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Christian Platonism in Early Modernity

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Introduction

There seems to be a battle like that of the gods and the giants going on among them, because of their disagreement about existence. . . . Some of them drag down everything from heaven and the invisible to earth, . . . and maintain stoutly that that alone exists which can be touched and handled; for they define existence and body, or matter, as identical.¹

The desire to understand and control nature gives practical incentive to follow the lead of the giants while the demands of Christian orthodoxy suggest the necessity of following Plato's gods in contemplating what is above nature. Yet, by revisioning the human heart as a mechanism it has become possible to repair it. But if mechanism is all there is, the truths of religion fall away.

Christian Platonists in early modernity sought to mediate between the new science and the metaphysics of Christianity including above all the immateriality and immortality of the soul and God. A creative tension in early modern philosophy and theology between mechanism and spirit led to dualisms, monisms, and positions in between. The variety of resolutions explored here are only a sampling of the new forms of philosophy and theology sparked by the collapse of the "Aristotelian Amalgam" of Scholasticism.² Whereas the earlier "Augustinian Synthesis" had been a Christianized version of Platonic theism, and thus held together organically as a unified body of doctrine, Scholasticism called for a more delicate balance between Aristotelian philosophy and "Neoplatonically formulated Christianity."³

New forms of natural philosophy developed in the same milieu that gave rise to the rebirth of Christian Platonism championed by Ficino. Recognizing the explanatory limits of Scholastic approaches natural philosophers were drawn to corpuscles and efficient causation as the keys to understanding nature. Christian Platonists in early modernity too were often taken by this new science but became unnerved by the conjunction of what we would call materialism, naturalism, mechanism, and empiricism. As Wilson and LoLordo have shown this conjunction was understood as, and in some cases was, a revival of the ancient school of Epicureanism.⁴ These early modern "Epicureans" were nearly universally identified as tantamount to atheists.⁵

¹ Plato, *Sophist*, 246a-b, trans. Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921).

² Stephen Gaukroger, *The Emergence of a Scientific Culture: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1210-1685*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 77-86.

³ Gaukroger, *Emergence*, 77.

⁴ See Antonia LoLordo, "Epicureanism and Early Modern Naturalism," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 19, no. 4 (2011): 647-664, and Catherine Wilson, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁵ Thomas M. Lennon, *The Battle of the Gods and Giants: The Legacies of Descartes and Gassendi, 1655-1715* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6.

Continuing a process begun in the Renaissance by figures like Nicholas of Cusa and Ficino many turned to Platonism for a systematic approach to natural philosophy and Christian theology. Yet how to retain the insights of the new mechanical science, which after all *worked*, while not abandoning the central doctrines of Christianity, including not just God as creator, sustainer, and redeemer but the immortality of the soul and divine providence too, was a major challenge. Some embraced forms of substance dualism. Others tried to mediate between body and soul in various ways. While still others were led to forms of idealism and solved the problems of substance dualism by way of a monism of spirit. All drew in various ways from the rich resources of Christian Platonism.

This chapter offers a selective interpretation of the nature of Christian Platonism in early modernity highlighting its place in some canonical philosophers and figures less well known than they should be today.⁶ The aim is twofold. First, to offer a point of access for an appreciation of the significance of Christian Platonism in the period. Second, to draw into sharp relief the internal diversity of the tradition.

Descartes, Smith, and Malebranche

Perhaps the easiest way to accept the innovations of the new mechanical and mathematical physics while protecting traditional Christian beliefs about the spiritual nature of the soul and God is to simply posit two non-overlapping realms. Serendipitously the Platonic tradition has elements seemingly tailor made for just such a purpose in its tendency to distinguish sharply between mind and body. Plato himself famously “sets up a strong anti-thesis between mind and body” in the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus*.⁷ The later Platonic tradition continued to assume the separability of mind and body.⁸ The rest of this section calls attention to the Christian Platonism of Rene Descartes (1596-1650) and relates it to the Alexandrian Christian Plotinianism of John Smith (1618-1652) and the explicitly Augustinian philosophy of Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715).

Augustine of Hippo famously sought to know two things, the soul and God.⁹ Throughout his mature writings he followed a common Platonic pattern of averting attention from the empirical world around us into the soul, and from the soul as image to God as original transcendent source. As Stephen Menn has argued, Descartes “took from Augustine . . . a hope and a discipline of drawing the mind away from the senses, through a special kind of contemplation of itself, to a special kind of contemplation of God.”¹⁰ This is most clearly seen in the contemplative itinerary of Descartes’ *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641).¹¹

⁶ For a more extensive introduction with similar scope see the essays in Douglas Hedley and Sarah Hutton eds., *Platonism at the Origins of Modernity: Studies on Platonism and Early Modern Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008).

⁷ John Dillon, “Plotinus, the First Cartesian?,” *Hermathena* 149 (1990): 20.

⁸ Dillon, “Plotinus,” 21. See also Anna Marmodoro and Sophie Cartwright, eds., *A History of Mind and Body in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

⁹ Augustine, *Soliloquia*, 1.2.7.

¹⁰ Stephen Menn, *Descartes and Augustine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), x. See also Zbigniew Janowski, *Augustinian-Cartesian Index: Texts and Commentary* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine Press, 2004). For the suggestion of Teresa of Ávila as the vector for this influence see Christia Mercer, “Descartes’ Debt to Teresa of Ávila, or Why we Should Work on Women in the History of Philosophy,” *Philosophical Studies* 174 (2017): 2539–2555.

¹¹ Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* [CSM], trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), II:3-62, and *Oeuvres de Descartes* [AT], ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1964-1974), VII:1-90.

The first day of mediation begins the process of aversion from the external world of sense via hyperbolic doubt.¹² Descartes is calling here for his reader to turn within themselves and away from the senses and the external world. Why would an early modern scientist want to turn away from the realm of scientific inquiry? Because he is trying, just as Augustine and Plotinus before him, to break free from the constraints of a sense bound ideology, Stoicism and Epicureanism for Plotinus and Augustine, Scholasticism for Descartes. All three “believe that they can attain wisdom only through an intellectual intuition purified of sensory traces.”¹³

After the first day of meditating Descartes has turned his attention so entirely from the realm of sense that it is doubtful that he has a body.¹⁴ Yet, this does not mean that his existence is doubtful. For even when we doubt, we are present to ourselves as doubters; “cogito, ergo sum.”¹⁵ Augustine too refuted skepticism by appealing to the necessity of our existence by contemplating our ability to be in error. If I err, I am alive.¹⁶ Both take these considerations as evidence that they are what Descartes calls *res cogitans*, a “thinking thing.”

Descartes and Augustine both conceptualize body in terms of spatial extension in three dimensions allowing for movement in space and time while portraying soul as movable only in time.¹⁷ Descartes then lays out his famous substance dualism as a consequence of his Augustinian Christian Platonist spiritual exercise of aversion. He goes on to specify more clearly the implications of this dualism in later *Meditations*, and most fully in his natural philosophy, but the metaphysical basis is set for a physics of bodily extension and a rational psychology rooted in immaterial spirit. The new science can have, therefore, no adverse effects upon our understanding of the soul or vice versa.

Like Augustine, Descartes is not satisfied with the rudiments of rational psychology and pushes on to the contemplation of God as well. On the third day Descartes’ aversion into himself as *res cogitans* leads him to reflect upon God via his “trademark argument.” Descartes argues that only an infinite mind could be the source of the idea of God he finds within himself.¹⁸ On the fourth day Descartes sures up his cardinal epistemic principle of “clear and distinct ideas” by arguing that God would not allow us to be systematically misled because the idea of God is of a perfect being including moral perfection.¹⁹ On the fifth day Descartes offers a version of the “ontological argument” in order to demonstrate that the supremely perfect Deity he conceives of necessarily exists as existence is part of God’s essence.²⁰ Thus, when we judge carefully about those natural things he reintroduces on the sixth day we can rest assured that we are not in error.²¹

“Descartes conceived his physics – and therefore science more generally – as resting on the metaphysical foundations developed in the *Meditations* and recast in the early sections of *The Principles of Philosophy*.”²² Yet it is by adopting the Augustinian path of aversion that Descartes established these

¹² Descartes, *Meditations*, 1 (CSM II: 15/AT VII: 22).

¹³ Menn, *Descartes and Augustine*, 394.

¹⁴ Descartes, *Meditations*, 1 (CSM II: 15/AT VII: 22-23).

¹⁵ Descartes, *Principia Philosophiae*, 1.7 (CSM I: 194-195/AT VIII: 7). Cf. Descartes, *Meditations*, 2 (CSM II: 17/AT VII: 25).

¹⁶ Augustine, *de Trinitate* 10.10.14.

¹⁷ Descartes, *Meditations*, 2 (CSM II: 16-23/AT VII: 24-34) and Augustine, *Epistulae*, 166.4. See also Bruno Niederbacher, “The Human Soul: Augustine’s Case for Soul-Body Dualism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 125.

¹⁸ Descartes, *Meditations*, 3 (CSM II: 31-35/AT VII: 45-52).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4 (CSM II: 37-43/AT VII: 53-62).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5 (CSM II: 45-47/AT VII: 65-69).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 6 (CSM II: 50-62/AT VII: 71-90).

²² Margaret J. Osler, “Eternal Truths and the Laws of Nature: The Theological Foundations of Descartes’ Philosophy of Nature,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46, no. 3 (1985): 349.

foundations. The whole superstructure then, including the metaphysical dualism so contested then as now, rests upon a form of Christian Platonism.²³ It is little wonder then that many of Descartes' first readers thought him unoriginal, a major insult to Descartes, and specifically pointed out how his major arguments had been anticipated by Augustine. For example, Marin Mersenne called his attention to the Augustinian argument that if I am mistaken I necessarily exist in 1637 as did Andreas Colvius in 1640.²⁴ Among the first readers of Descartes in England the Cambridge Platonist John Smith (1618-1652) saw in Descartes the latest in a long line of Christian Platonists.

Smith, intruded fellow of Queens' College Cambridge from 1644 till his untimely death, is best known today as a particularly eloquent member of the Cambridge Platonists. His Christian Platonism is clear throughout the posthumously published *Select Discourses* where he often explains scripture and Christian doctrine by way of Plotinus.²⁵ Smith's "True Way or Method of Attaining to Divine Knowledge" for example identifies the proper approach to theological understanding with the Christian Platonic path of aversion from the realm of sense, into the soul as image of God, culminating in contemplation of God.²⁶ For Smith as for Origen, Augustine, and to a limited extent Descartes, "we must shut the Eyes of Sense, and open that brighter Eye of our Understanding."²⁷ "This," Smith tells us, "is the way to see clearly" for when we avert our attention from the senses "the light of the Divine Word will then begin to fall upon us."²⁸ Smith's purposes are apologetic and catechetical rather than scientific but he agrees in terms of basic method with Descartes and, as we will see, he embraced a form of illuminationism like Malebranche on this basis.

In Smith's hands this illumination is always a matter of moral purification too.

Divinity indeed is a true Efflux from the Eternal light, which, like Sun-beams does not only enlighten, but heat and enliven; and therefore our Saviour hath in his *Beatitudes* connext Purity of heart with the Beatifical vision. And as the Eye cannot behold the Sun . . . unless it be *Sun-like*, and hath the form and resemblance of the Sun drawn into it, so neither can the Soul of man behold God . . . unless it be *Godlike*, hath God formed it, and be made partaker of the Divine Nature. And the Apostle S. Paul when he would lay open the right way of attaining to Divine Truth, he saith that *knowledge puffeth up*, but it is *Love that edifieth*.²⁹

Smith agrees with Descartes that we must have "an antecedent Converse with our own Souls" in order to understand the true nature thereof.³⁰ While Descartes does not live up to the promise to demonstrate the immortality of the soul in his *Meditations* Smith makes explicit use of the immateriality of the soul to that purpose.³¹

Smith argues for two basic substances, body and soul. Drawing on both Plotinus and his reading of Descartes he says body is divisible, material, and extended in three dimensions and soul (including mind) is incorporeal, immaterial, dimensionless, and therefore incapable of division.³² Smith's fourth formal argument for the immortality of the soul is a prime example of his Platonism and how he viewed Descartes in that light. Each of Smith's arguments for immortality follow Proclus' degrees of

²³ Menn, *Descartes and Augustine*, 394-395.

²⁴ See Descartes' letters to Mersenne 25 May 1637 (AT I:376) and 15 November 1638 (AT II:435) and his letter to Colvius 14 November 1640 (AT III:247-248). Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XI.26.

²⁵ John Smith, *Select Discourses* (London: J. Fisher, 1660).

²⁶ John Smith, "True Way or Method of Attaining to Divine Knowledge," in *Select Discourses*, 17-21.

²⁷ Smith, "True Way," 16.

²⁸ Smith, "True Way," 16.

²⁹ Smith, "True Way," 3.

³⁰ Smith, "Discourse of the Immortality of the Soul," in *Select Discourses*, 65.

³¹ See Descartes, *Meditations*, Dedicatory Letter to the Sorbonne (CSM II: 3/AT VII: 1-2).

³² Smith, "Immortality," 68. See also Descartes, *Principles*, I.53 (CSM I: 210-211/AT VIII: 25).

knowledge.³³ In the fourth, he finally arrives at the level of the “naked intuition of Eternal Truth,” including the archetypes of justice, wisdom, goodness, truth, eternity, and other first principles of moral, physical, and metaphysical sciences.³⁴ Our ability to intuit these intelligible and immaterial principles means for Smith that the rational soul cannot be material.³⁵ To these considerations he immediately adds another drawn from Descartes.

Smith argues that “whenever we take notice of those *Immediate motions* of our own *Minds* whereby they make themselves known to us, we find no such thing in them as Extension or Divisibility.”³⁶ While Smith is not a Cartesian *per se* he clearly understood Descartes as standing within the broad Platonic tradition and therefore as conducive for his own apologetic Christian Platonism.³⁷ His admiration for Descartes went so far as to accept the interaction of spiritual and bodily substances in the pineal gland as proposed in *The Passions of the Soul*.³⁸ Whereas Smith attempts to resolve the apparent paradox of body and soul interaction by way of Plotinus, Cartesians were busy coming up with their own solutions. Among them was Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715) dubbed the “premier philosopher of our age” by Pierre Bayle.³⁹

Malebranche read Descartes’ *Traite de l’Homme* in 1664 and found in it “the true philosophy, firmly based on clear and distinct ideas, and providing demonstrative arguments with all the rigour of mathematical proofs.”⁴⁰ The following decade saw Malebranche adapt Cartesian natural philosophy to the needs of Christian theology as he understood them. His mature fusion of Cartesianism and Augustinianism appeared in *Recherche de la Verité* (1674). Relying heavily on the Cartesian notion of clear and distinct ideas it is here that Malebranche set forth the two doctrines most often associated with his name: occasionalism and vision in God.

While Descartes might not strictly speaking have been a “Cartesian dualist” Malebranche clearly was.⁴¹ Unlike Smith who seems not to have appreciated the issue, Malebranche is clear that interaction between unlike substances is unintelligible.⁴² Malebranche’s solution was to embrace occasionalism. Malebranche’s position is based on Augustine’s belief that all things rest on the creative and sustaining act of God. God has seen to it that regular patterns obtain between states of the body and states of the mind, yet they do not actually interact at all.⁴³

In epistemology Malebranche’s debt to Augustine is most pronounced and profound. For “as the eye needs light to see, so the mind requires ideas in order to know.”⁴⁴ If sensation itself is a mode of

³³ Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentarii*, ed. E. Diehl (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903-1906), I.243.26-252.10.

³⁴ Smith, “Immortality,” 97.

³⁵ Smith is implicitly drawing upon the “affinity argument” from Plato’s *Phaedo*, 78b4-84b4 and Plotinus, *Enneads*, IV.7.8.1-7, IV.7.9.26-27, IV.7.10.1-6, IV.7.3.1-4.

³⁶ Smith, “Immortality,” 98. Cf. Descartes, *Meditations*, 2 (AT II:23-34; CSM II:16-23).

³⁷ Derek A. Michaud, *Reason Turned into Sense: John Smith on Spiritual Sensation* (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 161-189.

³⁸ Smith, “Immortality,” 113-117; Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, 30-36 (CSM I: 339-342/AT XI:351-357).

³⁹ Tad Schmaltz, “Nicolas Malebranche,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/malebranche/>, Accessed 31 January 2020.

⁴⁰ Andrew Pyle, *Malebranche* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 2.

⁴¹ Pyle, *Malebranche*, 6. On the unity of mind and body in Descartes see Jean-Luc Marion, *On Descartes’ Passive Thought: The Myth of Cartesian Dualism*, trans. Christina M. Gschwandtner (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2018).

⁴² Nicholas Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, trans. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 101-109 (bk 1, pt. 2, ch. 5).

⁴³ Malebranche, *Search*, 101-102. Occasionalism is not an *ad hoc* solution to the mind-body problem, however. See Schmaltz, “Malebranche,” §4.

⁴⁴ Pyle, *Malebranche*, 7. Lydia Schumacher, *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine’s Theory of Knowledge* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), is the best account of the theme in Augustine.

immaterial mind as it is for Malebranche it is not clear how we can have basic sensory experience of material things. Malebranche's answer is that we perceive things around us *in* God. All knowledge therefore is revealed knowledge for Malebranche because any human knowing relies on our having access to the ideas by which God continuously creates the cosmos.

All Malebranche's central doctrines, occasionalism, vision in God, his denial of theological voluntarism, etc., served a single purpose; that of unifying the new science and his ancient faith in a single "system." But Malebranche was not the only seventeenth century philosophical theologian seeking to re-new the harmonious system of Christian Platonism. In England two colleagues of Smith were also attempting to synthesize a truly rational theology or "intellectual system."

Cudworth, More, and Conway

Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688) was perhaps the most prominent of the Cambridge Platonists.⁴⁵ With Henry More (1614-1687) and others he exercised considerable influence upon Latitudinarianism, Romanticism, and Idealism both in Germany and Britain.⁴⁶ Cudworth's fame rests primarily on the massive, yet incomplete, *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678; hereafter TIS), a Christian Platonist rebuttal of various forms of "atheism." Above all Cudworth opposed as detrimental to good morals and Christian truth those philosophies which banish spirit from the material world. Explicitly citing Plato's conflict between the gods and giants he sought to re-animate what the Cartesians and others had made lifeless.⁴⁷ "They make a kid of Dead and Wooden World, as it were a Carved Statue, that hath nothing *Vital* nor *Magical* at all in it."⁴⁸ In contrast, those who give the matter proper consideration will clearly see that "there is a Mixture of Life or Plastic Nature together with Mechanism, which runs through the whole Corporeal Universe."⁴⁹ In so claiming Cudworth is calling upon the resources of the ancient theology he and other Renaissance Platonists identified with the tradition from Pythagoras through Plato, the late ancient commentators, Plotinus, Proclus, etc. and the Christian Fathers of Alexandria Clement and Origen. In calling upon the Christian Platonist tradition to answer competing philosophies Cudworth followed a then long-established pattern in Anglicanism that came to flower in Cambridge, and to a lesser extent also at Oxford in the seventeenth century.⁵⁰

First, like Descartes and others in this chapter Cudworth sought to resist the encroachment of the giants of "Epicureanism" upon faith and morality. Where Descartes painted himself into a dualistic corner, and Malebranche leaned heavily on a micromanaging Deity to bridge that gap, Cudworth endeavored to enliven atomism by uniting it with an active principle. This "Plastic Nature" plays a mediating role therefore between matter and mind like the World Soul of Plato's *Timaeus* and Plotinus' Soul. Cudworth insisted that while corporeal things are composed of atoms this cannot be the result of unguided happenstance as the Epicureans would have it because matter is essentially passive.

⁴⁵ David Leech, "Defining 'Cambridge Platonism'," in *The Cambridge Platonism Sourcebook*, ed. Douglas Hedley and David Leech et al., <http://www.cambridge-platonism.divinity.cam.ac.uk/about-the-cambridge-platonists/defining-cambridge-platonism>, Accessed 31 January 2020.

⁴⁶ Douglas Hedley, "Gods and Giants: Cudworth's Platonic Metaphysics and his Ancient Theology," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 25, no. 5 (2017): 946-951. My discussion of Cudworth is much indebted to Hedley's synopsizing work.

⁴⁷ Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (London: Richard Royston, 1678), 18.

⁴⁸ Cudworth, *System*, 148.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ See for example Paul Anthony Dominiak, *Richard Hooker: The Architecture of Participation* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2019) and James Bryson, *The Christian Platonism of Thomas Jackson* (Leuven: Peeters, 2016).

Something beyond the atoms themselves must be the stimulus for their motion. They cannot simply move each other for that would reach an endless regress of secondary causes.⁵¹

To avoid the inanimate world of Descartes Cudworth picks up on and develops a notion of Henry More's that accounts for physics via the "Spirit of Nature."⁵² For both Cambridge Platonists this active yet incorporeal principle actuates corporeal processes in the visible world composed of atoms. Cudworth sought to gain the physical insights of atomism without accepting the metaphysical consequences; to tame the giants to the service of the gods. Conceptually he accomplishes this by appealing to the long held Christian Platonist notion that the entirety of the cosmos "be nothing else by *Deum Explicatum, God Expanded or Unfolded*."⁵³ That is, Cudworth "wishes to sustain the vision of a universe originating in its transcendent Cause and suffused with the energy of that First Cause into the lower levels of Being as 'radii Deiatis'."⁵⁴ To this end Cudworth stressed "four tenets of 'emanative power to create.'"⁵⁵

Emanation involves a procession from the greater to the lesser.⁵⁶ Created things arise by a "*Gradual Descent into Greater Multiplicity*" from Divine Unity such that "*That which is Generated or Emaneth, immediately from the First and Highest Being, is not the very same thing with it.*" Indeed, "it must needs be *Gradually subordinate and Inferiour* to it."⁵⁷

Nature reflects its transcendent source while remaining distinct from it. The visible realm is an ectype reflecting and participating in the archetypes in the mind of God.⁵⁸ Cudworth compares these archetypes and ectypes to the "*Verbum Mentis*" and verbal speech or "Articulate Sound." The former is original and known by the mind that conceives it while the latter is informed by the former while remaining itself unknowing.⁵⁹

The reflection of the cause is present in the effect just as an image in a mirror. As Cudworth says, "the *Plastic life of Nature* is but the *Umbrage of Intellectuality*, a faint and shadowy *Imitation of Mind and Understanding*; upon which it doth as Essentially depend, as the shadow doth upon the Body., the Image in the Glass upon the Face, or the Echo upon the Original Voice."⁶⁰

Finally, the Divine Source is not reduced by emanation. God, for Cudworth, is like a fountain continuously pouring out the world yet never running dry.⁶¹ All of this is consistent with Neoplatonism but Cudworth is a *Christian* Neoplatonist. His emanationism made it easy to identify the ancient Platonic hypostases as partial glimpses of the Christian Trinity, but Cudworth was clear that it is only as revealed in Christ and interpreted by the Christian Fathers that this theology comes to completion.⁶²

By 1642 Henry More was a committed Christian Platonist emphasizing matter and spirit dualism and the immortality of the soul in his first publication the *Psychodia Platonica (Platonic Song of the Soul)*. Like Cudworth and Smith, More came to an early rejection of Calvinist predestination too. In its place

⁵¹ Sarah Hutton, "The Cambridge Platonists," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/cambridge-platonists/>, Accessed 31 January 2020.

⁵² John Henry, "Henry More," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/henry-more/>, Accessed 31 January 2020, §3.

⁵³ Cudworth, *System*, 308.

⁵⁴ Hedley, "God and Giants," 941.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Cudworth, *System*, 581.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 155.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 172.

⁶¹ Ralph Cudworth, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons at Westminster, March 31 1647* (Cambridge: Roger Daniel, 1647), A1r, 33, 34; Cudworth, *System*, 43, 45, 595, 598, 600.

⁶² Ibid., 406-408, 546-632.

More embraces the Alexandrian Patristic tradition of Clement and Origen with its emphasis on free will. More's dualism and interest in natural philosophy led him to Descartes' *Principia Philosophiae* in 1646 and he soon began teaching Cartesian mechanical philosophy at Cambridge. The very word "Cartesianism" in English is his coinage. More however was never an uncritical Cartesian. Over time he became more publicly critical of Cartesian philosophy as it became clear, especially after Descartes' death in 1650, that they did not agree on the limits of material mechanism in physics.⁶³

An early example of the argument that led More away from Cartesian philosophy as insufficient can be found in a letter from Descartes to More where the Frenchman portrayed animals as mechanical automata that move without thinking.⁶⁴ Ever concerned to guard against creeping atheism More saw this banishment of soul as an opening for denying the immaterial, and immortal, soul of human beings. The Scholastic consensus had it that non-human animals have vegetative and animal soul but that these are material things composed of fluids and material spirits. Descartes rejected this and simply assigned the functions of these lower souls to material mechanism. More too rejected the scholastic view but also the Cartesian. For him only immaterial animal souls can animate material bodies. The central assumption for More is that matter is passive and only immaterial substances are active, a view he initially thought was accepted by Descartes as well.⁶⁵ With Smith, and all Christian Platonists, More saw the doctrine of soul as an essential steppingstone for the doctrine of God. As he eloquently put it, "*No Spirit, no God.*"⁶⁶

More's written work is voluminous and touches on the soul, natural philosophy, the Spirit of Nature, atheism, enthusiasm, Christian piety, and more. The guiding principles of his thought however are all clearly drawn from Christian Platonism; a qualified dualism of body and spirit, the incorporeality and immortality of the soul, the rejection of voluntarist theology, spiritual extension, and his affinity for the "ancient theology" and Platonized Kabbalah. In this he stands definitively with the other Cambridge Platonists against Hobbesian materialism, Spinozism, and Cartesianism. Involved in many notable polemics in his day More's lasting influence has been minor outside a committed group of followers and critics. Among the most interesting of these is Viscountess Anne Conway (1631-1679).

Conway came to be mentored by More via letter through her brother who was his student at Christ's College, Cambridge. Their extent philosophical correspondence concerns Cartesianism primarily. Through the Flemish philosopher and physician Francis Mercury van Helmont she was introduced to Lurianic Kabbalah and Quakerism. She is remembered primarily today for a single posthumously published treatise, anonymously published in 1690 in Latin translation and then re-translated back into English as *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* in 1692.

As would be expected from More's "heroine pupil" Conway's book is a work of Platonic metaphysics and theology as well as a repost to Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, and in some respects, More himself.⁶⁷ Her philosophy is composed of a three-part hierarchy of "species." The highest species is God as eternal creator and source of all being. The lowest species is "creature" or created substance which even though

⁶³ Henry, "More," §2. See also David Leech, *The Hammer of the Cartesians: Henry More's Philosophy of Spirit and the Origins of Modern Atheism* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013).

⁶⁴ Rene Descartes, Letter to Henry More, 5 February 1649, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Vol. III: The Correspondence*, ed. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch, and Anthony Kenny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 366 (AT V: 277-278).

⁶⁵ Henry, "More," §2.

⁶⁶ Henry More, *An Antidote Against Atheisme, Or an Appeal to the Natural Faculties of Man, whether there be not a God* (London: Roger Daniel, 1653), 164.

⁶⁷ Richard Ward, *The Life of Henry More*, ed. Sarah Hutton, Cecil Courtney, Michelle Courtney, Robert Crocker, and A. Rupert Hall (Dordrecht: Springer, 2000), 177.

contingent remains wholly spiritual.⁶⁸ Conway in fact denies the existence of material bodies on the grounds that such lifeless bulk contradicts the nature of the Divine as life itself. While spiritual like God creature consists of particles called “monads” whereas God is purely simple.⁶⁹ Moreover, creature differs from God in being mutable. Creaturely substance is animate and perceptual too. There is no purely passive substance in this vitalist ontology. While distinct from each other as principle and principled, creator to creature, Divine substance and created substance nevertheless share a likeness in that creature participates in God’s life, goodness, and justice. This continuum between creator and creature is mediated by “middle nature” or Christ.⁷⁰ The middle nature of Christ participates simultaneously in God and creature creating a bridge between the extremes of Conway’s spiritual monism.⁷¹

Thus, Conway’s whole metaphysics is based on the existence and attributes of God with which she opens her treatise.⁷² God is wholly spiritual, omniscient, omnibenevolent, omnipotent, omnipresent, timeless, and creator of all things.⁷³ In God “there is an idea which is his image or the word existing within himself, which in substance or essence is one and the same with him through which he knows himself as well as other things and, indeed, all creatures were made or created according to this very idea or word.”⁷⁴ Moreover, “there is spirit or will in God, which comes from him and which is in terms of substance or essence nevertheless one with him, through which creatures receive their essence and activity.”⁷⁵

In addition to the metaphysical and theological core of her positive vision Conway’s treatise contains chapters devoted to pointing out the flaws of Cartesian and Morean dualism.⁷⁶ Like Malebranche, and in differing ways Leibniz and Berkeley, Conway answers the dualism of mind and body with a continuum of single substance (spirit) differing only in mode (at once more gross and corporeal, otherwise more spiritual and incorporeal). Conway too dismisses the materialism of Hobbes and Spinoza.⁷⁷ Thus, Conway was an apologist for the Christian Platonist tradition, heavily influenced by Renaissance Kabbalah, against “Epicureanism” who tried to advance a positive account of the system of the world without the problems of strict dualism.

Through the mediation of Christ and purgative suffering creatures can become more like God, more spiritual and morally better. Evil in this approach is the result of a kind of falling away from divine perfection. Following Origen, she argues that our fallen condition cannot result in an eternal damnation. Rather, our mutability allows us to seek perfection. Conway’s metaphysics is therefore also a theodicy. This dual nature of her thought has long invited comparisons to Leibniz. However, while he was gifted a copy of Conway’s treatise by van Helmont, a friend of both, their common use of the term “monad” likely has more to do with common Platonic sources from antiquity than each other.⁷⁸ Still, Leibniz was undoubtably correct when he observed in a letter to Thomas Burnett in 1697 that “My philosophical views approach somewhat closely those of the late Countess Conway, and hold a middle position

⁶⁸ Sarah Hutton, “Lady Anne Conway,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/conway/>, Accessed 31 January 2020, §2.

⁶⁹ Hutton, “Conway,” §2 and Anne Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, ed. Allison P. Coudert and Taylor Corse (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 20 (ch. III, §10).

⁷⁰ Hutton, “Conway,” §2 and Conway, *Principles*, 24 (ch. V, §2).

⁷¹ Conway, *Principles*, 26 (ch. V, §5).

⁷² *Ibid.*, 9-11 (ch. I).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 9 (ch. I, §§ 1-5).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 10 (ch. I, §6).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 10 (ch. I, §7).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 41-61 (ch. VII-VIII) and 63-64 (ch. IX, §§2-3).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 63-70 (ch. IX, §§2-9).

⁷⁸ Hutton, “Conway,” §2.

between Plato and Democritus, because I hold that all things take place mechanically as Democritus and Descartes contend against the views of Henry More and his followers, and hold too, nevertheless, that everything takes place according to a living principle and according to final causes – all things are full of life and consciousness, contrary to the views of the atomists.”⁷⁹

Leibniz, Berkeley, and Colonial America

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) has been called the “last great Christian Platonist.”⁸⁰ The remaining chapters of the present volume speak to the dubious claim to be the last, but it is beyond doubt that Leibniz was a Christian Platonist. Leibniz framed his differences with Locke in terms of ancient philosophy, saying “His is closer to Aristotle and mine to Plato.”⁸¹ Far from a mere epistemic family resemblance though Leibniz is here signally that the true heart of his system lies in a Platonism ever in the service of Christian orthodoxy. Best remembered today for his discovery of calculus and the notion that despite all appearances this is the best of all possible worlds, Leibniz came by his Platonism easily from his teachers. For, the “two most prominent professors at Leipzig in the middle of the seventeenth century, Johann Adam Scherzer [1628-1683] and Jakob Thomasius [1622-1684]” were both committed to Christian Platonism of an eclectic kind.⁸²

Among the Platonic themes that have been identified in Leibniz’s philosophy include the rational soul as paradigm of substance, our immediate first-person access to our own souls, the relative unreality of the material world, and the ultimate reality of the immaterial ideal world, among many others.⁸³ Providing key support for three of Leibniz’s most characteristic doctrines however is the classic concept of emanative creation.

Leibniz speaks often of the relation between God and creatures as one of emanation. The *Discourse on Metaphysics* offers a telling example.

For one sees clearly that all other substances depend on God, in the same way as thoughts emanate from our substance, that God is all in all, and that he is intimately united with all creatures, in proportion to their perfection, that it is he alone who determines them from the outside by his influence, and, if to act is to determine immediately, it can be said in this sense, in the language of metaphysics, that God alone operates on me.⁸⁴

Leibniz thus is clearly an emanationist and this emanative creativity is not just an act in the beginning. Rather, for him, God continuously emanates creation. As Leibniz puts it in the *Monadology*, “God alone is the primitive unity or the first [*originnaire*] simple substance; all created or derivative monads are products, and are generated, so to speak, by continual fulgurations of the divinity from moment to moment.”⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Quoted in Conway, *Principles*, xxx.

⁸⁰ Jack Davidson, “Leibniz: The Last Great Christian Platonist,” in *Brill’s Companion to German Platonism*, ed. Alan Kim (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), 43-75.

⁸¹ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Knowledge*, trans. and ed. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 47.

⁸² Christia Mercer, *Leibniz’s Metaphysics: Its Origin and Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 200. Leibniz was also influenced by Erhard Weigel (1625-1699) and, of course, his own wide-ranging reading in the history of philosophy and theology.

⁸³ Davidson, “Leibniz,” 53.

⁸⁴ G. W. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, in *Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber, 35-68 (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), §32.

⁸⁵ G. W. Leibniz, *Monadology*, in *Philosophical Essays*, 213-225, §47. Bracketed text in translation.

In Leibniz's mature formulation simple substances or monads are "the true atoms of nature."⁸⁶ As non-composite monads cannot come to be by natural processes nor can they pass away by them. Monads only come to be by emanative creation.⁸⁷ Each monad expresses the Divine in a different way thus there are an infinite number of monads which form the composites we identify as the elements of the phenomenal world.⁸⁸ Monads are mind-like in that they have perceptions, representations of the multitude within their unity, yet they "have no windows through which something can enter or leave."⁸⁹ Created substances therefore do not interact with each other but are instead created by God with the internal principles necessary to respond in perfect harmony with each other. As Mercer summarizes, "Each monad acts eternally according to its own complete concept, but it does so in a way that is perfectly parallel with every other substance."⁹⁰ Thus, by emanative creation God creates a pre-established harmony across the universe of monads.

Emanative creation accounts for Leibniz's idiosyncratic theodicy as well. Like all Christian Platonists Leibniz places the archetypes of created substances in the mind of God. Within God's ideas "there is an infinity of possible universes."⁹¹ From among the possibilities God selects the universe that is most fit, i.e., having "the highest degree of perfection" in it.⁹² God produces a harmonious cosmos of monads, each containing a perspective on all the others such that each is a kind of living mirror of the whole. The resultant universe of universes results in as much variety as possible, in the greatest order possible, leading to the greatest perfection possible.⁹³ Thus conceived, the universe "could not be otherwise."⁹⁴ Our world then is the best possible in addition to being a plenitude devoid of empty space and even undividable atoms, a true plenum where "each body is affected, not only by those in contact with it . . . but also, through them, it feels the effects of those in contact with bodies with which it is itself immediately in contact."⁹⁵ Leibniz's cosmos then is a pre-established harmony of monads some of which form composite bodies that exist in sympathy with each other all to bring about the greatest possible perfection.

Given the impossibility of interaction between monads and the way emanative creation deposits complete conceptions of monads within them from the start it is no wonder that Leibniz accepts innate knowledge. In fact, it is difficult to see how knowledge could be anything but innate in the sense that it must arise within the rational soul and cannot be transmitted from the outside as it were.⁹⁶ As Mercer has shown for Leibniz any knowledge includes knowledge of all potentially. Thus, "in order to glimpse God, all we have to do is escape 'the shadow world' and have a momentary insight in any area of

⁸⁶ Leibniz, *Monadology*, §3.

⁸⁷ Leibniz, *Monadology*, §6.

⁸⁸ Leibniz, *Monadology*, §19.

⁸⁹ Leibniz, *Monadology*, §7.

⁹⁰ Christia Mercer, "The Platonism at the Core of Leibniz's Philosophy," in *Platonism at the Origins of Modernity: Studies on Platonism and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Douglas Hedley and Sarah Hutton (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 230.

⁹¹ Leibniz, *Monadology*, §53.

⁹² *Ibid.*, §54. Also G. W. Leibniz, *Theodicy*, trans. E. M. Huggard, ed. Austin Farrar (Chicago: Open Court, 1990), §§ 8, 78, 80, 119, 204, 206, and 208.

⁹³ Leibniz, *Monadology*, §§56, 57, and 58.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, §60.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, §61.

⁹⁶ On Leibniz's innatism see, Brandon C. Look, "Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/leibniz/>, Accessed 31 January 2020, §6.3.

knowledge.”⁹⁷ With his metaphysics of “mind-like simple substances endowed with perceptions and appetite” Leibniz reduces “bodies, motion, and everything else” to composites of these monads.⁹⁸

Leibniz though was not the lone advocate of substance monism and idealism in early modernity. Famously the empiricist George Berkeley (1685-1753) too arrived at this position. Leibniz reports that “There is much,” in Berkeley’s *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, “that is correct and close to my own view.” Unsurprisingly Leibniz is particularly pleased to see that Berkeley understands “True substances” to be “perceivers” (i.e., monads).⁹⁹

Berkeley is best known today as the middle figure in the triad of British Empiricists with Locke and Hume. A close second is the fact that he advanced a form of idealism (“immaterialism”) that not only prioritizes the mental but denies the existence of the material. Berkeley argued for the thesis that the objects of knowledge are either sense impressions, operations of the mind, or ideas formed via memory and imagination.¹⁰⁰ These objects of knowledge are known or perceived by what Berkeley calls “mind” or “spirit.”¹⁰¹ He argues that the opinion that objects of sense exist as distinct from being perceived is contradictory.¹⁰² Thus, for Berkeley, to exist is to be perceived or to perceive (*esse est percipi aut percipere*). Like Leibniz then there is only one kind of substance for Berkeley, mind or spirit, including finite minds like our own and infinite mind of God. The physical world exists as immaterial mind-dependent ideas caused by God.

Since Berkeley’s arguments are empiricist and he explicitly argued against abstract ideas he has been typically seen as opposed to Platonism.¹⁰³ However, Berkeley’s last work *Siris* is full of positive references to Platonism. This text, often dismissed by philosophers intent on reading Berkeley as a stepping stone from Locke to Hume, proclaims that the “Pythagoreans and Platonists had a notion of the true System of the World,” specifically with their insistence that “mind, soul, or spirit truly and really exists” and “that bodies only [exist] in a secondary and dependent sense.”¹⁰⁴ References to Christian and pagan Platonists abound including discussion of Plotinian intimations of the Trinity reminiscent of Cudworth.¹⁰⁵ While the relationship between the early Berkeley and the *Siris* is far from settled, some more recent studies have argued that the latter should not be understood as a radical departure from the former. Of especial interest here is the role of archetypes in Berkeley’s philosophy.¹⁰⁶

For Berkeley, God sustains the universe by continually thinking and willing it.¹⁰⁷ It is by means then of God’s mental activity that the world is born, and my sensory ideas of the physical world are the same as God’s ideas thereof because it is by God’s having them that they arise in me. God’s archetypal ideas of the physical world are my ectypal ideas thereof, not in addition to my creation as a mind, but as part of the continuous creation of myself qua perceiver. For there can be no mind without ideas nor ideas

⁹⁷ Mercer, “Core,” 237-238.

⁹⁸ Look, “Leibniz,” §5.1.

⁹⁹ Leibniz, Remarks on Berkeley’s Principles (Winter 1714-1715), in *Philosophical Essays*, 307.

¹⁰⁰ George Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge: Part 1*, in *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. A.A. Luce and T.E. Jessop, 2:41-113 (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1948-1957), §1.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, §2.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, §4.

¹⁰³ On Berkeley’s anti-abstractionism see *Principles*, Introduction, §§6-24.

¹⁰⁴ George Berkeley, *Siris*, in *Works* 5:25-164, §266.

¹⁰⁵ Berkeley, *Siris*, §§341-363.

¹⁰⁶ E.g., Peter S. Wenz, “Berkeley’s Christian Neo-Platonism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37, no. 3, (1976): 537-546; Robert McKim, “Wenz on Abstract Ideas and Christian Neo-Platonism in Berkeley,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43, no. 4, (1982): 665-671; and Stephen H. Daniel, “Berkeley’s Christian Neoplatonism, Archetypes, and Divine Ideas,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 39, no. 2 (2001): 239-258.

¹⁰⁷ Berkeley, *Principles*, §§45-46, 62, 94, 151. Also, Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, in *Works* 2:250-256 and Letter to Johnson, 25 November 1729, in *Works* 2:280-281.

without mind.¹⁰⁸ While Berkeley does not embrace the language of emanation to describe God's creative activity, perhaps owing to his discomfort at the occasionalism of Malebranche, he arguably embraces the spirit thereof nonetheless.

While the lasting influence of Berkeley has been limited, during his lifetime he earned a significant following in British Colonial America where idealism of a Christian Platonist flavor remained a powerful intellectual force well into the twentieth century. Samuel Johnson (1696-1772), first president of King's College (now Columbia University), was an enthusiastic adopter of Berkeley's philosophy. Intriguingly he pushed Berkeley to elaborate and further develop his notion of archetypes.¹⁰⁹ As we have seen this was at the heart of the increasingly Platonic work produced by Berkeley later in life culminating with the *Siris*. Johnson too would go on from his productive friendship with Berkeley to develop his own account of Platonic archetypes in his *Elementa Philosophica* published by Benjamin Franklin in 1752.¹¹⁰ Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) widely viewed as the first great philosophical mind in British America developed a form of immaterialism that may well have both historical and conceptual debts to Berkeley as well.¹¹¹ Edwards, with many in America, was also well acquainted with the Christian Platonism of the Cambridge Platonists.¹¹² By the middle of the eighteenth century the geographic range if not popularity of Christian Platonism was on the rise. But it was about to face a new challenge from one equally opposed to the naturalism of the giants for whom the old Platonic path was no longer credible.

Conclusion

Despite his early flirtation with Platonism by 1781 Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) famously denied any access by the understanding to positive noumenal reality.¹¹³ While he presented devastating critiques of traditional arguments for the existence of God it is the critique of rational psychology that struck most fully at the heart of the Christian Platonist tradition.¹¹⁴ For if we do not have access to the immaterial and immortal soul as *imago Dei* the path to the contemplation of God is blocked. As Henry More might have put it, no rational psychology, no rational theology.

This chapter has just scratched the surface of the influence of the Christian Platonist tradition upon early Modern philosophy. This influence appears across denominational affiliations in the work of Protestants (e.g., Cudworth and Conway) as well as Catholics (e.g., Descartes and Malebranche). Empiricists like Berkeley and rationalists like Leibniz both found Christian Platonism congenial to their philosophical system building too. Christian Platonists argued for dualisms, monisms, and systems in

¹⁰⁸ Berkeley, *Principles*, §7.

¹⁰⁹ Michael Jonik, "Mind and Matter in Early America: The Berkeley-Johnson Correspondence," *The Pluralist* 11, no. 1 (2016): 44.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹¹¹ Scott Fennema, "George Berkeley and Jonathan Edwards on Idealism: Considering an Old Question in Light of New Evidence," *Intellectual History Review* 29, no. 2 (2019): 265-290.

¹¹² Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 43, 413-414, 534, 582-583, 596 n.41.

¹¹³ Immanuel Kant, "On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World," in *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755-1770*, ed. David Walford and Ralf Meerbote, 375-416 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A250/B307.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, A567-642/B595-670 (on rational theology) and A341-405/B399-432 (on rational psychology). See also Beatrice Longuenesse, "Kant's 'I Think' versus Descartes' 'I am a Thing that Thinks,'" in *Kant and the Early Moderns*, ed. Daniel Garber and Beatrice Longuenesse (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 9-31, esp. 20-25, and Garth W. Green, *The Aporia of Inner Sense: The Self-Knowledge of Reason and the Critique of Metaphysics in Kant* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 223-289.

between. As Christian Platonists always have, they disagreed on many issues and drew their Platonism from many sources with a wide variety of interpretations. But, in early modernity as in antiquity, they shared a common enemy in the form of “Epicurean” naturalism.¹¹⁵ With the coming of the Enlightenment period, and in the face of the seemingly decisive blows against Christian Platonism at the hands of Kant, echoes of this dynamic and resilient tradition would persist in Idealism, Romanticism, *Lebensphilosophie*, and Transcendentalism through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries.

¹¹⁵ See Lloyd Gerson, *Platonism and Naturalism: The Possibility of Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2020) for the bold thesis that any attempt to reconcile Platonism and naturalism is doomed.

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