the essence–energy distinction, but this may be due to the necessity of antinomy for a metaphysics of intelligible reality. As Perl states, "Creation is a mystery . . . because the only philosophically possible metaphysics is necessarily antinomic."[51]

This paper has traced the history and underlying structure of the essence–energy distinction. I began with the Neoplatonists and Dionysius the Areopagite. Here I detailed the Dionysian necessity of a God who is simultaneously and completely transcendent and immanent. I moved then to St. Maximus Confessor, detailing his continuity with the Dionysian schema, as well as Maximus' Christocentric doctrine of deification as the means to humanity's salvation. Finally, with St. Gregory Palamas I detailed the essence–energy distinction as an answer to the Dionysian necessity of a simultaneously transcendent and immanent God, as well as an answer to and explanation of Maximus' doctrine of deification. Furthermore I have argued that the essence–energy distinction explains the antinomy of God's complete and simultaneous transcendence and immanence and acts as a bulwark against both metaphysical monism and dualism. I conclude that the essence–energy distinction stands as a valuable doctrine, as it theologically enables God to be truly distinct from reality yet also be one with reality: to be in all things and in no things.

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[50] Ibid., 116.
[51] Ibid., 127.

The Problem of Factivity in Anscombe's Account of Practical Knowledge
Richard Creek

In *Intention*, G. E. M. Anscombe attempts to give an account of an agent's knowledge of his or her intentional actions. She begins this task by distinguishing intentional actions from unintentional actions an agent could undertake. Intentional actions are driven by reasons, and therefore are denoted by the relevance of the question "Why?" to the action that took place. This question has a unique applicability to intentional actions which is brought forth by a positive answer. If the agent is able to answer "Why?" the answer is a reason for the agent's acting and the action is intentional.[1]

Anscombe then clarifies this account by showing how one might be unable to answer the question "Why?" An agent can deny that the question "Why?" is applicable by claiming not to know that he is performing the action in question. If this response is true, the person could not have done that action intentionally. Anscombe points out that an action could be described in multiple ways, and a person could have knowledge of doing something under one description and not under another.[2] "So to say that a man knows he is doing X is to give a description of what he is doing *under which* he knows it."[3]

Anscombe develops another way that the question "Why?" could fail to be applicable to an action: the agent knows what he is doing only through observation. There is a specific phenomenon that exists in our knowledge of our actions: we seem to know what we are doing without observation. She illustrates this with our knowledge of the position of our limbs. We are able to say that we know where our limbs are without having to look at them.[4] Intentional actions are a "sub-class" of "things known without observation." Actions that are known only observationally are not

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[1] G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 9.
[2] Ibid., 11.
[3] Ibid., 13.
[4] Ibid.

ones we would know we were doing until we saw that we were doing them; we cannot give a reason to answer the question "Why?" for these actions.[5]

Non-Observational Knowledge

Anscombe anticipates someone objecting that her use of "known without observation" to describe all intentional actions; so far she has only used it to describe our knowing the position of our limbs. "Now it may be e.g. that one paints a wall yellow, meaning to do so. But is it reasonable to say that one 'knows without observation' that one is painting a wall yellow?"[6] Her reply is that it is possible to have the intention of doing something when we do what actions constitute bringing it about. If Z is brought about by doing ABC, I can have the intention of doing Z when I do ABC; knowledge of Z is not acquired through observation.[7] She illustrates this with the famous example of opening the window:

> To see this, if it is not already plain, contrast this case with the following one: I open the window and it focuses a spot of light on the wall. Someone who cannot see me but can see the wall, says "What are you doing making that light come on the wall?" and I say "Ah yes, it's opening the window that does it", or "That always happens when one opens that window at midday if the sun is shining".[8]

The opening of the window is a far more complex example than any Anscombe has given previously to illustrate this point. It is intuitive to classify the "opening of the window" as an intentional action, and to place the "casting the spot of light on the wall" into the class of unintentional actions. In this example, she knows what she is doing; she knows that she is opening the window and she does not need to consult any other source to know this. She does not rely on observation to know what she is doing; she knows non-observationally that she is opening the window. In the case of the spot of light on the wall, she did not know she was producing it initially. She found this out when someone told her about it and then she noticed it herself by seeing it. She required observation to know that it was happening in response to what she was doing. At

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[5] Ibid., 14–15.
[6] Ibid., 50.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., 51.

first glance, her account of non-observational knowledge works to sort actions between "intentional" and "unintentional."

The Twoness Problem

An agent's knowledge of his or her action is uniquely different from another person's knowledge of the action. The agent's knowledge in this case has a different role than someone else's knowledge; it provides order to the action, whereas the other person's knowledge is merely knowledge of what happens. The knowledge a third party has of the action is strictly observational. This would make it appear that there are two ways of knowing actions: one non-observationally and one through observation. The non-observational knowledge consists of our knowing our intentional actions. We know what happens around us through observation. So if we were to look at the window example, Anscombe would know non-observationally that she was opening the window, but she would not know that the window actually opened without seeing it. These two ways of knowing are quite distinct from each other and appear to yield different types of knowledge. Because of this, it is easy to conceive of this example with "two objects of knowledge": the intentional action and what actually takes place.[9]

Anscombe immediately seeks to reject this view by showing that the two ways of knowing do not yield two separate descriptions of the same thing; they are identical descriptions regardless of how they are known.[10] She believes that this problem has led many people to conclude that what is known non-observationally is merely the intention or bodily movement and that the result of the action is only known through observation. She calls this a "mad account" because the result was "willed in the intention" and we cannot give any sense to "willing." One does not make something happen by simply willing it to happen, nor can one restrict knowledge of one's intentional actions to simple bodily movements. Such a restriction would allow someone to say that he can move his arm but not a matchbox moved by his arm. It makes more sense to say that the person is simply moving the matchbox.[11]

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., 52.

She also rejects a solution to the problem according to which a person would be intentionally doing whatever she thought she was doing. If she thinks she is doing something, and it does not actually happen, then there is a gap between what she thought she knew herself to be doing and what really happened. In the event that the action and the thought actually correspond to each other, the control of what happens is made to seem accidental. The gap is closed, but not because of a direct relationship between knowledge of the action and what actually happened. This approach is unattractive because it makes it appear that what happens in correspondence to an intention is a matter of chance.[12]

Next, Anscombe considers a formula that she once upheld: "I do what happens."[13] If the description of what takes place is what she would describe herself as doing, then there is no gap between her doing and what actually takes place. This account was rejected by many people because what takes place is known observationally, whereas she claims we know what we do without observation. To attempt to clarify this matter, she gives an example of writing without watching what is written. She is able to say what she is writing and those words would show up on the paper without her having to see them appear. In this case, her eyes would have the role of guiding the writing; without the eyes she would not know if some external factor was preventing her words from appearing on the page. This is a potentially devastating objection to her formula of "I do what happens." It is very hard to avoid the conclusion that there are two different objects of knowledge in each case of intentional action.[14]

The idea of there being two objects of knowledge in each case of intentional action has the implication that observation is necessary for knowledge of intentional action. Consider the following argument, from John Schwenkler, about an agent performing an action without observing it:

> (1) An agent is not performing an action unless that action is actually happening.
> (2) For any action, the agent must know that the things required for the action to take place are happening.

[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., 53.

(3) By (1) and (2), the agent cannot know that the action is happening unless the agent knows that the necessary conditions for the action are fulfilled.

(4) The agent cannot know that the action attempted is taking place unless what happens is observed in some manner.

(5) By (3) and (4), the agent will not know non-observationally what actually takes place.

(6) The agent will not have observational knowledge of the action taking place.

(7) By (5) and (6), the agent will not know what he or she is actually doing.[15]

The conclusion that a person might not know what he is doing without observation is obviously what Anscombe would deny. This argument is valid, which means that its strength rests on its weakest premise. In order for this argument to be rejected, one of its premises must be denied; the question is, which one? Anscombe will have to find a way to reject one of these premises to hold on to non-observational knowledge.

Practical Knowledge

In section 32 of *Intention*, Anscombe describes our knowledge of our intentions as being similar to a shopping list. The man carrying the list in the store will buy what is on the list regardless of whether he made the list or his wife wrote it for him. This relationship is different than one that would exist if a detective were to be following the man and recording what he bought. The detective's list would have the function of recording the man's purchases and the man's list would determine what he bought. If the man shopping were to purchase the wrong things, he would be making a mistake that could not be attributed to the list. As Anscombe puts it, "the mistake is not in the list but in the man's performance."[16] If the detective's list does not match the man's purchases, the mistake would be in the recording of the actions and not in the actions themselves.

At the end of section 32, Anscombe criticizes modern philosophy for its conception of knowledge. "Certainly in modern philosophy we have an incorrigibly contemplative conception of knowledge. Knowledge must be something that is judged as such by being in accordance with the facts."[17] If we maintain that there are two types of knowledge, one observational and one non-observational, we are left saying that there are two objects of knowledge. If one tries to sidestep this conclusion and claim a single object of knowledge, "one looks hopelessly for the different mode of contemplative knowledge in acting, as if there were a very queer and special sort of seeing eye in the middle of acting."[18]

Anscombe introduces the notion of practical knowledge to help clarify the matter. Practical knowledge is able to account for the unique nature of the man's shopping list being different from the detective's. She explains practical knowledge by giving an example of a man directing a building project. The man directs the project but does not see it being built and does not get reports on its progress; he directs it by giving orders. His imagination plays the role of perception in most actions; he must completely visualize what is going to happen for it to take place.   In this example his knowledge of what is happening is practical knowledge.[19]

Practical knowledge has the role of ordering our actions, whereas speculative knowledge provides us with a report of the world around us. These two types of knowledge have opposite orientations. Speculative knowledge begins with acceptance of a fact known in the world. Practical knowledge works in the opposite direction; the knowledge of the fact shapes what happens in the world. This can be fairly described by stating that the two types of knowledge have different "directions of fit."[20]   Our non-observational knowledge is a species of practical knowledge and our knowledge by observation falls into the category of speculative knowledge. It may seem paradoxical to claim that one can have knowledge of a fact before the relevant event happens, but this is resolved by granting practical knowledge a causal role in making that event happen. In a sense, we have practical knowledge of an action

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[17] Ibid., 57.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., 82.
[20] Richard Moran, "Anscombe on 'Practical Knowledge,'" in *Agency and Action*, *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 55 (2004): 46.

because our knowledge of it made it happen; "it is the cause of what it understands."[21]

It is important to the concept of practical knowledge that its nature as causing its own understanding be interpreted as formal causality and not merely efficient causality. A formal cause is what makes something the type of thing that it is, whereas an efficient cause is what brings something about. Framing practical knowledge purely as an efficient cause gives an incomplete picture of its role in our intentional actions.[22] Practical knowledge specifies the descriptions one can have for one's actions; it forms the actions in such a way that the descriptions have relevance to the agent. Richard Moran explains this by citing an example from David Velleman's book *Practical Reflection*. In the example, a man is walking down Fifth Avenue and experiences a failure of practical knowledge: he forgets what he is doing. He stops walking and looks around to figure out what he was doing. His environment is able to provide him with some clues about what he may have been doing, but by itself, it cannot give the man knowledge of what he was doing; observation cannot give him the descriptions under which he was acting. What he sees is of little use to him because he lacks any relation to the objects that surround him; he cannot picture his goal and he cannot relate anything to that goal. This knowledge that the man lost is practical knowledge, which is not grounded on observation.[23] If practical knowledge is only granted efficient causality, it fails to account for an intentional action having a specific relevant description as opposed to some other description.

Anscombe's Practical Knowledge as Factive Knowledge?

We have already seen the problem that arises when knowledge of our own intentional actions is strictly non-observational. A wedge is driven between what the agent knows himself to be doing and what the agent knows to have actually happened. We are supposed to know what we are doing without having to rely on observation, and yet, we need observation to know if our action succeeds or not. This is not very visible in cases where the agent succeeds in doing what it is he was intending to do and has

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[21] *Intention*, 87.

[22] Anne Newstead, "Interpreting Anscombe's *Intention* §32FF," *Journal of Philosophical Research* 34 (2009): 166.

[23] "Anscombe on 'Practical Knowledge,'" 56–57.

the use of observation while acting. It is brightly highlighted in cases where the agent is unable to observe what happens when acting.

If I were clicking a light switch with my eyes closed, I would have practical knowledge of myself turning on the light. My knowledge would be giving my action a particular order that would make it the action of "turning on the light" instead of just a number of muscle contractions. I would also know what I was doing without having to observe my doing it. I would, however, have to observe what actually happens in order to know if the light actually turns on. If the light actually did come on as I thought it would, it would appear that I knew that I was turning the light on without observing the light. What is it I know if the light does not actually come on?

The concept of practical knowledge of an action becomes problematic if I fail to do what I think I am doing. If the light did not turn on, I would appear to have practical knowledge of something that is not actually happening. This is a huge problem for the concept of practical knowledge. It is counter-intuitive that one can know something that is not the case. If our non-observational knowledge of an action is not consistent with what actually happens, can it even be called knowledge at all?   Is practical knowledge exempt from the intuitive requirement that knowledge has to be factive? Anscombe acknowledges these difficulties and attempts to answer them in section 45 of *Intention*:

> Orders, however, can be disobeyed, and intentions fail to get executed. That intention for example would not have been executed if something had gone wrong with the chalk or the surface, so that the words did not appear. And my knowledge would have been the same even if this had happened. If then my knowledge is independent of what actually happens, how can it be knowledge of what does happen? Someone might say that it was a funny sort of knowledge that was still knowledge even though what it was knowledge of was not the case![24]

As Anscombe insists in the passage above, the knowledge is unchanged by the success or failure of the action; this knowledge is completely independent of what happens. This is a rejection of premise (2) in the argument from earlier that she is trying to get

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[24] *Intention*, 82.

around. When (2) is rejected, we are left with practical knowledge of an action that does not require a person to be doing what that action consists in; we do not have to be doing something in order to know that we are doing it. I could have practical knowledge of turning on a light without actually turning on a light.

If what is supposed to happen when I intentionally act does not happen, where did I miscalculate? Anscombe responds to this by quoting Theophrastus: "the mistake is in the performance, not in the judgment."[25] If I am intentionally trying to do something that does not occur, it is a mistake in my actual performing of the action that caused the failure and not in my knowledge of the action. As long as it is accepted that my practical knowledge of the action is not dependent on what actually happens, this accounts for failures to execute intentional actions.

There does still seem to be a possibility that more than just the person's performance is at fault when an action fails to be executed. If I have practical knowledge of some action that is not taking place, what is wrong with viewing my judgment as being in error? It is counter-intuitive to hold the action accountable to matching the knowledge of the action instead of making the knowledge accountable to being in accordance with reality. If (2) is not rejected, there is plenty of room for the judgment to be at fault.

Non-Factive Knowledge is not Knowledge

The counter-intuitive nature of Anscombe's rejection of (2) is the greatest problem with her account of practical knowledge. Her account entails that a type of knowledge is not bound to a common-sense requirement that is placed upon all knowledge. Knowledge must be of something that is the case; it is factive. Stripping this requirement from a species of knowledge completely changes what it means to "know" something. Our entire conception of knowledge depends on the things known being true; we do not educate ourselves to know false things. The truth of a proposition depends on whether or not it conforms to reality. In cases where propositions do not match reality, we would quickly label them false statements. In this fashion, we accept "2+2=4" as true because having two objects and acquiring two more would yield a quantity of four. We would reject the statement, "Cows have blue fur," on the basis that no one has ever seen a blue cow. If a man thought he was

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[25] Ibid.

a dinosaur, you would refer him to a psychiatrist on the principle that knowledge has to be in accordance with the facts of reality.

Anscombe wants to exempt practical knowledge from the requirement that knowledge be factive. Such an approach creates more problems than it solves because the agent is left knowing something that is not shown in any way to be true. This approach is completely worthless if practical knowledge is viewed as only an efficient cause; knowledge cannot be the cause of what it understands when it does not cause the thing to be understood. Thinking of practical knowledge in terms of formal causes does not lead to a sufficient solution either. At first glance, it seems that practical knowledge is what yields the primary description of our intentional actions. It orients the action in terms of goals and it is what makes physical actions more significant than descriptions of simple bodily movements. It would take the actions of "extending my arms forward," "closing my grip," and "lifting my arms upward," and grant them the description of "opening the window." Practical knowledge does seem to create the form of the action, but what form can there be if the action is not taking place? The agent is left with a false description in the event that what is believed to be happening is not actually happening.

Anscombe tries to deal with this issue with the example of the man with the shopping list. There is nothing wrong with the list in the case where the man simply buys the wrong objects. He simply commits some error when he picks up objects and makes the purchase. Anscombe is clearly using the shopping list in the example as an analogy for knowledge of action; it just may not be a good enough analogy. Knowledge has to do more than just command action; it has to provide a way of thinking about what is the case. In the event that the "knowledge" is of something that isn't the case, this role cannot be fulfilled.

John McDowell has a similar criticism of Anscombe's account of practical knowledge. He points out that on Anscombe's account, there is no "normative or evaluative element in the content of the knowledge, even though this knowledge is 'the cause of what it understands.'"[26] Practical knowledge requires the possibility of error in what is known and not just in the action itself in cases where one claims to be doing something that is not happening. When I fail

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[26] John McDowell, "What Is The Content Of An Intention In Action?" *Ratio* 23 (2010): 429.

to do what it is I describe myself as doing, "things are not as I say they are."[27] McDowell thus rejects the possibility that an agent can know that he is doing something when the tasks the action consists of are not taking place. If Anscombe is suggesting that practical knowledge does not rely on whether or not the person is actually doing what he thinks he is doing, she is falling into the trap of viewing intention in terms of interior mental states. This is unfortunate because Anscombe's work was driven by her opposition to viewing intentions as interior affairs. McDowell insists that knowledge is in intention only when what is said to be happening is actually happening. Practical knowledge must be true in the ordinary sense that we use the word "knowledge."[28] He concludes his paper by stating that the proper form of a statement of intention has to be a statement of what one is doing; it cannot be a statement of merely what one should be doing.[29]

In his 1963 essay, "Knowing What I Am Doing," Keith Donnellan acknowledges this same problem. "Even with my eyes open, my ability to say what is on the paper may not be the result of looking at what appears there. But there is not yet enough to make it essentially or necessarily a case of knowledge without observation."[30] Donnellan points out several difficulties with Anscombe's conception of non-observational knowledge. Non-observational knowledge is a concept that is so important to Anscombe that she was willing to deny a commonsense position to maintain it. Observation is not irrelevant to knowledge of action; we have confidence in our knowledge of intentional actions because we have past evidence from observation.[31] At the end of his essay, Donnellan questions whether it is really absurd for us to know intentions by observation, if it is the case the intentions are not "inner states."[32]

The strict adherence to practical knowledge being non-observational has created an epistemic and metaphysical gap "between intention and action."[33] The idea that the agent knows the

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., 430.
[29] Ibid., 432.
[30] Keith S. Donnellan, "Knowing What I Am Doing," *The Journal of Philosophy* 60 (1963): 407.
[31] Ibid., 404.
[32] Ibid., 409.
[33] Anne Newstead, "Knowledge by Intention? On the Possibility of Agent's Knowledge" in *Aspects of Knowing: Epistemological Essays*, ed. S. Hetherington (Oxford: Elsevier, 2006), 199.

intention non-observationally is not really disputed. The idea that the agent knows the complete intentional action without observation is not supported well at all. The gap could be thought of in two ways: as a causal gap between intention and action, or as an intention that is conceived of in a way that falls short of the action.[34] Anscombe argues against accounts of such a gap by trying to show that the gap simply does not exist. Two major attempts to bridge this gap are to restrict non-observational knowledge to simple bodily movements or to suggest that the only thing known without observation is the intention; Anscombe rejects both of these views.[35]

Anscombe's rejection of practical knowledge necessarily being factive is grounded on her assertion that such knowledge must be totally non-observational. This creates the metaphysical and epistemic gap; the agent supposedly knows what he is doing independent of observation, but the observation is the only way he knows what actually happens. The gap is present when what is known non-observationally falls short of what happens. Practical knowledge cannot truly be knowledge if it is not reflecting upon facts in reality, and therefore it cannot be truly independent of what happens. In the event that it fails to correspond to what happens, it is as if practical knowledge is an illusion; it serves little use if it does not yield knowledge of what happens. In the face of all of the problems that arise when it is maintained that knowledge of intentional actions has to be strictly non-observational, it is far more intuitive to reject the requirement that this knowledge has to be strictly non-observational than to remove the factivity requirement of this knowledge. It would be far better to allow that practical knowledge has an observational component than to conceive of it in a way that allows for what actually happens during an action to be totally irrelevant to our knowledge of it.

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[34] Ibid., 195.
[35] *Intention*, 51–52.

The Ethics of "Get Tough" in Juvenile Justice

John Streifel

For many of us, the reality and implications of juvenile offenses are distant and insignificant. However, juvenile delinquency is a troublesome issue, and society often responds to youth crime with callousness and retribution. Since the inception of the juvenile justice system as a separate entity from the adult system, there has been an increase in punitive measures toward youthful offenders, especially those who have committed serious crimes. This "get tough" approach, as manifested in transfers to adult court, is radically simplistic and not only fails to yield positive empirical results, but also clashes with a fundamentally Catholic moral perspective of addressing youth crime. Instead, a new juvenile justice movement called restorative justice should be offered for its distinctively Christian approach to crime, youth, and the healing process.

Legal treatment of juveniles has a long history. Before the last several centuries, society did not demarcate an adolescent stage, and children above the age of seven were routinely treated as adults in criminal proceedings. With the advent of urbanization and industrialization, a philosophy developed around the necessity to handle underage children in a different manner from adults. The first juvenile court was created in Illinois in 1899 and was founded on the idea that the state must occasionally intervene for the welfare of a child. This intervention may arise for a variety of reasons, such as that the parents of the child are negligent, the child has no home, or perhaps the child has committed a crime. This philosophy led to the development of systems that actively sought to help the child, who was thought to be a product of "adverse socialization" and who lacked full cognition and moral culpability for his or her actions. Through intervention, youthful offenders could be treated and "cured" of their misguided social practices.[1]

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[1] Lodi Walgrave, "Restoration in Youth Justice," *Crime and Justice* 31 (2004): 544–45.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the juvenile system underwent extreme pressure concerning its delivery model and guiding principles. Youth crime shifted in nature and grew in volume due to economic, demographic, and social forces. One of the many critical responses to this dramatic shift was a call for harsher sentences for juveniles involved in crime. Society adopted the view that youth are responsible and autonomous and should be held completely accountable for law-breaking behavior. The judicial mainstream embraced what Walgrave labels a "retributive just-deserts approach."[2] The conception that children are, in the words of Zimring, "semiautonomous" gave way to an unyielding assumption that youth who are involved in crime must pay full punishment and never receive any mitigating treatment.[3] This paradigm shift is reflected in such measures as a lowered age of jurisdiction, "boot camps," and most importantly, transfers (waivers) to adult court.[4]

To clarify the practices of juvenile justice, it may prove worthwhile to attend to the theological considerations relating to criminal and juvenile justice. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), in "Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice," lays out some crucial points for understanding and navigating criminal justice practice.[5] In broad terms, we are aiming for the common good among all persons in a community. When crime confronts our society, it is divisive, destructive, and debilitating. Crime tears at the fabric of a community and causes relationships to atrophy. A raw human response to crime is to retaliate and inflict more harm. However, the challenge of systems designed to deal with crime is to surmount and repair the "scattering" that sin causes. A Catholic view is two-pronged. First, a society cannot and should not tolerate crime in any form. Those who commit crime must be held accountable and suffer any appropriate consequences. At the same time, the offender is still a child of God, and for this reason we must never dismiss the human dignity and rights of a criminal.

The practice of juvenile justice fits within this context of providing safety for society and also offering treatment and

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[2] Ibid., 549.
[3] Mark H. Moore and Stewart Wakeling, "Juvenile Justice: Shoring Up the Foundations," *Crime and Justice* 22 (1997): 262.
[4] Ibid., 263.
[5] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice" (2000), (http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/criminal.shtml).

rehabilitation to youth offenders. Juvenile justice practitioners must balance these often-competing purposes, and frequently the balance shifts more toward retributive goals. Juvenile systems also are responsible for the care and custody of youth who are status offenders, and for dependent youth. These groups have not committed crimes but need protection because they are at-risk because of their environment. The purview of juvenile justice is wide, as evidenced in the mission statement of the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services:

> The Department of Juvenile Services ensures the safety of the community and the well-being and safety of the youths under DJS care, holds juvenile offenders accountable to victims and communities, and assists youths in developing competency and character to aid them in becoming successful members of society.[6]

"Many observers," Walgrave writes, "typify the social climate as being intolerant of deviancy and inclined to repressive measures against offending."[7] The rise of waivers in the juvenile process is indicative of this hostile social environment. One need only read the online comments following an online article about a juvenile crime to sense the anger and intolerance. Waivers gained traction in the 1970s, and they are provisions to send a youth normally under the jurisdiction of the juvenile system to the adult criminal justice system.[8] Many states have enacted mandatory transfers for certain youth who are above a cutoff age and commit certain heinous crimes like murder or first-degree sexual assault. The standard age that differentiates juvenile from adult is 18, and mandatory waivers often stipulate that a youth as young as 14 who commits such a crime must face trial in adult court. Discretionary waivers leave the option to the judge, with considerations from both the prosecution and defense, to assess a youth, his or her crime and its degree of severity, and then to potentially send the youth to adult court. These policies in the juvenile justice system represent the "intolerance" and "repressive measures" mentioned by Walgrave, and they are being actively debated in juvenile justice circles.

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[6] Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, "DJS Vision, Mission, and Goals" (2011), (http://www.djs.state.md.us/mission.html).
[7] Walgrave, "Restoration in Youth Justice," 584.
[8] American Judicature Society, "Return to the principles of juvenile justice" (2009), (http://www.ajs.org/ajs/ajs_editorial-template.asp?content_id=816).

This tougher way of conducting juvenile justice has certainly seen widespread implementation, and empirical research has tried to evaluate the effects of waiver policies on traditionally important juvenile justice statistics like recidivism. Two very recent and comprehensive studies have attempted to determine the impact of sentencing juveniles in adult court. In one, "Juvenility and Punishment: Sentencing Juveniles in Adult Criminal Court," the authors find that when comparing juveniles in the adult system to similar young adults in the adult system, the punishments are more severe for the juveniles.[9] These juveniles are waived up to adult court via transfers, and the researchers match juveniles (in adult court) with adult offenders who are similar in crime, demographics, etc. They find that the stigma of having "juvenile status" in adult court actually leads to harsher punishment. Waivers send juveniles to adult court under the philosophy of "get tough" and juveniles are treated more harshly (by about 62 to 75 percent) than a regular adult offender. This study is crucial in relation to the issue of fairness for juveniles in adult court. Because of a vindictive attitude toward juveniles, we send them to adult court after ignoring any mitigating factors, prescribing a more severe sentence than we would for an adult. The authors end by citing various studies that show that adult incarceration for juveniles typically leads to higher rates of recidivism. Finally, they note that most of these youth processed in adult court are not radically violent or predatory offenders. Thus the transfer policy seems to fail at its most basic and reasonable goal of removing "super criminals" from society.[10]

The second empirical study, "Adolescent Transfer, Developmental Maturity, and Adjudicative Competence: An Ethical and Justice Policy Inquiry," examines the effects of juvenile transfer and concludes that these policies present "significant processing, treatment, and recidivism problems for youths."[11] The authors review the importance of juvenile development psychology and trial competency. Although these issues are complex and not fully understood, the "historical understanding of juvenile fitness for trial neglects to take into account the psychological limitations that such

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[9] Megan C. Kurlychek and Brian D. Johnson, "Juvenility and Punishment: Sentencing Juveniles in Adult Criminal Court," *Criminology* 48 (2010): 725–58.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Brian G. Sellers and Bruce A. Arrigo, "Adolescent Transfer, Developmental Maturity, and Adjudicative Competence: An Ethical and Justice Policy Inquiry," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 99 (2009): 435.

youthfulness naturally entails."[12]   The punitive approach geared toward juveniles, in its frenzy to swiftly incarcerate, fails to recognize the multiple problems that it causes in the future. The authors state that while it may seem that mandatory waivers have a deterrent effect, "evidence-based research has yet to support this rationale."[13] If juveniles are channeled to adult court, the authors argue that it is vital to determine a proper level of "competency," based on developmental maturity, in order for them to fairly stand trial in an adult court. The social and behavioral research emphasizes that juveniles demonstrate a lack of "psychosocial maturity" which stems from "impulsivity, reliance on peer acceptance, lack of autonomy, and poor judgment in relation to future consequences."[14] In general, there are four concerns for juveniles standing competent at adult trials: "understanding of the legal system, their belief that legal circumstances applied to them, their capacity for communicating with counsel, and the processes underlying their decision-making."[15] The authors conclude by examining various relevant court cases dealing with waivers and find that courts normally adopt a utilitarian approach in which the needs and wants of the public outweigh the needs of the youth.[16]

Two conclusions from the literature resonate: transfers do not treat youth fairly or ethically and ignore social and behavioral research on youth, and, more often than not, youth dealt with in the adult system actually recidivate more. As Richard Benson discusses, the goal of any justice system is "to redress the disorder caused by the offense."[17] At the same time, we must offer help to the offender in order to change. In the juvenile case, several factors make the standard process and requirements of adult court incommensurate with the juvenile condition. Juveniles have "impediments to culpability" and do not possess the experience and wisdom that an adult would typically have. Placing juveniles in adult court via waivers seems not to be consistent with Catholic social thought, yet youth who have committed heinous crimes must still be thoroughly addressed, and public safety must be guarded. The concept of

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[12] Ibid., 439–40.
[13] Ibid., 444.
[14] Ibid., 446.
[15] Ibid., 450.
[16] Ibid., 475.
[17] Richard Benson, "Moral Foundations: Too young for a lifelong sentence?" *Healing Justice Coalition* (http://www.healingjusticecoalition.org/articles/Benson_JLWOP_2010.pdf).

restorative justice offers a hopeful alternative that embraces a communal context of offender and victim and recognizes the necessity of mercy, forgiveness, and healing.

Walgrave uses the following definition from Marshall: "Restorative justice is a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a particular offense come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offense and its implications for the future."[18] Through the interactions of community, victim, and offender, restorative justice attempts to heal the damage that has been inflicted by a crime. Crime is seen as not an objective violation of the legal code but as a highly subjective harm against the victim and the community. Restorative justice seeks out a peace among all parties involved and follows the belief that our lives are carried out in a deeply social and interconnected way. Restorative justice corrects the current legal practice of minimally involving the victim. Often in juvenile proceedings, the judge actually attempts to shield the youth from the victim and their demands for restitution because it might scare the youth. Restorative justice tries to heal the community and victim while also striving toward "offender's personal responsibility."[19] Dhami, Mantle and Fox give a list of core restorative justice values: voluntary participation, communication, personal accountability, respect, honesty, empathy, empowerment, inclusiveness, fairness, problem solving, healing and transformation.[20]

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) produced a document that outlines some of the guiding themes of restorative justice. Their version centers on three goals: accountability, competency development, and community safety. Accountability seeks to ensure that the juvenile is actively making progress toward "owning up" to his or her crime. Competency development deals with the need to build up the emotional and life skills of offenders. Community safety looks at the level of public safety and takes corrective action to reinstate community safety. Some of the most common practices in restorative justice are victim–offender mediation and restitution. When juveniles are put before their victims (normally a voluntary decision) the effects are large and profound. Through discussion guided by a trained

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[18] Walgrave, "Restoration in Youth Justice," 552.
[19] Ibid., 579.
[20] Mandeep K. Dhami, Greg Mantle, and Darrell Fox, "Restorative Justice in Prisons," *Contemporary Justice Review* 12 (2009): 438.

professional (mediator), the offender and victims seek to resolve differences and to understand the problems behind the crime. Due to the relatively young age of juveniles, this process can be even more impactful on them. Restitution aims to instill accountability in juveniles. If they are sent to prison and never concretely "repay" for their damage and harm, then they will most likely not make the moral connection. Finally, the community aspect is vital. The programs should be geared toward re-integrating the youth back into the community. This goal can be accomplished in several ways, such as volunteer service from the offender's side and employment assistance from the community's side.[21]

Several problems present themselves with restorative justice and serious juvenile offenders. First, some believe that "hardened" and callous criminals would never want to participate in such a program. Walgrave responds that although it may seem that serious juvenile offenders only respond to severe punishment and deterrence, many actually feel remorse and would benefit from these crucial interactions with victims. Studies cited also show that victims of serious crimes are more willing than not to participate in such programs, especially if they are practical. All in all, juvenile offenders are observed to participate at around 80 percent, and nine out of ten victims seem more satisfied. Still, these are less-than-comprehensive results from a few actual examples.[22] Secondly, and more importantly, practical considerations must acknowledge that serious youth offenders have to be detained in some way because of the concern for public safety. Indeed, this point is at the forefront of the USCCB document. However, such detention efforts must be ordered toward public safety and also reflect the human dignity of the youth. Hence, while serious juveniles should be detained in most circumstances, the way in which this detention is carried out must be consistent and conducive to restorative justice (certainly adult incarceration is not). How can we effectively implement successful restorative justice activities in the face of necessary detention?

The tenets of restorative justice have had success in an institutional setting. For example, DeVore and Gentilcore outline the principles of their restorative-justice-based approach at

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[21] Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, *Guide for Implementing the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model*" (1998), (http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/implementing/contents.html).
[22] Walgrave, "Restoration in Youth Justice," 563, 575.

Montgomery County Youth Center in Pennsylvania.[23] Key to their assessment is that not only should a delinquent youth feel part of his general community, but also a part of the community at the facility at which he or she is placed. Within this setting, DeVore and Gentilcore list some of the highlights of their curriculum: mentoring via the Internet, ethics discussions, community service, and "victim-based 'impact of crime' classes."[24] Also, Dhami, Mantle and Fox argue that restorative justice can be implemented in an institutional environment, although it is difficult because a harmonious atmosphere is not present in more secure institutions. They cite evidence that restorative justice has enabled prisoners to understand and grasp the devastation of their crimes. In order to surmount problems like prison environment and distance from victims, Dhami suggests that institutions maintain the offenders close to their community (something that juvenile justice has made an effort to do) and foster and maintain links with the outside community. The authors list examples of restorative programs that have worked in prisons, such as community service programs in Canadian prisons.[25]

The "repressive measures" in juvenile justice manifest themselves most forcefully in juvenile transfers. When we treat juveniles, even the most serious offenders, as full-grown adults and place them to stand trial in adult court, we first negate the primary goal of juvenile court: to be a different, less harsh way of handling youth who commit crime. Secondly, these policies do not even yield the type of "get tough" results we would like. In the majority of cases, waivers end up institutionalizing a youth, raising his chances for recidivism, and decreasing his possibilities to authentically reconcile with victims, himself and community. Waivers fail both at their intentions and in their results. Grimsrud and Zehr argue that, in the Western tradition, God is often perceived as acting punitively because of his holiness in the face of our sinfulness. This theological outlook became entrenched in the Middle Ages, but the authors contend that scriptural evidence lends itself more to the restorative approach. Drawing on biblical texts, they explain the significance of

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[23] Donald Devore and Kevin Gentilcore, "Balanced and Restorative Justice and Educational Programming for Youth At-Risk," *The Clearing House* 73 (1999): 96–100.

[24] Devore and Gentilcore, "Balanced and Restorative Justice," 98.

[25] Dhami, Mantle, and Fox, "Restorative Justice in Prisons," 437–39.

healing relationships and restoring the well-being of the community in God's plan for his people.[26]

Restorative justice recaptures the correctly understood theological concept of justice. Crime is harm against another and against the social structure in which one lives. Justice is seeking accountability and mercy and bringing about healing to all involved. This process is especially important for youth, whom, above all others, we should never forget or abandon in the turbulent years of development. Adult prison, as the USCCB writes, is devoid of any "moral vision" and as such is clearly no place for youth offenders. Restorative justice, because of its very demanding nature, still faces difficulties. A recent panel of victims involved stated that restorative justice must avoid a "cookie cutter" approach, strive to reduce "unintended harm," and continue to address victims' needs (especially in violent crimes).[27] On a positive note, courts, prosecutors, juvenile justice practitioners, and society are starting to heed the evidence and focus on the intrinsic goods of juvenile justice.[28] A start in the right direction would be to abolish automatic waivers, which determine an age and crime and refuse to take into account any other factors of the youth. According to Siegel and Welsh, studies of transfer laws show that states have recently limited their expansion of waivers, but very few states have actually reduced their transfer provisions.[29] The continued hope is that through more efforts toward restorative juvenile justice, as a society we will grow to balance the two sides of justice: the offender's accountability to victims and community, and recognition of and response to the offender's human dignity.

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[26] Ted Grimsrud and Howard Zehr, "Rethinking God, Justice, and Treatment of Offenders," *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 35 (2002): 259.

[27] Harry Mika, Mary Achilles, Ellen Halbert, Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, and Howard Zehr, "Listening to Victims: A Critique of Restorative Justice Policy and Practice in the United States," *Federal Probation* (2004).

[28] American Judicature Society, "Return to the principles."

[29] Larry J. Siegel and Brandon C. Welsh, *Juvenile Delinquency: The Core* (Wadsworth, 2008), accessed online: http://www.CengageBrain.com.

A Philosophical Inquiry into the Understanding of Autonomy as the Cause of Modern Meaninglessness

Jonathan Hiner

During pre-modern times, individuals seemed to experience a sense of meaning that transcended the self. The transcendent meaning experienced during pre-modern times had a foundation in structures and orders that were perceived to be of mysterious origin. These structures and orders, such as the Great Chain of Being, dictated meaning and purpose to those existing within them. During the modern period, political, scientific, and social changes challenged the legitimacy of these orders, and new orders and structures replace pre-modern ones. Generally speaking, these new structures grant a new amount of freedom in determining one's meaning and purpose within the structure. The new emphasis on the individual is grounded in a belief that humans are autonomous by nature. That is to say that during modernity the inherent condition which allows for the self-generation of principles that can be used to govern one's own life is emphasized. During contemporary times, the emphasis on a shallow conception of autonomy is taken to an extreme that neglects the community and leaves individuals feeling alienated, isolated, and meaningless. While feeling alienated and isolated, it is impossible to experience a genuine sense of meaning. For this reason, feelings of meaninglessness have become one of the defining characteristics of post-modern life. Meaninglessness is problematic because it leads to a lack of common values and the resulting elimination of political progress, and it can possibly lead to the failure of democracy and consequently the loss of the right to exercise autonomy. As a solution, autonomy can only be effectively and properly realized in conjunction with the realization of the inter-connected nature of the self with others through culture and tradition.

1.1. Characterizing the pre-modern sense of meaning

      The sense of meaning that is applicable in this paper refers to the feeling of purpose and significance within one's life. By purpose and significance I mean the feeling that one's choices, decisions, and actions are directed towards a goal, end, or *telos*. To live a meaningful life is to live a life that is accompanied by the feeling of having a purpose. To experience a meaningful life, one must recognize the transcendent dimension against which one's life and choices gain significance. Inherent in any genuine sense of meaning is an element of transcendence. That is to say that the meaning experienced cannot be entirely within the control of the self, but must have an element that is beyond or independent of the self. I will demonstrate in section 5.2 why attempting to realize a sense of meaning that recognizes no transcendence is destined to fail, thus proving that a dimension of transcendence upon which choice can take on significance is necessary to experience a meaningful life. All individuals are living meaningful lives, but the feelings of meaninglessness arise out of a failure to recognize how one's life is meaningful. Thus, to experience the feeling of a meaningful life does not involve changing one's choices and actions, but involves the recognition of how certain choices and actions are informed against a background that is beyond the self. If one fails to make this recognition, one is left with, at best, an incomplete feeling of meaning and, at worst, the feeling of total meaninglessness. Thus, the feeling of meaninglessness is the failure to recognize how one's decisions and actions take on significance transcending oneself in a meaningful way, and the feeling of living a meaningful life can only be realized through the recognition of how this transcendence happens.

      Individuals appeared to experience meaningful lives during the pre-modern period. It is very clear that pre-modern individuals had a definable purpose to their lives which transcended the self by the very origin of the meaning and purpose that characterized pre-modern individuals. For instance, the feudal order, inspired by the Great Chain of Being, dictated the vocation and social class to pre-modern individuals.[1] This kind of purpose to one's life is transcendent because it is assigned by an order which exists beyond the self. To accept one's purpose is to recognize the transcendent

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[1] "The Origins of Feudalism" (www.sca.org.au/ynys_fawr/as_articles/as.../as_doc_43.doc).

dimension of one's life. The meaning experienced was imposed externally through structures and frameworks which appeared to the average pre-modern individual as mysterious. An individual's purpose in life was not determined by the self, but determined by various structures and orders that existed apart from the individual. For example, the feudal order dictated one's social status, and social status generally dictated one's occupation.[2] Thus, from birth a child could be assigned the role of farmer, probably because his or her parents were farmers. The feudal order dictates which social class (lower middle) and vocation (farmer) this person will have. This person's dictated purpose is to be a farmer. This produced a transcendent sense of meaning because the structures that were dictating purpose did so from beyond the individual. Simply accepting the purpose that was dictated to one is to recognize the transcendence of one's purpose.

1.2. Modern transitions

Modern advancements, such as the scientific revolution, the transition from a feudal economy to a capitalist-based one, and various political revolutions, challenged the pre-modern worldview, causing the structures and framework that characterized pre-modern life to collapse. For instance, Galileo's study of the planets challenged the geocentric model of planetary order. The very nature of these pre-modern structures assigned a transcendent sense of meaning to the lives of pre-modern individuals. As the legitimacy of these structures was challenged, the feeling of transcendent meaning that they produced became questionable. During the modern period, pre-modern structures that dictated meaning and purpose through mysterious perceived sacred orders were replaced with mechanically perceived and self-ordering structures that allowed individuals to define meaning and purpose for themselves. There is a change from a respected natural order within which individuals sought to find their proper place to orders and structures that could be manipulated to better suit an individual's will.

Modern structures are mechanically perceived in the sense that knowledge of the structure does not originate from a mysterious source, but rather can be achieved through the study of the operation of the structure. Then the operation of the structure can be manipulated to better suit the individual's desires. These

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[2] "Feudal Order" (http://gcuonline.georgian.edu/wootton_l/Medieval_files/image004.gif).

structures are internally regulating in the sense that their order of operation is not determined from forces external to the structure, but rather through the performance of the parts existing within the structure. Since these structures do not dictate the purpose of individuals' lives but are rather present to be manipulated by individuals, the meaning and purpose of an individual's life is not rigidly determined in the sense that it is in a pre-modern society. This means that the meaning and purpose that characterize an individual's life do not originate from a transcendent source such as the feudal order, but are within the control of the self. Thus, in order to experience a meaningful life, modern individuals must find another way of realizing how their choices and actions are linked to a transcendent dimension. A failure to recognize how one's choices transcend the self has caused the general sense of meaninglessness that characterizes modernity.

1.3. *Autonomy as an underlying factor in modern transitions*

Modern transformations changed the structures that defined human experience, and reflect a change in the conception of the self. During the modern transformation, autonomy, the condition through which individuals and institutions are capable of producing self-generated principles used to govern their lives, receives particular emphasis. Heteronomy, when principles that are used to govern one's life are imposed upon one, characterized pre-modern life. There is a clear shift from heteronomy to autonomy during the modern transition. Following modern transformations, individuals are now capable of defining and governing themselves in ways that pre-modern structures prevented. This emphasis on autonomy allows for the unique self-development of the individual, or individualism, which becomes a distinctly modern value.

1.4. *The autonomy problem and its solution*

The overemphasizing of individualism has led to feelings of alienation and isolation. The idea that the self is somehow distinctly separated from nature, reality, community, and politics arises from an overemphasis on individualism and autonomy. If individuals feel isolated and alienated, there will be no recognition of how their choices transcend the self. The autonomy problem stems from an overemphasis, which I will hereafter refer to as radical autonomy, that prevents individuals from recognizing the transcendent dimension that gives meaning to choices and actions. Radical

autonomy and the feelings of alienation and isolation mutually contribute to the further development of each other. Individuals who feel alienated and isolated adopt radical autonomy in an attempt to create meaning, and adopting radical autonomy and attempting to create meaning lead to further feelings of alienation and isolation. Radical autonomy is an attempt to create meaning in one's life without any recognition of anything transcendent or lying beyond the self. The failure of radical autonomy to produce a genuine sense of meaning is proof that some form and recognition of transcendence is necessary for the realization of a meaningful life. In order to experience a meaningful life while retaining the modern value of individualism and the modern conception of the self as autonomous, one must recognize that choices are inherently linked to the development of one's community through culture and tradition. Through the recognition that one's choices are shaped by communal traditions, such as language and religion, and contribute to the development of the community, and through one's reactions to issues of significance, one can come to recognize how one's choices are transcendent. Tradition and culture have an effect on the development of the self, and the self has an effect on the development of the tradition and culture. Recognizing how one's choices take on significance against the background of the transcendent dimension of culture and tradition allows modern individuals to experience a meaningful life. Autonomy does not need to be sacrificed in order to realize this connection, and thus to have a meaningful life. Individuals can embrace their autonomous selves while actively recognizing their connection to a culture and tradition, as a transcendent background upon which their lives take on a genuine sense of meaning.

2. Understanding Modern Meaninglessness

In this section, I will analyze various modern characteristics in an effort to expose how the feelings of meaninglessness have arisen in modernity. I will analyze the scientific revolution as illustrated by the figure Galileo, and the transition from a feudal economy to a capitalist one. These transitions illustrate a change in how individuals perceive the world and society. There is a movement from mysterious perceived structures that externally imposed purpose and were accepted by pre-modern individuals to modern, mechanically perceived structures that that could be manipulated by individuals. Coinciding with this perceptual change

is a sense of demystification, a loss of mystery, and a new emphasis on individuality and self-creation. Driving and motivating these transitions is a general modern attitude of progressivism, the feeling that modern society is becoming fundamentally better than pre-modern society. Unfortunately, this extreme progressivism contributes to the overemphasis of the modern ideals of autonomy and individuality. This overemphasis causes a loss of the sense of how our choices and actions take on meaning, creating the overwhelming feeling of meaninglessness. This feeling of meaninglessness is captured in work of the modern poet Friedrich Hölderlin and the modern painter Edouard Manet.

2.1. Modern transitions

The modern era can be characterized as fundamentally different from the pre-modern era due to significant scientific, social, political, and economic changes. The scientific revolution granted natural science a new authority in the investigation of nature, including human nature. Reason arises as the superior authority over tradition and the Church in determining appropriate human relations. The separation of church and state positions reason as the authority for generating enforceable social laws, as opposed to relying on the Church or tradition. Agriculture-based feudal economies are transformed into capitalist economies. There is a new emphasis on democratic ideals, especially on the inherent freedom of the individual. For instance, the American Constitution guarantees basics rights and freedoms such as the freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion. Together, these developments lay the foundation for the formation of nation-states.

Underlying these transitions is a perceptual change from pre-modern mysterious structures that were externally imposed and accepted by individuals to mechanically perceived structures that can be manipulated by individuals. It is true that pre-modern structures such as the Great Chain of Being have a rational background. However, with the exception of the philosophical elites, the average pre-modern individual would be unaware of the reasoning behind such orders. This leads to the pre-modern perception of a mysterious order that was to be accepted. This perception is challenged during the modern period. I will analyze the scientific revolution and the transition from a feudal economy to a capitalist economy to illustrate this movement.

2.1.1. The scientific revolution

The scientific revolution dissolved the ancient, mysteriously perceived order of the cosmos that was generated externally by God and presented a world and universe perceived mechanically and operating according to fundamental laws and principles. Through an understanding of these laws and principles, such as gravity and thermodynamics, an understanding of the operation and order of the universe could now be achieved.

The perfect figure illustrating this change is Galileo Galilei. Galileo challenged the pre-modern geocentric model of the universe. The geocentric model of the universe as proposed by Aristotle had fifty-five concentric crystalline spheres in which celestial bodies were attached and which rotated at differing velocities around the earth.[3] This view remained the dominant view from ancient times until the scientific revolution and was even adopted by the Church as dogma. Dogma is an article of belief that must be accepted, and cannot be doubted or challenged. After all, the earth must be at the center of the universe since God created the universe for humans. The average pre-modern person would have subscribed to the view that the cosmos is ordered as it is because God naturally ordered it as such. Thus, investigating the order of the universe is not merely a scientific matter, but also a theological issue.[4]

Galileo challenged this model, arguing for a heliocentric centric model of the universe. A heliocentric model is one that places the sun at the center and places sees the earth, along with the other planets, as rotating around the sun. Galileo was the first to employ the telescope, which allowed him to track the movement of stars and planets much more accurately than had previously been possible. Galileo was a mathematician and, along with Tycho Brahe, showed the mathematical elegance of a heliocentric universe. Galileo investigated the nature of motion and generated laws of motion that govern physical bodies.[5] These laws explain phenomena such as the sun rising and setting, the moon's rotation and other appearances that are associated with a geocentric model of the universe. In place of Aristotle's categorical explanation for the order of the cosmos, Galileo offers mechanical reasons and laws, such as laws of motion and mathematical proofs for why the cosmos is ordered in a

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[3] "The Universe of Aristotle and Ptolemy" (http://csep10.phys.utk.edu/astr161/lect/retrograde/aristotle.html).
[4] Ibid.
[5] "Galileo Galilei" (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/galileo/).

heliocentric fashion. This illustrates a movement from a universe that was perceived as mysterious and accepted at face value to a universe that was an ensemble of functioning parts. To come to an accurate understanding of the universe, an investigation of the laws and principles that govern its function is required. Galileo's model of the universe is a reflection of a perceptual change that was occurring. The universe and other structures were being perceived as the functioning of different parts.

The Church initially rejected Galileo's theory. Galileo's most controversial writing, *Dialogues of the Two Chief World Systems,* is a debate between two people, one holding a geocentric world view and the other holding a heliocentric world view. The debate mocks the traditional geocentric viewpoint, exposing its faults and highlighting its inability to explain phenomena such as sunspots, mountains on the moon, and moons on other planets. At the same time the work presents solutions to these problems through the adoption of a heliocentric model.[6] The book received a negative reaction from the Church. In an effort to suppress Galileo's findings, the Church deemed Galileo a heretic for holding beliefs that were in opposition to Christian dogma. Galileo had to recant and sign a formal reconciliation, he was sentenced to house arrest, and all of his books were banned as a result of holding a heliocentric world view.[7] Galileo's scientific work illustrates a transition from a mysteriously perceived world to a mechanically perceived world in a process called demystification, and his personal story is an example of how pre-modern institutions, in this case the Church, limited individualism by attempting to control the spread of ideas.

2.1.2. The Industrial Revolution

In agriculture-based feudal societies, a person's social status and role were largely predetermined by feudal order, inspired by the hierarchy of being. This order collapses in modern times and is replaced with a system where one's status in society is not controlled by an external order, but is rather within each individual's own control. This can be characterized as a transition from an order that is externally imposed on society to an order that emphasizes self-determination.

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[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

In pre-modern times, the feudal economy dictated one's social class and social role. Typically, feudal economies emphasize the development of agriculture and classify individuals into one of five groups. Kings controlled the money and were at the top of the chain. Beneath the kings were the nobles, who controlled the agriculture. Beneath the nobles were the merchants, who controlled trade. Priests were next, controlling behavior, and serfs, the labor force, occupied the bottom of the chain.[8] Generally, an individual would remain in the feudal category that he was born into. This category dictated social status and vocation. This order provided a means for pre-modern individuals to define themselves. A pre-modern identity was shaped by one's relationship to the feudal order, and others' relationship to the feudal order. The feudal economy broke down after the black plague killed off a great deal of the work force and under the pressure of the new idea of fundamental individual rights such as the right to private property and the increased trade possibilities cause by travel.[9]

In modern times, a capitalist economy emerges as the dominant economic system. Capitalism is grounded in the principle that all individuals are different. If individuals have the freedom to pursue their own interests, they will gravitate towards occupations that match their skills and abilities. Furthermore, other individual interests outside one's occupation will fuel the economy by creating markets. For example, if enough people are interested in home brewing beer, a market for home brewing supplies, equipment, and ingredients will be created. Also, allowing individuals to pursue their own interests grants greater social mobility. Individuals are not restricted to the social class and occupation of their parents. Capitalism separates economics from politics and religion.

Capitalism is founded on the principle of supply and demand. When a demand arises it presents an opportunity for someone to satisfy that demand with a supply of the product. Understanding how supply and demand function provides individuals with keen insight on how to use this law to one's advantage. Recognizing where supply does not meet demand gives an indication of which markets will be profitable investments. For example, suppose one notices an increasing demand for home brewing equipment paired with the small supply of high-quality

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[8] "Mercantilism" (http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/mercantilism.htm).
[9] Ibid.

ingredients. This individual can then exploit this increasing demand in a profitable fashion by either providing high-quality ingredients or investing in a company that does so. Furthermore, the price of a product can largely be determined based on the laws of supply and demand. Businesses can manipulate this relationship to drive the price of products up. By limiting the supply of a product to the point that demand exceeds supply, one can raise the price of the product. Clearly, the movement from feudal economies to capitalist ones is a transition from a rigid, externally-imposed order to an order that operates according to rules that can be exploited at the will of an individual.

2.2. Other modern movements

Accompanying these historical changes is the phenomenon of demystification, a new emphasis on individualism, and an attitude of progressivism.

2.2.1. Demystification

As was illustrated above, there is a movement during the modern era from a world defined by orders and structures that have a mysterious origin and nature to a world that is perceived as mechanically ordered. This movement produces demystification. As can be gathered from the term, demystification refers to a loss of mystery. During pre-modern times, there was a certain level of mystery that characterized the pre-modern world view. The feudal order restricted individuals into particular categories, and the cosmos appeared to be ordered as it is for mysterious reasons.[10] This perception of the world is changed into a mechanistic perception during the modern era. There is no hierarchy of being that dictates one's social status, and the cosmos is ordered as it is because it operates according to rules and principles. Through a study of the functioning parts of the structure such as the laws of supply and demand and the laws of motion, knowledge of why and how the mechanism operates as it does can be achieved. This movement away from perceiving orders as mysterious to perceiving orders as operating based on rational principles that can be understood characterizes demystification.

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[10] Ibid.

2.2.2. *Individualism*

During the modern times, there is a new amount of freedom given to the ordering of one's life. Political freedoms such as those of religion and speech allow for the individual determination of truth. The collapse of feudal society and the rise of capitalism allow for greater social mobility. These changes place considerably more responsibility on the individual. If it is discovered that one has been worshiping a false God, has accepted false ideas as true, has entered into the wrong occupation, etc., there is no one to blame except oneself. No longer can one defer these kinds of decisions to the community; the new degree of individual control forces individuals to take self-responsibility. If one is not happy with one's social status, beliefs, occupation, etc., there is no one to blame but oneself. This new responsibility places greater emphasis on the individual. This new emphasis characterizes individualism.

However, individualism is much more than an emphasis on the individual. Individualism arises as a distinctly modern value, and it is considered by many to be the "finest achievement of modern civilization."[11] Individualism comes to be more than just the choosing of one's religion and occupation. Individualism becomes the creation and embracing of an entirely unique self in all aspects of one's life. This unique creation of an individual is regarded as the aesthetic ideal for the modern individual. Crafting a unique individual identity becomes valued as an art form. There is type of aesthetic regard and respect for the well-crafted unique person. Individualism becomes one of the highest ranking values in modernity.

2.2.3. *Progressivism*

There is also a strong sense of progressivism that permeates modern society. Progressivism is the common modern attitude that the changes that characterize the modern period are fundamentally bettering humanity. This attitude represents the assumption that the intellectual and political revolutions, the new means of perceiving the world (demystification), and the new emphasis on individualism have altered humanity in a beneficial way. This attitude is evidenced in the enthusiasm of Immanuel Kant's essay "What is Enlightenment?"

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[11] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 2.

In "What is Enlightenment?" Kant encourages his reader to take advantage of the new opportunities for self-definition. The political and intellectual revolutions allow for a greater level of self-definition than was available during pre-modern times. Kant's essay is directed towards the general public and encourages the development of the kind of autonomous rationality employed by figures such as Galileo. Galileo's refusal to accept the dictated model of the universe and his reliance on his own reasoning capabilities to uncover the truth make him the embodiment of Kant's autonomously rational being. Furthermore, Galileo's firm conviction that his own rationality was superior to that offered by the Church is an illustration of Kant's notion of self-reliance. "Have courage to use your own understanding!" Kant commands, inferring that it is cowardice to allow others to reason and make decisions for us.[12] He is essentially saying that one should rely on one's own individual reasoning, as opposed to relying on the reasoning of others. Reasoning for oneself and coming to one's own individual conclusions has more value than relying on others because reasoning for oneself is an affirmation of the autonomous nature of the individual. Kant writes, "Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without the guidance from another."[13] Here Kant is claiming that the mature thing to do is to embrace your individuality. In "What is Enlightenment?" Kant is encouraging the members of the general public to become mature, to be courageous, to reason for themselves, and to be autonomous. The sense of enthusiasm that permeates "What is Enlightenment?" is a reflection of progressivism. Kant is encouraging his readers to embrace modern changes because he believed that the new emphasis on individualism that was taking place was fundamentally bettering humanity.

2.3. *Evidence of meaninglessness that arises during the modern period*

Accompanying these advancements and changes are feelings of meaninglessness. The fact that meaninglessness arises during the modern period first becomes evident in the work of various modern artists, philosophers, poets, and authors. I will analyze poetry written by Friedrich Hölderlin and a painting by Edouard Manet to illustrate the feelings of meaninglessness that arise during the modern period.

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[12] Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" (http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html).
[13] Ibid.

2.3.1. Friedrich Hölderlin

Let us consider the following lines from Friedrich Hölderlin's "Hyperion's Song of Fate": "But we are fated/ To find no foothold, no rest,/ And suffering mortals/ Dwindle and fall/ Headlong from one/ Hour to the next/ Hurled like water/ From ledge to ledge/ Downward for years to the vague abyss."[14]   This passage captures the spirit of meaninglessness that was arising during the modern period. Hölderlin expresses feelings that humanity is fated to enter a vague abyss, that man is inevitably doomed to meaninglessness. The structures that defined pre-modern life have been dissolved, leaving man in a "vague abyss." Humanity has been stripped of the structures that gave meaning and purpose to their lives. Humanity is left with no "foothold" to support the kind of meaning and purpose that characterized pre-modern life. Hölderlin is expressing a modern vertigo that is experienced as the structures supporting a meaningful life, such as the feudal order, are stripped of their authority, leaving humanity to fall into nothingness. Man is reduced to a "mortal" animal left to suffer the same fate as everything else in nature.

2.3.2. Edouard Manet

This same sense of meaninglessness arises in the art of Edouard Manet. Manet's O*lympia* is his rendition of Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus. Sleeping Venus* was painted in 1510 and portrays an innocent, highborn woman peacefully sleeping outdoors. This woman seems to exude an aura of "sensuality," "love," "faithfulness," and "beauty."[15]   In 1538, Titian does another rendition of the same painting called *Venus of Urbino*. This rendition is a bit different. The woman is still highborn, but she lacks the innocence that was portrayed in the original. In *Venus of Urbino*, the woman has her eyes open and is giving the viewer a lustful gaze. She is also situated inside and on a bed, suggesting a more sexual situation. Both the *Venus of Urbino* and the *Sleeping Venus* are painted in vibrant, full colors to portray a transcendent aura of joy, passion, and elegance.

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[14] Friedrich Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, trans. J. Adler (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1998), 27.
[15] Robert Pippen, *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfactions of European High Culture* (Malden: Blackwell, 1999), 36.

When viewing Manet's version, *Olympia,* there is a clear change. The tone of the painting is pale and bleak, portraying the woman in a deadened "grey, corpse like color."[16] The woman seems to be a low-class prostitute giving a confrontational stare at the viewer. The woman appears to be "modern, free, autonomous, unhampered by traditional assumptions, starkly naked and direct."[17] The woman in *Olympia* is portrayed as stripped away from "the religious and moral frame" within which *Sleeping Venus* and *Venus of Urbino* were portrayed.[18] The cat on the edge of the bed is a sign that this woman is a hedonist. There is no longer an aura of divine innocence and otherworldliness, but a sense of harsh realism. The woman praying in the background of *Venus of Urbino* is replaced in *Olympia* by a woman offering a gift, perhaps from a client. *Olympia* portrays the free exchange that can now take place between individuals, "unrestricted by traditional constraints."[19] Clearly, this modern presentation reflects that something has changed; something contributing to the luster and passion of pre-modern life has been lost. *Olympia* is a reflection of a loss of meaning and purpose in modernity.

2.4. How meaninglessness arises during the modern period

As evidenced above, a sense of meaninglessness arises during the modern period. The very revolutions that have undoubtedly improved humanity have also robbed humanity of something very important, a meaningful life. The feeling of meaninglessness that has come to characterize modernity is caused by the failure to find a source of transcendence. This failure is caused by a loss of the transcendent backdrop upon which pre-modern lives realized meaning, and the development of feelings of alienation and isolation. As was stated earlier, to realize the feeling of a genuinely meaningful life one must recognize the transcendent dimension in which choices and actions can take on meaning. This realization is more difficult in modern times for two reasons. First, the structures and framework that characterize modernity do not implicitly contain a means for transcendence. And second, an overemphasis on individualism has created feelings of isolation and alienation.

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 37.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

2.4.1. Modern structures do not contain an implicit means of transcendence

The structures and frameworks that characterized the pre-modern era externally imposed meaning upon its subjects. The mysterious orders transcended its subjects, and thus any meaning that the orders imposed was necessarily transcendent. This is how pre-modern individuals experienced a meaningful life. Although potentially restricting, "these orders gave meaning to the world and to the activities of social life."[20] For example, in pre-modern times the hierarchy of being would determine an individual's social status. The hierarchy of being was a transcendent order that dictated to people how they would define themselves. Thus, this meaning is necessarily transcendent because the order that imposed it upon a subject was transcendent.

During modern times, "things that were once settled by some external reality—traditional law, say, or nature—are now referred to our choice."[21] The structures and frameworks that characterized pre-modern society, such as the hierarchy of being and the order of the cosmos, were challenged during the modern period. These structures were stripped of their authority by modern advancements and replaced by structures that allowed for individuals to determine how they would meaningfully define themselves within this new framework. Since these new structures do not dictate how individuals are to define themselves, the new structures do not implicitly contain a means of realizing the transcendent dimension through which one's choice and actions take on meaning.

In pre-modern times, simply by accepting the life dictated by structures such as the feudal order, one was recognizing the transcendent nature of the order and structure that has imposed purpose on one's life. Pre-modern plausibility structures—systems of meaning that go unquestioned—defined pre-modern life in a meaningful way.[22] In modern times, the structures do not impose meaning, but allow for one to define one's own purpose and meaning within the structure. Since it is internally decided, as opposed to externally imposed, what meaning and purpose will dictate one's life, simply deciding the purpose and direction of one's life does not implicitly contain a means of recognizing how those

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[20] Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity*, 81.
[21] Ibid.
[22] "Plausibility" (http://hirr.hartsem.edu/ency/Plausibility.htm).

decisions are transcendent. In modern institutions, simply deciding the purpose of one's life is not sufficient to provide the feeling of living a meaningful life. In modern institutions, individuals must go one step further. Individuals must define their own purpose and recognize how that decision is linked to a transcendent dimension in order to experience a meaningful life. Failure to take the extra step and recognize the transcendence of one's decisions causes the feeling of meaninglessness. Since the transcendent dimension necessary for a meaningful life is not explicitly expressed in modern structures, individuals existing within modern structures must find another means of recognizing the transcendence of their choices. Pre-modern structures dictated meaning, but modern structures leave individuals to define themselves and then recognize how the self-definition is meaningful against a transcendent background. Modern meaninglessness is caused by a failure to recognize other means of transcendence.

2.4.2. *An overemphasis on the individual leads to isolation and alienation*

Modernity replaced the pre-modern structures with structures that grant individuals significantly more control and power over their own purpose, direction, and position in society. Modern structures do not dictate the purpose of one's life as the pre-modern structures had, but rather allow one the freedom to create meaning and purpose. As I established earlier, modern institutions place a greater emphasis on the individual, making individualism a value. An extreme emphasis on individualism, however, leads to feelings of alienation and isolation.

Modern philosophers attempt to articulate a general change in thought that characterizes the modern emphasis on individualism; there is a movement from an objective conception of reality to a subjective conception of reality. That is to say that man no longer views himself within nature, but rather as somehow distinctly isolated from nature. It becomes clear that this separation is occurring as early as Descartes. In Descartes' *First Meditation* he doubts everything. He isolates himself from nature, community, and tradition.[23] However, the clearest attempt to explain this distinction is present in Immanuel Kant. Kant claims that there are two senses of reality. There is the unknowable objective existence of things-in-

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[23] Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. D. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), 54.

themselves (noumenal reality), and our knowable subjective interpretation of reality (phenomenal reality).[24] That is to say, there is the thing as it exists, and there is how the thing is perceived and interpreted by the senses. Humans are only capable of knowing external things through the senses. Thus, humans can only make knowledge claims about how they perceive and interpret things. Humans do not have the authority to claim to have knowledge of the thing-in-itself. The knowledge that we gain from perception is not knowledge of the thing-in-itself, but rather knowledge of our perception of the thing-in-itself. Kant was a firm believer that our perceptions and interpretation of a thing must mirror the thing-in-itself.[25]

Whether Kant's theory is correct is not relevant to our purposes. What is important to notice is that Kant is characterizing a general change in perception that is taking place during the modern period. His theory reflects the rift or division that is occurring between the individual and reality. This division between subject and object has a reciprocal relationship with an overemphasis on individualism. This rift between subject and object separates, isolates, and alienates individuals from reality. Individuals no longer think of themselves as a unique part of the whole; rather their perceptions are somehow distinctly separated and isolated from reality.

So long as individuals think of themselves as separate, isolated, and alienated, any attempt at recognizing transcendence is futile. After all, it is the very nature of the transcendence that it goes beyond the individual. While alienated and isolated, any attempt to go beyond one's self will necessarily fail because one is trapped in a subjective prison. To recognize transcendence is to recognize how one is connected to something greater than oneself. If one feels disconnected from reality, by nature one cannot connect to something greater. Clearly, the feelings of modern meaninglessness are caused by a failure to recognize the transcendence of one's choices. Individuals fail to recognize the transcendence of their choices because modern structures do not implicitly contain a means of transcendence and because their emphasis on individualism

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[24] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1964), 118.
[25] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. P. Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 362.
[25] Kant, *Groundwork*, 118.

creates a rift between subject and object that leaves the individual feeling isolated and alienated. In such a situation, any attempt at transcendence will fail.

2.5. Autonomy as underlying modern movements

Underlying the collapse of pre-modern structures, the rise of modern structures, the emphasis on individualism, and consequently the feelings of meaninglessness in the modern era is a faulty conception of autonomy. Before I demonstrate how autonomy underlies these modern transitions and how autonomy is misconceived, we must acquire a developed understanding of what autonomy is.

3. What is autonomy?

In this section, I will examine and define autonomy, and then compare autonomy to its counterpart, heteronomy. Finally I will explain the underlying role that autonomy has played in the creation of modern institutions, frameworks, and values.

3.1. Origin and definition

The word "autonomy" comes from the combination of two separate Greek words, *auto* and *nomos*, *auto* meaning "self" and *nomos* meaning "law." A law is a governing principle or rule. Based on this, autonomy is the condition in which the self can generate rules and principles with which to govern itself. In this sense, autonomy is not directly related to the ability to make a decision (freedom), but autonomy can be the condition by which the decision is made. Autonomy is a human condition that allows for the generation of principles. The principles generated can then provide the means by which decisions are made. If someone autonomously generated the principle "one should always support a delicate craft," then he or she would choose a craft micro-brewed beer. Autonomously generating a principle with which to govern oneself such as "one should always make the most rational economic decision" would prompt one to choose a mass-produced macro-brewed beer. So, when presented with a choice, a freely chosen action is one that is in accordance with certain self-generated principles that one uses to govern oneself. Autonomy is the human condition that allows for the generation of such principles.

Autonomy must also be distinguished from its counterpart, heteronomy. Where do the principles that one uses to govern one's life come from? If the principles used to govern the self are imposed from a foreign source, such as a divine being or one's community, then when one governs one's life and actions according to these principles, one is living heteronomously. A key aspect of heteronomy is that those living heteronomously are unaware that the principles used to govern their life are being imposed from a foreign source. If one is aware that the principles one is living by are of heteronomous origin, then one is autonomously choosing to act heteronomously. If the principles used to govern one's life are self-generated, and one is able to live one's life according to such self-generated principles, then one is living autonomously. If the principle "one should always support a delicate craft" was unknowingly employed by a person only on the basis of a community tradition, and this person used it to govern his or her life, then by choosing the craft micro-brewed beer he or she would be acting heteronomously. If the same principle was self-generated, then choosing the craft micro-brew beer would be an autonomous choice.

This is not to say that if a principle is adopted that conforms to the community, one is necessarily acting heteronomously. One can be autonomous and adopt traditional principles, provided that the principles were adopted because the individual has decided that the principles should be adopted, and not because someone external commanded one to adopt the principle. For example, the principle that abortion is a violation of basic human rights is a popular principle to adopt within certain religious communities. If this principle is adopted for no other reason than that one's religious tradition has commanded it, then the principle is adopted heteronomously. If one adopts this view based solely on the authority of an external person or entity, then the principle has been adopted heteronomously.

However, if the same principle is adopted as a conclusion after investigating and contemplating the issues surrounding the practice of abortion, what it means to be a human, and basic human rights, then this same principle can be adopted autonomously. Provided the principle is employed in action, the determination of whether or not a principle was generated autonomously is not contained within the principle itself but rather in the means by which

the principle is adopted. If one relies on the authority of another to indicate which principles to adopt, then the principle is adopted heteronomously. However, if the self, through its own authority, generates the principle, then the principle is generated autonomously. In conclusion, autonomy is a condition in which one is capable of governing one's own life according to self-generated principles.

3.3. The pre-modern era characterized in reference to heteronomy

If we exclude philosophical elites, pre-modern times can be characterized in terms of heteronomy. The order and structures that characterize pre-modern times left individuals with few self-determined ways of defining themselves. Which economic class they were to belong to, their profession, and their religious beliefs were all determined by their community. The opinion of the aristocracy defined the community, and the community defined the individuals. Failing to conform to who society has determined you to be was met with harsh consequences, as was evidenced in the case of Galileo. Practicing a different religion than the defined religion or supporting an idea that was perceived to contradict how that community defined itself could be grounds for excommunication. This sent a message to individuals that they either needed to define themselves in terms of the community or they could not be a part of the community. Although restrictive, "these orders gave meaning to the world and to the activities of social life."[26]   The structures that limited autonomous choice provided a sense of purpose to pre-modern individuals.

3.4. The modern era characterized in reference to autonomy

By contrast, during the modern era individuals were encouraged to be autonomous individuals and presented with the new freedoms. Autonomy receives particular emphasis during the modern period, and manifests itself in many different forms. On a macro level, autonomy enters the political sphere in the form of the nation-state. The very idea that a nation can be self-governing has its roots in autonomy. A nation-state has the ability to generate principles that it will use to govern its civilians. These self-governing political structures assure the autonomy of its members. The founding of America is an excellent example of this. The colonists were determined to be self-governing, and thus they emancipated

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[26] Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity*, 81.

themselves from British rule. Furthermore, the American Constitution guarantees the autonomy of its citizens through a series of basic rights such as the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, etc.

A nation-state guarantees the autonomy of the institutions operating within it as well as the autonomy of its citizens. Institutions and organizations within an autonomous nation-state such as America have the right to generate principles upon which to govern themselves. For example, in America a business is relatively free to operate based upon its own principles. A business has the ability to generate principles upon which to define itself. A compact disc store can choose to operate according to the principle that it is good to have a rich selection of harder-to-find music from independent record companies and local musicians. Or the company can operate according to the principle that it is best to provide the most popular music at the lowest price possible. If a business operates according to the first principle, it would be defining itself as a locally oriented, alternative-music-friendly establishment. If a business chooses to operate according to the second principle, it would be defining itself as top-forty-friendly and economical. Each company has chosen to operate according to what it has reasoned to be the most profitable for their situation. By acting according to their own reasoning, the companies are operating autonomously. Clearly, the very nature by which institutions operate in the modern economy has a foundation in autonomy.

Furthermore, nation-states guarantee the right of its citizens to be autonomous. Individuals have the right to define for themselves what career to pursue, what religion, if any, to follow, what scientific theories to accept, what organizations to join, what ethical philosophy to subscribe to, and various other means of self-definition. During modern times, the power of definition is transferred from the community to the individual. The new freedoms grant individuals an increased opportunity for self-definition. Autonomy is also the underlying condition that allows for individualism to take place. If individualism is defined as self-definition, then autonomy is the condition that allows for this kind of an activity. Individuality is not compatible with heteronomy. If one allows oneself to be defined by an external source, then one is not engaged in the act of self-definition. One is not participating in individualism, but rather allowing an external force to determine what kind of individual one will be. Individualism is the result of the

deciding, creating, and embracing of the self by the self. Individualism is the act of self-definition, and autonomy is the condition which allows for this kind of activity to be possible. Thus, individualism is only possible as the action of an autonomous self, and autonomy is the condition upon which individualism is made possible.

Autonomy even manifests itself in moral philosophy in the form of Kant's Categorical Imperative. The Categorical Imperative states that "I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law."[27] According to Kant, reason has the ability to generate rules, principles, and maxims, and people of reason act according to rules, principles, and maxims, whether they are aware of it or not. Rules, principles, and maxims are meant to be universally binding by the very nature of their existence. Provided one accepts the equality of all persons, a rule is not a rule if it does not apply to all subjects. To create a rule that is not universally binding is thus a violation of equality. Thus, the Categorical Imperative is the self-generation of rules to govern oneself (by autonomy). But in order for it to be a rule, by definition, we can only govern ourselves by rules that we could will to be employed universally. In order to behave autonomously, one should act based on a self-generated, universally binding principle, the Categorical Imperative.

Clearly, autonomy is the foundation of modern, Western societies. This is evident on the macro level of nation-states, on the institutional level of businesses and organizations, and on the individual level in the form of individuality. Autonomy is the underlying factor in all these distinctly modern social structures. Modernity can thus be characterized as a transition from heteronomy to autonomy. There is a new emphasis on the ability of nations, institutions, and individuals to generate principles with which to govern themselves. This ability would not be possible without autonomy because autonomy is the condition through which principles used to govern oneself can be generated. Clearly, autonomy is the defining characteristic of modernity, and the foundation upon which modern transitions take place. As the defining characteristic of modernity, autonomy must lie at the root of modern meaninglessness. Before I show how autonomy is linked

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[27] Kant, *Groundwork*, 70.

to modern meaninglessness, it must be established that the feelings of meaninglessness are problematic.

4. Modern Meaninglessness as a Problem

Autonomy was an underlying factor in the collapse and replacement of the structures and framework that characterized pre-modern life, and it is an essential condition of individualism. Autonomy is the condition that allows individualism to be realized, and individualism is the underlying factor in the transformation from feudal economies to capitalist economies, and an underlying factor in political rights such as the freedoms of speech and religion. The transition from heteronomy to autonomy can be used to characterize the various modern transitions. Unfortunately, the plausibility structures of pre-modern institutions could not be replaced in the same fashion by the modern replacement structures. The new structures lacked an explicitly imposed means of achieving transcendence, and thus a new means of recognizing transcendence is necessary for the realization of a meaningful life. However, this raises an important question: Why is meaninglessness a problem? If meaninglessness is not a problem, then there is no reason to pursue correcting it. For the purpose of this project, it seems intuitively obvious that a meaningful life is significantly better than a meaningless life. However, this is not the only reason that the feeling of a meaningful life should be sought. There are also practical reasons for correcting the current path of meaninglessness.

4.1. Practical problems associated with modern meaninglessness

One practical problem that arises out of feelings of meaninglessness is a lack of common values. A lack of common values can cause moral relativism and meaningless political debates. The feelings of alienation and isolation associated with modern meaninglessness consequently lead to feelings of political powerlessness. Furthermore, if these two problems combine, they can lead to a collapse of the form of government, such as a republic, thus hampering possibilities for the realization of autonomy.

4.1.1. Lack of common values

Individualism, unique self-definition, gives way to problematic forms of relativism. Out of individualism arises tolerance. Out of the high value placed on the creation of the unique self arises the idea that each individual has the right to live his or her

life according to his or her own sense of what is of value. Furthermore, no one should have the right to impose his or her conception of what is valuable on others. Extreme forms of toleration lead to relativism. Relativism takes toleration to an extreme degree, declaring that the reason one should not judge others or impose values on others is that there is no objective truth. Relativists believe that ethical truths (the good) vary among persons and cultures and have no objective universal meaning. Thus, moral relativism is the denial of the existence of an objective good, and the claim that each person is entitled to his or her own conception of what is good and bad, right and wrong. The social implications of widespread extreme moral relativism are alarming.

Extreme forms of moral relativism cause problems when viewed as contradictory to laws established by the government. By nature, laws are established forms of goodness, badness, rightness, and wrongness imposed upon citizens in the name of social order. This is already in contention with extreme forms of moral relativism which hold that there should be no imposition of goodness, badness, rightness, and wrongness. If one's personal conception of what is good, bad, right, and wrong is in contention with a governmentally established law, then the individual is placed in a problematic situation. The individual must either sacrifice a piece of his or her individuality or break the law, causing disorder in society. For example, it is not hard to imagine a person determining that it is good to smoke marijuana. The federal government, of course, has determined that it is bad to smoke marijuana, and thus has outlawed it. This put the marijuana smoker in a predicament. If the marijuana smoker values his individuality over obeying the law, the marijuana smoker will smoke marijuana, creating civil disorder. There is a conflict between the individual's identity and the established law that must be resolved by the sacrificing of one or the other. Although this may not seem to be a major issue when applied to marijuana smoking, this same method of reasoning can be applied to circumstances dealing with activities that are more debilitating to society, such as violence, rape, and tax evasion.

When taken to extremes, such as I have described, moral relativism is a reflection of a loss of common fundamental values. A functioning society must have a common set of fundamental values upon which to unite. A society is a large community that unites on the basis of a set of common core values. If these values are lost, the society can no longer function as a community. The loss of

fundamental values has devastating effects on dialogue, especially political dialogue. A core set of common values is the platform upon which political dialogue is successful. Lack of fundamental common values eliminates the platform from which political debates can be successful. A cluster of common values provide the stage uniting individuals into a community. One such stage is the common values of freedom of speech and religion that unite Americans. If individuals are not grounded on the same set of fundamental values, political dialogue is not productive. Instead of building on a platform of common values, political debates run past each other. Each party's conclusions reflect the specific values upon which it stands. If individuals' political ideas are grounded in different values, the platform from which political debate can be beneficial loses its common foundation. This means political arguments go past each other, each side reflecting different values rather than the common uniting values, and political progress is lost.

4.1.2. *The collapse of democracy and loss of autonomy*

Clearly, modern meaninglessness can have a devastating effect on the progress of politics. However, as I will show, modern meaninglessness can have an even more deleterious effect on society, possibly leading to the collapse of democracy and the loss of autonomy. As was stated earlier, isolation and alienation are characteristics of modern meaninglessness caused by an overemphasis on individuality. Isolated and alienated individuals feel disconnected from and lack identification with a political community. This contributes to the experience of feeling politically powerless. This causes individuals to adopt the apathetic attitude that "it does not matter what the government does as long as it does not affect me." The popular notion arises that one vote does not matter, and that a single individual has little to no control over political outcomes. This is evidenced by the voting rate and lack of political participation, and these can cause misrepresentation. When the political parties making important decisions regarding the nation do not reflect the majority opinion, democracy fails. Although the goal of a democracy is to ensure that even minorities are guaranteed basic rights and freedoms, this practice is jeopardized when minorities are not represented.

Autonomy requires a political structure like democracy to be fully realized. The rights and freedoms that a democratic government guarantees, such as the freedoms of speech and religion,

are the means through which autonomy is practiced. Autonomy cannot be exercised with a government that heteronomously dictates how its citizens will define themselves. Individualism cannot be properly emphasized except within a political atmosphere that allows for autonomy to be practiced. However, when overemphasized, the feelings of isolation and alienation that radical forms of autonomy foster cause a lack of participation, which in turn causes misrepresentation. Disenfranchisement caused by a failure to engage in political participation because of feeling politically powerless and somehow distinctly separate from one's community leads to a failure of democracy. If democracy fails, there is nothing to ensure that autonomy can be practiced. Without institutions to guarantee that autonomy can be practiced, autonomy could lead to its own suppression. Failure to ensure that the political environment that allows for autonomy to be practiced continues puts the freedom to exercise one's autonomy in jeopardy. Democracy is the political condition that allows for the realization of autonomy, and, if not corrected, radical autonomy can destroy the very political structure that ensures its own existence.

5. A Radical Understanding of Autonomy as the Modern Problem

It has been shown that autonomy is the fundamental force underlying modern transitions and the source of the feeling of meaninglessness. It has also been shown that if the feelings of meaninglessness continue, the very political structures that ensure that autonomy can be practiced are threatened. However, this is not to say that autonomy is bad. It is a very specific conception of autonomy that has caused the modern ills that I have described.

5.1. *An overemphasis on autonomy and a rejection of the community*

The modern transformation exposed the heteronomous nature of the pre-modern era and proclaimed the opposite, radical autonomy—the belief that one can autonomously generate meaning—as the solution. The moderns had a progressive attitude, believing that they were truly better than the people who preceded them. Progress was seen as moving as far from heteronomy as possible, with a radical formulation of autonomy as the goal. As the modern transformation exposed the faults of living heteronomously, its opposite, radical autonomy, became an attractive solution. This was the modern goal, and progress was the movement towards it.

Philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche proclaimed that humans are naturally autonomous and that becoming radically autonomous—becoming agents of the very creation of meaning and significance—was the highest fulfillment of the human potential.

In his famous passage from *The Gay Science* titled "The Madman," Nietzsche tells the story of a man who asks "Whither is God?"[28] The madman then goes on to explain that "We have killed him—you and I. All of us are murderers. But how did we do this?"[29] In this passage, Nietzsche is expressing the radically autonomous response to the modern meaninglessness that was arising. On my interpretation of "The Madman," God represents the mysterious order that gave meaning and purpose to the lives of pre-modern individuals. The process of demystification and the transition to structures that do not dictate to individuals what their purpose is to be is what is meant by the "death of God." But Nietzsche then presents the question, "How did we do this?" The presentation of this question suggests two consequences. First, in order to have killed God, we must be greater than God. Second, having killed God, we are left with the responsibility of filling his role. In order to solve the problems of modern meaninglessness, we must become gods ourselves, and do what gods do. We must create the very meaning in our lives through total self-fashioning and value creation. Nietzsche's dramatic presentation captures the radically autonomous spirit that was arising as the solution to modernity's failure to dictate meaning. Radical autonomy, the very creation of meaning, becomes an attractive option as a way to infuse one's life with meaning. Unfortunately, this view fails to create a genuine feeling of meaning because it neglects all forms of a transcendent backdrop, and furthermore it is this popular conception of autonomy that fuels the feelings of meaninglessness that characterize modernity. Radical autonomy sets out to perform an impossible task, leaving its practitioners in meaninglessness.

5.2. *Why this view is problematic*

This radically autonomous view is problematic. The view described by Nietzsche suggests that individuals can create significance and meaning at will. However, if one can create significance and meaning at will, then every decision and choice will

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[28] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage Publishing, 1974), 181.
[29] Ibid.

have equal meaning and value. Making all choices capable of the same level of significance and meaning is the equivalent of meaninglessness. As Taylor notes, "Unless some options are more significant than others, the very idea of self-choice falls into triviality and hence incoherence."[30] This means that unless some choices are more meaningful than others, no choice can carry meaningful significance. The radically autonomous view suggests that I can decide that it will be more meaningful that I wore brown shoes last Wednesday than that I am a Buddhist. To say that it does not matter that I am a Buddhist, that what matters is that I wore brown shoes last Wednesday, is ridiculous. It is obvious that it is more meaningful that I am a Buddhist than that I wore brown shoes last Wednesday. It is impractical to think that all choices can have the same amount of meaning and significance, regardless of their nature. It is obvious that certain choices will have more meaning and significance than others. This must be accepted if one desires to define oneself in a way that is not trivial but contains significance. This makes it clear that "which issues are significant *I* do not determine."[31] The only way for choice to contain any meaning at all is if there are issues of significance that have been established prior to my choosing. In our modern Western world, these issues are issues such as religion, stem cell research, sexual preference, and marijuana legalization. Individuals are only capable of making choices if the choice of what is significant is not in an individual's control but is pre-established by the culture and community. These issues of significance seem to arise from the challenging of accepted ideas creating controversy. The controversy generates the significance upon which individuals can meaningfully define themselves.

Charles Taylor calls the establishment of significance in communal circumstances the "horizons of significance."[32] The horizons of significance are the backdrop of intelligibility upon which our choices and actions are capable of taking on meaning. The horizons of significance determine through community and tradition which issues are of significance and are thus meaningful. Regardless of our choice, there are things that are significant and things that are not. This explains why it is insignificant that I wore brown shoes last Wednesday. In modern Western societies, it is not

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[30] *Ethics of Authenticity*, 39.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., 38.

a significant choice that I wore brown last Wednesday, no matter how hard I try to make it one. However, in our modern Western society it is a significant decision to choose a spiritual path. Thus, choosing to be a Buddhist is a choice that contains meaning. Again, it does not contain meaning because I decided it would have meaning. This choice contains meaning because society has determined that it is significant. Collectively and through tradition, issues of significance have arisen, and it is in one's reaction to these issues that one can meaningfully define oneself. It is against a communal background of significance that our choices are capable of taking on meaning. Meaning needs the background of significant issues in order to make some choices more significant than others. Thus, the radically autonomous position is attempting an impossible task, the pure creation of meaning. Meaning cannot be created in the sense that radical autonomy calls for because it reduces all choices to triviality.

6. Solution

The first step to recovery is the recognition of the nature of the problem. Underlying the transitions that characterize modernity is a movement from heteronomy to autonomy. Accompanying these transitions are feelings of meaninglessness. The feelings of meaninglessness arise because modern structures do not implicitly contain a means of transcendence. Furthermore, the emphasis on the individual leads to a perceptual gap between subject and object, leaving the individual feeling alienated and isolated. The individual feels somehow distinctly separated and isolated from the rest of his or her perceptions, as though there is a rift or barrier between him or her and the rest of reality. This creates more difficulty in discovering the transcendent means by which one's choices are meaningful because this barrier or rift creates difficulty connecting to a transcendent backdrop. In response to this failure, a radical form of autonomy develops by which individuals attempt to create the very meaning of their lives. This position necessarily fails because it is attempting the impossible task of creating meaning. However, autonomy is worth preserving, and adopting a revised conception of autonomy that recognizes that choices can take on meaning against a transcendent backdrop can lead to the experience of a meaningful life.

6.1. Why Keep Autonomy?

A possible way out of this predicament could be to completely abandon the autonomy project, and return to the way of life enjoyed by our pre-modern predecessors. However, the goal of this project is not to reject autonomy, but to realize what conditions are necessary for a genuinely meaningful life to be had. It has been shown that during the modern era a feeling of meaninglessness is experienced, that there is a new emphasis on autonomy, and that the new emphasis on autonomy is what causes the sense of meaninglessness. Does this mean that we should discard autonomy altogether? To discard autonomy altogether would be to return to the general state of heteronomy experienced during pre-modern times.

It can be argued that during pre-modern times a great sense of purpose and meaning was experienced. Pre-modern individuals believed in their place within the cosmos and within society. Their purpose was determined, and it was their job to fulfill it. However, the meaning and purpose that was experienced in pre-modern times was not a genuine sense of meaning and purpose because it was grounded in what from a modern perspective must be seen as a non-developed conception of the self. During modern times autonomy becomes necessary in any complete conception of the self. Following modern advancements, autonomy is a vital component of the self, and an accurate conception of the self is essential to the experience of a genuinely meaningful life. It is necessary to retain autonomy because it is not merely a modern ideal, but an integral part of the self that we each have become.

Autonomy allows one to experience the benefits of an individual identity, such as self-creation, self-definition, and self-reliance. Autonomy allows one to decide what convictions to adopt, what to direct one's life towards, and various other ways of developing one's individual identity. Individuality is an essential part of the self that autonomy is responsible for bringing to fruition. To experience a genuine sense of individuality one must embrace one's autonomy. This is one of the great realizations of the modern period. There is real worth in developing one's individual identity, and modern institutions ensure that one has an opportunity to develop one's own individuality. Autonomy grants the power and joy of self-governance and individuality. Embracing autonomy entails a great deal of self-responsibility, but it also involves a great recognition of self-worth. It is a declaration that I am capable of

deciding for myself who I am going to be. It is to say that I am capable of deciding on my own how I want to define myself. Autonomy has arisen as a modern value, and become an integral part of a modern conception of the self. For these reasons, autonomy should not be discarded.

6.2. Recognition of the self's inherent link to the community

As was previously stated, the reason the feelings of meaninglessness arise in modernity is because once modern individuals have decided how to orient their lives, they fail to recognize how this decision takes on meaning against a transcendent dimension. The transcendent backdrop that individuals fail to see is how intimately their choices and actions are connected to community and tradition. This decision is transcendent because it is intimately connected to one's community and tradition. Not only does tradition play a role in orienting one's life, but the way one chooses to orient one's life plays a role in the development of that tradition. This occurs through the recognition that one's life is not stagnant and alone but is significantly shaped by one's community, while shaping it at the same time. It is through the recognition of this larger picture that one can see the transcendent dimension within which choice and action can take on meaning, leading to the experience a meaningful life.

The self is both autonomous and communal. The self is necessarily communal because no individual can be raised in complete isolation. All individuals are a part of a living tradition and culture that shapes the very means by which the world is perceived. At the most fundamental level this link is made through language. Language is bestowed upon individuals through a tradition and takes on meaning within a communal context. Ludwig Wittgenstein pointed out that "words have meaning through contextual employment, through linguistic and non-linguistic settings."[33] One of the first ways of being incorporated into a community is learning the language that the community employs. By learning a language, one is being incorporated into a tradition that will shape one's thought. Furthermore, one's use (and manipulations) of a language shape the continuous development of the language and thus the tradition. Evidence of this evolving nature of language is the recent

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[33] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein on Foundations* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1989), 32.

addition of "LOL" and "OMG" to the Oxford English Dictionary.[34] Clearly, language is an example of how a tradition shapes the development of the self and the self can shape the development of the tradition. Individuals are incorporated into a tradition through the language that they have been taught. This language, created through tradition, influences the thoughts that an individual is capable of experiencing.

A proper understanding of the self recognizes it as both communal and autonomous. An individual is incorporated into a culture and tradition that have given meaning to certain issues. An individual is not capable of autonomously deciding what will be meaningful in a given society because this is done collectively as a whole. However, autonomy grants the individual the power to respond to these issues, which is a meaningful means of self-definition. For example, in modern American culture, meaningful issues include homosexual marriage, stem cell research, medical marijuana, and abortion. Taking a stance on these issues is a means of self-definition that meaningfully links one to one's society. One's opinions on these issues are meaningful means of self-definition. For instance, supporting stem cell research would be a meaningful way of defining oneself. The self meaningfully identifies itself as a supporter of stem cell research, and others will recognize this identification. How one responds to these issues contributes to the direction that the community will go in with regard to these issues of significance. In the process of self-definition and responding to the issues that the culture has brought forth as meaningful, the individual is helping to shape and direct the culture and tradition that defines his or her community. For instance, slavery was at one point in American history a common and relatively unchallenged practice. Soon, it became a controversial issue of significance, and individuals' reacting to this issue of significance led to a change in the practice of slavery. The tradition evolved from a tradition that was relatively satisfied with the practice of slavery to a tradition that relatively opposed slavery. Individuals' reacting to the practice of slavery, an issue of significance in America's history, contributed to the evolution of the American tradition. The individual is reacting to, building upon, and integrating his or her self into a tradition that

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[34] "LOL, OMG, ♥ Added to The Oxford English Dictionary" (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ 2011/03/24/lol-omg-oxford-english-dictionary_n_840229.html).

transcends his or her own individual existence as a means of achieving a meaningful life.

If the self is recognized as inherently autonomous and communal, a genuine sense of meaning can be experienced. Individuals can experience the benefits of autonomy through the creation of a unique individual. At the same time, if the role that the community plays in shaping the self through tradition and culture is recognized, one can come to realize that the feeling of isolation and alienation is illusory. Furthermore, in order to define oneself meaningfully, one has to respond to issues that the culture, tradition, and community that one belongs to have deemed meaningful. How one responds to these issues through self-definition contributes to the direction that the tradition and culture is evolving in. This creates a kind of meaning in one's life that transcends the individual and grants meaningful purpose to one's life.