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Enlightenment, Scientific Racism and Slavery: 
A Historical Point

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Abstract

This paper addresses a destructive and regrettable development in western European thought. The passages quoted here are frequently blatant in their opinion and no doubt offensive. It is the intent of this paper to examine the unfounded and often wildly speculative origin of the so-called "scientific racism" through which non-white peoples were "justifiably" enslaved or oppressed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This paper dares quote such opinions in the belief that in understanding and evaluating the origin, one may more accurately and thoroughly respond to these notions which are echoed, if not shouted, by various segments of contemporary culture.

Keywords: enlightenment, racism, slavery, modernism, western culture

I. In the Age of Enlightenment and Fascination

Western Europe's eighteenth century, the self-proclaimed age of Enlightenment, was an era in which men of learning or means advanced to new depths questions of society, religion, science and humanity. These men were the "philosophes", Lovers of Wisdom, whose writings characterize the era and hold the status of classics in contemporary libraries. This paper will examine in particular the philosophes' treatment of what would become a nebulous topic which perhaps has impacted later history to a greater degree than any other from that era. Eighteenth century European science and philosophy regarding non-European/non-white peoples put processes in motion which to this day remain influential and which directly contributed to the death or oppression of tens of millions of non-whites through slavery or conquest.

In addition to increased interest in specifically local or internal matters, western Europe of the seventeenth and eighteenth witnessed
unparalleled political and exploratory expansion which brought exciting new places and peoples to the imagination of the public. Through encounters with these other people groups it was quickly realized that even "primitive" cultures possessed undeniably high morality and the sense of nobility. For some, this resulted in lengthy inquiries regarding the true nature and origin of modern society and politics. Others sought a meaningful comparison of these highly moral "pagan" religions with the exemplar of unrivaled religious authority in Europe, Christianity. It is clear that for many philosophes, these foreign peoples embodied an innocent nobility which they deemed lacking within their overcivilized culture.

Very early on, general and speculative opinions also advanced regarding the various non-European people groups due to prolonged encounters with merchants and explorers. The accounts of these encounters clearly show that the Asians were respected for their civilization and social order, which predated Europe's. The Native American's physical attributes and demeanor were deemed both gentle and "god-like". However, despite such general compliments, both these groups were categorized as "savage" along with a third group, the African, with whom significantly less contact had been made by the Europeans. It is perhaps primarily due to the extreme difficulty European explorers faced in penetrating the interior of the African continent, that the fate of the African, both in European opinion and outcome, was to immensely differ from the Asian and Indian. Sixteenth and seventeenth century myths and stories concerning the African haunted the eighteenth century explorer, so much so, that Pruneau de Pommegorge, a merchant within Upper Senegal writes:

"it is impossible to have knowledge of the far interior of the country, because to reach it one has to cross so many nations which are often barbaric, that the white who would be brave enough to attempt such a voyage would have his neck chopped off before he reached it." (Pruneau de Pommegorge, 1789:150).
The safety of the coasts and rivers allowed the French to penetrate as far as the source of the Senegal River. But, as Abbe Prevost admitted, knowledge of Africa

"is limited nearly to the coast and some of the rivers such as the Senegal and the Gambia. We know the interior sites so little that we cannot with certitude speak of their location, their extensions and limits ... Africa is nearly unknown as compared to Asia and America, although it hardly is inferior in the variety and value of its products". (Prevost, 1746: 139).

It is for this reason, namely the inability of European explorers to penetrate the African mainland, that we find eighteenth century writers and philosophes relying mainly, if not exclusively, upon seventeenth century works claiming to explain, though vaguely, the African continent.

II. Source One: Abbe Prevost's *Histoire*

In 1745 John Green published in London with great success the New General Collection of Voyages and Travels on this wave of increasing interest in foreign travels. Of this four volume work, one volume dealt exclusively with Africa. Abbe Prevost later translated this work into French, mainly due to personal financial hardships. The French translation of Greene's work encompassed seven volumes, to which Prevost added eight more volumes consisting of his own collections and insights. Prevost's fifteen volume set was published between 1746 and 1759 entitled Histoire generale des voyages and quickly became incredibly successful. (Prevost's work was posthumously expanded to twenty-one volumes.). Although the first edition soon became an expensive collector's item, many could afford the less expensive *quarto* edition published in eighty-volumes over the period of 1746 and 1789.

Not only did major explorers and voyagers such as Montcalm and Bougainville carry Prevost's edition with them across the seas, but it clearly influenced the writings and thought of the philosophes. Buffon, the Encyclopedie (the Opus Magnus of the era), and Rousseau
all gleaned most of their information from Prevost and often even plagiarized the Histoire. (Cohen, 1980:66).

Prevost's information on Africa, however, was a hodgepodge collection which he had simply taken from previous seventeenth and early eighteenth century accounts and opinions by various authors. His financial motive and subsequent haste in writing the Histoire added to an inconsistency and contradictory view of African peoples. For example, of the West Africans, Prevost writes:

"Since they are naturally sly and violent they cannot live in peace with each other. The Europeans who are not safe from their insults can find no better vengeance than to burn their huts and ruin their plantations. On the other hand the Negroes of Sierra Leone are sober... They have more feeling and intelligence than the Negroes in the other parts of the Guinea Coast." (Prevost, 3:236).

Elsewhere Prevost states:

"The Negroes in general are given over to incontinence. Their women, who are no less stirred by the pleasure of the senses, employ herbs and barks to excite their husbands. These vicious customs reign here... But the inhabitants (of the Guinea Coast) are more moderate, more gentle, more sociable than the other Negroes. They do not like to shed blood, and don't think of war unless they are forced to by the need to defend themselves." (Ibid,595)

Prevost commonly uses this pattern of presenting favorable qualities of a particular group as an exception to the whole of the African peoples. As we noted earlier, European bias against the Africans may derive quite directly from the impenetrability of the African mainland and the resulting mystery/ignorance regarding those peoples. In support of this suggestion we can here point to the interesting fact that those groups of Africans of which Prevost speaks most favorably are in fact those groups with which Europe was most familiar, namely the
populations of the northwest coast of the African mainland. Thus Prevost deems the more familiar group as an exception of civility and respectability to the otherwise mysterious remainder of African peoples.

III. Source Two: Buffon's *L'histoire naturelle*

A second major collection informing eighteenth century France of the non-European world was Count Buffon's *L'histoire naturelle* (The Natural History). Buffon, like Prevost, merely gleaned, summarized and expanded accounts and notions already at his disposal. Buffon's work, however, seems to have been more widely read than Prevost's. A modern study of 500 eighteenth-century private libraries discovered Buffon's *L'histoire* to be the **third most commonly owned work.** (Mornet, 1910: 460).

Buffon's passages pertaining to Africa were undoubtedly more literary entertainment than accurate account. One very vivid example of this is found in his description of the men of Guinea as "idle and inactive, lacking any sense of imagination or innovation. They were said to become debauched at an early age and also commonly died young due to exhaustion caused by too frequent sexual intercourse since youth" (Leclerc& Buffon, 1811:284-85; 291).

Such incredible statements resulted in Buffon's work later being dubbed the "unnatural" Natural History. A greater and more unfortunate result was that such over-generalised and wildly exaggerated statements posing as science clearly contributed to a very visible and predominant negative opinion of African peoples by Enlightenment thinkers.

Examples of the influence of Buffon and Prevost's works upon individuals who had themselves never ventured off European shores are easily produced. The following are offered merely as examples of the manner in which negative opinions regarding the Africans were propogated on sheer dependence upon the prior popular accounts.
Voltaire, the otherwise self-persuaded independent thinker claims that "[blacks] are incapable of great attention, they reason little, and do not seem made to enjoy the advantages nor the disadvantages of our philosophy." (Voltaire, CC, 12:357).

Regarding the whole of the African continent, the supplement to the Encyclopedie says: "The government is nearly everywhere bizarre, despotic, and totally dependent on the passions and the whims of the sovereign. These people have, so to speak, only ideas from one day to the next, their laws have no principles... no consistency other than that of a lazy and blind habit. They are blamed for ferociousness, cruelty, perfidy (i.e. treachery), cowardice, laziness. This accusation is but too true." (Jaucourt, 780: 194).

Under the heading "Negroes, character of Negroes in general", the Encyclopedie describes "the large number" of Africans as "always vicious... mostly inclined to lasciviousness, vengeance, theft and lies". (Diderot, 11, 82).

IV. Classifying Differences: The Origins of "Racism"

Many Enlightenment authors attempted to probe and solve the question of physical differences between the African and European peoples. Though many might claim as significant differences exist between Europeans and Africans as between Asian and Europeans, the cumulative negative speculation regarding Africans lent itself to a near fascination in comparing the lightest and darkest skinned peoples.

As early as 1684, the French physician Francois Bernier, in an article published in a Paris journal, proposed a new method of classifying human differences. Rather than the ancient system of dividing according to geographical regions, Bernier proposed, perhaps for the first time academically, that peoples be classified according to facial and bodily appearances and figurations. Using this method, he recognized four general classifications or races: Europeans, Far Easterners, "blacks", and the Lapps. ("Nouvelle Division de la Terre, 1684: 133-40). According to Bernier's classes, the Native American is a subgroup of one of these, though he never specifies which. Despite
apparent overgeneralization, most marked in his optimism/naivete regarding knowledge of the whole of humanity, Bernier is remembered as possibly the first attempt to define "classes" of humankind. (Gossett, 1963:33).

Bernier's theory of innate differences among classes of people seemed to contradict a favorite presupposition of the philosophes, John Locke's "tabula rasa" and its implications of limitless possibility in education and enlightenment. For this very reason, Leibniz objected to Bernier's theory stating that although visible differences exist among groups of men, "that is no reason why all men who inhabit the earth should not be of the same race, which has been altered by different climates, as we see that beasts and plants change their nature, and improve or degenerate". (von Leibnitz, 1718:37; quoted in Montagu, 1942:19).

V. Environmental theory
Leibniz's "environmental theory" was in fact also held by Buffon, though Buffon also clearly believed the "white" race to be the epitomy of races, and that all others were exotic variations of the same species. According to Buffon, the African's blackness became "hereditary" due to prolonged, excessive heat of the tropical sun. He also believed this implied that the African emmigrating to the northern regions would eventually lighten in color, "perhaps as white as the natives of that climate". Whereas temperature alone was not able to explain all observable differences, altitude, proximity to the sea, diet and social customs were also suggested as causes. Thus Buffon's view of race was temporal, stating that it "persists as long as the milieu remains and disappears when the milieu is changed". (Leclerc & Buffon, 1791, VIII:34-35).

Notions of environmental or climatic impact upon human development may have already been in place by this time. For example, the memoirs of the French Academy of Sciences in 1705 states that a child who has learned the rudiments of Latin forgets it all during the hot season, but regains this knowledge during the winter. The French Journal des savans likewise claimed that Newton could
work more easily and successfully during the winter than during the summer. (Mercier, 1960:161). Both these references point toward the assumption that the heat of tropical environments decreases mental acuity and activity while colder climates enable learning and educational progress.

Montesquieu, building on this foundation, suggested that despotism flourishes in hot countries and while more temperate zones are the home of "constitutional" societies. In Montesquie's thinking, all men were originally equal but the intensity of the heat caused visible and predictable gradations among them. He writes (again, we note, without his ever entering Africa):

"You will find in the climates of the north, peoples with few vices, many virtues, sincerity and truthfulness. Approach the south, you will think you are leaving morality itself, the passions become more vivacious and multiply crimes... The heat can be so excessive that the body is totally without force. The resignation passes to the spirit and leads people to be without curiosity, nor the desire for noble enterprise." (Secondat, 2:.562).

The environmental theory clearly lacked comprehensive explanatory power, and so creative attempts were made to provide for its inadequacy. For example, regarding differences in facial features among Africans and Europeans, Daubenton, Buffon's assistant, wildly and without any evidential substantiation, stated that Africans were not born with "noses that flat, and lips that thick", but claims that African parents, after judging their children to be lacking in beauty, would "crush their noses and squeeze their lips so that they swell and thus believe they have beautified nature while disfiguring it". (Daubenton, 1, 1782:xxxiii)

Regarding facial features Volney had a different theory:

"The countenance of the Negroes represents precisely that stage of contraction that our faces assume when strongly affected by
heat. The eyebrows are knit, the cheeks rise, the eyelids are contracted and the mouth distorted. This state of contraction, to which the features are perpetually exposed in the hot climates of the Negroes, has become the peculiar characteristic of their countenance." (Volney, 1, 1787:80).

In summary, the environmental theory, while upholding the original equality of race among men, very clearly stated that all humans were originally white and that unnatural or extreme ecological conditions caused degeneration among the people of particular (non-white) areas.

The wedding of environment and subsequent biological theories gave rise to a legion of new "sciences" which at first simply drew sharper distinctions between "races" but later inevitably created an incomprehensible chasm between the European and African peoples.

VI. Biological theory
Cornelius de Pauw perhaps exemplifies the movement from environmental to biological factors when he states that Africans, as victims of the sun, were darkened, and thus their "physiognomy" was "disfigured". He then goes on to say, "The most delicate and subtle organs of the brain have been destroyed or obliterated by the fire of their native land, and their intellectual faculties have been weakened." (de Pauw, 2, 1774:56; and ibid., 1:52; quoted in Duchet, 1969:123).

Here the theoretical jump is made from temporal, environmental changes in physical appearance to the notion that physical differences (from Europeans) entail irrecoverable "damage" to brain and body. This notion of "damage" to the brain clearly precludes expectation of restoration and fuels a very prolonged (and mistaken) series of speculations regarding "brain size" whereby permanent distinctions among people groups were attempted. Historically, once this conceptual jump from environment to biology is accepted, there remained no real obstacle to purely biological classifications of humans, what we today understand as "racism".
The science of "Craniology" was introduced by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a professor of medicine at the University of Gottingen in 1775. Blumenbach had a profound interest in collecting skeletons, especially crania, from differing peoples and regions throughout the world. Blumenbach, after examining his skulls, concluded that humankind could be divided into five classifications: American, Mongolian, Ethiopian, Caucasian, and Malay. Of his five classification, the reader no doubt recognizes that one in particular remains widely used to this day, that of "Caucasian". In fact Blumenbach's classifications appear to the present day in various textbooks and are even codified in various laws. His five varieties are usually named by the colors "red, yellow, black, white, and brown", respectively.

Blumenbach's term "caucasian" derives from his possession of a single skull from the Caucasian mountain region in Russia. After finding strong resemblances between this particular skull and those of the Germans he conjectured that the Caucasian region was possibly the original home of the Europeans. (Gottingen, 1795, pp.viii, 264-65).

Although Blumenbach sharply criticized those holding to a superiority or inferiority of certain races, he also claimed that the "most perfect" skull was the single Caucasian skull he owned. (alrighty then...)

A contemporary of Blumenbach, Peter Camper, a Dutch painter, attempted to aid other painters struggling to capture the features of the Africans. He created a system measuring the "prognathism" or "prominence of the lower part of the face among Africans". Camper, by slightly decreasing the degree of angle of the faces, claimed to demonstrate the similarity of facial structure between African and beast:

"If I make the facial line lean forward, I have an antique head; if backward, the head of a Negro. If I still more incline it, I have the head of an ape; and if more still, that of a dog, and then that of an idiot". (Cunningham, 1908: 20, 26).
Camper's theory was severely criticized by Blumenbach, but was nevertheless uncritically adopted by the French and made its way into the foundation of nineteenth-century racist thought. (Haddon, 1934:16, 31). The notion of the (construed) similarity of African and beast fueled "polygenist" (lit. "multiple origin") theories which claim that most, if not all, non-white peoples are derived from non-Adamic and thus, "biblically speaking", non-humanic races. This perspective, of course, opens all manner of justification for "discriminating" between "races". An example of discriminatory polygenist thought is found in the recently (and unfortunately) popularized "Church of the Creator" which considers non-white people groups "mud people" due to their non-Adamic origin (hence the emphasis on Creator).

"Monogenism" therefore is the belief that all humans find their origin in the same original parents, and if one is to believe the Scriptural account of the origin of humanity and its gradual spread to diverse geographical regions (including Africa), this is undoubtedly the biblical position. But as we have seen, monogenism, as espoused by many of the philosophes assumed that all variations (away from the white) in people groups was due to a degeneration through environmental causes of the original white(r) people. This dual definition of monogenism, namely the biblical account on the one hand and environmental theory (presumably) on the other, resulted in its being targeted by both critics of the Church and of environmentalism. In other words, by lumping the biblical account and environmental theory together, critics could as easily attack one as the other.

Voltaire, who perhaps more than any individual is equated with enlightenment thought, exemplifies this effort to target at one and the same time both the Church's authority in seemingly scientific matters and the environmental theory. In this pre-Darwinian age, the major argument against the environmental theory was the observation that generations of dark peoples did not turn lighter after migrating to less harsh regions, nor did generations of lighter peoples turn darker by migrating to harsher regions. Thus this seemingly irrefutable
observation allowed Voltaire and other critics of the Church's monogenism to speak very confidently of the polygenistic alternative. Those familiar with Voltaire's writing have learned to expect nothing but overly colorful and intentionally controversial arguments. Thus readers are here warned that his statements quoted here regarding African and non-white peoples are no less controversial. The author's purpose in providing these passages is to reveal to what extent sheer assumption regarding the African people penetrated even the most iconic of enlightenment thinkers. As to Voltaire's personal "knowledge" of the situations he describes below, it must be noted that not only did he never touch foot on African soil, but an analysis of his personal library reveals that out of 3,867 books (titles), only 4 dealt with Africa.

On the difference between the African and European, Voltaire writes: The negro race is a species of men different from ours as the breed of spaniels is from that of greyhounds. The mucous membrane, or network, which nature has spread between the muscles and the skin, is white in us and black or copper-colored in them. (Voltaire, 1878: .5-6).

On the difference in the measure of intelligence:

Their round eyes, their flat nose, their lips which are always thick, their differently shaped ears, the wool on their head, the measure even of their intelligence establishes between them and other species of men prodigious differences. If their understanding is not of a different nature from ours, it is at least greatly inferior. They are not capable of any great application or association of ideas, and seem formed neither in the advantages nor the abuses of our philosophy. (Op Cit., p-240).

On the exclusion of any non-white people:

As the negro of Africa has not his original from us whites, why should the red, olive, or ash-colored peoples of America come from our countries? (ibid,241).
And as regards Voltaire's opinion of Scripture's monogenism:

> It is a serious question among them whether [the Africans] are descended from monkeys or whether the monkeys come from them. Our wise men have said that man was created in the image of God. Now here is a lovely image of the Divine Maker: a flat and black nose with little or hardly any intelligence. A time will doubtless come when these animals will know how to cultivate the land well, beautify their houses and gardens, and know the paths of the stars: one needs time for everything." (ibid, 241).

**VII. Racism and Slavery: A Feeble Backlash**

It soon became apparent to conscientious contemporaries that this direction of thought was establishing a philosophical basis for slavery and the subjugation of Africans (and other non-whites). Purely economically-driven individuals seized upon these speculations and very quickly justified slave trade and made it the unrivaled industry for more than 100 years.

During this time we see many previously outspoken polygenists such as Abbe Raynal reverse views to better promote their anti-slavery convictions, and polygenism soon became significantly outnumbered and overshadowed by influential monogenists such as Buffon and Blumenbach. The popular realization that polygenism was a pawn for an apparently brutal slave industry resulted in its very rapid decline within the writings of the philosophes.

In essence, the entire notion of polygenism was dropped and its advocated positions (and so also arguments against it) were no longer developed or seriously pursued. According to the evidence of the historic record, polygenism was discarded by all serious players due to the common-sense realization that its resultant human injustice was indefensible. Ironically, for this very reason, contemporary polygenist rhetoric by groups such as the recently infamous Church of the Creator catch even wisened individuals off-guard and encounter little if any anti-polygenist literature. By resurrecting a perspective cast
Aside more than 200 years ago, polygenist groups easily appear to provide an either new or ancient solution to social problems.

By far, the most influential theory regarding the nature and social position of the races, as well as the order of all creation is known as "the Great Chain of Being". This notion is generally believed to have begun with Aristotle's statement that "some [men] are marked out for subjection". This idea held that:

The universe resembles a large and well-regulated family, in which all the officers and servants, and even the domestic animals, are subservient to each other in a proper subordination; each enjoys the privileges and prequisites peculiar to his place, and at the same time contributes, by that just subordination, to the magnificence and happiness of the whole. (Jenyns, 1757, quoted in Lovejoy, 1957:207).

The Chain of Being by definition denied any great rift among species and so was often interpreted as denying the category of "specie" altogether. For example, John Locke, in book III of Essay Concerning Human Understanding refuted the idea of systematic divisions since such were merely man-made categories. Locke admitted the existence of "real essences", implying necessary attributes within each "nature", but stated that only the Creator and possibly the angels were acquainted with these "real essences", and thus mortal men were incapable of grasping them, with the exception of essences of mathematical figures and perhaps, moral properties. Locke writes:

Our distinguishing substances into species by names is not at all founded on their real essences; nor can we pretend to range and determine them exactly into species, according to essential internal differences. (Locke, 111, Ch.6, 3.6.).

And elsewhere:

I do not deny that nature, in the constant production of particular beings, makes them not always new and various, but
very much alike and of kin to one another; but I think it nevertheless true that the boundaries of species, whereby men sort them, are made by men. (Ibid., § 27).

Locke believed that even the essence of "man" cannot be defined by "precise and unmovable boundaries set by nature". It is only through arbitrary definitions created by man "that we can say: This is a man, this is a [baboon]; and in this, I think, consists the whole business of "genus" and species". (Ibid., § 36.)

Following Locke, Buffon, in Histoire Naturelle (1749) argued extensively against the whole of systematics, and concludes by saying, "In general, the more one increases the number of one's divisions, in the case of the products of nature, the nearer one comes to the truth; since in reality individuals alone exist in nature." (Buffon, 1749: 38).

In like manner, Diderot's Encyclopedie gives the relationship between this "systemless system" and the philosophe:

"...Everything in nature is linked together," since "beings are connected with one another by a chain of which we perceive some parts as continuous, though in the greater number of points the continuity escapes us," the "art of the philosopher consists in adding new links to the separated parts, in order to reduce the distance between them as much as possible. But we must not flatter ourselves that gaps will not still remain in many places." (Encyclopedie, art. "Cosmologie.").

Heeding Diderot's call to "add new links", many indeed submitted new theories regarding the relation of the "separate parts" of nature, and of particular interest was apparently the possible link between man and apes.

VIII. Origins of the Contemporary Model
The Swedish naturalist Carol von Linnaeus listed five human races which he believed revealed a descending order in the Chain of Being. Linnaeus' chain went as follows: white, Native American, Asian,
African, and "homo troglodytes". The "troglodytes" were, according to Linnaeus, "monstrous", and his classification of them is apparently due to both the "Troglodytes" of ancient classical mythology and Linnaeus' notions of orangutans. (Linne, I, 1956: 24-25).

Of importance here is not simply Linnaeus' naivete regarding the status of mythological creatures, but that he classifies these half ape, half human creatures within the human races.

In 1753, perhaps following Linnaeus' lead, Jean Jacques Rousseau asserted that the higher apes, namely the orangutan or the chimpanzee are of the same species as man, and that language was not originally "natural to man", but is simply an art which one variety of the species developed. (Jean Jacques Rousseau. Second Discourse on Inequality, note j).

Though this growing opinion did not elevate the social position of the monkey, it did drastically lower social esteem of African peoples. The "fact" that both apes and Africans were black added to the credibility of these "missing link" theories. Other "evidence" involved the fact that both African and ape were of the same geographical region. J.D. Robinet, an important French writer wrote in 1768 that the orangutans lived in Angola, "where the ugliest and stupidest" Africans also resided. (Robinet, 1768:168).

Those rare eyewitnesses of the Africans did very little to alleviate negative "scientific" and popular opinion. For example, Larimar, himself a former official in Senegal, wrote that the people south of the Gambia River physically resembled primates in their appearance due to their social relations, lack of "proper" language, and nudity. He thus concluded that there exists "no intermediary species between this race of men and the men of the woods [orangutans]." (Cohen.87) The bored yet excitable European imagination soon enthusiastically entertained and proliferated stories of African women being carried off by sexually excited male apes as mates and the alleged promiscuity of the African women who, it was claimed, invited either man or ape.
This topic of the "baseness" or depravity of the African seems to have captivated the imagination of many enlightenment thinkers, to the extent of renewing interest in "physiognomics". Hardly new, physiognomics had been present since Aristotle's proclamation that:

"When men have large foreheads, they are slow to move; when they have small ones, they are fickle; when they have broad ones, they are apt to be distraught; when they have foreheads rounded or bulging out, they are quick-tempered."

**IX. Physiognomics**
In the 1780's, France enthusiastically welcomed Caspar Lavater, the Swiss popularizer of the physiognomic school. The first edition of his work *Essai sur la physionomie detine a faire connaitre l'homme et le faire aimer* was published in 1780, and was followed by eight more editions in the next half-century. The original physiognomic theory, that an individual's character is discernable by physical appearance, was soon expanded to the assumption that a whole people group (or "race") is discernable by its members' physical appearance. Thus skin color, being the most visible physical difference, became thought of as indicative of inner character.

This esteem of skin color quickly became interwoven with French sentiments of aesthetics, and soon even major writers such as Diderot and Maupertuis bluntly state that they deem black peoples as "ugly". Many statements on the blackness of Africans made by writers at this time seem to spiritualize skin color. Darkness was said to imply depravity and whiteness nobility and a closer proximity to perfection. Daubenton declared Europeans "the model for beauty" and Bougainville that "blacks were much more savage than the Indians, whose color approached that of whites." (*Daubenton, I, p.xxxi; Bougainville, Voyage autour du monde*).

Physiognomics' basic and most destructive premise is that physical variations in color and appearance not only result in "intellectual and moral differences" among people groups, but that such differences account for or cause intellectual and moral differences. Though
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...subtley different, the latter notion is clearly "racism" as understood in modern parlance.

Let's see if you recognize notions implied in the following passages:

Georges Cuvier, at the end of the eighteenth-century, epitomizes the ultimate conclusion of physiognomics when he writes:

The white race, with oval face, straight hair and nose, to which the civilized peoples of Europe belong and which appear to us the most beautiful of all, is also superior to others by its genius, courage and activity. (And that there is a) cruel law which seems to have condemned to an eternal inferiority the races of depressed and compressed skulls. ...and experience seems to confirm the theory that there is a relationship between the perfection of the spirit and the beauty of the face."

J.J. Virey, a medical doctor, wrote, "All the ugly peoples are more or less barbarians, beauty is the inseparable companion of the most civilized nations.""

The German art historian Johann Winckelmann suggested that "our capacity to think is normally analogous to the shape of our body." He went on to summarize the mission of the European: "The European, called by destiny to run the empire of the globe which he knows how to enlighten by his intelligence, tame by his abilities, is man par excellence, the others are nothing but hordes of barbarians". (Daubenton, 1, p.xxxi; Bougainville, Voyage autour du monde.).

X. Conclusion?
This story continues in even more shocking and degrading ways throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Though some steps were made within the twentieth-century to correct the inaccurate presuppositions of the earlier centuries, to say that the modern world
has been freed from the previous centuries' superstition and ignorance is undoubtedly an over-optimistic evaluation.

One must wonder why enlightenment thinkers, in their self-proclaimed project to arrive at objective truth, fell so feebly to rumor, innuendo and the populus' momentum regarding the mystery of the African. This wonder must also necessarily carry over to the fact that America's founding fathers, proclaiming "unalienable rights" for all humanity, equally engaged in and thus set the precedent for America's most lamentable crime of institutional slavery.

Had the Enlightenment offered in the area of anthropology what it claimed to offer in other sciences, the world would truly be a vastly different place. Instead, it clearly opted to become the mother of prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Theologian James Cone rightly states that "for the black and red peoples in North America, the spirit of the Enlightenment was socially and politically demonic, becoming a pseudo-intellectual basis for their enslavement or extermination." (Cone, 1975:46).

It is universally held that actions speak louder than words. The actions resulting from Enlightenment theories regarding Africans more than overwhelmed any good intended by these writings. The residue of Enlightenment racial optimism remains fully operant within European and American culture, and enables many to discriminate on the basis of skin color. But if the basic premise of the Enlightenment is correct, namely, that objective knowledge of the truth will free minds fettered by superstition and demonstrably false beliefs, then perhaps this paper will serve its purpose.
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Cogito, Madness and Writing

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Abstract
This paper briefly examines the debate between Foucault and Derrida, which focuses on Foucault’s Madness and Civilization, and copes with madness and reason through Descartes. Foucault maintains that modern reason has founded itself, historically, as a leading type of knowing through the orderly exclusion of its other: non-reason or madness. He argues that Descartes supported the philosophical instant in this exclusion. Derrida not only criticizes Foucault for having misconstrued Descartes’ thoughts on madness, but also, in “Cogito and the History of Madness,” objects to Foucault having periodised the exclusion of madness as something exacting to the modern period. This paper compares Foucault’s response to Derrida in his article “My body, this paper, this fire” with Derrida’s response to Foucault, delivered in a lecture titled “To Do Justice to Freud: The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis.” I consider the oft-repeated view crediting Michel Foucault with the “destruction” of subjectivity. As stated by Foucault, we can talk about subjectivity merely with the meaning of that which is itself comprised by and through miscellaneous forces. I argue that attributing the destruction of subjectivity to Foucault needs some clarification. It is not all in all wrong given that Foucault places himself against the philosophical notion of a self-governing thinking subject. Neither is it altogether right since Foucault’s scrutiny is still concerned with a variety of ways individuals are constituted. I suggest that Foucault sidestepped Derrida’s accusations and instead went on the counter-offensive, hammering away at Derrida’s method of public discourse. The peculiar thing about Derrida’s position, however, is that it appears as though to repudiate the significance of the Cartesian idea of subjectivity simultaneously as it persists that we are not able to think without it.

Key words: Cogito, Subjectivity, Reason, Madness, Exclusion, Descartes, Philosophical shift.
I. Introduction
The ideas for this paper originated with my reading of the Foucault/Derrida debate on French philosopher Michel Foucault’s 1961 book *Madness and Civilization*, which deals with madness and reason via Descartes. The argument *cogito ergo sum*, (“I think, therefore I am”) comes from Descartes’ *Discourse on Method*, first published in 1637 and *Meditations on First Philosophy*, published in 1641.\(^1\)

For Foucault, it stands for a key transfer in the conception of madness. The cogito argument starts in doubt; Descartes endeavors to counter the position of severe skepticism concerning the world and his own existence. He asks, “How do I recognize that I exist?” (Descartes, 1999: 57) and speculates if he is not mad or being misinformed about his own existence. The response is basically that, albeit all other proof is discounted, Descartes knows that he doubts his existence; and since he doubts, he ought to be thinking. If he is thinking, he must exist and cannot be misleading himself. There are miscellaneous problems of interpretation that have an effect on this argument, but Foucault disregards them. What interests him is the way that Descartes discloses the assurance of reason in the classical period. Descartes believes he cannot be mad since he reasons: reason disputes itself utterly to madness

Foucault’s interpretation of Descartes was seriously criticized by Jacques Derrida in his 1964 treatise “Cogito and the history of madness”. Derrida quite fundamentally undermines Foucault’s plan of writing a history of madness. Derrida views philosophy as an instrument in the keeping out of madness: “there had to be folly so that wisdom might overcome it” (Derrida, 1978: 45).

The argument between the two philosophers is very studious and I make plain herein only the tenets most significant for my argument in this paper, namely, just what each writer accepts or rejects and why.

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1- I am grateful to my mentor, Maureen Ford, for her support and insightful discussion, which have helped shape my thought. This paper would not have been possible without her support.
To do this, I first convey Foucault’s basic argument in *Madness and Civilization*: that modern reason has founded itself, historically, as a leading type of knowing through the orderly exclusion of its other: non-reason or madness. In the next section, I argue that, Derrida not only criticizes Foucault for having misconstrued Descartes’ thoughts on madness, but also, in “Cogito and the History of Madness,” objects to Foucault having periodised the exclusion of madness as something particular to the modern period. Derrida sees the split between reason and madness as previously existing in Greek philosophy. He goes further than only amending historical mistake: he argues that reason itself, in the entire writing and the every part of Western philosophy, requires the exclusion of madness so as to be operational. For Derrida, the problem with Descartes is not so much that he is an awful philosopher, but that language itself betrays or fails him. In the middle section of my paper, I contrast Foucault’s response to Derrida in his article “My body, this paper, this fire” with Derrida’s response to Foucault, delivered seven years after Foucault’s death in a 1991 lecture titled “To Do Justice to Freud: The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis.” I suggest that Foucault sidestepped Derrida’s accusations and instead went on the counter-offensive, hammering away at Derrida’s method of public discourse. In my conclusion, I consider the oft-repeated view crediting Michel Foucault with the “destruction” of subjectivity. As stated by Foucault, we can talk about subjectivity merely with the meaning of that which is itself comprised by and through miscellaneous forces. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982: 143, 168) indicate that Foucault is interested in the power-knowledge relation and its insinuations for the genealogy of the individual both as an object and as a subject in *The History of Sexuality* and *Discipline and Punish* correspondingly.

I argue that attributing the destruction of subjectivity to Foucault needs some clarification. It is not all in all erroneous given that Foucault sets himself against the philosophical notion of a self-sufficient thinking subject. Neither is it altogether right since Foucault’s scrutiny is still concerned with a variety of ways individuals are constituted. The peculiar thing about Derrida’s position, however, is that it appears as though to repudiate the
significance of the Cartesian idea of subjectivity simultaneously as it persists that we are not able to think without it.

II. Foucault’s Critique of Descartes

Foucault sees the cogito as a key philosophical change in the formation of madness. In the first Meditation, Descartes reflects on whether he is certain of knowledge that is based on sensory observation and that regards large objects near at hand. Is his certainty undermined, he wonders, by the fact that “certain persons, devoid of sense, whose cerebella are so troubled and clouded by the violent vapors of black biles that they constantly assure us that . . . they are clothed in purple when they are really without covering. . . ?” (Descartes, 1999: 56). Descartes answers, “They are mad, and I should not be any less insane were I to follow examples so extravagant” (Ibid).

This is the channel that, Foucault says, demonstrates Descartes’ barring madness by verdict. And this is the objection based on the possibility of madness that Derrida believes is later addressed by Descartes. The problem is, according to Descartes, that the very possibility of making a counter-argument depends upon the assumption that he is not mad. As American philosopher David Kelley put it, Descartes held that “the acceptance of a proposition p is justified in accordance with some epistemological rule R only if the subject has determined that accepting p does comply with R” (Kelley, 1994: 7). But this determination can be made only if the subject is rational. To be specific, Descartes’ acceptance of the proposition “I am sane” is justified in accordance with some epistemological rule R only if Descartes has [rationally] determined that accepting “I am sane” complies with R.

On this basis, I think Foucault may have a reasonable argument, and perhaps this is why Descartes writes, in reply to the fourth set of Objections, “the power of thinking is asleep . . . in maniacs” (Descartes, 1999: 43). If the supremacy of thoughts itself is slumbering in madmen, the problem of arriving at definite knowledge does not occur for them. They could by no means make a long story
short of saying, “I possibly mad, but I have grasped (by reason) that ‘I think, therefore I exist.’” consequently, Descartes does not greeting their attendance in his argument. As a result, conceivably Foucault was on to something. Descartes, whether he completely recognized it or not, had no way of presenting an claim in an opposite position with the probability that he was mad. Having no grasp of the Objectivist axioms, he could rule out the possibility that he was mad only by decree. As Foucault articulates, “the analysis of statements operates therefore without reference to a cogito because it focuses on specific discursive formations at the level of what is actually said in particular statements” (Foucault, 1972: 122).

Foucault states ‘man’—what he calls the autonomous subject—did not exist for the period of the Classical age (or earlier than), since “there was no epistemological consciousness of man as such” (Foucault, 1973: 309). He notes that, as Hubert Dreyfus insightfully put it:

> When man sees himself as involved in the world and also as a transcendental source of meaning, he enters into a strange relation with his own involvements. His use of language that he does not master, his inherence in a living organism he does not fully penetrate with thought, and the desires that he cannot control, must all be taken to be the basis of his ability to think and act. But if man is to be a lucid transcendental source of meaning, this unthought must, ultimately, be accessible to thought. If he is to be autonomous, this unthought must be dominated in action. Yet insofar as this unthought in its obscurity is precisely the condition of the possibility of thought and action, it can never be fully absorbed into the cogito. Thus the lucid subject is undermined by the realization that it is a construction of our modern discursive formation and so has no causal power; the Kantian autonomous agent is an internally contradictory ideal.” (Dreyfus, 2002, online)

Such considerations, according to Dreyfus, "support Foucault’s famous claim that man is a recent invention and will soon pass away.”
(Ibid) Foucault figures out the total his opinion on this subject in an interview:

> The death of man is nothing to get particularly excited about. It's one of the visible forms of a much more general decease, if you like. I don’t mean by it the death of god but the death of the subject, of the Subject in capital letters, of the subject as origin and foundation of Knowledge, of Liberty, of Language and History (Foucault, 1980: 171, quoted in Dreyfus, 2002, online).

### III. Derrida’s Critique of Foucault

In this section, I comment on Jacques Derrida’s lecture “Cogito and the History of Madness,” beginning with an overview of the substance of that essay. “Cogito and the History of Madness” has two essential objectives, both of which identify with Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization*. First, Derrida aims to disapprove a passage in that work that elucidates Descartes’ dealing of madness in the cogito argument, as tackled in the doubts of the first Meditation. Second, and more commonly, Derrida wants to “interrogate certain presuppositions of this history of madness” (Derrida, 1978: 33), namely, he comments on underlying questions as they identify with Foucault's book.

The problem on which Derrida centers is the impact on the cogito of the possibility that the subject is insane. In Foucault’s interpretation (as Derrida takes it), “Descartes is not interested in madness, he does not welcome it as a hypothesis, he does not consider it. He excludes it by decree. I would be insane if I thought that I had a body made of glass. But this is excluded, since I am thinking” (Derrida, 1978: 47). This shows that Descartes does not, in finding assurance of his existence in the fact that he thinks, contest the doubt that he might be insane. At some length, Derrida suggests an alternative reading of Descartes, one that is “banal,” by his own agreement (Derrida, 1978: 33). Derrida elucidates that:

> “The Cogito escapes madness only because at its own moment, under its own authority, it is valid even if I am mad, even if my thoughts are completely mad. There is a value and a meaning of
the Cogito, as of existence, which escape the alternative of a determined madness or a determined reason. Confronted with the critical experience of the Cogito, insanity, as stated in the Discourse on Method, is irremediably on a plane with skepticism. Thought no longer fears madness… The certainty thus attained need not be sheltered from an imprisoned madness, for it is attained and ascertained within madness itself… [and] seems to require neither the exclusion nor the circumventing of madness” (Derrida, 1978: 55).

To be precise, even though one was mad, one would still unquestionably be conscious of one’s own thoughts. This is the summation of Derrida’s “re-reading” of Descartes. The problem is, this still gives one no assurance in one’s reason. Derrida notes that Descartes appears aware of this issue, as he appeals to God to make certain his saneness.

Derrida is in fact concerned in a larger scheme: the plan that “there is a kind of wellspring of reason more profound than the reason of the classical age” (Derrida, 1978: 43). It seems that he is in agreement with Foucault’s categorization of madness as “silence.” He notes, “Madness is what by existence cannot be said” (Derrida, 1978: 36) and adds, “through his own language (the philosopher) reassures himself against any actual madness -- which may sometimes appear quite talkative, another problem” (Derrida, 1978: 54). This other issue gets no more consideration, so the fact that punctures the entire metaphor, the fact that mad people talk, besides, casts a heavy shadow over the whole discussion.

Derrida says in a nagging manner, that Foucault attempted “to write a history of madness itself. That is, by letting madness speak for itself” (Derrida, 1978: 33). Nevertheless, when Foucault asserts to inscribe about madness itself, previous to or exterior its capture by modern reason, he himself can’t assist but detain madness from his “rational” discussion, consequently re-creating the very omitting he is disapproving. His own argument on madness would be impracticable without a prior binarisation of “reason” and “madness.” This
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Binarisation is part of Foucault’s hypostatization of structures of dissimilarity and distinctiveness as having being in and for themselves, unconventional, as essence in the actual world, as stabilized essences in a independent entirety, to be disclosed by writing.

At this instant, Foucault named his own historical study of madness “structural” and Derrida is more than happy to criticize Foucault on his “method for which everything within the structural totality is interdependent and circular in such a way that the classical problems of causality themselves would appear to stem from a misunderstanding” (Derrida 1978: 43-44). American philosopher Herbert Dreyfus suggests, however, that while Foucault came under the influence of French structuralism early on:

He was never, strictly speaking, a structuralist since the structures he studied were historical and changed abruptly from epoch to epoch, but he did share with structuralism a determined effort to eliminate the Cartesian subject. He did not deny that human beings were conscious and did things (Dreyfus: 2002).

Here, I want to comment on several features of Derrida’s method as they leap out at me from the Cogito and the History of Madness. To begin with, it seems to me that Derrida is at pains to use representational language, to speak definitely or elliptically, or to classify an obscurity parenthetically, so as to spice up his writing. The consequence is that one often, as with Heidegger, can have no comprehensible idea what Derrida means. Madness is, for instance, “the obstinate murmur of a language that speaks by itself, without speaker or interlocutor” (Derrida 1978: 34). An idea must be “interrogated” (1978: 33).

One prolonged instance of this takes place as Derrida points out his plan for the speech. With much indistinct, complicated language, with parenthetical comments, and even with an aside about hermeneutics, he conceals the fact that his first item amounts to little more than a
substitutive explanation of a passage in Descartes. This device is needed, to some extent to give the impression of profundity, and partly to square this traditional form of investigation with his analytical doctrines as they come into view elsewhere. Hence the odd sentence: “When one attempts, in a general way, to pass from an obvious to a latent language, one must first be rigorously sure of the obvious meaning” (Derrida 1978: 32). An understandable meaning should be clear, one would think, and therefore need no rigor to be comprehended.

Next, we see in “Cogito and the History and Madness,” that Derrida states “there is no praise by essence, except of reason” because reason, ultimately is logos. Etymology is “essence,” to Derrida, it comes into sight. “Cogito and the History of Madness” is characteristic of Derrida’s pattern of not writing plain philosophical essays, but inserting philosophical remarks in the course of examining literature, frequently literature that is irrelevant to the broader issues he is thought to have raised. John Ellis in his comprehensible critique of Derrida, Against Deconstruction, comments on Derrida’s On Grammatology that:

Derrida’s choosing to develop his own ideas on language through an extensive critique of those of Rousseau must remain something of a puzzle; among linguistic theorists, Rousseau’s ideas scarcely count as a serious contribution to the field, and much of what Rousseau has to say would have to count as dismissably crackpot taken in the context of modern linguistic theory... Derrida actually discusses, in all seriousness, precisely those aspects of Rousseau’s views that are most obviously so... (Ellis 1989: 25).

Yet On Grammatology is extensively considered by postmodernists as a influential work of literary theory and epistemology (Ellis 1989: 25).

Lastly, I would like to comment that Derrida appears to write in an odd isolation. For example, we see in “Cogito and the History of
Madness” that Derrida takes up Foucault’s keeping apart of Descartes with no the least reflection on Descartes’ impact on the theory of madness, nor on other interpreters of Descartes, nor certainly in contact with any literature that might improve our understanding of the problems. If the point is that the experience of madness is completely indescribable, that it is the kind of thing we have no terms to describe, then, all right, but I would think this point needs an argument. Why our regular complement of notions is inadequate for describing what madness is like? Of course, no explanation of madness will make the reader herself experience it. But we don’t wait for an appropriate explanation of anger to make us experience anger. Why should madness be any different? Derrida appears to presume that a description of madness would have to draw upon a language with very particular or unfeasible properties. He seems to think a real account of madness would necessitate a mad language. But does an account of anger need an angry language or an account of cats a catty language? I don’t presume it does. George Bennington writes:

The point of the Cogito is thus anterior to any determined relation between reason and madness: it is in this sense that the Cogito is valid even if the subject is mad: but communicating the sense of the Cogito involves a passage from its punctual truth to the temporality of discourse and the consequent de facto exclusion of madness which is a pre-condition of discourse. As soon as the Cogito becomes language it becomes the oeuvre which excludes madness in constituting itself (1979: 7).

IV. Foucault / Derrida debate on Freud
Foucault’s reply to Derrida (1972) is very detailed, but most analysts agree he doesn’t succeed in countering Derrida’s critique. However, I would like to say that Derrida’s “textualisation” of “discursive practices” likewise stands in the way of analyzing the historical events in which Foucault is interested. The causes and effects of keeping out and difference (of madness, of madmen, of psychiatric hospitals) do not reflect any basic structural totality, but neither are they unconnected to the way they are described in texts and subjectivities. As Foucault argues, discursive practices—like the writing of the
history of madness—aren’t just “textualisations,” but institutionally embedded activities constructing the very objects, relations between objects, and structures they converse or write about. “Constructing,” here, does not specify just constructing in the realm of the “mind” or of “language.” Differentiating by discourse has effectiveness in the further discursive reality of which it speaks (Foucault 1979: 27).

Derrida can reply:

> It is a question today of the age to which the book itself belongs, it is a question of the age that is describing rather than the age that is described... Foucault regularly attempts to objectify psychoanalysis and to reduce it to that of which he speaks rather than that from or out of which he speaks... Were one to trust too readily in the opposition between subject and object, as well as in the category of objectification ... In a word, what is the situation of psychoanalysis at the moment of, and with respect to, Foucault’s book? And how does this book situate its project with respect to psychoanalysis?” (Derrida 1996: 72)

At this point we reach the essential vagueness in _Madness and Civilization_, which, in addition to determining Foucault’s ambivalence to Freud, continues to produce other orderly and continuous hesitation and incongruity all the way through his following work. Foucault’s commendation of Freud agrees with one pole of his ambiguous position towards his offensive heroes. Which is to say, in the positive approach, Freud is seen as reopening the conversation with madness, thus undermining the self-satisfied of modern rationality. I cite the pertinent passage:

> This is why we must do justice to Freud. [Unlike the other psychiatrists], Freud went back to madness at the level of its _language_, reconstituted one of the essential elements of an experience reduced to silence by positivism; he did not make a major addition to the list of psychological treatments for
madness; he restored, in medical thought, the possibility of a dialogue with unreason (Foucault 1965: 198).

In an indicative interpretation of this passage, Derrida notices a trace of antagonism even in Foucault’s obvious admire for Freud. Derrida indicates that the phrase “one must do justice to” proposes the necessity of “correcting an impulse” to perform an unfairness. “One is . . . recommending resisting a temptation,” in this case, to subsume Freud under standardizing psychiatry. Derrida writes that “since it is still necessary to call for vigilance . . . such a temptation must still be threatening [Foucault] and liable to reemerge.” (Derrida 1996: 83)

When Foucault claps Freud for having permanently separated from hospital psychiatry, his applause is essentially doubtful. That is, while he admires Freud for having “demystified” most of the structures of the psychiatric asylum, he disputes that the one characteristic of the asylum Freud kept was indeed the most essential and destructive. In other words, though the psychoanalytic situation abandoned the external features of the asylum, it came to concentrate utterly on “the doctor–patient couple” (1965: 277). The investigative setting supported, in turn, to raise the “moralizing sadism” of the development. The analyst’s situation following the couch turns him into a total unnoticed viewer, and his “pure and circumspect Silence” (1965: 278) converts him into an unapproachable Judge.

Consequently psychoanalysis’s move forward therapeutic psychiatry has an essential feature in having accomplished “confine without confinement” (1986: 81), which is an uncertain type of development undeniably – and which, for Foucault, came to characterize the kind of advancement fulfilled by the humanistic reformers. while former Foucault had admired Freud for having “restored, in medical thought, the possibility of a dialogue with unreason”, - he ultimately disputes that “psychoanalysis has not been able, will not be able, to hear the voices of unreason, nor to decipher in themselves the signs of the madman. (Foucault, 1965: 278).
It is significant to realize how profound Foucault’s criticisms of the doctor–patient affiliation go. They relate not just to the sermonizing substance of the beliefs the doctor apparently endeavors to instill in the patient but also to the very “Cartesian” pattern of the connection itself. Foucault holds that the curative affiliation between the physician and the patient embodies in outward form the association between Cogito and the prereflexive self: “The physician in relation to the madman, reproduces the moment of the Cogito in relation to the time of the dream, of illusion, and of madness. A completely exterior Cogito, alien to cogitation itself, and which be imposed upon it only in the form of an invasion” (1965: 179). Moreover, because the reflective understanding of the doctor represents “a completely exterior Cogito” which is “alien to cogitation itself,” it “can be imposed upon it only in the form of an invasion.” Foucault disputes that this exteriorization converts “the solitude of Cartesian courage into an authoritarian intervention, by the man awake and certain of his wakefulness,” and strictly decreases Descartes’ long road” into a healing “short cut” (1965: 184-185).

If Foucault’s assertion that the doctor’s insightful understanding is an entirely external Cogito were accurate, psychoanalysis would be unimaginable. In fact, it could by no means start functioning successfully, for it would be impracticable to set up a curative coalition between a psychoanalyst and a psychoanalyzed in either of its correlated features. First, the psychoanalyst would not be capable to expand and reveal the understanding of and sympathy for the patient’s interior world – not important how strange or mad it might look – which is essential to succeed his or her faith and expand a working relationship. Second, the analyst’s substantial ego would be incapable to shape an alliance and converse with the patient’s watching ego – that piece of self-government outside the dispute, which is required for the work of analysis in the function of self-contemplation to carry on. (Freud 1995: 129)

For Foucault, nevertheless, the intensification of the watching ego is disagreeable in itself. This is why his admire for “Cartesian courage” and “Descartes’ long road” in this circumstance includes an aspect of
bad faith. He wants to use the laboriousness of Cartesian meditation to punch the showiness and outwardness of the curative fix namely forced from the exterior. But he does not think as the first consideration in the goals of Cartesian meditation — that is to say, the development and enrichment of the reflecting self vis-à-vis the pre-contemplative self. Consequently, it is probably fair to say, as British philosopher Christopher Norris has observed, that:

At the heart of Foucault’s critique of Freud, is a protest against the notion of conscience. That is, Foucault objects to the notion of a moral agency in the psyche, which is created through the internalization of external authority, and through which, for Kant and Freud at least, the subject gains his or her autonomy. And the normative deficit in Foucault’s thinking results from the fact that although he repudiates the notion of conscience, he does not conceptualize an alternative moral agency to put in its place (Norris 1993: 67).

V. Conclusion
Foucault believes that Descartes bring in madness in double-barreled antagonism to reason: the rational is the good and the rational leaves out what is mad. Outside the limits of integrity of reason, madness is then put beyond the aegis of rationality. The social classes that characterize what is rational will also describe what is mad and who is mad and thus who is leaved out from societal protection. This is, lastly, to identify what enumerates in history: what can be calculated, what can consequently be stored in the memory or be registered. Madness and the mad are leaved out from all this and leaved out by the judgment of the believer in the doctrine of rationalism that institutes and inflicts rationality.

Foucault argues that merely archaeology can move toward the subject matter of “man” with the appropriate critical approach. He writes: “One thing in any case is certain: man is neither the oldest nor the most constant problem that has been posed for human knowledge. . . As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end” (1973: 386-387). The
probability and state of self-assurance of the subject of “man” is established upon a burst in the episteme of Western philosophy. The “end of man” announced by Foucault is principally his assertion that “man” is neither the superior groundwork of knowledge nor the first and most significant object of experimental knowledge. Archaeology subverts the autonomy of subjectivity by performing that subjectivity is purely the consequence of special irregularity in the history of western culture.

Foucault’s reading of Descartes was seriously criticized by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida in his “Cogito and the history of madness” in which he takes Foucault to task for assuming that for the period of medieval times there was no division between reason and insanity. For Derrida, Foucault demonstrates in his own reading of Descartes the very “structuralist” suppositions and approaches that Foucault considers as belonging to Descartes. Derrida connoted that an archaeology was in effect a logic, and as a result, that an archaeology of the stillness of madness was in fact a history of madness (Derrida 1978: 35).

Derrida argues that Foucault misinterprets Descartes to some extent that exhibits Foucault’s structuralist suppositions. Derrida understands Descartes’ comment on madness (being entirely free from sense) to be purely overstated: the main issue is that we do not usually doubt what’s up close to our view (unless we are sleeping and imagining, or are by mistake).

Boyne Roy writes, “…for Foucault, Derrida was a defender of the one form of understanding that would always …produce holy wars in the name of truth, for Derrida, Foucault’s subtle defence of the established order was the false promise of Utopia” (1990: 4). Although Roy’s investigation is extensive, one thing that Foucault and Derrida visibly differ on is their antagonistic explanation of the Cartesian idea of a self-transparent subject and the connected Kantian ideal of autonomic agency. Yet neither denies the significance of human autonomy. Hubert Dreyfus (2002) argues that for Foucault, after Madness and Civilization through the period of The Order of Things and The
Archeology of Knowledge, “the subject is reduced to a function of discourse: he argued that the subject as a lucid, autonomous agent, was a product of particular practices and so could not have the causal agency our culture attributed to it.” in brief, while Foucault refuses the Enlightenment idea of an autonomic subject, he has a strong belief in freedom and action. It drives away for Foucault, that each person can adjust his or her cultural practices by accessibility to embeddedness in them.

Although the strange thing about Derrida’s viewpoint is that it looks to refute the meaningfulness of the Cartesian idea of subjectivity at the same time as it insists that we are unable of thinking without it, it is fair to state that this is possibly because of the heritance of a philosophical nomenclature that he takes to be inherently significant, an inheritance that appropriates the cautious investigation of the sense or senses in which it could be meaningful. For Derrida, all claims to sureness or definiteness must bring in the Cartesian cogito secretly, without which knowledge is unattainable. Concerning philosophical discourse, one can state that Derrida’s analysis is both applicable and accurate. The complicatedness with his viewpoint is that he makes optimistic claims about what is probable or improbable in non-speculative life founded upon of what is probable or improbable within philosophy. Concerning the problem of what it intends for an individual to identify something, it is apparent that Derrida recognizes the “self” with the philosophical principle of subjectivity. Consequently, having deconstructed the philosophical principle of the cogito, he considers himself therewith to have disassembled the everyday ideas of self-centeredness and certainty.
References


Abstract
Philosophers rarely advocate arguments from beauty for the existence of God, and those who do advocate them rarely spend more than a few paragraphs in their cause. [1] This is so much the case that major critiques of theistic arguments, such as J.L.Mackie's The Miracle of Theism, feel no need to respond to aesthetic arguments. However, the range, subtlety and power of aesthetic arguments is greater than commonly realized, and they have been defended by such luminaries as Richard Swinburne, F.R.Tennant and Keith Ward. [2] I will define four general categories of aesthetic arguments for God: two epistemological and two ontological. I then develop two avenues of argument, one epistemological and one ontological, paying particular attention as I do so to the thought of two secular philosophers who have considered the relationship between aesthetics and religion: Anthony O'Hear and Roger Scruton. I will also draw upon the work of Christian thinkers Francis Schaeffer, C.S.Lewis and Peter Kreeft.

Keywords: God, beauty, theology, aesthetics, theism

I. Categories of Aesthetic Argument
Aesthetic arguments for God are traditionally subsumed under the category of design arguments. They generally take the form of argument by analogy or to the best explanation, although several deductive arguments exist.

Aesthetic reality can be divided between our subjective awareness of beauty and the objective beauty (intrinsic aesthetic admirability) of which we are aware. Aesthetic arguments may therefore focus either upon our ability to know beauty, or upon the existence of beauty itself. Aesthetic arguments that focus upon our knowledge of beauty are...
epistemological’ arguments; those that focus upon the existence of beauty *per se* are ‘ontological’ arguments. Some of the epistemological arguments (aesthetic argument type a) work from the nature of our subjective aesthetic experience, seeking to interpret this experience as revelatory of divinity. Other epistemological arguments (aesthetic argument type b) begin with the mere fact that we have aesthetic awareness, seeking to show that theism gains credibility in providing the best understanding of this capacity. As William C. Davis writes:

Humans have numerous features that are more easily explained by theism than by metaphysical naturalism, if only because metaphysical naturalism currently explains all human capacities in terms of their ability to enhance survival. Among these features are the possession of reliable faculties aimed at truth, the *appreciation of beauty*, and a sense of humor. (Davis, 1999:37).

Some ontological aesthetic arguments (aesthetic argument type c) ask how likely it is that non-purposeful natural laws should produce the objective beauty that we find all around us. For example, J.P. Moreland affirms that features of the world such as ‘a sun-set, fall in Vermont, the human body, the Rocky Mountains [and] the singing of birds. . . all exhibit real, objective beauty’ (Moreland, 1987) and suggests that: ‘the beauty in the examples cannot be accounted for in terms of survival value, natural selection, and the like.’ (ibid.) For this conclusion he gives the following reasons:

Some of the examples (the Rocky Mountains) are not biological organisms. Further, even when one considers biological organisms (the human body) it is not clear that the beauty of those organisms is related to their survival. Since science does not deal with value qualities (aesthetic or moral) in its descriptions of the world, then beauty as an aesthetic property is not a part of evolutionary theory. (ibid.)
The thought is that, since naturalistic explanations of the world give no *a priori* reason to expect beauty to arise in either the biological or non-biological realm, a theistic explanation, which can invoke teleology to explain this fact, gains a measure of credibility.

Other ontological aesthetic arguments (aesthetic argument type *d*) propose the existence of God as the source and standard of objective aesthetic value. Augustine, in his *City of God*, provided the following typical example of a deductive type *d* aesthetic argument:

Beauty... can be appreciated only by the mind. This would be impossible, if this `idea' of beauty were not found in the mind in a more perfect form... But even here, if this `idea' of beauty were not subject to change, one person would not be a better judge of sensible beauty than another... nor the experienced and skilled than the novice and the untrained; and the same person could not make progress towards better judgement than before. And it is obvious that anything which admits of increase or decrease is changeable.

This consideration has readily persuaded men of ability and learning... that the original `idea' is not to be found in this sphere, where it is shown to be subject to change... And so they saw that there must be some being in which the original form resides, unchangeable, and therefore incomparable. And they rightly believed that it is there that the origin of things is to be found, in the uncreated, which is the source of all creation.

The following apologetic concentrates on aesthetic argument types *a* and *d*.

**II. Beyond O'Hear on Aesthetics and the `religious resolution'**

In *Beyond Evolution* (Oxford, 1997) Anthony O'Hear writes that: `in experiencing beauty we feel ourselves to be in contact with a deeper reality than the everyday.' (195).

He passes the following observations upon this experience:
Art can seem revelatory, just as it does seem to answer to objective standards. It can seem to take us to the essence of reality, as if certain sensitivities in us... beat in tune with reality. It is as if our... appreciation of things external to us... are reflecting a deep and pre-conscious harmony between us and the world from which we spring. If this feeling is not simply an illusion... it may say something about the nature of reality itself, as responsive to human desires...

But how could we think of an aesthetic justification of experience... unless our aesthetic experience was sustained by a divine will revealed in the universe, and particularly in our experience of it as beautiful? It is precisely at this point that many or even most will draw back. Aesthetic experience seems to produce the harmony between us and the world that would have to point to a religious resolution were it not to be an illusion. (ibid, 199; 201)

So far so good, but O'Hear himself draws back: `But such a resolution is intellectually unsustainable, so aesthetic experience, however powerful, remains subjective and, in its full articulation, illusory. This is a dilemma I cannot solve or tackle head on.' (ibid.) To summarily dismiss the `religious resolution' as `intellectually unsustainable' seems like an uncharitably off-handed failure to follow the evidence where it leads, a failure that also forces O'Hear to deny his first impression of beauty as being objective. What a strange, even absurd universe, in which the aesthetic experiences that seem to give life so much of its meaning are in fact meaningless illusions! Perhaps the universe is sane after all, in which case O'Hear's dismissive attitude towards the divine is (literally speaking) not.

O'Hear's chapter on beauty in Beyond Evolution ends with the thought that, `despite the problems of alienation thrown up by science and morality' [10] we nevertheless have a sense that we are (to some extent) at home in the world, and that nowhere do we meet this intuition quite so strongly as in aesthetic experience: `From my point of view it is above all in aesthetic experience that we gain the fullest and most vividly lived sense that though we are creatures of
Darwinian origin, our nature transcends our origin in tantalizing ways.' (ibid.) This is to say that naturalistic evolution is incapable of adequately accounting for our aesthetic faculties; but O'Hear offers no hypothesis to plug this inherent gap in his explanation of things. Might this be because the obvious explanation lies with God? Aesthetic experience, says O'Hear, promises to reconcile our particular aesthetic experiences 'to what might be thought of as our striving for some transcendent guarantee and consolation.' (ibid.) For O'Hear, the tantalization is literal. The aesthetic experience that calls us home is an illusion, a 'whistling in the dark' (ibid.) as he puts it (unless God is accepted after all), and this realization must leave us alone with our alienation.

O'Hear therefore finds himself in exactly the same position as the author of Ecclesiastes who saw that everything was 'meaningless . . . under the sun [i.e. without reference to a transcendent God].' (Ecclesiastes 1:2-3.) It seems to me that embracing the existence of God is the only way for O'Hear to escape from the pit of nihilistic despair. Here then is an experiential, existential aesthetic argument that works by proposing an adequate, integrated, intellectually and aesthetically satisfying world-view.

More recently, in After Progress (Bloomsbury, 1999), O'Hear seems to have drawn closer to the acknowledgement of "what the religions have referred to variously as God or Brahman or the One" (O'Hear, 1999), concluding that:

Through art, particularly the great masterpieces of the past, we do have intimations of beauty, of order, of divinity, even, way beyond the biological. . . in appreciating the beauty of the world. . . we are seeing the world as endowed with value and meaning. . . In responding to our experience of the world in moral and aesthetic ways, we are implying that there is something to be responded to. . . We are seeing the world and our own existence as created. . . seeing the world as animated by some higher quasi-personal purpose, operating through and behind the material process revealed and studied by natural science." (ibid.)
As F.R. Tennant wrote: ‘God reveals Himself... in many ways; and some men enter His Temple by Gate Beautiful.’ (Tennant, *Philosophical Theology.*

III. Aesthetic Experience and Longing for God

If God exists and has designed us for relationship with Himself, as Christianity claims, one would expect people to find contentment only within such a relationship and to show signs of deprivation if such a relationship is lacking. That there is a deep need for God within the human heart was recognised by the biblical songwriter who wrote that ‘As a deer longs for streams of cool water, so I long for you, O God.’ (Psalm 42:1, G.N.B.) Christian writers through the ages have echoed this theme of longing. Augustine wrote in his *Confessions* that: ‘You made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless till they rest in you.’ Pascal wrote of how ‘There is a god-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man, and only God can fill it.’ (Tennant, *Philosophical Theology.*).

Many atheists also recognize the existence of a restless, unfulfilled desire for something more. Katharine Tait said this about her father, the famous atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell: ‘Somewhere at the back of my father's mind, at the bottom of his heart, in the depth of his soul, there was an empty space that had once been filled by God and he never found anything else to put in it.’ (Palau, 1998:93) Russell himself acknowledged that: ‘The centre of me is always and eternally a terrible pain - a curious wild pain - a searching for something beyond what the world contains.’ (Yancey, 253).

That this restless desire apart from God predicted by the theistic hypothesis exists, and that people who believe they have discovered relationship with God seem to have discovered the object that satiates this desire, is evidence in favor of the theistic hypothesis; empirical confirmation of Jesus’ claim that: ‘this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.’ (John 17:3.) As Pascal argued:
Man tries unsuccessfully to fill this void with everything that surrounds him, seeking in absent things the help he cannot find in those that are present, but all are incapable of it. This infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite... object... God himself. (Pascal, 181).

Pascal here perfectly describes secular culture in its futile search for fulfillment apart from God. As Roger Scruton observes: 'The desolation of the god-forsaken city is proof of that higher world from which the soul descends.' (Scruton, 1998:74).

This desire for God (which pulls against our sinful desire to be our own god) was discussed by Thomas Aquinas and (though unpublished) by Pascal; but it was left to C.S.Lewis to present it as an argument for the Heaven of ‘eternal life’ with God:

Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. . . If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. [3].

What has all this to do with aesthetic experience? Augustine provides our first clue: ‘my sin was this, that I looked for pleasure, beauty, and truth not in him but in myself and his other creatures, and the search led me instead to pain, confusion, and error.’ Augustine’s search eventually led to the discovery that God was the true object of his need, the true fountain of beauty (of all that is good, including truth and knowledge), and to the exclamation: ‘Oh Beauty so old and so new! Too late have I loved thee!’ (Augustine, Confessions).

This same search for that transcendent something sensed within or through aesthetic experience was a golden-thread running through the life of C.S.Lewis:

If a man diligently followed this desire, pursuing the false objects until their falsity appeared and then resolutely
abandoning them, he must come at last to the clear knowledge that the human soul was made to enjoy some object that is never fully given... in our present mode of... experience. This desire was... as the siege Perilous in Arthur's castle - the chair in which only one could sit. And if nature makes nothing in vain, the One who can sit in this chair must exist. (C.S.Lewis, The Pilgrim's Regress, (Fount).

As a literary scholar, Lewis picked up on the Romantic term Sehnucht to describe a family of emotional responses to the world (melancholy, wonder, yearning, etc.) which are linked by a sense of displacement or alienation from the object of desire. 'Sehnucht', writes Corbin Scott Carnell, 'may be said to represent just as much a basic theme in literature as love.' (Lewis, 1999:23).

The closest English translation for Sehnucht is probably 'nostalgic longing', and it arises when experience of something within the world awakens a desire for something beyond what the natural world can offer as a corresponding object of desire. Sehnucht therefore directs our attention towards the transcendent, that which 'goes beyond' our present experience. The power of fairy-tales lie in their ability to transport us into a world transparently imbued with Sehnucht. [4] Peter Kreeft considers music, noting how the ancients attributed it to gods, as perhaps the most powerful producer of Sehnucht. However, Lewis suggests that:

The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing. Do what we will, then, we remain conscious of a desire which no natural happiness will satisfy. (Lewis, 'The Weight of Glory').

The rhetoric is a little overplayed here: there is objective beauty in books and music, but these things also stir within us a desire for a beauty greater than themselves which we seem to apprehend through their beauty. It is as if their finite beauty is a derived quality that
draws our aesthetic attention into the heaven of underived and absolute beauty. On the theistic view of things, this 'as if' finds its fulfillment.

This Sehnucht points, then, towards the existence of a supernatural happiness. Is there truly any reason to suppose that reality offers satisfaction to this desire? Being hungry doesn't prove that we will get fed. True; but such a criticism misses the point. A man's hunger does not prove that he will get any food; he might die of starvation. But surely hunger proves that a man comes from a race which needs to eat and inhabits a world where edible substances exist: 'In the same way,' says Lewis, 'though I do not believe (I wish I did) that my desire for Paradise proves that I shall enjoy it, I think it a pretty good indication that such a thing exists and that some men will.' (C.S.Lewis)

Lewis was impressed by Rudolph Otto's book The Idea of the Holy, in which 'the Numinous' is described as that which causes in those who perceive it a sense of awe. This sense of awe is not the fear that would be caused by believing a fierce animal was in the room with you, nor the supernatural dread of believing a ghost to be near-by, but the feeling of awe one might have if one simply believed that 'a great spirit' were present. [5] The Numinous is not the subjective experience, but the transcendent object about which one feels this sense of awe. The principle of credulity (that we should trust first impressions until given reason for doubt) encourages us to take the straightforward interpretation of such experience that the Numinous is an objective reality truly perceived.

The point of discussing the Numinous in the present context is that awe of the Numinous is one of that family of emotional states grouped together under the category of Sehnucht. Moreover, a sense of the Numinous often accompanies aesthetic experiences of the 'sublime' variety (i.e. the beauty of the great and majestic), such as a mountain or thunderstorm. This explains why mountains and climatic events feature so widely in the religious experience of the Jewish nation. Neither the aesthetic experience nor the immediate objects of that experience can be termed 'the Numinous'. The mind of a university
educated prince turned shepherd is quite capable, for example, of distinguishing between a burning bush and the numinous presence of God mediated through that burning bush. To argue that the burning bush was 'nothing but' a natural conflagration is to fall into the pit of reductionism. Perception of the Numinous constitutes a whole new 'level' or 'depth' of experience, and it is recognizable as such. As Evelyn Underhill wrote:

When we are awed by the intolerable majesty of the Himalaya, when we look . . . at the lonely hostile beauty of the Eismeer - only water at a low temperature after all - . . . we are merely receiving through symbols adapted to our size, intimations of the Absolute Beauty. . . . Looking at an object which is 'beautiful' or 'sacred'. . . we are - if we receive a genuine aesthetic or religious impression - passing through and beyond this object, to the experience of an Absolute revealed in things. (Underhill, 1934:170).

Peter Kreeft writes of the human face as 'the most numinous, most magical matter in the world.' (Kreeft, 99)

[ Why? Because 'the surface of the face, like the appearance of the world, points . . . beyond the surface to . . . depths not of matter but of meaning.' (ibid. ) Kreeft explains that, like a poem, the face must both be and mean:

A smile both is and means happiness; the word "happiness" only means it. There is no happiness in the word, as there is in the smile. . . A human face is more than a part of the body, an object; it is a part of the soul, a subject. . . It is the place where soul . . . transfigures body. . . (ibid.).

Like the face, suggests Kreeft, the cosmos not only exists, but means: 'the whole world is a face.' (ibid.) Kreeft distinguishes between the conventional sign, like letters in an alphabet that could have been different, and the natural sign that 'is a living example of what it signifies.' (ibid.). For example, 'There is happiness in a smile, as there
is not a curve ball in the catcher's two fingers signaling it.' (ibid.) Just
as the smile is a `natural sign' of the happiness it signifies, so nature
can be seen as a natural sign of that transcendent object of desire who
makes Himself immanent therein.

Is this `seeing' a true insight into ultimate reality, or a delusion?
Again, in the absence of sufficient reason to doubt the existence of
God, the principle of credulity would suggest that what seems to be
the case is the case. One can easily explain how some people fail to
`read the sign', for we know that we can look at a sign instead of
looking along it [6] to that which it signifies. Roger Scruton's
thoughts on natural signs and religious experience parallels Kreeft's:

Milton tells us that `Smiles from reason flow,/And are of love
the food'. He means that only . . . reasoning beings smile, since
only they have the peculiar intentionality which is expressed in
smiling. . . Yet smiles would not appear in the scientist's `book
of the world'. . . We classify facial movements as smiles,
because that is how we perceive and respond to them. . . There
is an attitude that we direct [or are naturally led to direct]
towards the human person, and which leads us to see in the
human form a perspective on the world that reaches from a
point outside it. That is what we see in a smile. And the
experience of the holy, the sacred and the miraculous arises in a
similar way, when we direct [or are led to direct] this attitude
not to other human beings, but to places, times, and objects. . .
A sacred place is one in which personality shines from mere
objects. . . Such things have no subjectivity of their own. . . The
experience of the sacred is therefore a revelation, a direct
encounter with the divine, which eludes all explanation in
natural terms. . . (Scruton, 1997:95-96).

This revelation, which Scruton values for its role in overcoming
human estrangement and re- enchanting a world demoralized by
scientism, must nevertheless be considered by Scruton to be a
groundless illusion, since he remains, as far as I can tell, an atheist. I
am of course suggesting that this revelation is not an illusion - which is, after all, a more straightforward interpretation of the facts.

Maybe it is due to a misplaced generalization of the scientific method, looking at the natural world rather than along it, that more people do not experience the world as a natural sign. (Of course, if the world is a sign, one must take into account its `fallen' nature; this is why we only see `through a glass, darkly'.) Some people set up scientific delectability as a metaphysical criterion of objective existence that thereby excludes God from their world-view as a window excludes wind from a room. However, such a criterion cannot pass its own test. How could it be proven scientifically that only scientifically knowable entities are objectively real? Science consciously restricts itself to the impersonal (although scientific data can ground rational conclusions about agents, as in forensic science); but the person who declares that science disproves the existence of God is like a person who declares that windows disproves the existence of wind! Such a person would find no scientific category within which to place their own beliefs or personhood - can matter be true or false about anything? [7] Perhaps we need to open the window a bit:

Have you ever seen one of those picture puzzles that masks a face as jungle leaves or bushes? "Find the man in the picture." Once you do, the picture never looks the same again: it is not a jungle but a man. Once you see the face of God, the world is forever transformed into his features. (Kreeft, 119).

How does sensitivity to the Numinous function as a variety of Sehnucht? I believe that part of the explanation lies with beauty functioning as a link to the divine source and standard of all goodness and beauty. That is, the link between objective beauty and objective goodness is the key to understanding the link between aesthetic and religious experience. That link, simply put, is that goodness is beautiful, and beauty is good. It is therefore unsurprising to read Roger Scruton affirming that 'When art and religion are healthy, they are also inseparable. . . for the aesthetic is rooted in the religious'
Nor does it come as a surprise to find him admitting that:

In the sentiment of beauty we feel the purposiveness and intelligibility of everything that surrounds us, while in the sentiment of the sublime we seem to see beyond the world, to something overwhelming and inexpressible in which it is somehow grounded. . . it is in our feeling for beauty that the content, and even the truth, of religious doctrine is strangely and untranslatably intimated to us. (ibid,29)

Despite these observations, Scruton denies the existence of God and recommends a 'let's pretend' philosophy of 'as if' to paper over the cracks of meaninglessness left in his secular world-view by the absence of God. High culture, says Scruton, 'teaches us to live as if our lives mattered eternally.' I think this speaks for itself, being inclined to agree with Peter Kreeft that 'Plato in the Symposium let the cat out of the bag. . . Only Beauty Itself, absolute, pure, unmixed, perfect and eternal, will satisfy the soul.' (Kreeft,1989: 214.).

Aesthetic experience gives us something we want, but only in part, satisfying our desire only to reveal within us a deeper need that no natural object seems to satisfy:

We want so much more - something the books on aesthetics take little notice of. But the poets and the mythologies know all about it. We do not want merely to see beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words - to be united with the beauty we see. . . to receive it into ourselves. . . to become part of it. . . At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us feel fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendours we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumour that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get in. When human souls have become as perfect in voluntary obedience as
the inanimate creation is in its lifeless obedience, then they will put on its glory, or rather that greater glory of which Nature is only the first sketch. (Lewis, "The Weight of Glory").

IV. Art and The Line of Despair

Christian apologist and evangelist Francis Schaeffer analyzed modern culture in terms of the dichotomy it has set up between the rational realm of (objective, empirical) facts and the non-rational realm of (subjective, opinion relative) values. Schaeffer called the historical crossing-point after which this dichotomy arose "the line of despair." (Schaeffer, volume 1, 1994).

Schaeffer observed that a secular world-view that cuts a transcendent God out of its account of ultimate reality leads to the depersonalization of humanity in the realm of fact and the restriction of values (including moral goodness, beauty, and even truth) to the realm of subjective, relative, opinion. As a secular world-view grows, value is increasingly placed in what Schaeffer dubbed "the upper story", where a leap of blind faith was required to avoid the obvious naturalistic conclusion that the "death of God" leads to the "death of value".

While Schaeffer wrote in the 1970's, post-modernism was in its infancy, and culture as a whole still clung, though a non-rational leap of faith, to the existence of value. Today, the implications of the "death of God", foreseen by Nietzsche, have finally caught up with us:

Where is God?" [cried the madman]. "I shall tell you. We have killed him. . . All of us are his murderers. But how have we done this? . . . Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the horizon? What did we do to unchain this earth from its sun? . . . Where are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying through an infinite nothing? (Frederick Nietzsche, Gay Science).
Scruton notes that 'The announcement of the death of God is less a statement about God, than a statement about us... The death of God really means the death of an old form of human community - a community founded on holiness.' (Scruton, 1998:95). It is as if society has become exhausted with the attempt to hold on to objective value in the face of a world-view that provides no basis for their existence.

Postmodern society is the result of the realization that without the transcendent reference point provided by God, the ‘upper story’ of value has become nothing but an incoherent miscellany of subjective, relative opinions, governed more by fashion than common sense. Consider the similarities between the prophetic words of Nietzsche and Roger Scruton’s view of current post-modern culture:

To understand the depth of the... ‘as if’ is to understand the condition of the modern soul. We know that we are animals, parts of the natural order, bound by laws which tie us to the material forces which govern everything. We believe that the gods are our invention, and that death is exactly what it seems. Our world has been disenchanted and our illusions destroyed. At the same time we cannot live as though that were the whole truth of our condition. Even modern people are compelled to praise and blame, love and hate, reward and punish. Even modern people... are aware of self, as the centre of their being; and even modern people try to connect to other selves around them. We therefore see others as if they were free beings, animated by a self or soul, and with more than a worldly destiny. If we abandon that perception, then human relations dwindle into a machine-like parody... the world is voided of love, [moral] duty and [aesthetic] desire, and only the body remains. (ibid,68).

Briefly put, Postmodernism necessitates an inconsistent life. In the realm of fact we 'know' that people are the unintended products of material necessity, plus time, plus chance. We 'know' that God is a figment of our imagination. We 'know' that there is therefore no objective value in truth, goodness, or beauty. However, we cannot live
as if all this were true (but then again, perhaps it isn't true!). Therefore, we must be inconsistent and live the lie of `as if'.

Schaeffer noted how some naturalists (such as Julian Huxley) admit that man `functions better if he acts as through God is there', and he points out in a somewhat understated manner that: `This is not an optimistic, happy, reasonable or brilliant answer. It is darkness and death.' (Schaeffer, op cit. ) Roger Scruton seems to be repeating history because God-less philosophy has no-where left to run but the land illusions.

Scruton's contention is that `Culture. . . has a religious root and a religious meaning [such that] the point of being cultivated cannot, in the end, be explained without reference to the nature and value of religion.' (Scruton, 1998) . Scruton thinks that aesthetic objects invite us to place ourselves `in relation to the thing considered', a search for a meaning that is not for practical benefit but `for the insight which religion also provides: insight into the why and wither of our being here.' [Ibid.).

With the rise of naturalism and secularism in the (so-called) Enlightenment, art unsurprisingly came to the fore as a substitute religious experience: `art became a redeeming enterprise, and the artist stepped into the place vacated by the prophet and the priest.' (Ibid,36).Modernist culture rejected the Medieval recognition of the `face of God' in nature and art, but continued to seek the Numinous experience of Sehnsucht that it craved in an art devoid of transcendent reference point:

The high culture of the Enlightenment. . . involved a noble and energetic attempt to rescue the ethical view of human life. . . which flourished spontaneously in the old religious culture. . . The rescue was a work of the imagination, in which the aesthetic attitude took over from religious worship as the source of intrinsic values. (ibid.)
From the theistic point of view, one could say that the spiritual feelings of modernism were better than its philosophy. However, the rescue attempt (however noble in intent) was doomed from the start, and the theist has an explanation for this failure: God is the source of aesthetic value as well as ethical value. Cut off from its source, aesthetic value no less than ethical value was bound to wither and die. After the ‘death of God’ it would not be long before people realised this was so; but instead of preserving the meaning of spiritual experience by reacknowledging its transcendent source, post-modernism held on to naturalism and accepted the objective meaninglessness of all value. As Scruton says, ‘When religion dies . . . the vision of man’s higher nature is conserved by art. But art cannot be a substitute for religion, nor does it fill the void that is left by faith.’ (ibid, p49).

Walking through a Cambridge museum I was struck by the changing themes apparent in the historically ordered art collection. Many of the earlier paintings had a religious theme, paintings of nature became more prominent as time went on, but the general impression produced by these art works was one of artistic beauty and meaning. I could sense that the artists were saying ‘Look, this person or event is important (often theologically so),’ or ‘Look, this is beautiful.’ As we reached the Enlightenment, detailed still-life studies and portraits of wealthy people who had paid to be immortalized on canvas dominated the collection. Art had begun to serve man. Finally, we reached galleries of twentieth century art. The change of mood was even more pronounced and all the more disturbing, for this art clearly expressed a disturbed mindset. Images of pain and depression filled me with a sense of tragic compassion in stark contrast with the beauty and hope we had just seen filling the art of so many preceding centuries. As Catholic theologian Hans Kung put it: ‘Art has now become the expression of man’s estrangement, his isolation in the world, of the ultimate futility of human life and the history of humanity.’ (Kung, Art and the problem of Meaning.) I think that the decline of beauty in art and the decline of faith in God are linked; it’s just too much of a coincidence otherwise.
If God exists, then to worship the beauty of art in the Enlightenment manner is to make art into an idol, to mistake the sign for the subject, the face for the person. As Peter Kreeft warns: `Since an idol is not God, no matter how sincere or passionately it is treated as God, it is bound to break the heart of its worshipper, sooner or later. Good motives for idolatry cannot remove the objective fact that the idol is an unreality. . . You can't get blood out of a stone or divine joy from nondivine things.' (Kreeft, 1989)

If art begins to reveal our broken cultural heart, then this is some confirmation of the suggestion that art as idol has failed (as all idols must); but the pain of artistic mis-use should re-direct us towards art's healthy, religious use (and by `religious use' I do not mean art with a liturgical function or an explicitly religious subject matter; but rather art produced within a religious world view).

If, as Scruton claims, healthy art is inseparable from healthy religion, then either God exists and explains this connection, or God does not exist, and the world is absurd. Why absurd? Because a world in which aesthetic value depends upon the retention of belief in a non-existent God is a world that asks us to hypocritically predicate true value on a falsehood. Therefore, if the world is not thus absurd, God both exists and grounds aesthetic value.

The hypothesis that God is the only sufficient condition of the objectivity and meaningfulness of aesthetic value explains (what otherwise seems inexplicable) why the flower of artistic high culture that flourished under the world-view of Christendom turned to rancor in a secular society: `if you consider the high culture of modern times', writes Scruton, `you will be struck by the theme of alienation which runs through so many of its products. . . the high culture of our society, having ceased to be a meditation on the common religion, has become instead a meditation on the lack of it.' (1997: p17) What is it that people miss so much that they devote a large proportion of our culture's artistic output to mourning its loss? The answer is simple: God.
Schaeffer also pointed out how a naturalistic world-view leads to the denial of those aspects of personhood which is essential to the existence of meaningful aesthetic experience. The denial of any objective reality besides matter is the denial of what Schaeffer called ‘the manliness of man’ (and which, in these more ‘politically correct’ times, we might call ‘the humanness of humans’): ‘Those aspects of man, such as significance, love, relationship, rationality and the fear of non-being, which mark him off from animals and machines and give evidence of his being created in the image of a personal God.’ (Schaeffer, op cit)

In denying that any reality, let alone ultimate reality, is personal, the naturalist has no room for the ‘manliness of man’. For example, atheist Francis Crick writes that, ‘You... your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behaviour of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.’ (Crick, 1994). As Schaeffer put it: ‘If man has been kicked up by chance out of what is only impersonal, then those things that make him man - hope of purpose and significance, love, motions of morality and rationality, beauty and verbal communication - are ultimately unfulfillable and are thus meaningless.’ (Schaeffer, op cit) Naturalism therefore leads to Nihilism, of which post-modernism is really an expression: ‘The existential vacuum which is the mass neurosis of the present time can be described as a private and personal form of nihilism’ wrote psychiatrist Victor E. Frankl, ‘for nihilism can be defined as the contention that being has no meaning.’ (Frankl, 1984:152).

No one, says Schaeffer, has ever worked out how to obtain the personal from the impersonal (a feat that would involve getting the greater from the lesser). Thirty years of thought since Schaeffer produced his ‘cultural apologetic’ has not improved matters for the naturalists. Philosopher William Hasker concludes that ‘naturalism experiences severe difficulties in its attempt to explain the phenomena of humanness. . . [whereas] in the universe as conceived by theism, the existence of these distinctive attributes of humanness is far less surprising.’ (Hasker, 1999:108) Theism, in which ultimate reality is personal, constitutes an eminently reasonable alternative to
naturalism; in Schaeffer's own words: 'Our generation longs for the reality of personality, but it cannot find it. But Christianity says personality is valid because personality has not just appeared in the universe, but rather is rooted in the personal God who has always been.' (Schaeffer, op cit)

The relevancy of this line of argument to the validity of aesthetic experience is straightforward enough: only persons can mean things, or impart meaning to things, and so only through persons can art have any meaning; but naturalism denies the 'manneliness of man' and thus the validity of artistic creation. Naturalism also fails to account for the existence of human experience, including aesthetic experience. The 'death of God' has led to 'the death of man' and hence 'the death of art'. Aesthetic value is an objective reality that cannot be reduced to 'nothing but atoms in the void'. Therefore naturalism should not look like a good candidate for a world-view to anyone who wants to retain a reasonable belief in aesthetic value, and this gives one reason to prefer theism. If one accepts that naturalism involves a denial of the 'manneliness of man' then one ought to look favorably upon theism as a world-view capable of giving art, and aesthetic appreciation in general, a welcoming home. [8]

V. Conclusion
I suggest that the four categories of aesthetic arguments for the existence of God deserve greater attention than has traditionally been the case. Secular philosophers, like Anthony O'Hear and Roger Scruton, recognize that aesthetics lends itself to religious treatment, and it is notable how strong a pull towards God they feel when considering aesthetic phenomena. However, being unprepared to follow this evidence where it leads, secular philosophy ends either by denying the objectivity and meaningfulness of beauty, or by requiring a leap of blind faith into Schaeffer's 'upper story' if the validity of aesthetic creativity and appreciation is to be retained. A theistic world-view, on the other hand, provides a natural environment for the existence, appreciation and rational understanding of aesthetic reality.
Endnotes

[1] This is also the case with my own apologetic work: The Case For God, (Monarch, 1999), which I wrote before my MPhil research led me to investigate these arguments in greater depth.


[3] C.S.Lewis, Mere Christianity. This is the greatest conclusion of any argument I know, since it argues not only for the existence of God, but for the existence of Heaven as well, including thereby the possibility of personal immortality.


[7] For a critique of naturalism see C.S.Lewis, Miracles, (Fount); Douglas Geivett & Gary R. Habermas ed’s., In Defence of Miracles,

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Anthony Flew's Deism: Critical Remarks on
“My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism”*

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Abstract
In January 2004, it was reported that Anthony Flew (1923-) the British atheist Philosopher, announced that he has believed in the existence of God. The report was considered to be very astounding in scientific, especially in religious and philosophical, circles, not only because one of the world's foremost atheist has come to believe in the existence of God – an atheist who, according to many, has produced the most important arguments against the existence of God during the past 50 years – but also it was more important in that he pointed out that the theists' arguments for the existence of God – especially “argument from design” in its recent version – is very good and persuasive. In a dialogue with Gary Habermas, he raised many points concerning the belief in God, revelation, divine religions, and afterlife, that are at once useful and worth deliberating and criticizing but his new approach is still messy and needs some critical remarks in details. Considering this dialogue, I will put forward some points concerning the contents of the dialogue.

Keywords: theism, atheism, deism, Islam, Anthony Flew

This report also caused various challenges among atheists. While some of them thought of it as a "Fatal Shock" to atheism, others considered it to be insignificant and in relation to Flew's old age. Of course, I find nothing wrong with him in coming to believe theism or the existence of God in old age! It seems that psychological findings that people are more inclined to believe theism in old age than in other ages not only does not reduce the significance of theism, but also persuades a human being to deliberate further, especially if the aged person is a philosopher such as Flew who has produced the strongest arguments against theism, unless it is claimed that, Flew loses his senses because of old age and may hallucinate. But as it is evident in
Flew's interview with Gary Habermas, and in the book he is compiling, that this is a false claim. In a relatively detailed and all-embracing interview with Gary Habermas, Flew has explained why he has given up atheism and has come to believe in the existence of God. In the dialogue, he raised many points concerning the belief in God, revelation, divine religions, and afterlife, that are at once useful and worth deliberating and criticizing but his new approach is still messy and needs some critical remarks in details:

1. In his interview, Flew has announced that he merely has come to believe in the existence of God, but he has avoided accepting any religion of revelatory system. According to Flew, God, Whom he has come to believe, is the Aristotelian God Who is Omniscient and Omnipotent and Who created the world, but He has not intervened in the world since then. Flew calls his position deism [or natural theism]. According to the deists, intellect can prove the existence of God on the basis of some proofs, but there is no reason to think that God intervenes in the universe constantly, either by way of revelation or anything else. This sort of theism, as opposed to revelation, holds to a belief that God created the world and, from then onwards, exercises His will in two ways: ontologically and legislatively [= through revelation] or by way of takwin and tashrif, to use the Islamic terms.

Flew does not deny revelation absolutely; rather, in his interview, he points out clearly that he has found no decisive evidence to consider the Bible or the Qur'an to be revelatory, and he would accept divine revelation if such an evidence were produced. Flew's statement has certain epistemological basis. In his view, whatever science proves or supports is acceptable; otherwise, it is not. Accordingly, the only way to accept divine revelation is that what the Prophets have brought as evidence of divine revelation must be in a way or other supported by science, too. In other words, the arguments any Prophet has presented to show the truth of his claim, should be either scientific or supported by science.

Flew's epistemological basis leaves him subject to two objections:
The first objection concerns his basic premise. Flew's epistemological premise (principle) which is said to be general and unexceptionable should necessarily be true of itself. However, which one of the scientific reasons does establish that everything must be proved or supported by science? In other words, Flew's premise may be scientific or unscientific. If it is not scientific, why should one accept it? Which one of the scientific evidences and reasons refutes it as unscientific? And, if it is scientific, what evidence and reason can be offered to confirm it?

The second objection is raised as to the contradiction which has found its way into Flew's claim, which seems to stem from accepting the above-mentioned epistemological principle. On the one hand, Flew holds that he is open to accept divine revelation. On the other hand, he asserts that any evidence for revelation must be proved or supported by science. These two claims appear to be self-contradictory and inconsistent, because, by accepting the above epistemological principle, it does not make sense to accept the divine revelation. If others, through scientific methods, can offer such an evidence and a miracle like that of the divine Prophets, the phenomenon in question can no longer prove the truth of the Prophets' claim.

According to this analysis, ordinary human scientific discoveries fail to explain and clarify a miraculous event, and there is no positive way to prove or support it. So, Flew has only one option to accept the revelation: leaving out his own epistemological principle. This means that he can merely accept that there is no contradiction or inconsistency between science and revelation, which paves the ground for him to accept "divine revelation", by leaving out the claim of maximum scientific verification and confirmation. To sum up, if a Prophet has offered some evidence and argument to show the truth of his claim, his evidence or argument should not be in contradiction with science, but it is not necessary that science prove or support it.

Therefore, the epistemological approach that Flew adopts in accepting revelation is incomplete, and he can not accept revelation rationally in so far as he does not leave out this approach. On the other hand, no
scientific reason allows Flew to ask religious believers not to accept a religious claim necessarily if they find no scientific reason to prove the truth of that claim.

2. Another issue that Flew has raised in his dialogue with Gary Habermas is what it is called the problem of evil. In Flew’s view, Deism is taken to have the advantage of not being in conflict with the problem of evil. As we know, the problem of evil is believed to be one of the most important human problems which has raised many philosophical debates and has always been subject to enormous challenges in theological discussions. Our purpose here is not to discuss all open and hidden aspects of evil\(^2\), but we try to remind some points regarding the issues that Flew has raised in his dialogue.

Flew has presented two reasons in selecting Deism and refuting revelation:
1. Not all evidences and reasons presented by religions for divine revelation are proved or supported by science.
   We discussed this claim and its epistemological basis in the previous paragraph.
2. The existence of real evil in the universe suggests that, having created the world, God did not make an ontological and legislative intervention in the universe.

Flew's second argument can be stated as follows:
   a) Evil exists in the universe and is undeniable.
   b) The existence of evil in the universe is inconsistent with the divine goodwill

Conclusion: God’s will cannot operate in the universe.

In Flew’s eye, the first premise of the argument needs not to be established. All of us have experienced some various forms of evil in our ordinary lives. In spite of the fact that there have been numerous debates over the reality and nature of evil, most human beings have reached an agreement about the cases and circumstances which are considered to be evil. Deaths caused by natural hazards such as flood,
earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and some serious diseases like cancer, AIDS and the like are regarded as cases of natural evil. These evils, of course, can be distinguished from the ones which are called moral evils inhering in the wicked actions of moral agents who are free in acting as they do.

The second premise of the argument can be clarified by adding this point that God of religions is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and perfectly Good Being. God, Who is perfectly Good, does not permit evil, and the Omnipotent God, is able to prevent evil. In Flew's eye, the result of the above argumentation is to deny God's intervention in the universe. In fact, Flew suggests that in order to avoid facing the problem of evil by accepting God's intervention in the universe, we can deny God's intervention in the universe altogether. In this case, the so-called problem of evil will not remain. Flew makes clear that "the problem of evil is a problem only for Christians. For Moslems, everything which human beings perceive as evil just as much as everything we perceive as good, has to be accepted obediently as produced by the will of Allah".

There are some considerations about the argument in question as well as Flew's claim about religions, including Islam, which are worth mentioning:

1. Flew has accepted the existence of God. So, for him, the existence of evil in the universe is not meant to be inconsistent with the existence of God. Flew has stated that he accepted the Aristotelian concept of God, a Being who is Omniscient and Omnipotent, but he has failed to explain how the existence of undeniable or real evil in the universe is consistent with the existence of God? If Aristotelian God is Omniscient and Omnipotent, why do the natural evils exist in the universe?

Flew may answer that my Omniscient and Omnipotent God does not intervene in the universe, so there is no room for Him to prevent evil. Aristotelian God has merely created the universe, and to do so, knowledge and power is enough. God, the Creator, is not required to
do anything in the universe, so this leaves us no room to speak about its evil and good.

Flew's answer leads us to something which is the key to the problem. Can one have an exact and reasonable conception of God Who, in spite of being Potent, Wise and Creator, does not intervene in the universe? Some commentators of Aristotle's works believe that Aristotelian God is merely "the First Cause" and Aristotle has no idea about creation or divine providence or dispensation. But others have interpreted Aristotle's notion of God in such a way that it is not inconsistent with providence and dispensation. Flew's comment on Aristotle's notion is a borderline between these two comments. Flew has stated that "... if there was the First Cause, has very clearly produced everything that is going on. I suppose that does imply creation "in the beginning". Therefore, in Flew's view, Aristotelian God is also a Creator, but, at the same time, He must not interfere in the universe.

Now, we ask Flew, what is meant by saying that the Aristotelian God must not intervene in the universe?

God's intervention in the universe can be conceived in two ways:
   a) Intervention in the creation of the universe (ontological intervention).
   b) Intervention by way of determining the human fate, behavior and actions (legislative interference).

Flew would not imply (a), because it involves contradiction.

How is it possible that God Who has created the universe has no intervention in its creation and formation? Flew may answer that by "creation" he meant creation "in the beginning"; this means that the universe is God's creature in its temporal origination (contingency) and existence, but He has no intervention even of ontological kind as far as its continuance is concerned. The answer lies in the fact that how we can interpret God's agency in relation to the universe. God is Complete Agent and Complete Cause.
According to the law of causation, effect is dependent on its complete cause both in temporal origination and continuance. This analysis shows that acceptance of God as a Creator will imply ontological intervention in the universe. Obviously, this analysis in not inconsistent with the acceptance of intermediate causes and a chain of material causes as subsidiary factors.

What we have already said suggests that Flew must accept God's ontological intervention in the universe. If so, he is faced with the problem of evil – ,at least, natural evils – too.

From Flew's dialogue with Gary Habermas we infer that he has meant the second kind of intervention – legislative intervention. In this case, we should see what reason he offers to deny legislative interference in the universe. It seems that his argument proceeds as the following:

a) God’s legislative intervention in the universe – as has been stated in divine religions -- involves compulsion and predestination.

b) Compulsion and predestination is false.

Conclusion: God's legislative intervention in the universe is false.
Flew does not produce any intellectual reason to prove the premise (a), but he only brings some evidence from religions to show that God's legislative intervention in the universe, as has been stated in religions, involves compulsion. Relying upon the two verses of the Qur’an (The Cow: 6 and 7), he makes a general judgment that Moslems believe that everything which human beings perceive as good or evil has to be accepted (on faith) as produced by the will of Allah. In Flew's view, the major premise of the argument is decisive. In this case, the conclusion of the argument will be necessarily true. In the case of major premise of the argument we are in complete agreement with Flew, but we find his minor premise of the argument to be incomplete and subject to falsification in some respects:
First, our objection to (a) is not philosophical and intellectual, because Flew has offered no intellectual reason to prove the first premise of the argument; instead, he has resorted to the sacred scriptures of religions to show that God's legislative intervention, as evidenced by the Qur'an and other divine scriptures, involves predestination and compulsion. So, the logic of discussion necessitates that we take his claim into consideration and see whether what he relies on is true or not.

Second, what he has generally attributed to divine religions cannot be true of both Islam and Christianity. Some Qur'anic verses, such as the two which Flew has brought as evidence and certain other verses also apparently imply compulsion. However, there are also many verses in the holy Qur'an which are evidence of human non-compulsory or free actions, including such verses as “Verily have we shown him the (Right) way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful (Every man: 3); “so, let whosoever will believe, and let whosoever will disbelieve.”(The Cave: 29); and "Indeed, Allah changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves (Thunder: 11). Third, there are many thinkers like Flew, who, because of lack of exact and complete acquaintance with views and opinions of different Islamic sects (denominations), have been subject to false and unreasonable generalization.

To believe in “Divine decree and destiny” is among undisputed facts (musallamāt) of Islam, but Flew, like many others, has failed to distinguish between belief in divine compulsion and belief in Divine decree and destiny. It goes without saying that conflicts between the two groups of Moslems in the early years of Islam regarding the interpretation of the Qur'an’s verses may exacerbate this kind of understanding. Some of Mu’tazilite commentators (exegetes) and theologians (mutakallemun) believe that the determining action [taqdir] of God requires compulsion. Another denomination, Ash’arites, held to a view that human free will and the attribution of determining action to the human beings would imply the denial of "Divine decree and destiny." However, this does not settle the problem, because if the overall meaning (implication) of the verses
indicating “compulsion” and those suggesting “free will” were contradictory and/or inconsistent, that is, as a complete mutual exclusion, the contents of one verse might imply the denial of the contents of the other, Flew’s understanding would be correct and we necessarily had to accept the implication of one set of verses and give esoteric interpretations of the implication of the other set, but if we can explain the contents of each set so that there would be no need to give the esoteric interpretation (ta’wil) of one set and leave out the other, we have succeeded to introduce a third belief which requires no absolute compulsory and absolute authority. The third belief is the very belief that Shi’ah scholars interpret it as "a middle path between two extremes".

We are not in a position to enter into details of the third belief here, but our discussion will suffice to suggest that Flew’s general judgment that doctrines of religions imply compulsion is a false judgment. To recapitulate briefly, the main points of the previous paragraph as follows:

First, one can not get rid of the problem of evil theologically and philosophically even by denying revelation. Deists (natural theists), like theists (monotheists) must provide some explanation for the problem of evil.

Second, God's legislative intervention in the universe, as it has been stated in some religions, especially in Islam, implies no belief in compulsion.

3. In his dialogue, Flew makes a comparison between the Qur’an and the Bible (the New Testament) and pronounce judgments about both the Qur’an and the Prophet of Islam.

The present writer believes that Flew's hasty judgments spring from his very little acquaintance with Islam and the Qur’an. However, we may provide the reader with some responses to some of his claims. Flew has offered four claims about the Qur’an:
a) *The Qur’an has no literary attraction.*

Having Compared the Qur’an and the Bible, Flew has come to the conclusion that the Bible is an attractive book even for those who don't believe it, and everybody can read it like any other literary books and enjoy it and that this is not true of the Qur’an.

Flew will be right if he means to read [of course, the English translation] of the Qur’an as a literary book, because the Qur’an is not believed to be a literary book in the exact sense. Nor is it a book of physics, chemistry, history, etc. In this sense, the Bible is not a literary book, too. The Qur’an is a Divine book revealed to the Prophet to guide mankind, the sacred book which makes use of all epistemological means and devices in order to achieve this goal.

But if he intends to say that the Qur’an is not attractive in terms of its language and literary features, it should be said that the Prophet of Islam is the only Prophet that his miracle is a miracle of speech and expression. One, and perhaps the most important, aspect of the Qur’an is its eloquence and fluency of the expressions. The Qur’an itself challenges disbelievers when it asked them to bring “[even] a chapter like it” which, according to numerous commentators of the Qur’an, indicates that the Qur’an is unique in many respects, especially in its eloquence and fluency (The Cow: 23). Historical evidence shows the eloquence and rhetoric expressions in the Qur’an can not be found even in Arabic literary works as well as in the speeches of Arab writers and poets before and after the Qur’an was communicated to the Prophet of Islam.

This is the secret of eternity of the Qur’an as a miracle. The Qur’an has been revealed to the Prophet among the most eloquent Arab writers and speakers and has presented serious challenges to them. The Qur’anic literary and rhetorical attractions in terms of eloquence, fluency of expressions, word order and sentence patterns are such that, to quote from an eminent scholar working on the Qur’an, “if a Qur’anic term is misplaced, then the whole Arabic language is searched for, no other term will be found to replace it.”
Great Arab men of letter and philology have spoken a lot concerning the Qur’an’s rhetorical attractions and for that reason they have found it to be a miracle; this means that such a sublime rhetorical is only within God’s power to produce. The eloquence and fluency of the Qur’an is so much that it has been a source of Arabic literature and grammatical (syntactical) rules throughout the history.  

It must be remembered that Flew has compared the Qur’an’s English version to the New Testament. Naturally, one can not preserve all literary and linguistic features of an original text when it is translated from a language to another. In this case, a comparison of such kind is wrong and unrealistic. To make a fair comparison, Flew must take the trouble to learn Arabic well.

b) “There is no particular order or development in the Qur’an’s subject mater. All the chapters (the Suras) are arranged in order of their length.... it is difficult to suggest any superior principle of organization.”

This objection can be answered by saying that materials (contents) of a book are formulated, arranged and developed in line with its purpose or objective which is followed. If the Qur’an had been arranged and organized in the manner that Flew has in mind, it would not have had the result as it has now with its present order and arrangement. For the Qur’an is widely believed to be the inspiration and guide for human beings, leading them towards happiness in this world and the world to come. By reading one Chapter of the Qur’an and pondering over its verses one can obtain an enormous amount of information about the Origin (mabda’) and the Resturn (ma’ad), past events, and moral and social issues -- proportionate to the goal that he Qur’an follows. If the Qur’an had been written as a scientific book according to particular principles and rules, undoubtedly, it would be of no avail. Therefore, the present order and arrangement of the Qur’an is considered by most scholars to be one of its virtues and advantages which has given it a particular elegance and freshness.
Apart from ample evidence presented by the Muslim scholars for the rhetoric features of the Qur’an and its present preferred arrangement and organization, some Western authors such as Arthur J. Arberry, who is believed to have a thorough knowledge of the Arabic language, and of Islam, and is well qualified to produce a good rendering of the Qur’an, and from whose translation of the Qur’an some verses have been taken as evidence for particular issues by Flew, writes in his introduction to the Qur’an:

In making the present attempt to improve on the performance of my predecessors, and to produce something which might be accepted as echoing however faintly the sublime rhetoric of the Arabic Koran, I have been at pains to study the intricate and richly varied rhythms which – apart from the message itself – constitute the Koran’s undeniable claim to rank amongst the great literary masterpiece of mankind … . This very characteristic feature – ‘that inimitable symphony,’ as the believing Pickthall described his Holy Book, ‘the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy’ – has almost totally ignored by previous translators; it is therefore not surprising that what they have wrought sounds dull and flat indeed in comparison with the splendidly decorated original. For the Koran is neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both …. [Italics are mine.]"8

The passage above, especially the sentences and phrases I have selected and written in italics, show that the Holy Qur’an is viewed as a unique divine scripture whose numerous characteristic features, both in form and content, cannot be denied.

C) …to read the Qur’an is a penance rather than a pleasure.

This objection bears witness to Flew’s insufficient information about Islam and the Qur’an. The Qur’an is a unique Divine scripture on which, both itself and its bearer, the Prophet, have made some statements about the manner of its reading and reciting. For this reason, the Qur’an is widely believed to be a miracle of speech and expression and unique and rare in its kind. Although one can easily realize that Flew’s remarks about
the Qur’an are false, it is worth mentioning some points about
the traditional manner of reciting the Qur’an.

First, one of the manners of reciting the Qur’an is what it is called
“reading and reciting with great contemplation” which has been
emphasized both in the Prophet's words as well as his acts.\(^9\)
Essentially, such goals as liberality (openness), luminosity,
confidence, tranquility and the like can only be achieved by reciting
the Qur’an with great contemplation. We read in the Qur’an: "We
have sent down a book to you that is blessed, so prudent men may
ponder over its verses and thereby be reminded." (Sād: 29).

The Qur’an frequently asks believers to listen to the contents of the
Qur’an and to deliberate and reflect upon it in order to recognize the
truth. If they do so, they will certainly be impressed, because the truth
will be revealed to them. "And when they listen to what has been sent
down to the Messenger, you will see their eyes well up with tears
because of the truth they recognize. They say: "our Lord, we believe,
so enroll us among witnesses". (The Table:83) . Neither believers nor
unbelievers have been asked to read the Qur’an for fear of penance
or punishment; rather, unbelievers should read the Qur’an to
recognize the truth and believers should read it to increase their faith:
“ Believers are merely those whose hearts feel wary whenever God is
mentioned and whose faith increases when His verses are recited to
them. On their Lord do they rely. (Booty: 2).

Second, in Islamic view, any act of worship shall bring human
beings closer to God, and thereby God may reward them for doing so
out of his grace and generosity, but, of course, under two conditions:
first, the act or deed should be worthy of being approached and
second, the doer should have the intention of complying God’s
command. If these two conditions are fulfilled in performing an act, it
will be considered an act of worship, and human beings will achieve
the station of “proximity to God.” Reading the Qur’an is not an
exception to the rule. It is clear that this station can not be achieved
merely by reading the Qur’an without contemplation or meditation.
This is totally different from what Flew calls "reading the Qur'an for
penance”. Third, another point which is only true of reading the Qur’an and no other books can have such a characteristic feature is the pleasure which comes to us as a result of its particular rhythms, patterns and varying musical sequence of the verses of the Qur’an and fascinates any listener, as the believing Pickthall described his [translation of] the Holy Book, ‘the very sound of which move men to tears and ecstasy.’ Many people have come to believe in God through listening to the verses of the Qur’an recited by mellifluous reciters.

a) There are references to Hell on at least 255 of the 665 pages of the English version of the Qur’an.

In this objection, Flew mentions that Qur’an, when compared with the New Testament, has made far more references to and emphasized on the doctrine of Hell, fate and predestination, so that there are quite often pages with two such references to Hell.

Several important points can be made concerning Flew’s assertion:
1) There are 77 references to “Hell” in the Qur’an. However, there are several other references to Hell under other names (about 21 names). If the number of references to a subject serves as a measure of judgment about what constitutes the contents of a book, it should be said that the number of references to Heaven (Paradise), divine blessings and mercy is far greater than the references to Hell. References to Heaven in the Qur’an under various names amount to about 21 names, and there is no doubt one of the Qur’an’s instructions is to make believers and unbelievers be hopeful for diving mercy, forgiveness and eternal blessings in Heaven, and disappointment and hopelessness are considered to be blameworthy.

2) Although Flew has pointed out that every Sura is prefaced by the words "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate", and it would appear to be of very substantial theological significance; however, it is not known why he has left this significant matter in neglect easily. Most of the commentators of the Qur’an believe that "In the Name of God …" is one verse and part of every Sura (except
Sura Repentance or Dispensation). That "every Sura is prefaced by "In the Name of God" suggests this very significant fact that the contents of the Qur’an and its inspiring doctrines originate in the divine grace. God is All-Merciful, because His general mercy encompasses all human beings, whether believers or unbelievers; "but my Mercy encompasses all things" (Height or Al-A’raf: 256). God is Compassionate. This means that His Especial Compassion only encompasses believers. With so much emphasis the Qur’an has placed on divine mercy, how can one infer that the doctrine of Hell is much more stronger in the Qur’an than that of Heaven?

3) The doctrine of Hell and Heaven in the Qur’an are to be considered in two ways. First, from the psychological perspective and what appears as the influence of warning, annunciation, punishment and persuasion on human acts and conducts. In this respect, there is, at least, a kind of balance, not to say persuasion and annunciation of Heaven and divine blessings in the Qur’an are much greater. Second, from the theological perspective, the doctrine of Hell and Heaven is related to such doctrines as fate and predestination, divine justice, divine reward in proportion to acts, eternal torment and the problem of good and evil. It seems that Flew’s view on this subject is directed toward this aspect (theological aspect). As we explained earlier, Flew held to the view that religious doctrines concerning Hell and Heaven would imply Divine compulsion, because, according to the divine religions, human beings are predestined to be inmates of the Fire or inhabitants of the Garden. We offered the response to this objection earlier.

We stated answer to this objection previously. In his dialogue, Flew also expresses his opinion about the Prophet of Islam. In this regard, he has mentioned two points:

a) “… the Prophet, though gifted in the arts of persuasion and clearly a considerable military leader, was both doubtfully and certainly ill-informed about the contents of the Old Testament and about several matters of which God, if not the least informed of the Prophet’s contemporaries, must have been cognizant.”
b) His illiteracy has produced a book with no order and arrangement. Such a book, along with the Prophet’s illiteracy “raises the possibility of what his [Flew’s] philosophical contemporaries in the heyday of Gilbert Ryle would have described as a knock-down falsification of Islam.”

There is little to be said as to the first objection. The Prophet of Islam is believed to have been illiterate and not informed of the contents of the previous divine scriptures. According to various historical documents, it is known that Prophet of Islam did not know how to read and write at least before his Mission. The Messenger of God lived at a time when there were but 17 literate people in Mecca\(^1\). In such circumstances, if the Prophet was literate, it would customarily be impossible to conceal it.

In different places in the Qur’an, this fact has been explicitly expressed and its philosophy has been explained: "And you had not been reciting any scripture previously, nor did you copy it down with your right hand; otherwise quibblers would suspect it. (The Spider: 48); "Those who follow the Messenger, the Unlettered Prophet, whom they will find written down for them in the Torah and the Gospel... . …Believe in God and His Messenger, the Unlettered Prophet who himself believes in God[Alone] and His Words: Follow him so you may be guided.” (The Height: 137, 158).

Therefore, it is evident that before his Mission, the Messenger had been unlettered. What is surprising is the second charge (false claim) which Flew has loaded onto his first claim. In Flew’s opinion, because the Prophet of Islam was illiterate, his religion and the Qur’an could have been subject to falsification.

We have to mention some points in response to the above objection:

a) Distortion or falsification of the Qur’an could be viewed from two aspects. If it is viewed from within, the falsification of the Qur’an would imply that those who accept the Qur’an as the Prophet’s miracle and have come to believe it, must provide an answer to the question whether what they possess today as
the Qur’an is exactly what has been revealed to the Prophet or it has been falsified. To answer this question, we can bring as certain historical evidence some valid traditions and Qur’anic verses. From this respect, many Muslim theologians and Qur’anic exegetes have raised many issues but we would not intend to discuss them all here.

If it is viewed from without, then the argumentation that the Qur’an is ‘unfalsifiable’ can take a different form. This view of the Qur’an is significant in that the Qur’an can be regarded as the miracle of the Prophet as well as an evidence of his truth-claim only when it is unfalsifiable.

b) Falsification is of various forms. All forms of falsification are not detrimental to the validity and authenticity of the Qur’an, but some of the alleged six forms of falsification are detrimental to its validity and authenticity. If falsification means that there is some human element added to the Qur’an, this will necessarily be false because all Muslim scholars studying the Qur’an are unanimous that no external human element (falsification by addition) can be found in the Qur’an14, but if it means falsification by reduction, it will be open to varying disputes. Most of the Moslem scholars believe that the extant Qur’an is exactly what has been revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.15

c) In order to make every fair person be assured of the Qur’anic doctrine of the infallible word of God, it is sufficient to draw the attention to some points:

First, the enormous effort by the Muslim to preserve the Qur’an intact and original clears up any doubts about its authenticity. There are numerous unquestionable historical evidences that both the Prophet and faithful Moslems have made big effort to preserve the Qur’an, because the Qur’an means everything to Moslems. This effort is so big that we can say that the Qur’an is widely transmitted or mutawātir, to use the Islamic term. The eminent Shi’ah scholar Tabarsi, has quoted from Seyyyed Morteza:
To be sure of the validity of the Qur’an as a faithful and unalterable [divine] source is to be sure of the world's big cities and great historic events and famous books by popular writers, and great long poems and songs by well-known poets. However, the attempts and motives to preserve the Qur’an have been far greater than this, for the Qur’an is widely believed to have been the miracle of the Prophet and the origin of Shari’ah (Divine Law).16

Second, if falsification means that there is some human element added to the Qur’an (falsification by addition), it will be inconsistent with the idea of the miraculous nature of the Qur’an. Since, according to historic evidences and Arab linguists and epilogsists, human beings are incapable of producing one verse like that of the Qur’an, possibility of the existence of some human element in the Qur’an is strongly refuted.17 When it is proved that what exists in the Qur’an is nothing but God's word, falsification by reduction is refuted, too, because God Himself has guaranteed in the Qur’an that He will safeguard the Qur’an: “We Ourself have sent down the Reminder just as We are safeguarding it (Stoneland: 9).

d) We will now return to Flew’s statement. His argument for the falsification of the Qur’an (the possibility of being falsified by some human element) was that the Prophet of Islam was unlettered.

Some points have to be made here:

First, it is not known what relationship exists between being unlettered and possibility of the falsification of the Qur’an? If a bearer of a book is lettered, will there be no falsification in his words? On the contrary, as the Qur’an itself has reminded (The Spider:48) : if the Messenger of Islam had read any book and had copied it down, those who sought to refute his miracle would suspect it and consider it to be the Messenger's own words or be derived from others.

Second, I want to emphasize the point that the most important aspect of the Qur’an as a miracle is that an unlettered person has brought a book from God which no one has ever brought a chapter like that to
have such eloquence and fluency and sublime content. How can such a book be subject to falsification?

4. At the end of his dialogue, Flew has attributed some other false assumptions to Islam. He claims, “I would never regard Islam with anything but horror and fear because it is fundamentally committed to conquering the world for Islam.”

Flew arises the issue of Palestine as an evidence for his claim and states “… that Moslem Arab armies moved in to destroy Israel at birth, and why the struggle for the return of the still surviving refugees and their numerous descendants continue to this day.”

The present writer finds it necessary to remind some points concerning this claim:

First, Flew fails to show which of the doctrines of Islam implies that Moslems should conquer the world for themselves. No Islamic doctrine has such an implication. What is considered as a certain Islamic fact and is expressed in many Qur’anic verses is that Islam is a universal and everlasting religion. "And we have not sent you [Muhammad] except as a newsbearer and warner to every single human being even though most men do not realize it". (Sheba: 28); "Blessed is the One Who has sent down the Standard to His servant so he may [act as] a Warner for [everyone in] the Universe." – (The Standard : 1); "He is the One Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion so He may cause it prevail over all [other]religion, no matter how associators may hate it." (Repentance: 33). These verse and many others denote that Islam is not restricted to a particular tribe or family or geographical boundaries. Nor is it limited to a particular time or age. This point that Islam is a universal and everlasting religion, has no relationship with the idea of ‘conquering the world for Moslems.’

Second, according to the Qur’anic verses, inviting to Islam [and its expansion] should be accomplished by dialogue and good admonition. By sending the Messenger of mercy and compassion and revealing the Qur’an which is a book of guidance, God has shown human beings the
Path to salvation and deliverance, and they can take the right path of their own freewill: “No compulsion is there in [acceptance of] religion.” “Rectitude has become clear from error (The Cow: 256)

It is likely that Flew's words refer to some verses which persuade Moslems to fight associators and hypocrites. It is true that in Islam, it is incumbent upon every Muslim to fight for God’s sake, but this does not mean to conquer the world for Muslims. Islam invites Muslim people to fight against any form of cruelty and subversion. Having conquered any territory, Muslims had, and still have, no right to make people accept Islam by force, but every tribe, ethnic group and religious denomination can preserve their own religion, ideology and beliefs under the rule of the Islamic government. If Flew's words refer to the Muslim's actions and their conquests, it should be noted that first, Flew does not show any evidence of fighting broken out by Muslims to conquer the world for themselves; second, Muslims’ historical actions is not at all a criterion for making a judgment about Islamic doctrines, for it is not reasonable to judge on someone’s beliefs merely in terms of one’s actions; third, drawing upon their understanding of the holy war (jihād), most Muslim scholars believe that a holy war can be carried out just in defense of their country only at the time of occultation (when the Prophet or his successors, Infallible Imams, are absent), but to initiate a holy war and invite disbelieves to Islam is restricted to the time when the Infallible Imams are present.

Third, Flew brings the issue of Palestine as an evidence for his false claim. Of course, that false claim is worthy of being proved by such a flimsy evidence.

Indeed, how can one bring Palestinians’ rightful defense of their homeland as an evidence of Palestinians’ aggression and violence and attribute horror and fear to Islam? On the basis of which ideology and doctrine and which known international rights and laws can we say that the fighting of an oppressed refugee in order to return to his homeland is an evidence of conquering the world for himself? Is Palestinian refugees’ defense of their homeland and the worldwide Islamic support an evidence of the Muslim conquest and horror and
fear, or the Zionists’ cruelty, brutality, massacre, aerial bombardment of defenseless civilians and so many terroristic barbaric actions, which have been condemned worldwide even by the truth-seeking people of the Western countries are clear and undeniable unprecedented instances of extreme horror and fear? Having resorted to force, violence and massacre, Zionists made Palestinians homeless and formed the Israeli government based on a radical understanding of Judaism with the help of some colonialist powers such as England, on which many books, articles have been written, and speeches delivered, by honest writers and public speakers throughout the West. Is such an illegitimate political movement an evidence of horror and fear, or Islam, which merely persuade Muslims to fight a holy war against injustice and oppression? However, Flew’s understanding of the issue of Palestine suggests that how only a few Zionists managed to misrepresent the historical realities to the West so that the homeless nation’s rightful defense of their own country is considered even by thinkers like Flew as an evidence of cruelty and the cause of horror and fear?

5. In conclusion, I would like to make my last point. Flew’s remarks concerning religious doctrines, especially the Qur’an and Islam, stimulate feelings of regret and grief simultaneously. On the one hand, it seems to be very astonishing to see how a great well-known philosopher such as Flew, who appears to be least informed of the Qur’an and Islamic doctrines, dares to make such general dogmatic judgments so explicitly and decisively! On the other hand, as a Muslim, especially a Shi‘ah Muslim, we can not hide our great regret and sorrow that why there are not sufficient scientific and scholarly books in different languages – especially in English – available for scholars like Flew. To the present writer, Flew’s incomplete and insufficient knowledge concerning Islam is partly due to his lack of close acquaintance and access to the original Islamic sources. However, it is fortunate that Flew has come to believe in the existence of God and there are many attractive and instructive points in his dialogue with Habermas, though some of his views and opinions on different subjects are open to serious criticisms and objections.
Reference:

*This interview appeared in 'Philosophia Christ', winter 2005.


2. For more details see Mutahhari, Mortazā, (1361), Adle-e Illāhī(= Theodicy), Tehran, Sadrā Publication, p. 139.


7. For more details see Khuī, Abu al-Qāsim, al-Bayān fi tafsir al-Qur‘ān, p. 80.


11. Ibid., p. 397.
12. For more details see Mutahhari, Mortazā, Peyāmbare Ommi (= The Unlettered Prophet) Qum, Islamic Publication Office, n.d., 11 ff.


14. Ibid.


17. A detailed account of this argument can be found in Misbāh-e Yazdi, Muhammad Taqī, (1367), Rāhnemā Shenāsi, Qum, the Management Center for the Seminary of Qum, p. 313.
Remarks on Comparative Philosophy: Islamic and Western Philosophies

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Abstract
Contemporary Islamic philosophy, which is not in the direction of dead end of Ghazzali’s approach and Averose’s unfollowed philosophy, has had more improvements in Shi’ites Iranian cultural background. These active philosophical thoughts that have been encountered some of contemporary problems in philosophy and other problems are rarely known by Western thinkers. In this paper I will review the possibility, meaning and importance of comparative studies between Western and Islamic philosophies. Although there are some increasing activities in this field, there are some obstacles in this comparison (and other comparisons) that must be overcome for a true one. These difficulties arise from hermeneutical meanings of the problems and the cultural diversities and the different approaches in the same problems. These matters bring the suspicion of impossibility of comparative philosophy. But if it would be so then all kinds of mutual understanding would be meaningless and absurd. I believe that all comparative studies must be aware of those obstacles and try to overcome them more and more to reach a more true comparison. Then, I will examine five meanings of comparative philosophy between Western and Islamic philosophies that some of them cannot result fruitful consequences and some others are closer to upgrading mutual understanding and more cooperation for some better philosophical views. I will also point to the importance and necessity of such dialogues for a more global intercultural relations and solving the apparent conflicts that have some deep misunderstandings.

Keywords: Islamic philosophy, comparative philosophy, western philosophy, dialogue

I. What is Contemporary Islamic Philosophy?
In contemporary Muslim territories we can find a great diversity of attitudes towards Philosophy. Hence, before dealing with the particular situation of Contemporary Islamic Philosophy, we would like to enumerate a few trends in the context of which the special
identity of contemporary philosophical activity can be recognized. We shall then try to explain the main characteristics of Islamic philosophy as it is practiced in Iran. In the first place, however, we must deal with the fact that the different approaches to Philosophy in the Islamic world have essentially to do with different interpretations of the relation itself between Islam and Philosophy. Among these interpretations we find the following (Ayatollahi 2006):

1. The rejection of philosophy and of any rational approach to religious teachings with the emphasis placed on the ordinary meanings of Quran and **hadith** (*vahhabi* approach).

2. The Ghazzalian approach, i.e., the one that we might call the philosophical rejection of philosophy. This is a common view in Malaysia and Indonesia, but with important similarities to the **tafkik** (separation) movement in Iran.

3. The mystical approach in Turkey and countries of North of Africa like Morocco and Tunisia.

4. The revival of the Islamic philosophical heritage as it was instituted during the period going from the 9th to the 13th centuries. The thinkers interested in this revival are more commentators than philosophers in their own right. This position is particularly strong in schools and departments of Islamic philosophy in the Arabian countries that reject the *vahhabi* approach.

5. The westernized contemporary approach to philosophy in Islamic countries and other parts of the world. Among the representatives of this approach we find thinkers like Muhammad Arkun, Hassan Hanafi, Nasr Hamed Abu Zaid, Ali Mazroui, Abdolkarim Soroush. They all have in common a rather secular approach based on different Western concepts of philosophy.

6. The more ideological approach represented by thinkers that attempt to find solutions for the practical problems affecting the Muslim world
based on the premise that the best way of proceeding is to promote the return to the traditional doctrines of Islam.

7. The approach of traditionalist thinkers like Rene Genon, Schowan, and Nasr.

8. The approach of the Sadraian transcendental philosophy (philosophy of Mulla Sadra) in Iran, as well as in Pakistan and India.

II. The background of contemporary Islamic philosophy

In the past, the interest of the Western world in learning about Islamic Philosophy was mainly centered on the question regarding the active influence of Muslim thinkers upon the historical formation of Christian scholasticism in the Middle Ages. For example, it is clear that in order to study the philosophical contribution of thinkers like Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus in their correct historical perspective we must also become acquainted with the thought of at least Avicenna (980-1037) and Averroes (1126-1198). Any adequate history of medieval Western philosophy should include in consequence an important chapter on the history of Islamic philosophy. (Mohaghegh, Izutsu 1978:3)

This distance between the western intellectuals and Islamic Philosophy may have to do with the rather common view in the West that Islamic Philosophy came to an end with the death of Averroes (1126-1198) and/or ceased to exist when Ghazzali (1058-1111) produced his major attack against philosophical thinking in his influential book Tahafut al-Falasifat. But in reality what came to an end was nothing more than what shall be considered the first phase in the development of the whole history of Islamic Philosophy. It is true that with the death of Averroes, Islamic Philosophy ceased to be alive in the West, but this does not mean that it ceased to be alive in the East. It is also true that the Islamic philosophy did not develop in all Muslim countries after Ghazzali and Averroes particularly among Sunni Muslims, so that in the Arabian countries there was no longer a large interest in developing philosophy. The fact that the Sunni Muslims were the majority in terms of population and the Arabian
countries were the ones with closer ties to the West explains why the
generalized assumption grew in the West that there was no longer
Philosophy in the Muslim countries. Moreover, this assumption
became necessarily an obstacle for the deepening of any relations
between Islamic and Western Philosophy.

We must also add that even “histories” of Islamic philosophy written
not as a chapter in the history of Western philosophy but
independently and for its own sake were largely shaped by the idea
that the golden age of Islamic Philosophy is to be found in the period
of three centuries extending from Farabi to Averroes, and that after
Averroes, in the ages subsequent to the Mongol invasion, and with the
exception of a few isolated prominent figures (like Ibn Khaldun, for
example), the Muslim world did not produce, when it comes to
Philosophy, anything more than commentaries and commentaries of
commentaries in a long and tedious series of lifeless and mechanical
repetitions, without any spark of real creativity and originality.

That this is not a true picture of the historical facts has amply been
made clear by the remarkable work done by scholars like Henri
Corbin and Seyyed Hossein Nasr concerning the intellectual activity
of the Safavid Dynasty. At any rate, it is only very recently that
Orientalists have begun to realize that philosophical thinking in
Islamic context did not irretrievably fall into decadence and
fossilization after the Mongol invasion, as it was commonly believed.
Indeed, we think that the kind of philosophy that deserves to be
regarded as typically and characteristically Islamic developed much
more after Averroes death than before it. We are talking about the
typically Islamic philosophy that arose and matured in the periods
subsequent to the Mongol invasion and found the culmination of its
vigorous creativity in the Safavid period in Iran. This peculiar type of
Islamic philosophy, which grew up in Iran among the Shiites, has
come to be known as *hikmat* or “wisdom”. We can trace the origin of
the *hikmat* back to the very beginning of the above-mentioned second
phase of the history of philosophy in Islam.
Hikmat is structurally a peculiar combination of rational thinking and Gnostic intuition, or, we might say, rationalist philosophy and mystical experience. It is a special type of ontological philosophy based on existential intuition of Reality, a result of the philosophizing applied on the Gnostic ideas and visions attained through intellectual contemplation. Historically speaking, this tendency toward the spiritualization of Philosophy finds its origin in the metaphysical visions of Ibn ‘Arabi and Suhrawardi. In making this observation, however, we must not loose sight of the fact that hikmat is also endowed with a solid and strictly logical structure and as such it goes beyond Ibn ‘Arabi and Suhrawardi and, as such, comes back to Avicenna and the first stage of development in the history of Islamic Philosophy.

Hikmat, having as it does these two distinctive aspects, must be approached from two different angles, if we are to analyze properly its formative process: (1) as a purely intellectual activity, and (2) as something based on trans-intellectual, gnostic experience – dhawq “tasting” as the mystics like to call it –of the ultimate Reality.

The most famous and important philosophers of the second phase of Islamic philosophy is Mulla Sadra (1572-1640). He had many innovative ideas in the realm of Philosophy (especially ontology) and became one of the brightest stars in the sky of Islamic philosophy. As a matter of fact, his novel ideas mark a turning point in Islamic Philosophy so that the philosophers that came after him were significantly affected by his views.

The appearance of an intellectual figure like Sadr al-Din Shirazi during the Safavid period is a clear indication of the presence in his own time of a strong intellectual tradition whose deepest currents he was able to so brilliantly bring to the surface. Mulla Sadra is a metaphysician and sage of outstanding stature who cannot be taken in isolation and separated from the tradition that produced him.

Something to be mentioned, however, is the revival of Islamic intellectual life in the eastern lands of Islam, especially in Persia.
During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, this was made possible by the establishment of new intellectual schools by Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi, followed by the resurrection of Ibn Sina’s teachings during the middle decades of the thirteenth century by Khwajah Nasir al-Din Tusi. The background of Mulla Sadra must be sought in these schools as well as in the Sunni and shi’ite schools of *kalam* as they developed from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. (Naser 1997: 16)

The four classical schools of the post-Mongol period, namely, the Peripatetic (*mashshai*), the Illuminationist (*ishraqi*), the Gnostic (*‘irfani*) and the Theological (*kalam*), with all the inner variations contained in each of them, developed extensively during the four centuries preceding Mulla Sadra and also approached each other, preparing the ground for the major synthesis brought about by Mulla Sadra. Therefore, in order to understand the background of Mulla Sadra, it is necessary to delve into the development of each one of these schools as well as into the interactions that occurred between them during this very rich and at the same time most neglected period of Islamic intellectual life, from the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries.

**III. The Characteristics of Sadraean Philosophy**

The Sadraen Philosophy can be characterized by the recognition of the following aspects:

1. intrinsic compatibility between Religion and Philosophy;

2. necessity of a serious rational study of the religious doctrines to the point of bringing together the views of Reason and the views proper to Religion;

3. need for a combination of the four traditional schools present in the Islamic world, namely mysticism, peripatetic philosophy, illuminationist philosophy and *Kalam*;

4. importance of studying Western approaches to Philosophy as well as other sources of human thought;
5. need to proceed to a comparative study of the different philosophical views in order to explain the strengths and the weaknesses of transcendental philosophy;

6. evolving character of Islamic Philosophy as a whole;

7. philosophical primacy of ontology over epistemology and of reason over experience;

8. influence of theoretical philosophy on other dimensions of human thought and activity, namely politics, economy, education, aesthetics, ethics, etc.;

9. importance of the attention to Quran and of the hadith and prayers – as an important source of knowledge - for a philosophy that tries to argue her own views based on reason alone and not on revelation;

10. importance of the dialogue among philosophers from different perspectives in order to achieve better ideas of how to promote the future of the human family.

IV. The difficulties of having a comparative philosophy
Although we confront a lot of topics that have been studied in different philosophical schools and have been discussed by various philosophers and it seems that those are different answers to the same questions, there are some difficulties in accounting similarities between them. Therefore the comparative philosophy has been hard and far reaching. Some of theses difficulties are as follow:

The historical background and geographic situation of philosophical problems and solutions make the mutual understanding of two different philosophical schools which are belonging to two paradigms in question. In first glance, we encounter one topic that is translated in two cultures and it seems that they are the same; but the deep meaning of that topic is connected to those cultural backgrounds that varied hardly one from another. The hermeneutical situation of a word or a text is an obstacle for understanding them in another culture.
Therefore there are some suspicions that we can understand similarities between two words in two cultures. Thus most of critics of some philosophical views from perspective of another philosophical paradigm can not be sound.

The epistemological approach of modern philosophy and its subjective view based on a kind of humanism bring a sphere that is different from another intellectual and ontological attitude. It is difficult to criticize another philosophical tradition from Western-modern point of view.

It is also difficult that understand from a non-western philosophical perspective Western one without having necessary knowledge from Western culture. In my view, the Christian background of Western philosophy (for both theistic and atheistic philosophies) is one of the most important paradigms of modern philosophy. It is confused in translation of the important idea of Nietzsche that “God is dead” in nonwestern philosophies. Nobody may have correct understanding from “God is dead” without understanding the Christian doctrine of God incarnated in Christianity. Without understanding the importance of history in Christian doctrine it is difficult to understand various philosophy of history in many philosophical approaches in Western philosophy.

It is also difficult to understand contemporary Islamic philosophies from an empiristic or pragmatistic approach in philosophy that is dominant philosophical method in Western philosophy. The rational attitude of Islamic philosophy differs from rational one in Western philosophy.

The orientalists in Western countries are guilty in this confusion. For them, the oriental culture must be understood carefully but from a Western point of view and must be judged based on Western values. But some useful attempts –like this conference- are realistic awareness of this gap and the solution for building some bridges between all cultures. Philosophy needs, in a globalised world, more mutual understanding than philosophical theories.
V. The possibility of comparative philosophy

However, it does not mean that it is not possible to have comparative philosophy. If it was so, there was not any meaning for dialogue and negotiation. All philosophical attempts for understanding other thoughts in all over the world and in all periods of time in history (or historical study of philosophical schools) presupposes admitting the possibility of understanding others even in some main part of their thoughts. Therefore, although it is possible to understand others, there are many considerations in translation of one thought in a culture to another culture.

These considerations are the most important factor to think of comparative philosophy as a difficult but possible study that must measure a long process to bring the other thought nearer.

VI. The method of comparison

I believe that, for a best comparative study in philosophy, the comparison must pass through four stages of four hermeneutical rules in the view of Emilio Betti (1890-1968). Because of limitation in this paper, I point, only, to these four rules: (Betti 1962: 56-85)

1- The principle of hermeneutical autonomy of subjects

2- The principle of totality or the rule of coherence of meaning

3- The rule of actuality of understanding

4- The compatibility of meaning in understanding or the rule of hermeneutical correspondence of meaning.

I hope I can develop this method in another research.

VII. The advantages of attempting for a comparative philosophy

There are some factors that make comparative study in Western and Islamic philosophies necessary nowadays. First, that the penetration of globalization in all dimensions of our life make necessary to understand each other in a same tent. The global awareness which
conflicts local thoughts and the necessity of interaction between cultures requisites a kind of mutual understanding. All various cultural representations point to deep variety that is caused from different foundations of those thoughts. Philosophy that has the task of analyzing the basic foundation of all cultural representations has very important role in any interaction between cultures. This is what necessitates comparative philosophy.

The second, we can know ourselves not from an inner insight but from its contrast with others. In otherness we understand the boundaries of selfness. There is a joke that can make this truth clearer. A child showed his father a quite white paper and said to him “Oh, father, look at my painting. Is it nice!” father asked him “there is nothing in your paper!” the child reply “why you can not see the painting? It is a white bear in the snowy surface of north pole, which is pursuing a white rabbit!!”

This is a joke but If it was correct how could somebody confirm it. Without the boundaries of bear and rabbit nobody can find any one. I the contrast of rabbit and bear one can distinguish them; more contrast more understandable!
Every thought needs others to clear itself. We can understand our selves more and more with more understanding the others. In comparative philosophy we can reach to know selfness and otherness.

VIII. Necessity of comparative Western and contemporary Islamic philosophy and its position nowadays
The philosophy of Mulla Sadra, must be considered as one of the most important contributions of contemporary Islamic Philosophy specially in Iran. This philosophy has been continued and matured by scholars like Sabzavari and Tabatabaii and Motahhari. In fact, due mainly to its compatibility with the Islamic tradition a very honorable place within the context of Shiite Islamic thought was granted to this kind of philosophizing, so much so that it became part of the official learning and teaching in religious seminaries (hozeh elmiyyeh). Moreover, we also would like to say that Shiism has been a good context for all kinds of rational thinking. We can say, therefore, that understanding
and confronting with every kind of rational and philosophical thinking has been a major duty of Islamic scholars in Shiite countries like Iran. Islamic philosophy has been a strong foundation of Iranian culture. It constitutes a strong factor in promoting Iranian culture. For example, it was due to the Iranian Islamic philosophical background that the people of Iran were preserved from Marxism and atheistic positivism.

I also would like to add that philosophical research in Iran is not focused on Islamic philosophy only. For more than 50 years, there is an ongoing acquaintances of the Iranian culture with Western schools of thought, which are studied side by side with Islamic philosophy. The number of works of the Western philosophical tradition translated into Persian is already quite significant. But it is also true that Islamic philosophy represents the major interest of this domain in Iran. On the other hand, the comparative study of philosophy has become a major topic for academic dissertations, lectures, books and conferences. In Iran, the majority of scholars believe that Islamic Philosophy has the power to seriously contribute for the solution of many contemporary problems.

**IX. Conclusion**

We suggest, therefore, that Philosophy is crucial for the furthering of any kind of positive dialogue between Iranian culture and the culture of other peoples and nations. In other words, we are convinced that Philosophy must play a very important role in the furthering of international peaceful relations. As we very well know, there are many historical backgrounds that constitute serious obstacles for the achievement of peaceful relations between countries. Moreover, the flood of false news and deficient political analysis, together with all possible difficulties attached to the differences in the corresponding system of values, are abundant cause for conflict and misunderstandings. Accordingly, we advocate the recognition of the extraordinary role of reason and of rational thinking in order that differences and misunderstandings may not remain serious obstacles to peace and the mutual understanding of different cultures and civilizations.
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Al - Mufid's Concept of Kalám :  
A Comparative Approach

Martin J. McDermott

Abstract
This paper is an effort to understand al-Mufid's concept of kalám in a comparative way, and to understand what he was doing, and what he meant to do and tried to do. Arguing that there is a fundamental difference between kalám and theology, I will try, then, (1) to say something about al-Mufid's own concept of kalám, and (2) then see how he carried it out, and after that (3) compare it with the theological method.

Introduction
In a book I wrote about al-Shaykh al-Mufid, (M. McDermott, (1978). I provisionally translated 'ilm al-kalám by the word "theology", as its closest equivalent in the languages of the West. It is not a very satisfactory translation, for 'ilm al-kalám is not quite the same as what Christians call "theology." Now my purpose is to come back to these two terms and consider a few differences between what al-Mufid, the mutakallim was doing in his discipline and what Christians mean by theology. To be quite plain, I am thinking inside my own tradition, which is that of a Catholic Christian whose model and ideal in theology is Thomas Aquinas.

I admit that my aim here is personal, simply to answer a question I have long ago asked myself but have not investigated before. I am trying today to see the two methods in comparison: that of 'ilm al-kalám and of theology. Noting the differences helps me to understand al-Mufid better, what he is aiming to do and what he is not aiming to do. Perhaps also it may help you to understand Christian theology more, what it does and does not try to do. My guide in all this has been the monumental study by Louis Gardet and Georges Anawati, Introduction à la Théologie Musulmane, which however suffers from
the defect, recognized by its authors, of not considering the Shi'ite mutakallimûn. (Gardet and Anawati, 1948.)

It is commonly said of 'ilm al-kalâm in general that it is a defensive apologetic, good in the opinion of some Muslims, but not all. Al-Gazzâli thought 'ilm al-kalâm to be a dangerous remedy, useful only for protecting the faith of the people and silencing heretics. (Ihyâ' 'ulûm al-dîn, 1, 174, cited in Gardet-Anawati, 71). Ibn Khaldûn's definition of 'ilm al-kalâm is well known:

"It is a science that involves arguing with rational proofs in defence of articles of faith and refuting innovators who deviate in their dogmas from the doctrines of the early generations and the people of tradition. The core of these dogmas is the oneness of God." (A’l-Muqaddimah, 1164, Gardet-Anawati, 309).

And yet surely the mutakallim, in elaborating his defence of the propositions to be believed, is at the same time making an effort to understand and to illuminate what it is that he believes. This is what interests me in al-Mufid.

Here is the fundamental difference between kalâm and theology. Kalâm aims primarily to defend and secondarily to illuminate; theology aims primarily to illuminate; to come to some understanding of a mystery which the human mind cannot fully grasp, and only secondarily to defend. Both hold that God is one. And we both, I presume, also hold that God is a mystery that cannot be fully understood by the finite human mind. We both hold that nothing in true revelation can contradict reason, for God is the author of both reason and revelation. Yet God can also reveal things about Himself which are beyond our power to understand fully.

My own interest is in the effort at understanding and explaining the datum of revelation which al-Mufid makes in his kalâm. One of the important things al-Mufid did was to provide a rational substratum for the Imamite faith during the absence of the Imam. He had to meet not only the objections of outsiders but also the demands of believing
Shi’ites for explanation of how what is proposed for belief does not contradict what they already know. I will try, then, (1) to say something about al-Mufid’s own concept of kalâm, and (2) then see how he carried it out, and after that (3) compare it with the theological method.

I. Al-Mufid's Concept of Kalâm

First of all, kalâm is for the specialists. Although ordinary believers were allowed to protect themselves by taqiyyah, still, says al-Mufid, the Imams had commanded another group of the more learned, "to face their adversaries openly in argument and call them to the truth." (Mufid, 1412: 66, McDermott, 1978: 317).

For, says al-Mufid, from the first there had been in the Imamite community some who "used reason (nazar) and disputed for the truth and repelled falsehood with arguments and proofs, for which the Imams praised them." (Tashih, 26-7, Theology of al-Shaikh al-M’ufid, 315).

In assessing the method of his teacher Ibn Bábawayh, al-Mufid made this reproach, that

"he followed the method of the traditionists, going by surface meanings and shying away from the paths of reflection (al-’itibâr). This point of view harms the religion of the one who holds it, and resting in it blocks rational inquiry (al-’istibsâr)." (Tashih, 67).

From this criticism it is possible to infer al-Mufid's own idea of what a mutakallim should do. He should reflect and try to understand the meaning of the traditions that he has heard. This will improve the quality of his own faith and so enable him more effectively to defend it against the attacks of nonbelievers.
Man's first duty, according to al-Mufid, is to know God. (Theology", 58, citing Karajaki, Kanzal-fawá’id.). Apparently, then, this comes even before the duty to reason to knowledge of His existence. Mere passive acceptance of traditions on the part of those who are capable of reasoning, brings no reward, for passive acceptance is not faith. (Al-Fusul al-mukhtárah, 78, cited in Theology., 243).

This however does not mean to say that all must be skilled in dialectic or capable of expressing their knowledge in debate and disputation. (Al-Fusul, 79, Theology, 245). For nazar is not the same as munázarah. (Tashih, 28, Theology", 316). Many of the common people, says al-Mufid, are able to have the personal knowledge, based on reasoning, that puts them above the passive accepters of another's word, without being themselves mutakallimún.

On the other hand, al-Mufid says that

"reason (al-’aql) needs revelation (al-sam’) both in its premises and in its conclusions, and it does not dispense with revelation for informing the ignorant of how demonstration (al-istidlál) works. And an apostle is necessary for the initial imposition of moral obligation and its beginning in the world." (Awâ’il, 11-12, Theology, 60).

This interdependence of reason and revelation is basic in al-Mufid's system, and it is a pity that he did not theorize about it further in any of the writings we have from him.

II. Al-Mufid's Kalám in Practice

It is the contention of this paper that al-Mufid did more than just argue against external opponents and refute adversaries. While doing this, he also met to some extent another vital need of the Imamite believer which had been performed by the Imams when they were available, but which needed continuation in al-Mufid's time and still needs to be done along the lines he laid out or along the lines laid out by his pupils and successors. That task is the rational elaboration of the faith. What
does this or that doctrine mean? How can I justify it against the objections of my own mind? It is the task of giving an intellectual substratum to what he believed. For the content of what is to be believed does not stand on reason alone, but also on revelation (sam').

To this end, for example, al-Mufid elaborates in al-'Ifsāh a fourfold proof of the need for an Imam: from the Qur'an, from tradition, consensus, and from reason and experience. And the last part of the proof, from reason and experience, rests upon two premises: one, that it is impossible to carry out the legal duties of the believer without an Imam, and, second, that God does not oblige what is impossible. (Al-'Ifsāh. fi imāmat Amir al-Mu'minin,3-4, Theology, 120).

12] So one of the two premises is based on revelation, and the second, that God does not oblige what is above man's strength, is from reason.

Al-Mufid also argues against the Ash'arites that God is just and does not command man beyond what he is capable of(Awá'il,24-25,Theology,156).

This leads him also to consider whether God acts for man's best interests, and whether God does so because He is obliged in justice, or whether He puts Himself under a kind of moral obligation rising from His nobility and generosity. (Awá'il, 26, Theology, 77). In deciding for the latter, al-Mufid is in agreement with the Baghdadi Mu'tazilites against the Basran school.

But if God is not held by strict justice, it would seem rather hazardous to claim that we know by reason what He may and may not do. Hence this seems to be another reason why al-Mufid's thesis fits in well with his other doctrine that reason (aqil) needs revelation (sam') to support it.

This would seem to be in line with the prayer of Ibrahim to see how God would raise the dead. God replied, "'Do you not then believe?' He said, 'Yes! but to satisfy my own heart.' "( Sūrat al-Baqarah, 2:260). It is not so much a question of whether it is so, but an effort to understand how it is so. And in kalám, it is an effort more in the first
operation of the mind (the concept and what it means) rather than the second operation (the judgement) which deals with the true and the false.

That is, the Imamite already believes what the Imam says.

But still he wants to know how this accords and harmonizes with other things which he knows by reason. So he asks, for example, in al-Masá’il al-Hájibiyah, how this or that Qur’anic verse can be harmonized with the doctrine of the Imamites, e.g. on the purity of the People of the House, with the verse: "And God only wishes to remove all impurity from you, Members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless" (Súrat al-Baqarah, 2:260). This is really asking for an explanation of the meaning of the verse which he can rationally accept along with the doctrine that the Imams were already pure.

Or how certain actions of the prophets or the Imams harmonize with their ‘ismah, for example: if Ali knew what would happen, why did he go to the mosque where he was assassinated, and why did al-Husayn go to Kufah? (Ibid., Q. 20) This leads al-Mufid to explain more fully what ‘ismah means and what it does not mean.

 Granted. then, that the main purpose of ‘ilm al-kalám is to defend one’s doctrine against deniers and enemies, it remains that it also has a secondary function, which is to explain more fully the meaning of the doctrine in order to meet the need of the believer for a fuller understanding of what he believes. I think this second task of kalám looms large in al-Mufid’s work.

III. Comparison with Theology

All that I have said so far may perhaps seem obvious to you. Why do I elaborate on it? Because before coming to a study of kalám and al-Mufid, I had been trained in theology, and my own curiosity leads me- to ask what are the similarities and what are the differences between the two sciences. I would like to note three differences: one of emphasis, another of function, and of subject matter.
In theology, the function of defensive apologetic is secondary, relegated to a minor ancillary role. For theology is mainly a dialogue between believers rather than with unbelievers. Where the dialogue is with unbelievers, one is in the realm of philosophy or what is called natural theology, which appeals only to what can be proved by unaided reason. And in defending one's religious doctrine against outside attacks, or in seeking to convince a nonbeliever of its truth, one is using the science called apologetics, not theology proper.

For the primary aim of theology is "understanding of the faith". Or as Augustine, one of the formers of the theological tradition said, "I believe in order that I may understand, and I understand in order that I may believe better." (Sermon 43, 7, 9).

It uses reason in order to try to see the harmony between the doctrines among themselves, and also how they lead man to his last end, which is the direct knowledge of God in heaven. In other words, if the parts of a theological system contradict one another or do not fit in with one another, the system falls. But the theologian as such does not make it his business to prove the credibility of what he believes to a nonbeliever, That is the task of the philosopher or the apologist. The theologian seeks not so much to defend as to deepen his faith, and by contemplating with his reason what he believes to be revealed truths, to see connections between them and draw conclusions from them. In doing this he aims to know God better, even though God will remain a mystery to him. And the fruit of this effort should ordinarily be love.

It must be said too that another difference between the subject matter of kalām and that of theology is that kalām does not deal expressly with mysteries that surpass our understanding.

Of course, every Muslim will admit at once that there are many things about God and what pertains to Him, al-ghayb, beyond the understanding of His creatures. However the task of kalām is not to treat of those mysteries. The theologian, in fact, treats many of the same subjects as the mutakallim, but under a different light:
that of faith. And theology holds of course that many truths about God (that He exists, that He is One, that He rewards the good and punishes the evil, etc.) can be proved by reason alone, but that revelation is necessary in practice so that these truths can be arrived at by all, more quickly, easily, and certainly and without error being mixed in.

For faith, in the theologian's view, is a gift which God offers and man can accept. When he accepts it, it raises him above his own natural powers and enables him to believe not on the strength of proofs, which may or may not be present, but because God says so.

What the theologian is trying to do by using his reason with the aid of this gift of faith is to come to some knowledge of God which stands between the knowledge of a child, who simply believes, and the direct knowledge of God which is experienced in love by those who contemplate Him in heaven.
References:

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The Shape of the Coming Global Civil Society:
Suggestions for a Possible Islamic Perspective

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Abstract
In a world in which the degree of interdependence and interconnection among nations, cultures and civilisations is ever-increasing, the necessity of creating efficient global institutions for managing global affairs has become more urgent than ever. However, what makes the task of constructing such competent institutions rather difficult is that interconnectivity and common concerns are not the only factors responsible for shaping the future of our societies; diversity in the form of plurality of value systems/belief systems also plays an important role in this respect. The problems we are facing with are exaggerated types of the age-old universal-particular or global-local dichotomy and the apparent incommensurability of rival paradigms.

To be able to create efficient global institutions, in this case a well-functioning global civil society, we ought to take into account diverse concerns and sensitivities of local communities and cultures. For Muslim countries to be able to contribute meaningfully to the construction of such a global civil society, a prior condition is the establishment of effective local models of civil society which are in tune with the sensitivities of these communities. Such models could play a significant role in educating and training members of the Muslim communities for full and constructive participation in shaping a desirable future global civil society. The introduction of such indigenous models of civil society is of particular significance at a time when Muslim societies, by and large, are suffering from acute forms of ‘identity crisis’ syndrome.

The aim of the present paper is to propose the outline of a dual-purpose model of civil society which could be adopted by Muslim societies and communities. This model, while would fulfil the usual standard functions of civil societies, would also prepare the ground for the participation of the societies which have adopted it in the creation of efficient global civil society.

Keywords: globalization, civil society, Islamic Perspective, Identity Crisis

Belief-ecosystems and Identity Crisis in the Muslim World
From a cultural point of view, human beings are, in the final analysis, what they believe and think. As such, it will not be too wide of the mark, for the sake of the arguments of the present paper, to identify the “identity”, either of individuals or communities, with their belief systems or intentionalities. Belief systems are not fixed and rigid entities. On the contrary, like living organisms, they are constantly changing and evolving in response to the changing situations in the intellectual and physical environments surrounding them. We can somewhat loosely liken individual’s belief-systems to Popper’s world-2, and the intellectual and physical environments with which they interact to his world-3 and world-1 respectively (Popper, 1972, Ch. 4). Communities’ belief-systems which can be regarded as collective belief-systems or collective intentionalities, on the other hand, are part of the world-3. We also use the term ‘belief-ecosystems’ to denote sets of communities’ belief-systems which are somewhat related to each other. Belief-ecosystems, on their part, like natural-ecosystems are shaped by interaction between the entities which constitute them and the environment encompass them.

Islamic civilisation can be regarded as a geographically vast and historically old belief-ecosystem. Within the context of this belief-ecosystem one can discern many varied and diverse belief-systems. Each of these systems has taken shape in response to factors (internal and external) that have influenced the Islamic belief-ecosystem since its inception one and half millennia ago. The emergence of Shi’ism and Sunnism as well as other less comprehensive sects, the rise of various schools of thought and intellectual disciplines, e.g., mysticism (Irfan), philosophy, theology (kalaam), jurisprudence (fiqh), and the appearance of myriad forms of folk-cultures throughout the Islamic lands, can all be attributed to this process of identity-formation.

The responses of Muslims to the changes in their belief-ecosystem can be classified into three general categories, namely, revolutionary transformations and conversions of a gestalt-shift type, evolutionary adaptations and adjustments, and attempts to preserve the status quo.
These categories, either separately or simultaneously, can be traced in various historical periods in different parts of the Islamic world.

Belief-ecosystems, as remarked above, are constantly transforming under pressures from internal and external factors including social, economic, political, environmental, scientific, technological, and cultural. However, although changes in the belief-ecosystems are happening all the time, it is not the case that each of these changes constitutes an identity crisis. Identity crises are defined in terms of the threats perceived by the individuals or the communities in question, the threats which these individuals or communities consider to be detrimental to their existing belief systems. In other words, and to use a modern terminology, belief-ecosystems are of the type of complex systems known as ‘robust yet fragile’ (RYF). Such systems can tolerate many drastic changes and yet are vulnerable towards some particular changes that happen along their fault lines. Identity crisis is one of the major Achilles heels for belief-ecosystems (Doyle, et.al, 2005).

The Islamic belief-ecosystem has undergone various changes in its long history. However, none of those changes were regarded as constituting an identity crisis for this belief-ecosystem. External military invasions, internal political cataclysms, environmental catastrophes, and the like, did not create a widespread sense of identity crisis amongst the inhabitants of Islamic lands in the previous centuries. This, of course, does not mean that during that long period one could not find cases of individuals or small groups of people who have experienced such a crisis. What it means is that a large scale crisis of identity cannot be discerned in the earlier parts of the development of Islamic belief-ecosystem. It is only since the encounter of the Islamic societies with modern Western civilisation in the early nineteenth century that the symptoms of an acute and comprehensive identity crisis in the Islamic belief-ecosystem have become evident.
As a result of this encounter, among other things, a large number of new intellectual elements were (and still are being) introduced to the traditional belief systems which, in the past, were in a state of quasi-equilibrium within the Islamic belief-ecosystem. The intrusion of these new elements has disturbed the quasi-stability of the ecosystem. It has changed both the geometry and the dynamics of the traditional belief systems within the Islamic belief-ecosystem: the arrangements of the constituting parts of these belief systems and the ways of their interaction have undergone profound changes. In other words, the contact between Islamic societies and the West in modern times has put into motion a long and ongoing process of co-evolution (Kauffman 1995).

This ongoing process, so far, has resulted in many socio-economic and political upheavals. In Iran alone, during the twentieth century, and in the span of few decades, two major revolutions have taken place in direct response to the flow of new elements which penetrated the traditional fabric of the Iranian society (Koury and MacDonald (eds), 1987). The phenomenon of change due to the interaction between new and old elements is, of course, not restricted to Iran. Throughout the Islamic lands, during the past one and a half centuries, many political regimes have been toppled, many new political parties and movements have appeared on the scene, countless many new institutions and new forms of life have come into being, and a large spectrum of new ideas have made their debut.

In a nutshell, the encounter with the West has given rise to the phenomenon of ‘identity-crisis’ which in turn has shaken the robust-yet-fragile complex system of Islamic belief-ecosystem to the core and has resulted in deep structural changes in the Muslim countries. A sure sign of the identity crisis is the appearance of soul-searching questions concerning the very fundamentals of the belief system. In the context of traditional Islamic societies, many questions which, prior to their encounter with the West, were simply taken for granted, gained a large degree of importance and urgency. People who used to take Islam as a perfect guide to life, were now forced to ask difficult
and painful questions such as: "Who is a Muslim?", "Are Muslims as the Holy Quran points out, really the chosen nation amongst all other nations?", "Is Islam capable of offering efficient solutions to the modern-day problems facing Islamic communities?", "Is Islam really the best religion superior to all other systems of belief?", "Is the apparent weakness of Muslim communities in comparison to the Western societies a result of deep defects within the Islamic belief systems, or is it due to the defects in the approaches and attitudes of the Muslims?", "Is there such a thing as pure Islam?", "If so, then whose version of Islam is the genuine article?"

These questions and their ilk have been recurring themes in almost all Islamic societies since the early nineteenth century. In fact one can map out the history of Islamic societies in the past one and a half centuries according to the efforts on the part of Muslims to answer these questions.

Ikhwan-al-Muslimun in Egypt, Jimmat-al-Islami in Pakistan, both the Constitutional and the Islamic revolutions in Iran, Taliban in Afghanistan, Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia and other countries, Islamic Intellectualism Movement in Iran, and many other socio-political phenomena in the Muslim lands are all examples of relentless efforts on the part of Muslims to provide answers to the above and many more serious and disturbing questions which have emerged in the Islamic Belief-ecosystem, all challenging the very foundations of this system.

Despite all these efforts, which have taken different shapes and forms, in the first decade of the twenty-first century these questions have still not found satisfactory solutions. This lack of success has further deepened an already deep crisis.

However, although no satisfactory solution so far has been found, and while any claim for a quick fix should be regarded as unrealistic, it is not the case that in the Islamic lands all is doom and gloom. A closer look at the history of Islamic communities in the past one and a half
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centuries, would reveal that as a result of the process of co-evolution Muslim passed through various phases of intellectual maturation and sophistication, from disbelief and puzzlement in the early stages of their encounter with the West, to the state of suspension of disbelief, and from there to the phase of focusing on the problems and trying to get a clear understanding of the issues at hand. At present, it seems, at least in some parts of the Islamic lands, Muslims have entered the phase of critical assessment of the situation and are, at long last, proposing solutions which are more realistic and competent than ever. Those who are involved in this latest phase of activities have equipped themselves with a good level of theoretical knowledge necessary for a comprehensive appraisal of different alternatives and proposing new models.

During this latest period of change, a number of major epistemological points are gradually gaining credibility amongst ever increasing portions of Muslim population especially within the younger more educated generations. It is for example, gradually being accepted that the search for final solutions, magic wands, and panaceas which would resolve all the difficulties once and for all, is futile. The desire for building utopias on earth is gradually giving way to the more realistic approaches of piecemeal social engineering. Learning from one’s own mistakes and from the mistakes and/or achievements of the others, Muslim or non-Muslim, is also gaining respect in many quarters in Islamic societies. Perhaps most important of all, people are slowly coming to terms with the fact that just one unique and absolutely valid interpretation of Islam is not within the reach of the mortal souls; and rival interpretations, which may all appear to be equally valid, could be entertained by various groups or individuals, though this sort of epistemological pluralism need not result in a rampant relativism.

Interestingly enough, in the course of this process of co-evolution, many factors which initially deemed to solely produce grave and undesirable consequences for the integrity of the Islamic belief systems, have shown also to be having beneficial effects in bringing
about changes towards further enrichment of these systems. Opening
of the printing houses and publication of newspapers, the introduction
of modern methods of education and the appearance of political
parties were among such factors which made considerable impact on
the outlook of the Muslims in the past one and a half centuries. In our
times, factors like globalization, advances in communication
technology and information explosion, and continued political crises
such as the Arab-Israeli conflict are similarly exerting enormous
pressures on the existing belief systems within the Islamic belief-
ecosystem. Under such pressures, these belief systems should either
adapt or face losing their appeal in the eyes of the faithful.

Identity Crisis in the Muslim World and the Role of Civil
Societies
A Central argument of the present paper is that the discourse of the
‘civil society’ which has made a remarkable comeback in the West in
recent years (Cohen & Arato 1992), and is gradually gaining grounds
in the Islamic countries (Al-Azme 1993; Schwedler 1995; Norton
1995; Glasius et.al. 2004), can play a significant role in not only
resolving the identity crisis in the Muslim lands but also help
Muslims to participate in the creation of effective global civil
societies.

In the past few years, an impressively large number of papers and
books on the subject of "civil society" have been published in various
Islamic countries and several conferences and seminars have also
been convened by universities, research centres, or governmental
bodies in these countries, to discuss different aspects of this subject.

In a fashion more or less comparable to what has happened in the
West, the notion of "civil society" has received a mixed reaction
amongst Muslim intellectuals and/or scholars, statesmen and political
activists. In the West, there are those who ardently advocate such an
organisation. However, there are others who would voice concern
about this model. Thus for example, whereas Ernest Gellner has
praised it as an ideal whose reappearance should be heartily
welcomed (Gellner 1994), John Gray, who used to defend such a model, now argues that a more pluralistic approach, with some resemblance to the pluralism propounded by Alasdair MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1985, 1988), though not identical with it, should be developed (Gray 1995).

In the context of the Islamic belief-ecosystem too, there are those who argue that this notion is quite incompatible with Islamic views. Others claim that the only permissible model of civil society in Islam is the one introduced by the Prophet in Medina (Nadri Abyaneh 1997). And yet a third group are of the view that the notion of an "Islamic civil society" is a contradiction in terms since ‘civil society’ is ideology-neutral (Muhammadi 1996). Apart from the Muslim critics of the notion of ‘civil society’ there are also non-Muslim scholars (mostly orientalists) who would claim Islamic societies cannot (and historically have not been able to) produce a construct such as ‘civil society’.

For my part, while I take issue with all the above positions, to establish my own argument, I need to impose a rather restrictive condition. The critical dialogue concerning the status of civil society within the boundaries of Islamic belief-ecosystem, could most successfully be held with those interlocutors who subscribe to some interpretations of Islam which would endorse and uphold the essential right of reason in pursuing real life problems. I shall call these interpretations, the "rational" readings of Islam, for the want of a better word.

My argument is that it is possible to develop effective indigenous models of civil society by means of the resources provided by rational interpretations of Islam which could not only assist contemporary Muslim communities to overcome their ‘identity crisis’ but also help them to participate in the creation of effective global civil societies.

To briefly present my argument, let me begin by introducing a working definition of the notion of civil society based on the views of
Cohen and Arato (1992). I regard civil society as a sphere of social interaction between the state on the one hand and the economy on the other. This sphere, in its turn, is composed of the family, voluntary associations, social movements, and forms of public communication and self-mobilisation. Civil society, in this sense, is institutionalised and generalised through laws and rights. However, in this model, civil society is not identified with all of social life outside the administrative state and economic process in the narrow sense. Thus for example, according to this working definition, political organisations, political parties and parliaments, as well as organisations of production and distribution of goods, like firms, cooperatives and partnerships are not part of civil society per se. The political and economic role of civil society is not directly related to the control or conquest of political and/or economic power but to the generation of influence through the life of democratic associations and unconstrained discussions in the cultural public sphere.

The argument against compatibility of civil society with Islam has appeared in two distinct forms. On the one hand, there are those writers, usually Western orientalists, and occasionally their oriental followers, who following Max Weber (1958), would claim that contrary to the Western cities, the structure of Islamic societies has not been amenable to the emergence of civil societies. B.S. Turner, in a recent study, has thus summarised the two main features of this line of argument:

"The first is to make a dichotomous contrast between the static history and structure of Islamic societies and the evolutionary character of occidental Christian culture ... The second ... is to provide a list of causes which explain the stationariness of Islamdom. The list typically includes the absence of private property, the general presence of slavery and the prominence of despotic government. ... These features ... can be summarised by the observation that oriental social formation possessed an overdeveloped state without an equivalent 'civil society'”.

(Turner 1984, p. 68)
However, as a number of researchers have shown, the above argument is based on an oversimplified picture of the life in Islamic societies and cities, from which many essential aspects are omitted. For example, it has been shown that in many Islamic cities, Muslim professional guilds and urban corporations had actually created embryonic civil societies. Louis Massignion, for instance, has observed that:

"There was not a single town ... from Central Asia to Mesopotamia, which did not have its ayyarin ... they ... seem to be more closely linked with the local bourgeoisie in support of a native prince, ... Sometimes the bourgeoisie relied on them in resisting the authorities ..., in the majority of towns which had no charta (police force), they formed an indispensable local militia, ... upon whom the race of the city relied." (Massignion 1935, p.962)

Bernard Lewis, in a more critical vein, having compared the similarities and the differences between the Muslim and the Western European urban grouping, has endorsed the independent nature, and social function of the Islamic guilds:

"Unlike the European guilds, which were basically a public service, recognised, privileged and administered by public authorities, seigniorial, municipal or Royal, the Islamic guild was a spontaneous development from below, created not in response to a state need, but to the social requirements of the labouring masses themselves." (Lewis 1937, pp. 35-36.)

Apart from the Charta and the Islamic guild (sinf) a number of other institutions also emerged in the course the evolution of Islamic Civilisation. These institutions could be regarded as the precursors to the Modern institution of civil society. (--- 2004)
Whereas the orientalists have based their argument against the compatibility of the models of civil society and Islam on the so-called "stationariness of Islamdom", quite recently, some Muslim writers have argued against the thesis of compatibility from a doctrinal point of view. According to these writers, which by and large, advocate a traditional approach to Islam, civil society, is a product of the liberal philosophical tradition, and this tradition is inherently at odds with the Islamic ideas and ideals. S.Larijani, a lecturer in Qom seminary and a member of the influential Council of Guardians, is amongst the advocates of this view. In a recent paper entitled, "Religion and the Civil Society" he has spelled out the main argument of this group of writers in the following way:

"In a nutshell, civil society and liberalism are twin brothers, and one of the main theses of liberalism, and therefore of the civil society, is the neutrality of the state. This is not consistent with pure Islamic doctrines unless one is so infatuated with liberalism that one does not care about such an inconsistency, and that is another matter. Contrary to the views of a number of myopic intellectuals, liberalism is not only incompatible with the fundamentals of religious belief in general, and with Islamic thought in particular, but also poses grave philosophical problems for the individual. A necessary consequence of the liberal doctrine is that every immoral law, provided that it is endorsed by all and sundry, is then enactable and it is the duty of the state to pave the way for its implementation. This is because the state has no criterion for distinguishing wrong and right. Its only obligation is to safeguard the liberties. If people decided that abortion or homosexual life style should be allowed, then the state must follow suit and modify its laws to accommodate these demands.

... Such ideas are not only untenable from an Islamic point of view, because among other things, Islam does not endorse moral pluralism, but are also faced with irresolvable philosophical difficulties." (Larijani 1997, 222)
A critical assessment of the arguments of the traditional Muslim writers takes us beyond the scope of the present paper. However, suffice it to say that the development of the models of civil society has not been a prerogative of the Liberal thinkers in its narrow sense. Hegel, Marx, as well as subsequent Socialist and Marxist writers have also made significant contributions in this field. (Keane 1988) Moreover, to equate *laissez-aller*, or unconstrained freedom, with Liberalism is to refute the actual history of ideas.

It seems the main objection of the traditionalist Muslim writers to the notion of civil society is that such a society, which they regard to be a product of Liberalism, would pave the way for moral and social decadence. Though one could sympathies with such concerns, one should not, as some of these writers seem to have done, conflate permissiveness with moral pluralism. While the former could lead to moral impropriety, the latter basically involves divergent sub-moralities in relation to the same area of conduct. In other words, moral pluralism is not equal to moral relativism and ‘anything goes’ attitude in moral life. Liberal minded Muslim writers are among the foremost critics of moral relativism.

In the past two decades, and after the demise of state-administered Socialism and the discrediting of fully-fledged free-market economy and rampant *laissez-faire*, many thinkers have striven to develop more refined models of civil society in which the rights and liberties of the individuals are reconciled with a partnership between the state and the society. In such models, great emphasis has been placed on the importance of morality as a method for conducting the affairs of the state and the individual.

Delicate philosophical distinctions aside, the model of civil society, alluded to above, with its strong moral component, would not only provide great assistance to the more ‘rational’ interpretations of Islam, but it should also prove to be attractive even to the traditionalist Muslim writers. In fact, the affinities between a civil society shaped
according to the above approaches and the more traditional interpretations of Islam do not end here. One can think of such a society as not just built on a Hobbesian kind of social contract, but as one which also benefits from a moral contract or a covenant. A society built on social contract, as J. Sacks has observed, ‘is maintained by an external force, the monopoly within the state of the justified use of coercive power. A covenant, by contrast, is maintained by an internalised sense of identity, kinship, loyalty, obligation, responsibility and reciprocity. Parties can disengage from a contract when it is no longer to their mutual benefit to continue. A covenant binds them even - perhaps especially, in difficult times. This is because a covenant is not predicated on interests, but instead on loyalty, fidelity, holding together even when things seem to be driving apart.’ (Sacks 1997)

However, while this model of civil society might succeed in mitigating the opposition of more conservative and traditional Muslim writers, it may prompt the discontent of more critically-minded citizens of the Islamic communities. It might, for example, be argued against this approach to the civil society that to let the moral law to take precedence over the law of the land could lead to dangerous and undesirable consequences. It might also be argued that this model harbours a latent communitarianism which gives cause for concern to more liberal-minded Muslim intellectuals.

Despite these worries, it seems that a model of civil society in which morality takes a prominent place in regulating the relations between the individuals as well as the institutions can still be upheld in the face of the criticisms levelled against it. Thus for example, for those who are worried that the law of the land might be undermined, one can reiterate H.L.A Hart’s argument that the law of the land is a set of fallible interpretations by mere mortals and as such is not only not sacred, but may not even be moral in an ideally desired sense. However, such a law has to be made as moral as possible. A new model of civil society which lays emphasis on the moral principles can facilitate this process. (Hart 1983, essay 2) The law-makers, in a
fashion which is not dissimilar to the way science approaches the notion of truth (Popper 1963), will be encouraged to constantly revise their laws in manners which strengthen the laws’ moral elements.

As for the second objection, it can be argued that in the proposed model the emphasis is placed on moral norms which can be shared by all members of a diverse society. Such moral norms constitute a set of moral values and principles. This set, given human beings shared concerns, is of course, not an empty one. Moreover, since rampant value relativism is untenable, the common moral denominator of the society can be further expanded through dialogue and rational discussions. (Berlin 1998)

Within the framework of the proposed model of civil society, citizens can play an active role in producing better interpretation of the laws governing the conduct of the society. Critical debates and constructive discussions amongst the citizens and the authorities would pave the way to constantly producing new and better balanced laws and implementing them in more effective ways.

Civil society in the defined sense can also exert considerable influence with respect to a satisfactory resolution of the so-called identity crisis in the Islamic countries. The identity of an individual partly takes shape in his or her society. However, the regimes and governments in many Islamic countries are despotic or non-democratic. In such countries there is very limited room for manoeuvre for the individual. As a result, the individuals’ identity will not have enough chance to flourish and their potentials cannot be fully actualised. In a civil society strengthened with the notion of moral covenant, values like freedom, equity, solidarity, democracy, and the basic human rights can all be realised. Such a civil society can facilitate the constructive interaction between different elements of the belief systems and therefore, can assist to produce novel solutions to the so-called crisis of identity.
However, from among various interpretations of Islam within the Islamic belief-ecosystem only those which I called the 'rational' readings are most amenable towards the above model of civil society. Other interpretations like the fundamentalist or the traditionalist tend to be more exclusionist and insist upon drawing rigid boundaries between the "insiders" and the "outsiders". (--- 2006, pp.123-148) These interpretations are not only in danger of distorting the real message of Islam, which purports to be a universal religion, a world view for humanity at large, but also posing increasing threat to the stability of the Islamic societies. This is because modern Muslim societies are increasingly becoming pluralistic. In such societies, just one form of life cannot be imposed upon all the citizens.

**Islamic Civil Societies and Global Civil Society**

Now, granted that there is no incompatibility between the Islamic teachings, at least according to the more rational interpretation of Islam, and the notion of civil society, it can further be asked that whether the prospective civil society in an Islamic society is necessarily value neutral or can there be such a thing as Islamic civil society.

Traditionalists, as we have already seen, argue that Islamic civil society is a superfluous or an incongruent concept: We either have Islamic society or civil society. And since these two societies are based on two different ideologies, they cannot be reconciled. However, some secular Muslim writers also endorse the traditionalists view on this subject. The following quotation taken from a letter recently posted on the internet contains one such argument:

*Islamic* civil society is an oxymoron. Civil society is a secular construct which either exists or does not exist. If we accept the idea of an *Islamic* civil society, then in principle we should also agree to the legitimacy of Christian, Hindu, and Jewish civil societies. But that would be tantamount to celebrating the exclusionist character of societies, an atavistic approach at best.

(Iftikhar Ahmad 1997)
Indeed, in defence of the above argument, it can be argued that civil society, like the different forms of government and the various other institutions and social constructs which have evolved during the process of maturation of human civilisation, is, in a sense, an instrument and therefore, ideology and value neutral. It is a means to an end, and like all other means can be used properly or be misused. As such, apparently it does not make sense to talk of such a thing as an ‘Islamic Civil Society’.

The above argument though on the face of it may appear to be sound is nonetheless incomplete and as such can be even misleading. It is true that many (though not all - see below) of social constructs can be regarded as instruments or technologies. In this sense, they are ideology and value neutral. Technologies, machines or instruments are, by and large though not entirely, defined by their main functions. For example, cars, TV sets, parliaments, universities, etc. are all defined in terms of their specific functions, and in this sense are distinguished from each other according to their main functions. However, all those social constructs which are regarded as ‘technologies’ could also be considered with respect to their ends or telos. From this point of view, the social constructs would embody the values which the social actors through their collective intentionalities interject into them. For example, in the UK all schools have their own specific ‘ethos’ and ‘mottos’ which serve, among other things, in distinguishing each from the rest, despite the fact that as educational institutes they all have similar functions. In this sense, all technologies, including the one which is called ‘civil society’ (in all its varieties and types) is value-laden. In fact, as the above quotation indicates, the objector regards ‘civil society’ as a ‘secular construct’. In other words he claims that this technology embodies the values of a secular world-view. But this means that contrary to the claim of the objector, ‘civil society’ in not value-free. All technologies, with regard to their telos are value-impregnated and in this sense, one can legitimately talk of an Islamic civil society. In a nutshell, an Islamic civil society is a kind of civil society which share the main functions
and universal values of other efficient models of civil society anywhere in the world while carry with it (some of) the values which belong to the Islamic value system. It may also have some extra (non-main) functions, added to it by its local users, which make the machine of civil society more efficient in particular local contexts.

Such models of civil society can operate in societies and communities whose members are pre-dominantly Muslims. Likewise, civil societies inspired and informed by Christian or Jewish or Hindu values can operate in communities whose dominant values systems are Christian or Jew or Hindu. In more pluralistic societies, models of civil society which embody shared values of the members of the society can be put into use.

The thesis of Islamic civil society, however, needs further clarification. For example, whose Islam is meant in such a society? Is there just one model of Islamic civil society or many? Apparently, we are facing with a dilemma here. To opt for the first horn of the dilemma would bring about the charges of narrow-mindedness. To go for the second horn however, would, presumably, amount to arbitrariness.

The above dilemma, despite its frightful horns, is not irresolvable. Earlier in the paper I pointed out that only some rational interpretations of Islam are amenable to the idea of civil society. It should also be born in mind that civil society as a social construct is open to the functions which the collective intentionality of its creators would assign to it. In the context of an Islamic society in which a rational interpretation of Islam is the dominant element of its belief eco-system, the citizens assign their desired functions to a model of civil society whose broad characteristics were briefly explained above. Such a construct bear the values which the members of this particular form of life assign to it. Some of these values are universal human values and some are more specific to the way of life and tradition of the society in question.
It must be emphasised that in an Islamic society in which a rational-critical interpretation of Islam is the dominant element of its belief ecosystem the citizens are open to interactions in a pluralist manner. They are not imprisoned in a particular way of life. On the contrary, for them the Islamic ideals and ideas act as regulative principles, in the Kantian sense, as ideal objectives. They combine their rational interpretations of these principles with their knowledge and experiences of modern time to create novel syntheses which would better assist them to conduct their personal and collective affairs.

One of such syntheses is a model of civil society along the lines briefly explained in this paper. Such a model, among other things, could help the "rational" interpretations of Islam to meet the challenges of identity crisis. The identity crisis, as pointed out above, is nothing but a serious threat to the very existence of the belief systems. In responding to this threat only those belief systems which are the fittest could survive. And the fittest systems are those which have the highest capacity for adaptability and coping with the rapidly changing situations.

It is a known fact in the natural ecosystems that those organisms which make the best use of the resources available within their own ecosystem stand a better chance of survival. By analogy, it can be argued that those belief systems which make the best use of the resources within their own belief ecosystems, i.e., their own "past traditions", will be in a more advantageous position to ward off the threats to their integrity. (Popper 1963)

Within the context of the Islamic ecosystem, there exist a strong tradition with a long history whose main characteristic has always been the great emphasis which it lays on such basic values as freedom, tolerance, equity, responsibility, love and respect for all manifestations of God on earth, i.e., all creatures small and large, animate or inanimate. One eminent representative of such values is Imam Ali (pbuh) whose views concerning these issues can be gleaned from his sermons, letters and maxims.
It could be argued that in meeting the challenges facing Muslim communities in the third millennium, those rational interpretations of Islam which could manage to combine the best elements of their own past tradition with the most effective modern constructs such as a model of civil society more or less similar to what briefly described here, are better placed to weather the storm which is blowing over the Islamic lands.

Within the boundaries of a society which is based on such a combined approach, the ideal of siblinghood of humanity will be pursued. Such an ideal is an integral part of the Islamic belief eco-system. It can be found in the teachings of the Quran, the tradition of the Prophet (pbuh) and the wisdom of Imam Ali. In a famous letter to his governor in charge of Egypt, Malik Ashtar, Imam writes: “… people can be categorised in two groups: those who are your brothers in Islam, and those who share with you the bound of humanity … treat them with kindness and forgiveness in the same way you like the Almighty to treat you with kindness and forgiveness.”

The same wisdom and ideal has been echoed by many great Muslim thinkers throughout the ages. For example, it was stated almost 700 hundred years ago by the great Persian poet and sage, Sa’di of Shiraz, whose words of wisdom grace the entrance to the Hall of Nations in New York:

Of one Essence is the Human race;
Thusly has Creation put the Base;
One Limb impacted is sufficient,
For all Others to feel the Mace.

This is an ideal, like truth, which we can strive towards. It is of course an operative ideal, not an unrealistic utopian dream. To move towards it the notions of responsibility, freedom, equity, and pluralism need to be disseminated. Fortunately, all these elements, which are part and parcel of a bona fide model of civil society, are also indigenous
ingredients of some of the traditions within the Islamic belief ecosystem.

Such a model of civil society could hopefully help the Muslims to overcome the identity crisis they are facing with at present. But more than this since many of the values embedded in such a model are universal values which are easily identifiable by all people across the globe, it could also assist Muslims to make meaningful participation in the creation of international organisations, and in particular global civil societies, whose aim is, to promote peace, curb aggression, encourage social development, and foster prosperity. Of course, as Paul Kennedy (2006) has pointed out in the context of his discussion about creation of the United Nations, for every voice favouring global cooperation there will be another, warning against the erosion of national sovereignty or destruction of local values and traditions. It is in this context that a model of Islamic civil society which tries to reconcile Islamic sensitivities with universal values and concerns could prove its mettle.

1. "Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in God...", The Holy Quran, Ch. III, verse 110.
2. "The religion before God is Islam", (The Holy Quran, Ch. III, verse 19)
"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost." (The Holy Quran, Ch. III, verse 85).
3. The relation between reason and religion within the Islamic belief-ecosystem is a vexed and complicated one. Taking a cursory glance at the history of Islam, it can be seen that Muslims have adopted three different attitudes towards the use of reason and the rational approach. Some have regarded as a dangerous enemy for belief. Others have emphasised on the compatibility of reason and religion. And the third group have urged going beyond the realm of reason and into the realm of direct and immediate religious experience.
4. Other researchers, emphasising the historical importance of these embryonic civil societies within the context of Islamic cities and Muslim communities, have gone further to show that while from a doctrinal point of view, there has been no restriction for the flourishing of civil society in the past Islamic communities, other historical and environmental factors have hampered their development. For one such recent defence of the notion of urban autonomy and civil society in Islamic cities, see, (Ebrahimi1994).
5. Similar views can be found in the works of M.H. Mesbah, a professor of philosophy at Qom seminary, who is, by far, one of the most ardent proponents of this position. For a clear and concise statement of his position see his (2001, p. 8).

6. For a critique of moral relativism in the shape of moral particularism see (--- 2007).

7. For a Socialist version of such refined models of civil society see, John Keane (1988). J.L. Cohen & A. Arato, op. cit. have based their model of the views of Habermas. Karl Popper has tried to combine the aspirations of Liberalism with some of the ideals of Socialism, cf. his (1997). J. Shearmur in (1996), has discussed Popper's brand of Liberalism. For the significance of the moral component in Popper's thought, and the notion of morality as a method, see, A. --- (1998). Among the modern Liberal writers, Isaiah Berlin, too has tried to develop a version of Liberalism in which, the rights and liberties of the individual and the social responsibilities of the state could be reconciled. John Gray has called Berlin's model "Agnostic Liberalism" and has discussed it in his (1993 and 1994).

8. Kant, too, was of the view that governments are obliged to keep their contract with their citizens, and this contract is moral not political. See, H. Reiss (ed) (1991).

9. This of course should not be interpreted as implying a deterministic notion of identity. On the contrary, it can be argued that while external factors such as race, gender, language, geography, and history all play a role in shaping one's identity, the openness of the universe and the indeterminacy of the evolutionary process plus the role of man's free will would render deterministic and fatalistic models of identity untenable. Cf. (Popper 1982, Popper and Eccles 1977).

10. All human constructs could be divided into two general categories: those which are devised to respond to man's cognitive needs and those which are created to respond to human's non-cognitive needs. The former constitutes all our corroborated theories and as-yet un-falsified (though fallible) knowledge claims. To the latter belong all technologies, hard and soft, including a technology which is called 'civil society'. While the former category ought to be as free from the values of the inquirer as possible to better (i.e. more faithfully) represent the reality he/she wants to know about, for the latter category it is most desirable to carry the values cherished by the user of the technology in question. For a detailed discussion of this point see, (--- 2007b).

11. Imam Ali's thoughts and sayings are partly collected in two main Arabic sources, namely, Nahj al-Balagha and Ghorar al-Hikam va Dorar al-Kalam. Imam's teachings have inspired, among others, Muslim mystics and Islamic mysticism. Many of the Muslim mystics trace the origin of the schools they belong to the views and ideas of Imam Ali and claim him as the original founder of their schools. See (--- 2008). One of the best representatives of Islamic mystical thought is Jalal al-din Rumi. Many of his views can be usefully put into practice within the large project of responding to the identity crisis. See, The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi, edited and translated by R.A. Nicholson (1926).
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Philosophy and Film: Interwining Heidegger and Wenders

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Abstract
The thesis of this paper is that philosophy is at its end and movies are replacing it. It seemed helpful to start with a generalized overview of my project and spread out from there. I will use the philosopher Martin Heidegger's sketch of the end of philosophy, and the filmmaker Wim Wenders as an example of how movies are replacing philosophy. We spend much of our lives surrounded by moving photographic images. We are surrounded by an audio-visual form which first took shape in the cinema and became the common currency of modern television. Both materially and mentally they have a shaping impact on our lives. Few people make an effort to reflect back on film, thinking of movies solely as popular entertainment. My task is to take films seriously as thought and art. I want to think about films. I want to explore how films have the capacity to address some of the key issues which academic philosophy has been grappling with for centuries, and opens these questions up in new ways to the billions of people who are exposed to this technology. As an example of the capacity of film to do philosophy, I will look at Wim Wender's Wings of Desire (1987), the story of an angel hovering over Berlin who decides to become mortal. The German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) sets the stage of philosophy in this century, describing how he sees its completion in the traditional sense and what he sees as the task of thinking in philosophy's wake. In Heidegger's late writings I will use his call for philosophy to begin again, to experience the Being of beings which sparked the original Greek philosophers (his task of thinking) as a springboard to leap into Wings of Desire and its capacity to respond to this challenge. I will look at Wenders as overcoming Heidegger's response to his own challenge, his dwelling; which is possible because it is a film.

Keywords: philosophy, film, phenomenology, technology, Heidegger, enders
I. Questioning Technology

Central in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger is the concept of technology. "We shall be questioning technology and in doing so we should like to prepare a free relationship to it. The relationship will be free if it opens our human experience to the essence of technology."

I want to use Martin Heidegger's essay, "The Question Concerning Technology" as a way of framing my discussion about film. I see Heidegger's discussion of the dangers of technology and the corresponding saving grace as a microcosm of his philosophy as a whole, and the transformation of thought he wishes to carry out. This section can also be seen as a microcosm of my project as a whole. I will define how I am using technology, look at the dangers of technology, and finally I will explore the saving grace which can arise from technology. Later in the paper, I will play out a similar cycle of definition, dangers, and overcoming in the arena of metaphysics, using both Heidegger and Wings of Desire to articulate the process.

Defining technology

Heidegger uses the word technology in many ways. Historically, he is referring to the mass mechanicazation which began in the eighteenth century and cites concrete examples such as hydroelectric power plants, radar stations, and jet aircrafts. This is a matter of using external instruments as a means to an end. In addition, Heidegger uses technology to define a mode of thinking, and a way of revealing. This definition of technology is not limited to external machines we use, but has roots in a way of thinking which goes back to the ancient Greeks. For Heidegger, technology and Western metaphysics are intricately connected and inseparable. Technology arises out of the tradition of metaphysics and signals the closure of metaphysics. The essence of technology is essentially a way of revealing the totality of beings. As a way of revealing it is pervasive in Heidegger's life (and even more so, in ours), so much so that we can not choose to avoid technology. The advent of technology is something determined and destined long before the beginning of the technological revolution in the eighteenth century.
For Heidegger, technology is a method for calling forth and transforming the stock of reality according to our will. Technology facilitates a control over reality, rather than openness to experiencing it. For Heidegger, technology in its essence is an extension of metaphysics -- and is grounded in the history of metaphysics as a mode of revealing.

My use of film as technology

Film is one of the most powerful and prevalent technologies of our century -- and one of the most technological of popular art forms. In the medium of film the artistic and the technological meet, and this confrontation/cooperation springs forth a fascinating relation which I want to explore.

Heidegger's only specific reference to the medium of film in "The Question Concerning Technology" is relating to its danger and negative impact. It is a warning against the numbing impact the proliferation of images in which we live can have on us. Heidegger warns that "we do not yet hear, we whose hearing and seeing are perishing through radio and film under the rule of technology." This proliferation of images and sounds, which has multiplied numerous times in the forty-five years since Heidegger wrote the essay, makes it very easy for one to lose oneself in publicness and idle talk. Consequently, the individual fails to hear or see her own self amongst the chatter of the they-self. Amongst a barrage of CNN, Tom Cruise, and infomercials, it is easy to lose sight of oneself.

Danger in technology

For Heidegger, this danger is not limited to the proliferation of images, but in the use of all technology without adequate questioning its impact. "We are delivered over to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral; for this conception of it, to which today we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology."
The danger follows from the fact that people are no longer merely preoccupied with the tool-world in order to provide the basic necessities of life, together with a modest supply of luxuries. We are tempted to become entirely absorbed and fascinated by the very demanding universe of objects studied and manipulated by technologies. In this age of what Heidegger calls, Gestell (enframing) -- everything, including man himself, becomes material for a process of production, an imposition of human will on things regardless of their own essential natures. Gestell sees things primarily in their relation to human will as a matter of a process of production or self-imposition -- a concept of the thing in its subservience to human preoccupation. The danger is realized when this one way of revealing beings (technology) overwhelms man and all other possible ways of revealing.

In Heidegger's life span he saw the dawning of the technological era which freed man from many of the limits of his natural environment. Transportation technologies and communication technologies largely overcame the barrier of physical distance. Humans became more independent of their natural world and less dependent on its limitations. The unreflexive incorporation of these delimitations into our everyday lives and thinking struck Heidegger as dangerous. Just as many liberations came with this increase in the power technology gave us over natural limits, man correspondingly lost part of the definition and ground of being human. With this separation from natural limits comes the danger of denying, and forgetting, what makes us human. The denial of finitude, individuality, and mortality is the true danger of technology. To the extent that technology fosters the illusion that we can live forever and control everything, we are in danger of losing our humanness.

Heidegger sees the danger associated with the modern outlook (Gestell) not in science, nor even in technology, nor in machines as such, but rather in man who has lost his insight into man and behaves toward himself and to others as though all were non-human-like objects.
This dehumanization can be seen in the over-abundance of images, information, and manipulation which the technology of film and television makes possible on a global scale. The technologization of communication, which yielded communication mediums for the masses, such as radio, television, and film made it possible for live sights and sounds to lose their context and connection with the beings from which they arose.

As a productive part of this production and distribution of images, the filmmaker, Wim Wenders sees this danger exemplified most clearly by in the "country of technology", the United States, and one of its most powerful technologies, television:

"Every fucking telly is the center of the world. The center has become a pathetic notion, and so has the image of the world become a pathetic idea, the more televisions there are in the world. Down with television." "[American television] was that incredibly noisy, tasteless, calculated, contemptuous behavior of this system of images which I watched at first with frightened fascination, and then I gradually became its prey. I was like an animal paralyzed by fear, on a road at night, staring into the car headlights. That's how I stared into that flickering light."

The mass of images which are produced serve what Wenders sees as "the American state philosophy: Entertainment."

**The saving grace**

But where there is danger, there grows what saves. Salvation must come from where the danger is -- or it is inauthentic. For Heidegger begins with this acknowledgment and the saving grace "includes holding always before our eyes the extreme danger." Everything depends upon this: that we ponder this arising and that we, recollecting, watch over it... So long as we represent technology as an instrument, we remain transfixed in the will to master it. We press on past the essence of technology.

In our century, poets and technicians confront each other as antithetical figures, and Heidegger's thinking revolves around their
confrontation. Certainly poets and technicians are not mutually exclusive beings, but they are generalized to represent a larger tension within society of the poetic and the technological in our thought and action. The poet walking in the woods loses himself in the rapture of its presence; the technician calculates bulldozers that will be needed to level it. We see in the poet the ideal of beholding the beauty; in the technician, the drive to power. Is the saving grace in the poetic technology? In the reconciliation of poetry and technology?

When Heidegger’s ideas are applied to images and technology, the saving grace is in personalization and poeticizing of the generic mass of images with which we are barraged. In a selection and appropriation from the indistinct masses, the technology becomes humane and significant, not just a tool of manipulation. The saving grace in technological communication is to take the medium beyond the regulated-regulating instrument of information and commercialism it can so easily become.

What is needed in the face of the danger of technology is not new technologies to fix the old ones, or even a shelter to hide from existing technologies, but to humanize the ones which we live amongst; making the form meaningful, significant, humane and resonating. I am offering the filmmaker Wim Wenders and his film, Wings of Desire as an example of what is possible with the humanization of the technology of film. With a heightened attention, film can rescue images from the generic mass and proliferation of sights and sounds. By fostering a quietness which makes it possible to listen to the things themselves, the film can let the image speak, and let things appear.

II. Questioning Stories
As I am using Wenders as an example of this saving grace, it seems good to sketch the relation Wenders has to the rest of the film world. What is the connection between the two, and how representative is Wenders of other filmmakers?
Wim Wenders began making films in the early 1970s as part of a movement called the New German Cinema. As Wenders was beginning to make films, an overwhelming majority of films shown in Germany were made in Hollywood and exported to Germany. The images which filled the theaters and the sub-conscious of the German people were largely from a mythical land of warmth and wealth which Wenders saw as very distant from the post-war Germany he grew up in. Wenders and the New German Cinema strived for a unique independence from Hollywood. The American film studio system appears, with some exceptions, as a prime example of the regulated, unreflective, commoditization of technology which Heidegger warned of. Of popular American cinema Wenders explains the limitations it has brought upon itself,

They've given up experiencing things -life- outside the cinema and as a result they are unable to get anything of that into their films. I read a very frank interview with Steven Speilberg. He said he thought it was a great loss to himself that his entire experience, his world, consisted entirely of his childhood cinema experience. It is an astonishing admission, but I think he'll carry on regardless. I don't believe he will ever do anything differently. The attempt Wenders made was to began filmmaking again, outside of the commercial machine. "The New German Film has been the strongest argument in the world for a cinema that is not just a business but also an expressive form; something not only with money; but also with art."

Ironically, Wenders began making movies in the early 1970s in Germany, but made nearly all of his films in the next fifteen years about or in the United States. The America which he scorned also had a great fascination for him. In 1987 he returned to Germany and the German language for the first time in a decade to make Himmel Uber Berlin, directly translated, The Sky above Berlin, or The Heaven above Berlin -- but distributed in English under the title, Wings of Desire.

Wings of Desire also marked a distinct change in tone for Wenders. All eleven of Wender's full length films up to this point had been
about the difficulty of telling stories, and very self-reflexive. But just before the making of Wings of Desire, Wenders decided to deliberately overcome this self-impediment,

Either I show that storytelling is once more possible, or I shut up. That's what I've set for myself in my next two films. Try a narrative that passionately and confidently assumes the relevance of film language to life and is no longer at pains to relate the story to the method of storytelling... Not to leave everything to the great box office spectacles, but to proceed with full confidence and tell stories.

III. Heidegger and Wenders

Both Heidegger and Wenders are fond of citing the poet, Rainer Rilke, and in this passage I think Rilke articulates a fundamental connection between the projects of both men. Both are looking for a fresh opening to the question and experience of Being (alive).

For Heidegger, to be faithful to his chosen path, the question of Being, he had to learn a new way of speaking (and thinking) -- from "inside," from "out of experience of Being itself," rather than from above Being. (what Heidegger calls metaphysics) The majority of Heidegger's late writings, beginning at a some debatable point after his early philosophic "masterpiece" Being and Time, focus on different aspects of this speaking from inside Being, or what Heidegger calls dwelling.

In comparison, Wenders metaphorically embodies this transformation in Wings of Desire. He shows the frustration of an angel always confined to looking on from above, always outside the experience of "Being" itself, as a starting point for a transformation to inside "Being." The immaterial angel falls in love with a human woman, who performs as an angel in the circus, and chooses to become mortal and enter into the experience of mortality. First, the movie shows us the floating, detached, omniscient perspective of angels and then we enter into life from the eye level, into mortality.

I will be relating and contrasting Heidegger's transformation from metaphysics to dwelling and the transformation in the film, Wings of
Desire from angel to mortal. I will look at how Wenders overcomes Heidegger's overcoming of metaphysics, and at the movie as a possible saving grace which arises out of the area of danger, technology, and takes Heidegger's challenge of dwelling a step further than Heidegger takes it himself.

Likewise, choosing to do philosophy within the medium of film, and using the medium to its fullest potential, brings the metaphysical into the real, and forces philosophy into an expression from inside Being, rather than outside and above Being.

**World-Wide Homesickness**

The reason that both Heidegger and Wenders feel the need for this transformation into Being is to address an uprooted consciousness which they see and feel in the contemporary world around them. This lack of rootedness is the motivation which prompts the transformations each wishes to make. I am looking at their creations and expressions offered to the world, both in writing and film, as an attempt at dealing with a profound lack of connection with world and Being prevalent in our technological time.

We can see this homelessness most concretely in the situation both men arise from in post-World War II Germany, they were severed from their past and present. They were forced to forget their collective past and where they came from because of the horror of it, leaving them without a tradition to arise from, or build on. At the time Heidegger wrote "Buidling Dwelling Thinking," one of his most poignant attempts at searching for dwelling, Germany was overwhelmed with a national crisis of literal homelessness, with millions of people lacking basic shelter, on the first steps towards recovering from the destruction of the war. Beyond the current tragedy he saw, Heidegger had to deal with his own involvement in Nazism, and his lack of resistance to the movement. Wenders was born in this same time period, and grew up in Dusseldorf in the aftermath of the terror. The extent that each man's longings are subjectively true, and the extent that they are true for all people alive in the second half of this century strongly merge together in my mind.
All I know for certain is that the longings and lack of connections which they describe are very resonant with what I see and feel, and don't feel as distant situations peculiar to post-war Germany.

To deal with this problem, the first step in the project of both men is an acknowledgment of the current tendencies of homelessness. "Not angels, not men, and the shrewd animals notice that we're not very much at home in the world we've expounded." Rainer Rilke (1st Elegy) Both see an alienation and despair in their respective, overlapping contemporary times which is a result of a definitive underlying metaphysics and world-view. Both also see a need to overcome this limitation. This is the prompt which longs for and calls about dwelling.

**Wenders**

In Wender's 1982 film, The State of Things, about the making of an independent film, the "fictional" director of the film within the film, Friedrich, articulates the feeling of all of Wenders' earlier films and confesses, "I'm not at home anywhere." For Wenders, somewhere, the joy has gone astray, but it is not out of sight, or memory. "When the child was a child, it didn't know it was a child, everything was full of life and all life was one" Wenders sees things as fragments now, or as some would say, he is cursed with a "post-modern sensibility," yet he has a longing to piece these fragments together in a whole, to collect them in a story, and to experience resonances.

All of Wender's films prior to Wings of Desire were road-movies. The characters go on and on, without any particular destination in mind. It is not important for them to arrive anywhere in particular. The stories are dominated by dislocated males searching for the saving grace, yet never satiated. In Wender's first dozen films he acknowledges and describes his view of the fragmented nature of the contemporary soul and culture. Not until Wings of Desire did he respond to that homesickness, or did he offer a transformation beyond that fragmentation.
As Wings of Desire was filmed in 1986, just a couple of years prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall and a divided Berlin, angels and the camera keep returning to the wall, giving us one of the strongest modern images we have to describe the divided (German) soul. This gives a universal symbol for the dualities within ourselves which Wenders wants to overcome.

For Wenders, being a creator and shaper of images, this fragmentation is also clearly expressed in the over-abundance of images and information in the world, especially in the United States. "No other country in the world has sold itself so much and sent its images, its SELF images with such power into every corner of the world." "America, land of images Land made of images Land for images. Even writing has become pictorial here like nowhere else." This is Wender's specific prompt for his project: the recovery of vision. Paul Cezanne phrases Wender's desire. "Things are looking bad. ou have to hurry if you want to see anything. Everything is disappearing." In Wender's travel-diary, Tokyo-Ga, his fellow German film-maker, Werner Herzog, addresses the problem,

The simple truth is that there aren't many images around now. When I look out the window here, everything is blocked up, images are impossible. ou practically have to start digging for them like an archeologist to try and find something in this damaged landscape. We urgently need images to accord with the state of our civilization, and with our innermost souls.

Wenders has set out digging to find these images which connect the external state with the internal state of things. "It is better to have a few images that are full of life than masses of meaningless ones." Cinema can rescue the existence of things with attention and care to the selection and creation of images. For Wenders, we need these images to become thoughtful of our place in the world.

_Heidegger_

Contemporary, technologically fragmented times don't fit into what Heidegger sees as the ordered monolith of the metaphysical
tradition. The metaphysics which tradition has handed Heidegger do not satisfactorily accommodate or incorporate the world he sees. In the face of the essential homelessness of man, there is a struggle for a home, for a grounding. Heidegger sees this homelessness as, most fundamentally, the symptom of man's oblivion to the question of Being. The truth of Being remains unthought and we have closed ourselves off to the meaningfulness of the question. "This homelessness is specifically evoked from the destiny of Being in the form of metaphysics and through metaphysics is simultaneously entrenched and covered up as such."

Divided souls and culture. "The time remains destitute not only because God is dead, but because mortals are hardly aware and capable even of their own mortality." Starting from the fragments, the reconstruction into a whole begins. The first step in this transformation is acknowledging and describing the painful disconnection which exists now, and exploring how it came to be; how the unconcealment of metaphysics led to the technology. Homelessness must first be experienced, rather than pretending everything is "OK."

Before a transformation is possible, one must first connect the internal and external and recollect what brought us to this point.

IV. Defining Metaphysics
"Still you argue for an option, still you anger for your case, like you wouldn't know a burning bush if it blew up in your face." (John Hiatt, "Through your Hands")

Heidegger
Heidegger defines philosophy as striving for the Being of beings. It is man's attempt to think beings in their common properties, to isolate the "Beingness"(Seindheit) of beings. The most universal features, such as idea (Plato) and energia (Aristotle) are isolated and distinguished. The history of metaphysics is the history of a discourse which opened itself by asking the question, "What is Being?", only to begin at the very same time, the spelling out of an answer that
forecloses any possibility of an experience with the dimensionality of Being as such. The discourse begins with an opening question, the question of Being, but its history is marked by a way of thinking -- speculative, explanatory, representational -- which spells its increasing CLOSURE to (the meaningfulness of) Being. The explanation of Being which reveals also conceals. The reason which clarifies also obscures. Nothing may be illuminated without shadows being cast. The values which Western civilization had drawn in order to define man and to give meaning and direction to human life have been nullified. "This is the darkening of the world." We see the lights in the cinema have fallen. We still await the flickering light coming from the projector to engage us. The world awaits a source of energy to illuminate the screen.

"The tradition of the truth about beings which goes under the title of 'meta' develops into a pile of distortions, no longer recognizing itself, covering up the primordial essence of Being. Herein lies the necessity of the 'destruction' of this distortion, when a thinking of the truth of Being becomes necessary. But this destruction, like 'phenomenology' and all hermeneutical transcendental questions has not yet thought in terms of the history of Beings."

By "philosophy" in these essays, Heidegger means philosophy as a "matter of reason." When we look into the history of metaphysics, we find philosophy's faith in reason and its faith in the ultimate rationality of the world. We find a world which is intelligible within existing categories, conforms to the laws of logic, and is ultimately explainable.

According to Heidegger, no metaphysics, whether idealistic, materialistic, or Christian, can "get a hold" on Being on its own terms or in accord with its essence. On the contrary, metaphysics is the underlying structure of presuppositions which shelters us from Being. "Every determination of the essence of man which already presupposes an interpretation with being without asking about the truth of Being, whether knowing or not, is metaphysical."
Though Heidegger draws inspiration from Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Anaximander, who preceded Socrates, Heidegger is referring to the tradition which begins most distinctly with Socrates, and is passed to Plato and Aristotle, and from them, to the subsequent western tradition. In this use, philosophy is interchangeable with Western "rationality" or what Heidegger calls "metaphysics." It is a matter of supplying reasons and argumentation, of entering the forum of rational debate. Socrates is the paradigm for a philosopher in this sense. Socrates searched for clear and well formulated definitions, and for the arguments which sustained them. He wanted to give a "rational account" of the virtues, not one which rested solely on the authority of the poets. As I will explore later, Heidegger consciously tries to deviate from this idea. For Heidegger, "thinking" is not primarily concerned with definitions and arguments; it dwells -- despite Socrates's warning -- in an intimate relation with the poets and poetry. This thinking is only possible if one makes the leap beyond the necessity to provide reasons for every proposition, if one overcomes metaphysics.

The beginning of philosophy is the beginning of the rule of reason. Today in the age of reason and the age of technology, the innermost teachings of philosophical reason are being worked out. In this century, philosophy has unfolded into the form of the "particular sciences." The appearance of psychology, sociology, anthropology -- of all the natural and humanistic sciences -- does not represent the dissolution of philosophy, but its completion, its final development. Philosophy in the form of metaphysics gives birth to philosophy in the form of the particular sciences. The demanding of science to "give reasons" has as its issue the rational and the technical sciences of the modern age. For Heidegger, the completion of philosophy means the beginning of the world civilization based upon Western rational thinking. Now, the rational systems worked out in the mind of Aristotle and other philosophers are acted out in the computerized landscape across all of the continents, effecting the lives of all humans, not just select intellectuals who can read and think along with Aristotle.
We are so filled with 'logic' that anything that disturbs the habitual somnolence of prevailing opinion is automatically registered as a despicable contradiction. We pitch everything that does not stay close to the familiar and beloved position into the previously excavated pit of pure negation which negates everything, ends in nothing, and so consummates nihilism. Following this logical converse we let everything expire in a nihilism we invented for ourselves with the aid of logic." "By continually appealing to the logical, one conjures up the illusion that he is entering straight forward into thinking, when in fact he has disavowed it."

**Wenders (angels in the metaphysical section)**

"I feel so detached today, I don't know, no" Poi Dog Pondering, "It's not that Simple". The movie, Himmel Uber Berlin is told through the eyes and ears of angels in Berlin. The angels can not only see everything physical, but can also over-hear people's secret thoughts and glide in and out of any private conversation or monologue. Even lies can be detected by noticing the disparity between thought and expression. They see beyond the present day also, into the past which lingers unconsciously behind the present. The ruins and rubble of World War II Berlin intertwine with today's images of modern buildup and decay. The angels are condemned to be witnesses, for ever nothing but onlookers. They are only marginally guardian-angels, laying an understanding hand on people passing by, but not always successful in their influence. They are unable to do so much as move a grain of sand. They are invisible to man, but themselves all-seeing.

They simply wander around Berlin. Each angel has his own area which he walks, and his people, which he grows fond of watching, and whose progress he follows with special attention. Mortals are unaware of their presence. Only the most naive children can catch glimpses of them, but they soon forget their visions, dismissed in the "realistic" world of grown-ups. Most mortals are sheltered from the experience of angels by their own the closing of their mind and heart. In an overconcern with the technological management which comes with "adulthood" and "seriousness" one loses the ability to see angels. In Wender's Berlin, many of the citizens have even lost the ability to
truly see other human beings. A lonely taxi driver in the movie thinks to himself that each citizen is a "separate nation state" which can only be entered with the correct password, often unknown to anyone. We each build our own walls and barriers, much higher than the Berlin Wall to protect ourselves from angels and other suspicious, magical creatures.

Although the angels can witness everything from above, there are many things they don't understand. They lack emotions, taste, touch, and all the peculiarities which come with living in the sensuous, passing world. From the angel's eyes, the film(world) is in a tinted black and white, suggesting a metal with a little lustre of old coins or tarnished silverware remaining as a reminder of the possibilities of color. As Wenders describes his own angels in preparatory notes for the film, "They are pure CONSCIOUSNESS, fuller and more comprehending than mankind, but also poorer. The physical and sensual world is reserved for human beings. It is the privilege of mortality, and death is its price."

The detached life of Wender's angels, who appropriately live and congregate in a large Berlin library, resembles the analytic life of the academic intellectual; hovering forever above. They are a cliche kind of intellectuals in their apartness and distress over the spiritual emptiness of people. The angels task, as is the academics, is to "assemble, testify, and preserve." Their spirit nature is both a delight and a burden to them; they live in an ambivalent loftiness. The angels can easily be seen as aspects of ourselves, not just abstract theological tapestries. Within each one of us a detached, onlooking angel is longing to leave the loftiness and enter into the stream of life.

"I am walking with my arms swinging. I want the stream to be a river, the river to be a torrent, and this puddle to be the sea."

V. Overcoming Metaphysics
"Everybody's trying to figure it out Everybody's trying to work it out on out But it's not that simple it's not that simple." (Poi Dog Pondering, "It's not that simple") "Past the scientific darkness... to an angel
bending down to wrap you in her warmest coat.” (John Hiatt, “Through your Hands”)

Heidegger

The dominant question Heidegger must face is, now what? Can the closure of metaphysics be overcome? Can the discourse somehow be re-opened? Can we 'end' metaphysics by thinking the question of Being in a way that reopens it -- and reopens us to its reach and range? Heidegger wants to end metaphysics, not to end the question of Being, but precisely in order to let ourselves be opened up by it.

"But with the end of philosophy, thinking is not at its end, but in transition to another beginning." At the same time that Heidegger argues for the destruction of that which presently rules in our Western tradition, he also insists on a return to the tradition, and a retrieval of its concealed wisdom. We must recollect, remember, and recreate the beginning of the beginning of the question of Being; for in the beginning of the questioning the task is strongest and brightest. In the beginner's mind the mystery is clearest.

Thinking (Denken) is differentiated from "philosophy." Thought can be restored, at philosophy's end. The end is no mere stopping, but the completion of philosophy, which makes room for a new beginning. "Thinking begins only when we have come to know that reason, glorified for centuries is the most stiff-necked adversary of thought." Philosophy must cease to be a matter of "deciding issues" and "settling disputes" at all. If the answer can be given, it will consist in a transformative thinking, not in a propositional statement about a matter at stake.

"It is time to wean ourselves of the habit of overestimating philosophy and therefore demanding too much of it. What is necessary in the present time of world need is less philosophy but more of the attentiveness of thought... The thinking of the future is no longer philosophy, because it thinks more originally than metaphysics, which is a name for the same thing." In Heidegger's later writings, he
surrenders the labels of philosophy and metaphysics altogether. From within metaphysics he was unable to find any way out.

"...et a regard for metaphysics still prevails even in the intention to overcome metaphysics. Therefore, our task is to cease all overcoming and leave metaphysics to itself." The question proposed in the previous section of this paper, defining metaphysics is presumably not asked at all in the later stages of Heidegger's overcoming, for to have that concern is to have a regard for metaphysics, which distracts from the new task of thinking.

**Wenders**

In Wings of Desire, one day the angel Damiel has the extraordinary notion of giving up his angelic, metaphysical existence for human life. I'm going to take the plunge, an old human expression, often heard, that I only understand today. Now or never; the moment of the ford. There is no other bank. There is only the river. Into the ford of time, the ford of death. Down from our look-out of the unborn. Observing from above is not like seeing at eye-level. First I'll have a bath.

The metaphysics which Wenders overcomes, as the angel enters mortality is the metaphysics of angels and divinities which is fully separate and distinct from this mortal existence. Divinity is no longer a reward to be hoped for after life passes in a distant heaven, but divinity is an active energy which interplays with this very moment, and need not be waited upon. The angels and the divine enter into this life, if we open up to the possibility and leave our metaphysical shelters -- as the innocent children in Wings of Desire do. The idea of grace and divinity as necessarily other is overturned. Angels are everywhere. Even Columbo is an angel. Heaven is overturned and the angels want to enter into the messiness of life.

To show the overcoming of abstraction from life, the original detachment must first be shown and lived through. Wings of Desire opens (and closes) as a poem written into a personal journal. From these detached words, living is born. Just as almost all movies begin as words on a script and only later come to life in sights and sounds on
the screen. The path one follows in leaving the flat world of paper for the full experience of life is traveled through. "The paradoxical thing is that films begin with words, and that words determine whether the images are allowed to be born. The words are like the headland that a film has to steer round to reach the image."

In many ways, Wings of Desire is one of the most intellectual and abstract movies ever made. It is full of telling and philosophical side-winders which abstract the concrete and take our focus away from the physical world. The movie is full of things Heidegger wants to get past (representative, calculative, linear thinking). Wings of Desire is not all a blissed-out, Heideggerian meandering. The full cycle is shown, going from abstract intellectual detachment to the simple pleasure of cupping ones hands around a warm cup of coffee on a winter day. The full cycle is needed to show the transformation and overcoming. Beyond that, after we have gone through Heidegger's transformation and begin living (thinking)(feeling) anew, what is returned to after the overcoming might be the same philosophic development and abstraction which was being overcome. We might have a cycle of the linear, and a return to the origins of Greek philosophy (wonder) such as Hereclitus which Heidegger was so influenced by. What Heidegger is trying to overcome is not the philosophy itself, but to overcome a stale taking for granted, a sleepiness of the tradition which has covered the original spark of wonder and experience of Being.

By giving up layers of presuppositions and explanations which covered the brightness of Being, we enter a nearness with Being which Dwells.

VI. The Task of Dwelling

"Logic and sermons never convince, The damp of the night drives deeper in my soul." (Leaves of Grass, 49)

"So whatever your hands find you must do with all your heart. There are thoughts enough to blow men's minds and tear great worlds apart. There's a healing touch that finds you on the broad highway
somewhere. To lift you high as music flies into the angel's hands." (John Hiatt, "Through your Hands.")

Heidegger articulates the problem which he has created in discounting metaphysics and philosophy in his book, The End of Philosophy:
The mere thought of such a task of thinking must sound strange to us. A thinking which can be neither metaphysics, nor science? A task which has concealed itself from philosophy since its very beginning, even in virtue of that beginning, and thus has withdrawn itself continually and increasingly in the time to come? A task of thinking which - so it seems- includes the assertion that philosophy has not been up to the matter of thinking and has thus become a "history of a mere decline?"

That outlines Heidegger's challenge of construction. It is much easier to cynically and recklessly tear down a false construct than to build a fresh place of dwelling. Heidegger makes this task of building even more difficult by taking away the main tools which the old worker (philosophy) used to assemble its monolith. Where is one's path of thinking to start without the tools of reason and metaphysics?

Heidegger answers this in primarily metaphoric language rather than in the technical language of philosophy, in his essays contained in Poetry Language Thought.

Fourfold of earth, sky, mortal, divinity
Essential to Heidegger's dwelling is the idea of the fourfold. In this notion, Heidegger also comes closest to directly paralleling the play between angels and mortals in Wings of Desire. Throughout Poetry, Language, Thought, Heidegger speaks of the rift between apparent opposites we experience in our thought and lives. In a time which has lost contact with Being and is obsessed with technological management, mortals and divinities, earth and sky, are thought and felt as separate, distinct beings.

The saving grace is in the gathering of the fourfold. What unites opposites is the rift, the pain of the threshold which joins the opposites. How the world fits together, the appropriating of mortals to
divinities, earth to sky, things to place and function -- how all this fits together -- can be determined only by the upward glance that spans the opposites, earth and sky. In this glance there is a mirror-play of earth and sky, divinities and mortals. Each reflects itself, in its own way, into the oneness in a round dance and their belonging to each other. In Wings of Desire, Daniel and Marion, the angel and the mortal, become lovers in the sense that they become clarified, exposed, and reflected in each others presence; yielding a replenishing affirmation of each other.

In this light, Wings of Desire can be seen as the gathering of Heidegger's fourfold. As Wenders suggested to in the original title, the "Sky above Berlin" enters into the play of sleepy mortals on the ground. As the angel enters into mortality, the sky enters the earth; heaven and earth do not seem so far away. The mirroring of the angel and mortal is realized and they "are together." They come out into the open, together, belonging to each other.

"I'll be your mirror, reflect what you are In case you don't know I'll be the wind, the rain, and the sunset The light on your door To show that you are home." (Velvet Underground, "I'll be your Mirror")

Mortals are in the fourfold by dwelling. "In the gift of the outpouring, mortals and divinities each dwell in their different ways." The opposites are united not when all lose identity and become one generic mass, but when each realizes his own true nature and releases into that nature. The nature of being a human is mortality, finitude, and in this acknowledgement and acceptance, comes a harmony with the fourfold.

Mortals dwell in that they initiate their own essential nature - their being capable of death as death - into the use and practice of this capacity, so that there may be a good death. To initiate mortals into the essence of death in no way means to make death, as the empty nothing, the goal. Nor does it mean to darken dwelling by blindly staring toward the end. In saving the earth, in receiving the sky, in awaiting the divinities, in initiating mortals, dwelling comes to pass as the fourfold preservation of the fourfold."
Heidegger is thinking always of opening up to the possibility of authentic human existence, of a life in which man does not go on blindly, as in the technological world view of Gestell, but a life in which man dwells, and is more open to an experience with Being; of finding one's way into the nearness of Being.

**Letting the sky be the sky, the mortal be the mortal**

The key to dwelling for Heidegger is to hear and see the world with the child's sense of belonging and joy. "We have heard when we belong to the matter addressed."

Wenders in his 1985 movie, Tokyo-ga, a personal travel diary and homage to the Japanese film-maker, Ozu, reflects on this during his flight to Tokyo. For five minutes Wenders points the camera out the window and does not speak. Then he says, "Just looking out of the window did me good. If only it were possible to film like that, I thought, the way you sometimes open your eyes. Just looking, not trying to prove anything."

"Men alone, as mortals, by dwelling attain to the world as world."

Dwelling is the process of finding your own nature, which for humans is deeply rooted in mortality. With this comes an eternity by being what you are now, and not being elsewhere. The experience of bliss comes in the acceptance and willingness of our own mortality and acceptance of change, glad to be here, not there.

**Becoming Mortal**

"Rational living beings must first become mortals." Heidegger says, when discussing the need for poetry, that he lives in a time when "mortals are hardly aware and capable even of their own mortality. Mortals have not yet come into the ownership of their own nature. Death withdraws into the enigmatic. The mystery of pain remains veiled. Love has not been learned."

Likewise in Wings of Desire, the angel, Damiel, in entering mortality, did not automatically become human, just as many of us are not fully human beings. Only through the learning of love did Damiel become
mortal. "Only the amazement about the two of us, the amazement about man and woman--only that made a human being of me."

For Heidegger, intertwining mortals and divinities is at the very heart of dwelling. "Man dwells, insofar as he is man, in the nearness of god."

Are we yet mortals? Becoming mortals is a deliberate decision to dare, just as Marion articulates in her monologue to Damiel when they first meet. After Damiel has entered into mortality, they find each other at a bar in an underground music club. Before Damiel can speak, Marion begins a monologue which challenges both to become truly alive in each other's presence, or in Heidegger's terms, to listen to the voice of Being. "I don't know if destiny exists, but decision exists. Decide! you're holding the game in your hands... Now or never."

Do we hear the chirping of crickets and the mating calls of the frogs with the ears of a child? Do we hear the music of Being at all? How capable are we, each one, of becoming beings without shells, open to pain, shaken by every sight and sound? Mortals hear the thunder of the heavens, the rustling of woods, the gurgling of fountains, the ringing of plucked strings, the rumbling of motors, the noise of the city--only and only so far as they always already in some way belong to them and yet do not belong to them.

By belonging and dwelling, our bodily senses open to enchantment; to belong to Being, so that we may listen to it. Heidegger is preparing for an attunement and releasement into Being where one patiently waits for the voice of Being. "Thinking of Being is as much a thinking done by Being through one individual as individual thinking of Being." This is close to the poetic self-surrender, and for the philosopher, a surrender of philosophy. We do not come to thinking, thinking comes to us.

One can not explain the fourfold--to explain just doesn't reach the fourfold. To remain in explanation leaves us looking on from outside of Being. The meaning is found in the actual living out of existence--in a radical openness to the question of Being. In order to dwell, we must give ourselves confidently to earth's sacred revelation.
One does not follow along Heidegger's path by learning a doctrine or by doing research on a body of writings. Instead, one must have an experience of the matter of thought, of Being. The aim of his essays is to prepare us to undergo an experience with thought. One's individual being can receive Being if only one chooses to turn toward the light, as the rose turns to the sun instinctively to grow. This experience is not in our control, rather it befalls us, strikes us, comes over us, overwhelms us, and transforms us. The task of thinking is not an "object" of scholarship and calculative thought, but the source of an experience. It is not we who play with thought, but thought which plays with us.

From a metaphysician's perspective, one would want to know what "proofs" we have for Heidegger's "thesis" concerning the task of thinking. Philosophers distrust such instinctive, intuitive responses, as we are trained to distrust them, and sometimes so much so that we lose the capacity for them. (I think that last sentence was too intuitively based for a philosophy thesis) But none of what Heidegger says of dwelling takes place in the realm of "assertions" "about" thought. Heidegger's task of thought occurs outside the realm of justification. It can only be understood by those who have had the experience, who can shut off concepts and representations and listen to what thought itself is saying. Heidegger came to hold that every "concept" and every "assertion" spoke from outside, spoke "about" Being. To be faithful to his path he learned a new way of speaking -- from inside, from out of the experience of Being itself; no longer a hovering, detached angel, but an intricate part of the flow of Being.

Beyond Heidegger's words. The world is in color. It smells.

Within the story there is an affirmation of mortality and finitude in the narrative of Wings of Desire; a joy of being alive. Upon leaving his angelic safety and sterility, the angel Daniell approaches Peter Falk, realizing he was also once an angel and made the same descent from angel to mortal, and that he is not alone.

This is the essence of dwelling which is difficult to derive from the serious world of Heidegger: play. The joyful celebration of being alive
Poetically dwelling

Although there are many similarities, I see the playful, active dwelling which Wenders gives to us as quite distinct from the dwelling which Heidegger calls us to. Wenders shows us a dwelling through exploration of the physical and emotional world in action, instead of the meditative thinking Heidegger speaks of. Heidegger remains a spectator. Heidegger lives in ideas of Beings and can not tear his gaze away from them, or not for too long. There is an intellectual passion in his writings, but not much sensitivity to the actual occasions of our human history and their implications. "To think is to confine oneself to a single thought that one day stands still like a star in the world's sky." Heidegger has nobly devoted his life to one thought, and the rest of the world has fallen away. Heidegger's overcoming of metaphysics is an attempt at pure thinking, of blissing out, is a process of reflection not in the service of doing or making. Heidegger's call to thinking remains in the blissed-out meditation which is embodied in the first hour of Wings of Desire. As the angels float in and out of the city, they are fully aware, yet detached. The angels are listening to what Heidegger is looking for, i.e., an attentiveness to the murmur of thoughts rising from Being. The angels are listening carefully and compassionately to the deep thoughts arising from the Being into Berlin, into the silent passengers on the subway, beneath expression and even the consciousness of the individuals.

In contrast, Dammel in Wings of Desire blisses out in the utter everydayness of physical existence. Wings of Desire points to a dwelling beyond words, in the nameless which Heidegger only thought about, and expressed in words. Wings of Desire answers Heidegger's challenge of dwelling and is uniquely suited to do so by its medium. It is impossible for a lecture to literally dwell in the nameless. Heidegger, or another writer, may prepare us for this experience, but the means of communication is limited to words. Wender's camera gracefully allows us to enter into sights, sounds, and things which Heidegger spoke about, and allows them to speak for
themselves without the intermediary of words. It is quite true that this language of film which Wenders shares with us has its limits and boundaries just as the written word does, and there is much about a first hand experience of the world which a movie can never capture; the joy is in the overflowing of previous confinements and the fresh world which our attention correspondingly opens up.

Wenders has overcome Heidegger's overcoming. He has shared what it means to dwell in this uncanny world in a way which Heidegger didn't, and added an extra dimension to the question and challenge. He has discovered eternity in the moment, in giving oneself over to the mystery. This is the age-old story of the birth of the eternal into the temporal, pure consciousness becomes flesh. But now heaven is overturned. The angels are discontent with the life above and beyond the birth and death merry-go-round. What is sacred to Wenders is the story itself, and through it we may enter into the divine. The story has healing powers.

Telling stories on film aims at recognition from the spectator while the form tries to produce order out of a chaos of impressions. Ever since Homer, mankind has needed stories to learn that coherence is possible. There is a need for connections, because human beings don't experience much coherence. That's what stories do. They confirm your ability to determine the meaning of life."

That is what entering the detached world of philosophy and then leaving it can do -- awaken us to the uncanny joy of being alive which cannot be found in any system of metaphysics. Just as Dammiel discovered the magic of colors, smells, and touches he could not feel as he was detached from life; so the world surely holds an expanse of colors beyond the ones I can see now. An infinite number of layers of color and discovery lie waiting for our attention and wonder to awaken them.

Perhaps, if our bearing can become more thoughtful, our walking more open to feeling the support of the earth and taking its measure in our stride, we may be blessed with answers that only our phenomenal
body moved by its ancient and irrepressible dream to make every single moment a celebration of Being, could ever understand. Though you argue for an option, though you struggle in your logic, though I might lose myself in the abstraction of a senior philosophy thesis, it will come through your hands. "I only need to raise my eyes, and once again I become the world." (Marion in Wings of Desire)

VII. Dwelling in the Senses

"And you ask, what am I not doing? our voice can not command. Inside you will move mountains, and it will come through your hands." (John Hiatt, "Through your Hands")

Wings of Desire is uniquely suited to overcome Heidegger's dwelling because it is a film and not only words. In film it is possible to enter into the nameless and communicate that experience. Wenders uses a medium which can bypass language to communicate directly with the senses through moving photographic images of reality accompanied with the aural.

Heidegger unknowingly hints at the advantages this might provide. "As soon as we have the thing before our eyes, and in our hearts an ear for the word, thinking prospers." An endorsement for using the medium of film for philosophy? I am fairly certain that Heidegger never suggested using the medium of film to address this task of thinking, but I think he has set up the stage nicely for the possibility. "Films are the art of seeing, my father used to say." (Kings of the Road).

Film as addressing popular philosophy

We are all philosophers in so much as we have a general view of the world. Film goers regularly accomplish what many philosophical theories wrestle with and are defeated by and this rehearsal of their powers is a source of great pleasure; the human capacity to model the world and to play at modelling possible worlds. Professional philosophers can not help being fascinated by the spectacle of ordinary people playfully accomplishing what the philosophers theorize about. The play is voluntary and fun.
A new kind of reality is created, and brings our mind into a previous, complex state, where the outer world is woven into our minds and shaped not by its own laws, but by the acts of our attention -- an ease of movement back and forth (past/present, distant/close) fused world, as in our consciousness. Overcoming space, time, and causality and adjusting the events to the forms of the inner world of attention, memory, imagination, and emotion.

Movies fulfill our ancient yearning toward the world of dreams in a technologically obsessed age. For more than trivial entertainment, the cinema can spur our transformation and archetypical insights. In the theater's darkness the discriminating rational ego is lulled, so that we allow ourselves to be taken over by a spell, as real and potent as the trance of the primitive. Cinema is our shrine, our house of worship, our prayer room, a tribal rallying hall. Watching cinema is a communal, shared experience.

**It's only a movie**

Man is both actor and spectator. Have a good time, its only a movie. Having assumed less pre-conceived metaphysical limits of experience, the child experiences a joy that most adults have lost forever. Dwelling is the process of retrieving, or indeed, discovering for the first time, this sense of joy. Can we find within ourselves a child of joy? Can we begin to see and listen to the world with a sense in touch with that joy? Can we see again with the child's sense of belonging? Let the mystery be, even within this technological world, we can release our illusion of control over the world and belong to the world. Love the questions and perhaps you will live your way into the answers.

"But do we know what beings mean? We would only come closer to the matter if we were to conceive ourselves with the nose, the eyes, and with hearing."

The Berlin wall which was the backdrop for much of the division in Wings of Desire of soul and body, East and West, is no longer there.
Look and realize with the effortlessness of seeing. Make no efforts from withdrawal from the world. Live. All is the ultimate reality, and it can be understood from the motion of a finger as well as from the experience of any everyday ritual. Damiel is not born into a new kind of mortality. It is the same one we belong to. It has been there all along. All that is needed is the discovery and awakening.
References:
a) Print Sources:


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McKown, Clark. (1972) It's only a Movie. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs.


b) Video Sources:


c) Audio Sources:
