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From Laws to Liturgy: An Idealist Interpretation of the Doctrine of Creation

Edward Epsen

Abstract

Christian idealism is an interpretative framework for developing the doctrine of creation in the parallel contexts of theology and philosophy. It recommends itself by its explanatory fecundity and consilience. Against physical realism's claim that the physical world is ontologically fundamental and mind-independent, idealism holds that it is constituted by facts about the organization of human sense experience. The sensory regularities in turn may be explained by a prephysical temporal reality of angelic minds who causally constrain human experience within a divinely decreed nomological system. Idealism is here re-attached to a tradition of Christian Platonism, recovering and updating the traditional notions of the *aeon*, angelic government, and the divine ideas, so as to be capable of explanatory work in regard to the philosophical problems of perception and induction. In so doing, Christian idealism enables theologians coherently to articulate the thesis that the ontological objectivity and empirical immanence of the world, as grounded in the phenomenological laws of nature, is explained by the liturgical function of the cosmic Church hierarchy. An idealist theology thus develops the doctrine of the cosmic liturgy, that the various works of God in heaven and earth are analogously unified in a single sacramental economy of the Eucharist.

From Laws to Liturgy: An Idealist Interpretation of the Doctrine of Creation

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PhD Thesis

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Preface

This work aims to offer an interpretation and defense of orthodox Christian cosmology as expressed in the traditional doctrine of creation, that the triune God freely creates out of nothing a world that he absolutely transcends, which remains wholly dependent on his continued sustaining providence, and whose final purpose is the sanctification of man in union with his Creator through the attunement of man's heart to the praise of the Lord's glory. In the spirit of systematic theology, my goal is to provide for an understanding of the content of this article of faith, using the resources of idealist metaphysics for exposition and insight.

Developing Christian idealism as an interpretative theory for the doctrine results in a rationally defensible exposition. It is rich in explanatory power on account of its grounding in analytic metaphysics, where idealism offers solutions to the problems of perception[1] and induction, but also fertile in its implications for dogmatics. It is a helpful resource to theologians in the attempt to articulate a dogmatic cosmology: an understanding of what God produces in creation, and how it is ordered and governed. An idealist interpretation helps systematize the interrelations among Trinity, creation, providence, Christology, the sacraments and other confessional elements, including those that were once traditionally significant but have fallen by the wayside, such as the doctrine of angels[2] and the doctrine of the cosmic liturgy.[3] It shows us that a coherent idealist theology of the laws of nature that appeals to angelic cosmology is abductively supported by its solution to the philosophical problems of perception and induction. Thus the interpretation enables us to make a very bold claim indeed. As the establishment of the laws of nature through the angelic governance is in the service of the liturgical life of the Church, the angels and thus the liturgy are the reason why the physical world is objective and empirically immanent. The possibility of science is explained by the possibility of the Eucharist.

The broad outline of the theological argument for the particular version of Christian idealism that I wish to offer runs as follows:

(A) Revelation presents us with a trinitarian model of creation in which the transcendent, omnipotent God

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[1] See Howard Robinson, *Perception* (London: Routledge, 1994), and John Foster, *The Nature of Perception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), both of whom offer idealist theories of perception.
[2] Augustine, *de Gen. ad lit.* IV, 32-49, pseudo-Dionysius, *Hierarchia Coelestis*, Aquinas *ST* Ia.50-64, 106-114; but see also Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* (1911) IV, 177-258, and John Damascene, *De fide Orth.* III.2.
[3] See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004)*,* Erik Peterson, *The Angels and the Liturgy* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), Louis Bouyer, *Cosmos: The World and Glory of God* (Petersham, MA: Saint Bede's Publications, 1988), pp.194-205,.and Keith Lemna, "The Angels and Cosmic Liturgy: An Oratorian Angelology", *Nova et Vetera* 8,4 (2010): 901-921.

creates through his Word and in Wisdom. What he creates is limited, contingent, and totally existentially dependent on his sustaining word of power. The Trinity creates all things for the Incarnation of the Son in his body, the Church. Christ's lordship and priesthood are thus fully implicated in his creative role, as the sovereign lawgiver of creation and the one who bestows blessing on creation, even the ultimate blessing of consecration into the life of divine sonship through the sacrifice of the Paschal mystery.

(B) Consonant with this trinitarian model, the very foundational order of creation is hierarchically arranged so that all life may be uplifted through liturgical action. The hierarchy extends from the throne of Christ the Royal Priest, through the ranks of the invisible and visible Church, and to the ends of the earth[4], to every creature with the breath of life[5], for Christ's eulogistic rule and liturgical praise are to be coextensive.[6] The cosmic order of the hierarchy is regulated to conduct charitable, ministerial movement downward in condescension and upward in priestly, anaphoric con-ascension. In proportion to the knowledge and charismatic blessings received, each living creature is consecrated to the extent that it communally participates in this hierarchic movement.

(C) In the cosmic hierarchy, the role of inanimate matter is to act as a medium for liturgical action. The nature of matter is thus symbolic or linguistic, and the causal-nomological structure of the physical world is constituted by divine speech as addressed to its spiritual participants. The phenomenal events of nature are made from the "invisible reality"[7] of the Royal Priest's liturgical commands, hierarchically mediated by the angelic spirits in the immanent context of human sense experience, while the sacramental mysteries of the Church are mediated by both pure spirits and human beings cooperatively in the wider context of the cosmic liturgy. This means that: the angels are invested with the "powers of nature" insofar as the purpose of creation is liturgical; that we, the lower orders of the cosmic hierarchy who are charitably served by the higher, participate in the consecrating and indeed divinizing work of the liturgy at the same phenomenal level at which this service is revealed to us; and that the very "powers of nature" possessed by the angels consists in their power to govern the phenomenal order of human sense experience as liturgically ordained by God and executed within the celestial hierarchy.

(D) Therefore, given that the angelic powers for creating the physical world through the governance of human sense experience derive from the ultimately liturgical purpose of the cosmic hierarchy, in consonance with the trinitarian model described above, it follows that the ontological reality of the

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[4] Ps 22:27, Is 41:5, 45:22, Mk 13:27
[5] Gen 1:30, Job 12:10
[6] Ps 48:10, 72:8
[7] Heb 11:3

physical world is in no part fundamental but in every aspect logically dependent on the way in which Christ has instituted the Eucharistic mystery.

If Christ is Priest, Prophet, and King, and if creaturely holiness is conformity to the likeness of Christ, then creaturely holiness participates in the threefold office. Scripture reveals that angels, as sons of Gods, act liturgically (as priestly worshipers in the Books of Ezekiel and Revelation), prophetically (in the Books of the Zechariah and Daniel), and *presidentially*, as guardians of nations (in the Book of Daniel) and individuals (in the Psalms and the Gospels). We know that they reveal the Law to Moses, the oracular visions to the prophets, and the Gospel to those close to Jesus. All together the angels thus imitate the threefold office in their 'ministry of salvation'.[8] But if all of creation—including the inanimate—is a gift from God, then its *charistic logic*, its donation and eucharistic blessing, ought to fall within the arrangement of the cosmic hierarchy, which is itself an explication of the absolute primacy of Christ. If all things are created through Wisdom and Word, then we can see Christ as head of the hierarchy and his liturgical / prophetic / kingly instructions as pertaining to the whole of creation for the purpose of the glory of a human nature in Christ.

Theologians who find this line of reasoning persuasive should look to the immaterialist metaphysics of phenomenalistic idealism as part of a strategy for explaining how it is that Christ as the Incarnate Word and Wisdom creates the world through and for (comm)union with the triune Godhead by the mediation of the dynamic arrangement of persons that is the cosmic hierarchy, in particular through the hierarchy's mediation of the creation of the visible world, the bodily gifts that human creatures lift up in the Mass.

We can account for Christ's divine, continuously creative activity as the giving of creative wisdom to angels and men, that is, as hierarchical ordinances or instructions to the angels about how causally to regulate human sense experience, as the way in which the angels lift up those below them (human beings) within the provision of the hierarchy. Angelic *presidential* activity would consist in the execution of these commands, as the causal imposition of constraints, of nomological regularities as such, directly on the human mind with its created receptive endowments for having sensations and interpreting their thematic content in characteristic ways, so that sensible experience is the reading of a divine language, and interaction with the environment (most proximately the body) a form of communication with God.

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[8] The most sustained modern theological reflection on the biblical revelation of angels is found in Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics* (III/3 §51). Though Barth is critical of the speculative tradition associated with Dionysius and with the liturgical interpretation of the angelic office in Peterson, his own expansive conception of the angelic ministry of witness effectively reconstructs a highly sacramental understanding of intracosmic hierarchy as mediating the covenant, Kingdom, and "the whole secret of God" (pp.176, 192).

To support such an account, we need a theory of perception in which the nomological organization of actual and potential sequences of human sensations and volitions is such that when experienced at the human subjective viewpoint and interpreted in accordance with our created psychological endowment, they give rise to the experience of the world as we know it and so "encode" a physical world. In this way, visual sensations become the words of an embodied language, words whose meanings are, for example, possible future tactual sensations. More generally, as the compresence of consciousness brings together "pure sensations" from disparate sense-modal realms into "total sensations", we could say that the regular conscious succession of such episodic compresence comes to signify possible future total sensations. In this way the world of space and time and 3-D mobile occupants is created at the human empirical viewpoint by such sensory regularities together with, or within the context of, the conceptual resources of the human mind. This means that to create the physical world God must only create human minds and causally impose on them a certain characteristic sensory organization—a system of ordinances and executive control for what possible sensation-volition sequences are lawful—which He may well do through the cosmic hierarchy, that is, through the causal mediation of the angel spirits in accordance with the plan for the liturgical glorification of all things in Christ, culminating concretely in the eucharistic supper of the Mass.

Inasmuch as the idealist theory of perception just described has already been shown to solve two deep problems in theoretical philosophy—the problems of perception and induction—we may then, all together, give a *theological* explanation for our empirical epistemic access to the laws of nature and the inferential practices in which we use them instrumentally: the possibility of science is explained by the possibility of the eucharist.

In Part A of the work I begin making the theological case for idealism and introduce the key conceptual content as found in historical and biblical context. Chapter II seeks to establish premise (A) above by introducing the Trinitarian dimension of the doctrine of creation, the "logos cosmology" of the Psalms and the wisdom literature, the theme of the absolute primacy of Christ, and biblical angelology. This chapter also goes on to make an argument for idealism from sacramental theology which, while incidental to the overarching argument of the whole (as outlined above), is nonetheless representative of it in miniature. Chapter III introduces the two core ideas of phenomenalistic idealism by appeal to the theories of Plotinus and Gregory of Nyssa. By appeal to the writings of pseudo-Dionysius, Chapter IV introduces the concept of the cosmic hierarchy as a development of both Biblical angelology and the absolute primacy of Christ, and seeks to establish premise (B) above. With the goal of synthesizing the concept of the cosmic hierarchy with phenomenalistic idealism, Chapter V introduces an immaterialist metaphysics and idealist perceptual theory through a study of Bishop Berkeley's thought and philosophical system. The result establishes premise (C) and so, by inference, (D). Also here I tie together

the cumulative cosmological and sacramental themes of Part A with an idealist theory of sense perception in an explicit way.

In Part B of the thesis my purpose is to elaborate an idealist metaphysics and theory of perception in order to show that the theological argument for idealism receives abductive support from its explanatory power. In Chapter VI, I introduce an idealist ontology of sensory universals, or *qualia*, and introduce the problem of perception: simultaneously to account for the phenomenological and causal facts about the perception of physical objects. An idealist theory can solve this problem by defining physical objecthood in terms of nomic and phenomenal relations among qualia. Such an account of objecthood also allows us to give an elegant account of the mundane causal order of perceptual experience across normal and deviant episodes in a way that explains why genuine physical objects and events are taken to be causally efficacious in producing perceptual episodes.

Chapter VII takes on the challenge of showing how the regular order and thematic content of sensory experiences, together with the endowed conceptual resources of the human mind by which we interpret experiences, is able to logically sustain the entities and facts of the physical world. Where Ch.VI had focused on the mind-matter relation as found in perceptual consciousness, showing that the physical object of perception need not be anything over and above the systematic order of appearances, so Ch.VII considers more broadly how the world of space, time, and matter, described ordinarily or scientifically, could be (exhaustively) existentially-dependent on facts about how human sensory experience is organized. Here I propose a sequence of syntheses by which the physical world might be logically constructed from the temporally-structured qualitative content within sensory experience, and analogously between experiences, in a way that harkens back to the specification of criteria for physical objecthood in Ch.VI. The most important concept is that of phenomenal overlap, which extrapolates the relation of temporal succession among component sensations within a single episode of awareness (e.g., in hearing a melody or seeing the flight of bird) into a relation between episodes. The goal is to show that there is enough order at the pre-interpreted phenomenal level of experience to prompt conceptual interpretation, which is itself an organizational force in perceptual consciousness that allows the subject to discern increasingly sophisticated patterns of sensory regularity. The descriptions corresponding to such stages of discernment correspond to the various notional and scientific physical theories, from a unified space of persistent 3-D occupants to the more refined descriptions of contemporary physics.

Having demonstrated the coherence of a "logical construction" of the physical world from facts about sensory regularities, the next step in demonstrating the coherence of idealism *tout court* is to explain how the sensory regularities are themselves ultimately grounded by something nonphysical. This is the subject of Chapter VIII, which first specifies a theory of mental time, and then a prephysical temporal community of pure mental agents capable of interactively regulating human sensations in accord

with divinely-issued causal laws. Here the idealist appeals to the wisdom and power of the Judeo-Christian God to prescribe such a harmonious system of laws and to a community of celestial spirits as the pure mental agents who receive them and, through one-to-one pairings with human minds, causally execute them. All together the idealist can now coherently claim that the physical world is logically created at the human empirical viewpoint by the way the angels administer the divine regulatory commands. In accordance with principles of the Dionysian hierarchy, we can attribute ontologically dependent levels of organization within the empirical order to the idealistically creative work of corresponding ranks of angelic governance within the celestial hierarchy (which are in turn ordered by knowledge and power).

Rather than seeing the administration of the presidential commands as mechanically imposed by God on the angels, it should be regarded as the liturgical function of the celestial hierarchy within the plan of glorification. With the full analytic exposition of the theory of Christian idealism in place, Chapter IX returns to the consideration of the theory's merits in exegeting the theological tradition. Special emphasis is given to Augustine's own interpretation of Genesis and also to the angelological texts in the Prophetic and apocalyptic literature. Ch. II had already drawn attention to the Biblical revelation that angels, as servants of the Lord, are ministers of public service (literally practitioners of *liturgy*), dispensing the Mosaic Law[9], and in so many ways assisting man in the Holy One's plan of salvation.[10] In the Old Testament, any theophany or appearance of God occurs in conjunction with an angelophany or the appearance of angels. They always mediate his presence, and this mediating function is confirmed in the New Testament with the revelation that the Lord is Jesus Christ, the King of the Angels[11], even unto the end when he will take up his position as the head of the Church, his body, in the nuptial union. But less well known is the Scriptural revelation that the angels are also causal governors and elemental regulators.[12] Christian idealism makes sense of the view that even the elemental laws of phenomena are a work of the angels, performed in obedience to their divine charge. It is their uprightness of will, freely affirmed in charity that prompts them to perform their liturgical office of transmissively magnifying to those below the good he has given them with their own labor mixed in, cooperatively giving back to God "a sacrifice of praise"[13], in their own imitation of the trinitarian *chesedic* condescension.[14] With the view of Christian idealism now in place, we can make sense of this statement in a very concrete way. The glory

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[9] Deut 33:3, Acts 7:38, 53, Gal 3:19, Heb 2:2
[10] Ex 23:20-21, Ps 34:7, Lk 22:43
[11] Dan 7:9-10, Phil 2:10-11, Rev 5:11
[12] Ps 102:19-21, Rev 10:1-3
[13] Heb 13:15
[14] Job 38:6-8 specifically emphasizes the connection of liturgical praise with angelic cosmology and the typology of temple and cosmos brings this out more generally. Like the angels, when man is in awe his eucharistic impulse translates itself into a desire to make or build something. *Cf.* Gen 32:30, Ezra 3:10-11 and Mt 17:4.

given to God by the heavenly hosts participates in the song of creation, which is quite literally, in its sustaining effect, the words of man's sensory experience ignited by the angelic mind and written in the fire of his own. The manifest liturgy of the eucharist, with its sanctuary, altar, incense and lamps, is the manifestation of the hierarchically encompassing liturgy. Man's liturgy is joined with the angelic cosmic liturgy in the Mass because the human eucharist is hierarchically contained in the angelic, as is all human environmental activity, though in this special form of public work the angelic and human interact in the way they were intended to, with man collaborating in praise and thanksgiving, and using the superiority of the office of the angel as a real, continuous extension of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, to help his song and above all—in the Mass—his sacrifice be brought to God. The sacrifice of course is itself the gift of the Trinity, which again (or rather, firstly) is mediated by the angelic government.

Chapter I: Introduction

I.1 The God-World Relation in Metaphysics: Idealism and Traditional Christian Theism

In view of the doctrine of creation, that "the Word was God" and "without him was not anything that was made", and the fact that "God is spirit"[1], I want to suggest that traditional Christian theism has a strong tendency in favor of idealism, that a Christian should regard idealism as the first and most straightforward philosophic option, and that systematic theological reflection on the doctrine of creation should appropriate the metaphysics of idealism especially as already found within its tradition.

At a basic conceptual level, idealism would seem to be a close corollary of traditional Christian theism. If God alone is absolute existence and "God is spirit" but of course not matter or body, then spirit would seem to be metaphysically fundamental in a way that body is not. For the same reason any version of physical realism, or the thesis that matter, space-time or the physical world is metaphysically fundamental, seemingly puts itself in conflict with traditional Christian theism. If the physical world is God's free creation and so wholly existentially dependent on him, how can it be metaphysically fundamental? Notice that when we ask what is metaphysically fundamental, we are asking a question from a transcendental framework: obviously within our experience the physical world features as something objective and conceptually independent of that experience. But what is its status beyond our experience? This is both a metaphysical and theological question, though not a question of natural science. Physical realism holds that it is substantial and so ontologically independent of that experience. Idealism denies this and so too it seems does traditional Christian theism.

I intend for the arguments contained in this work to strengthen the claim that a version of idealism, what I call 'Christian idealism', is the right philosophical companion for liturgical and sacramental theology and in greater harmony with revealed theology generally than any version of physical realism. Put briefly, this is because idealism, as a successor to Platonism, is able to make sense of the claim that the physical world is a sensible language, a medium of communication and ultimately liturgical participation, that it is proto-sacramental, its very being grounded in the logic of divine proclamation and creaturely eucharistic synaxis, so that in a very direct sense the world is mystically contained in the Church. For many this will be a startling claim, likely to be met with suspicion, and for understandable reasons. Berkeley's own idealist position was often, though not always[2], misunderstood

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[1] Jn 1:1, 1:3, 4:24

[2] Notably, he was *not* misunderstood by the British empiricist-phenomenalist tradition that followed him, including Hume, Mill, Russell, and Ayer.

by influential succeeding philosophers like Kant[3] and Hegel[4], and at times mockingly dismissed by the upholders of educated common sense.

Though it is counter-intuitive in some striking ways, idealism's understanding of the ontological status of the physical world and our relation to it is not only rationally defensible but, from a philosophical *and* theological perspective, rationally preferable to competing explanatory alternatives. As Berkeley himself was concerned to show, the prevailing philosophic alternatives reinforce intellectual errors that in turn affect other disciplines. They also distort the relationship between natural science and religion. To think of space, time, and matter as logically independent of the human mind and ultimate metaphysical categories (a proposition that the prevailing alternatives accept but idealism strongly denies) promotes the false belief that the world navigated by people in their everyday lives and investigated more deeply by science either has no immediate relation with God (deism) or is identical to some part of God (pantheism). In both cases, either because the world is conceived as some part of God or as being so God-like (in its mind-independence and metaphysical fundamentality) and at the same time more immediate in its empirical immanence than God, we become inclined to a practical world-idolatry, whatever we might profess on special occasions.

Thinkers of faith have recognized this problem, but so far in the modern history of theology the only new option that has exercised them to a significant degree, as an alternative to deism and the pantheism, is the panentheism of liberal Christianity[5].and its companion metaphysics of emergentism. Owing to the apparent lack of satisfying alternatives, this position also has more recently attracted orthodox-minded theologians.[6] Whether liberal or orthodox, these theologians reacted against the exclusive disjunction of divine transcendence and immanence, and rightly so. But because they were

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[3] See, e.g., Kant's characterization of the "psychological" or "material" idealism he attributes to Descartes and Berkeley in the "Refutation of Idealism" (B274) in the second edition of the *Critique*. Following this characterization, Berkeley's idealism was closely associated with a kind of skepticism in much of the history of philosophy.

[4] The view of Hegel in III.2.A of his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy,*1805-6, trans. E S Haldane, 1892-6 is similar to Kant's.

[5] See, for example, Philip Clayton, *The Problem of God in Modern Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), John W. Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers—from Plato to the Present*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006, and Philip Clayton and Paul Davies, eds., *The Re-Emergence of Emergence: The Emergentist Hypothesis from Science to Religion* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006).

[6] See, e.g., Kallistos Ware, "God Immanent yet Transcendent: The Divine Energies according to Saint Gregory Palamas,".in *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World*, P. Clayton and A. Peacocke, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 157–168. One could also mention Barthian neo-orthodox and Radical Orthodox theologians as supporters of traditional Christian theism against panentheism. The former tend to eschew metaphysics all together, however. Modern theologians more generally seem to be once again comfortable with the use of descriptive metaphysics, recognizing its value to aid the interpretation of Scripture and received doctrine. But they largely—indeed almost exclusively?—have considered only physical realist options in Thomas' hylomorphism or Kant's empirical realism (which, one will recall, is the corollary of his transcendental idealism). In both cases, when 'updated' to be in conversation with contemporary analytic philosophy, emergentism seems to be the position with the greatest family resemblance. It is really to Platonist theologians that the idealist hopes to make the greatest appeal.

unwilling, consciously or not, to relinquish their commitment to an ultimate and experience-transcendent physical world, they were forced to affirm that God is in the world in the same way that the world is in God, and so the tendency to idolatry remained. Being unwilling to relinquish their commitment to an ultimate and experience-transcendent physical world, they have been forced either to accept an emergentist metaphysics in order to affirm that God is in the world in a way different from that in which the world is in God or to give up on such a claim altogether. Emergentism, however, presupposes that the physical world is ontologically independent of the way in which it is disposed to appear in human experience, that it has some significance in God's plan outside of the relationship between God and human beings, that he would have created dust even if he had never intended to breathe life into it.

Against all three positions of deism, pantheism, and panentheism, traditional Christian theism maintains *both* that God is neither exclusively transcendent or immanent in relation to the world (he is both) *and* that the world is asymmetrically dependent on him—he is in the world as its creator, redeemer, and end, while the world is in Him in neither of these ways but as His handiwork, messenger, servant, and ultimately, his household and dwelling place. With deism, traditional Christian theism maintains that God is not dependent on the world; with panentheism it holds that God is both transcendent and immanent to his creation; and against all positions it insists on the (absolute) asymmetric dependence of the world on God. The table below lays out the relations between these four basic positions.

	God and the World are Interdependent	God and the World *not* Interdependent
God is exclusively Transcendent or Immanent (in relation to the world)	Pantheism (God is immanent)	Deism (God is transcendent, God/world mutually independent)
God is both Transcendent *and* Immanent (in relation to the world)	Panentheism (God/world mutually dependent)	Traditional Christian Theism (world asymmetrically dependent on God)

It is notable that traditional Christian theism would seem to be the only one of the four options that countenances metaphysical supernaturalism. Given the systematic connection between metaphysics and doctrine, this is no accident. Idealism denies the ultimate, external status of the physical world that still predominates in much contemporary thinking. It proposes instead that the metaphysically fundamental external reality that constrains our experience is purely mental and indeed spiritual. So a Christianity that embraces idealism can justify its ease with traditional interpretations of Scripture, supernatural miracles, and the truth-value of religious language. Christian idealism can uphold claims of traditional supernaturalist dogmatics against contemporary theologians who emphasize God - world interdependence and support a panentheistic metaphysics. But it addresses their concern to reconcile science and theism. It provides a clear, traditional framework in which to understand the content of scientific discovery, psychophysical interaction, the status of the laws of nature, and our moral and ecological responsibilities.

Theologians have once again become secure in their right to test claims to knowledge against the canon of their tradition of faith. They are resisting the cultural and institutional pressure to regard their faith as narrow, private, and intellectually a kind of 'optional extra', where contemporary science and educated common sense leave room for it. They want to recover a traditional conception of the relation between faith and knowledge (*gnosis*), in which the wholeness of truth as found in the faith is the standard or criterion for theological speculation, which itself must be in mutual exercise (*askesis*) with Christian worship.[7] With this orientation, working from within the life of the Church, we may position ourselves rightly to evaluate and appropriate the wealth of Christian philosophy as it has come to us, not least of which from the modern era.

Accepting this much, it still may not be clear why this would point us in the direction of idealism. In expounding and elaborating a subject of doctrine, why not turn to the metaphysics of Platonism, which time and again seems to have inspired philosophically-minded theologians? Is it not Platonism rather than idealism that has been the mainstay of the Christian philosophical tradition and so our heritage? Put briefly, my answer is that, for the reasons mentioned above and soon to be elaborated, we want a theological metaphysics to imply the denial of physical realism, and whereas idealism clearly does, it is not so clear that Platonism does. Fortunately, the move of transforming Platonism into a system that does imply the denial of physical realism was already taken for us by the Church fathers. This is how idealism arose. It was a Christian philosophy from the first.

I.2 How Platonism Becomes Christian Idealism

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[7] Here I am thinking of the patristic model of *gnosis* as described by Irenaeus in *On the Apostolic Preaching* and Clement of Alexandria (*Miscellanies*).

As a preliminary, it will help to have a working definition of the terms 'Platonism' and 'idealism'. The former is more likely to be familiar to theologians even though both tend to be used vaguely. We could simply take it to mean a system of thought or set of intellectual tendencies resembling that system or those tendencies characteristic of Plato. Now what exactly is it that is characteristic of Plato's thought? Is it the Theory of Forms, a belief in the eternal and necessary existence of abstract universals, including mathematicals, a belief that the Good is the end of all being? For a project of theological metaphysics, the first suggestion would seem the most fitting. Interestingly, if we follow Lloyd Gerson's definition of Platonism[8] as a very specific kind of 'top-down-*ism*', we end up with a quite different understanding. Gerson's definition, which he derives from the later Platonists and Neoplatonists in accordance with the exegetical "harmony thesis"[9], takes Platonism to be a belief in a systematic unity of being, hierarchically organized by simplicity and explanatory priority into noetic, psychic and material existence.

Depending on how exactly material existence or 'matter' is understood, particularly in its existential relation to what is prior to it, such a philosophy is potentially already in agreement with the core thesis of idealism. On a traditional reading of Plato, matter is conceived of as a coeternal abstract substrate that is a necessary principle for physical creation.[10] Whether other ancient Platonists understood it this way is an interesting question. Gerson, in emphasizing the harmony thesis, argues that the Neoplatonists interpreted Plato to be in agreement with Aristotle, though not without confessing significant differences between them in both method and doctrinal content.[11] Aristotle conceives of matter (*hule*) as the underlying subject (*hypokeimenon*)[12] for all physical items. Middle Platonism, however, as represented in Alcinous' *Handbook of Platonism* (*Diskalikos*)[13], follows Plato and not Aristotle in identifying matter with space or 'receptacle', defining it negatively as *ámorphos*, *apoios*, and *aneidos*[14], without mentioning *hyle* or *hypokeimenon*. Matter is thus described in terms compatible with a conception

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[8] In *Aristotle and Other Platonists* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

[9] This is the thesis that the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle are in agreement with each other.

[10] See *Timaeus* 49A6-53B2.

[11] For our explanatory purposes, with a close eye on the theoretical status of 'matter', these differences appear to be a basis for later divergence between the physical realist and the idealist developments of Platonism. Whereas Aristotle's thought is clearly in continuity with Plato's, 'harmony' is perhaps too strong a word, for reasons that Gerson himself is quick to point out in Op.cit., pp.102-115. Here in regard to matter Gerson's general "harmony" thesis is qualified to say that while Aristotle and Plato differed significantly, following the ancient Peripatetic and Neoplatonist interpretation, the differences were not so discontinuous as to prevent the *partial* adoption of theoretical elements from Aristotle in a synchretic version of Platonism.

[12] In fact, the *primary* underlying subject (*to protera hypokeimenon*).

[13] John Dillon, translator, *Handbook of Platonism*, Ch.8, pp.15, 90-91.

[14] p.15. *Cf*. Plato, *Timaeus* 51A4-B1. Dillon's commentary on this chapter in the *Handbook* (pp. 90-91) appeals to the aforementioned fact that Plato unlike Aristotle never uses the word *hyle* (to mean 'matter') nor *hypokeimenon*.

of it as spatial form or qualitative extension.[15] Again depending on how such qualities are existentially related to the noetic, such a position could well be a nascent version of idealism. According to the exegetical view of the later Academy, the relation of ontological priority in the Platonic hierarchy—and its inverse, ontological reducibility—is determined by criteria of noetic simplicity. It would follow from this that matter, understood as a quality of extension or spatial form and hence as both sensible and divisible, would be reducible to the noetic.[16]

Turning now to the term 'idealism' in quest of a definition, this too may already be familiar at least in a form with some adjective before it, such as 'absolute idealism' (associated with Hegel), 'transcendental idealism' (associated with Kant), or Berkeleyan idealism. While seemingly concrete in its consideration of historical examples, this is a precarious road by which to approach an analytical understanding of the topic. What exactly do those three forms of idealism have in common that helpfully could be extracted to move us in the direction of a deeper understanding of the theoretical possibilities of metaphysics? Using this approach, perhaps we could do no better than to invoke Norman Kemp Smith's definition of idealism as the philosophy "maintaining that spiritual values have a determining voice in the ordering of the universe".[17] This would certainly encompass all three versions of idealism and much of "perennial Platonism", including the philosophies of the Cambridge Platonists, Renaissance neo-Platonists, Scholastics, and the ancient Neoplatonists themselves to name but a few. A moment's reflection allows us to see just how inclusive this definition is, and so, while by no means utterly unhelpful, it will prevent us from discerning a deeper and logically stronger philosophical position that has developed right at the center of the tradition of Christian philosophy.

It is this more specific brand of idealism that we want to seize upon. Perhaps ironically it is best to see it as a thesis about the nature of the physical world, the sum total of physical entities and physical facts. The thesis of idealism is *that the physical world exists but in no part composes ultimate reality*; in other words, that physical existents, whether objects or facts, are not an ultimate category, that they would not be included in a complete theory of metaphysics, that they do not enter into an account of what is logically basic or ontologically primitive from a transcendental perspective.[18] This is not to say that the

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[15] Not unlike the characterization of Plato himself as he was understood by ancient commentators, including Aristotle (*Physics*, Delta 209b11-16). While Alcinous follows a tradition of understanding matter by analogy with the odorless oil used as a base or substrate in perfume, this may well be no more than an improper analogy of metaphor, expedient for instructional purposes. Even reading it as a proper analogy, it may well be that only the lack of positive qualities and the not the 'thinghood' of matter is here emphasized.

[16] Whether or not the ancient Platonists themselves made this doctrinal development, they prepared the way for idealism's thesis of the reducibility of the physical world to the mental.

[17] Kemp Smith *Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge*. p.1, quoted in Gersh and Moran (2006).

[18] Because of the negative character of idealism as a thesis about the physical world, it can be useful to think of it as Berkeley did under the name 'immaterialism'. In any case we must be careful not to confuse it with the denial of the existence of the physical world *tout court* (such confusion arguably being Kant's interpretative mistake) instead of the denial merely of the ontological independence or ultimate reality of the physical world.

physical world does not exist at all or that it is somehow not fully objective or conceptually basic in our ordinary interpretation of our sense experience. Rather, according to idealism, the physical world is objective and conceptually basic within the immanent framework of experience, *because* it is logically sustained by purely mental facts about how human sensory experience is organized. We can carefully explicate the relevant notions involved in this defining thesis as needed later on. Here it is important to notice that it is not too dissimilar from Kemp Smith's definition, that it would apply to the systems of Berkeley and Kant (and *almost* to that of Plato), but also that it allows us to have a more intensive purchase on something at the core of Christian philosophy.

With these preliminary remarks in place, let me now explain my preference for conceiving of the present work as being a project in the tradition of idealism rather than Platonism or what is sometimes called "Christian Platonism". The first reason for this preference is that I read the intellectual history of the developments of Plato's thought into Christian philosophy as a process by which the core of Plato's metaphysics, his Theory of the Forms (*Ideas*), becomes gradually transformed into something close to idealism even among Pagan philosophers, especially Stoics, Middles Platonists, and Neoplatonists. When received by Christian thinkers it is reworked in accordance with the doctrine of creation and Scriptural revelation so that the core of Plato's original metaphysics and cosmology—the doctrine of forms—is modified into an idealistic interpretation in which the forms are taken to be divinely commanded creative structuring principles of human knowledge, very similar to what Berkeley will call the "laws of Nature".[19] Plato was the first philosopher to introduce and systematically to use the term 'idea', for whom it referred to a fundamental kind of being as found in the total complex of thought, both in the change (*kinesis*) of the soul's cognitive act and the changelessness (*stasis*) of its cognitive object. The ideas or forms are thus, in a sense, not fundamental at all as they are logically entailed by the being of noetic reason (*nous*), a spiritual or immaterial principle of cognition.

The essential connection of the forms with noetic activity, especially as described in the late dialogues such as the *Sophist*, led the Marburg neo-Kantian philosopher Paul Natorp to defend an interpretation of Plato on which the forms are not entities but structuring principles or laws (*gesetze*), objectively real and valid because they are transcendentally grounded in divine goodness (what pleases the gods), but logically dependent on the activity of the cognizing intellect whose content they structure. Their *esse* is *cognoscuri*. The Middle Platonists understood Plato in this "de-mythologized" way[20], and the later ancient tradition progressively modified and developed the theory of ideas as a theory of noetic *logoi*, increasingly in the context of the relation between the divine or transcendent reality and the changing reality of the empirical cosmos. This is so among the pagan philosophers like the Stoics and

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[19] The slogan I like is "idealism is Plato purged of paganism"
[20] See John Dillon, "The Platonic Forms as *Gesetze*" in Gersh and Moran (2006).

Neoplatonists, even before the theory's full appropriation into Christian philosophy at the hands of the Alexandrian school, Nyssen, Augustine, and eventually pseudo-Dionysius.[21]

The transition of the Platonic Ideas from the abstract noetic *logoi* of a pagan metaphysics into the creative principles of Christian cosmology occurred alongside a wider transition of the principles of Platonism in their reception into the personalist metaphysics of Christian theology. The three *arche* or hypostatic principles of Platonist philosophy as systematized by Plotinus become personalized in their Christian interpretation as the Trinity, just as do the modes of activity of the causal principles of created reality become personalized. Alcinous in the *Handbook of Platonism* has an argument that qualities (*poiotētes*) are immaterial, which "no Platonist after Antiochus [of Ascalon] would have disputed" according to John Dillon.[22] The *poiotētes* of the physical world are realized by the agency of personal minds. They are essentially objects of cognition and so existentially constituted by facts of cognition.

A little earlier historically Philo Judaeus had de-mythologized the *Timaeus*'s demiurge and identified the intelligible realm with the Logos, the summation of the *spermatikoi logoi*. In a different paper, Dillon points out that "this system is thoroughly Stoic, except for the important fact that God Himself is immaterial and transcendent".[23] And the Logos (not the demiurge) *is* personalized as Son and Sophia. In Philo's *De Agricultura* 51, God is described as 'King and Shepherd', and the *logoi* as the intelligent formulae by which he commands creation into being. The transition from the Logos/Demiurge to the second person of the Trinity is taken a step further by Alcinous and Numenius, for whom Ideas are "a creative link between God and matter".[24] Porphyry's trinity of Father, Power, Intellect[25] takes over the trinity of Being-Life-Intellect from the *Sophist*[26], and by the time one arrives at Ch. 2 of Gregory Nazianzus' *Third Theological Oration*, he identifies the Holy Trinity with the monad, dyad, and triad, and the Plotinean *mone, proodos, and epistrophe*, while being careful to deny any abstract mechanical interpretation of the processional movement.[27] In Proclus's *Elements of Theology*[28] the Platonic hierarchy of being finds a place for pure created spirits, who as noetic beings are well-suited to administer the divine ideas as creative structuring principles and so sustain the physical world by organizing the

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[21] See John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to 220 A.D.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), and Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middles Ages* (Chicago:University of Chicago Press, 1983).

[22] Ibid, p.xxvii.

[23] *de Opificio Mundi*. 4.16-5.20. See John Dillon, "Logos and Trinity," in *The Great Tradition: Further Studies in the Development of Platonist and Early Christianity* (Variorum, 1998), but also Richard Sorabji, *op.cit.*, p.250.

[24] Dillon, *op.cit.*, p.7.

[25] In his *Sententiae*. See John Dillon, "Logos and Trinity: Patterns of Platonist Influence on Early Christianity," in *The Philosophy in Christianity*, G. Vesey, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1-13.

[26] Ibid, p.8

[27] See *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), p.70.

[28] Translated by E.R. Dodds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963).

(immaterial) *poiotētes* of experience. The pure spirits can perform this ministerial function because, as noetic and hence simple beings, they are self-constituted (*authupostaton*) and perpetual[29] and so capable of reversion (*epistreptikon*) upon themselves.[30] This develops a theory already found in Plotinus that the physical world is the consequence of a projection of the plurality of Ideas in *Nous* onto the sensory receptivity of immaterial human souls.[31] In Proclus, this process of immaterial noetic "projection" is now accorded to the personal agency of the pure spirits.

Augustine receives the Platonist doctrine of the creative *logos* and adapts the Platonist theory of the pure spirits or noetic beings into a Christian angelology. Like the early fathers in the tradition of Irenaeus, he is concerned to test Platonist philosophy against the truth of the revealed word. In different places Scripture seems to indicate that creation is both instantaneous and processional. According to the Book of Ben Sirach, "qui manet in aeternum creavit omnia simul".[32] So creation is from an eternal and hence instantaneous act. Yet the creation narrative of Genesis tells us that the work unfolded in sequence. So somehow, Augustine reasons, what grows, what develops, what later comes into being was "already there from the start", in some latent form. Such reasoning leads him to adopt the Stoic doctrine of seminal principles (*spermatikoi logoi*) and to see their immanent operation in the created world as the ectypal activity of the archetypal reality of the divine ideas. On Augustine's interpretation of Genesis, the 'day' of creation[33] is the act of creating spiritual intelligences of heaven, transmitting the knowledge of the divine ideas of creation to them (morning), their shared governance of the visible world (evening) in accordance with those received ideas, and the referral of praise for the glory of this work back to the Lord (morning of the next day).[34]

In developing the divine Ideas of the Platonists into exemplar causes used by the Trinity in creation through the mediation of angelic governing knowledge, Augustine also sometimes refers to God's creative *principales formae* which are *stabiles atque incommutabiles*, transcendent patterns of creation that form but are themselves unformed. God does not create new effects, neither are causes at once created and creative. So-called "secondary causes" are but occasional causes that reflect the governing influence of the spiritual powers of heaven who have been invested by God with a knowledge of the forms.[35] Like causality in the physical domain, causality in the cognitive domain is ordered by parallel archetypal and ectypal powers. While sense experience acquaints us with the secondary

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[29] Proposition 47
[30] Proposition 43
[31] Souls, *qua* immaterial minds, are themselves properly speaking, that is, transcendentally, in *Nous* as well, the experience of embodiment and egocentric spatial location itself being a result of the projection. See *Enneads* IV, 8.6.4-8.
[32] Sir 18:1
[33] "...the day that the LORD God made the earth and heavens". (Gen 2:4)
[34] *de Gen. ad. lit*. IV.28-32.
[35] Compare this suggestion with the text of Jn 5:17 – "Pater meus usque adeo operator, et ego operator".

operations of natural phenomena as produced by angelic administration, only the light of noetic reason can produce knowledge and the clarity required for justification must be provided directly by the primary agency of God. Even the psychological endowment by which we conceptually interpret the content of our experience is provided by the Creator and true judgment requires illumination, for "In your light we see light".[36]

So Augustine's Platonic hierarchy of being has a corresponding hierarchy of cognition, in which sensible/material things are passive and cannot causally effect the senses or the mind but only provide occasions for reflective understanding and other noetic acts. The Neoplatonist realms of Being, Living, and Intellect correspond to the faculties of sense, common or inner sense, and intellect, and the reflective (self-)certainties of existence, life, and understanding.[37] Augustine accepts the privacy or internal (subjectively relational) character of sensory experience, even of vision and audition. He takes seriously the epistemological underdetermination of sensory cognition and its inability to ground scientific and religious knowledge and the need to explain the justification of any form of reasoning like induction, viz., reasoning from parts to wholes, particulars to universals, or contingent truths to necessary ones, by appeal to indivisible rational principles. The higher form of cognition achieved through noetic illumination is a form of direct acquaintance for Augustine because the object known is ideal albeit objective. As in the Platonist tradition, this theory of cognition is plausible for Augustine because he has a cogent argument for the immaterial substantiality of the soul.[38]

Though taciturn on the theory of cognition, Dionysius assumes Augustine's treatment of the divine ideas as transcendent patterns of creation in his discussion of the transcendence of divine being[39], who as such causes and pre-contains all that is. For Dionysius the exemplar causes or divine ideas of things are *paradigmata logoi*, *proorismoi*, and *thelmata*. Thus they have both an intellectual and voluntative status, and are indeed unified in the simplicity of the divine essence. This too recapitulates Augustine, who says that the divine ideas are not merely *in* the divine mind and thought about in their multiplicity on some model of human cognition, rather they are in the Word, which is God's Wisdom.[40] Following both, John Scotus Eriugena[41] comes to see the divine ideas as pre-eminently contained in the simplicity of the eternal Word, referring to them variously as prototypes, predestinations, and divine volitions. For him they are (somewhat problematically) created and creative, the first way in which God who is *beyond* all being comes to know himself, but in a manner from all eternity.

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[36] Ps 36:9
[37] *De Trinitate* X.13-16
[38] Something the idealist will want to endorse explicitly. See VIII.2.
[39] *The Divine Names*, Ch. 5
[40] *de Gen. ad. lit*. II.8
[41] See Dermot Moran, "Idealism in Medieval Philosophy: The Case of Johannes Scottus Eriugena," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, 8 (1999): 53-82.

While in the Scholastic period Aquinas seems to follow in this established divine ideas tradition, there is an interpretive question as to whether or how much he retains of Augustine's theory of cognition and immaterialist Platonic metaphysics.[42] For an idealist, the important question concerns the status of his hylomorphism, particularly in regard to his use of Aristotle's formal-functional causes (*formae naturales*) and their relation to Augustine's *principales formae*. Like the mainstream of classical Platonism, idealism insists that forms can only inhere in a mind. Insofar as it would transfer the transcendence of the ideas into the operative powers of material substances in nature, hylomorphism is incompatible with this tradition. Whereas for Augustine it seems clear that the *spermatikoi logoi* are not responsible for bringing about new effects in nature and do not act as natural causes of human sensory experience[43], it is not so clear that the forms of physical substances do not do so for Aquinas. Another important interpretative question from the standpoint of assessing compatibility with idealism is the status of Aquinas' view of the soul, which on one reading goes against Augustine's Platonic view. Aquinas holds that while the rational soul is a subsistent it is not a substance because it does not form a complete nature apart from a body.[44] There are two points of contention here. One is the general point that man, as an animal and a material substance in Aristotelian science, can only have a complete nature as a hylomorphic composite. While his immaterial soul, being his substantial form, can subsist apart from his body and is incorruptible, its powers cannot operate independently of the body. The particular sticking point for Aquinas is that the faculty of sensory cognition, the soul's sensitive power, is according to him completely dependent on the bodily organs and has no *per se* operation of its own.[45]

A key component of Platonist philosophy[46] is a stratification of being into: i) a highest level of transcendent being, identified with God either in the pagan or Christian sense; ii) a level of noetic structuring principles or creative laws, described as divine ideas, *logoi*, or exemplar causes; iii) a level of pure living and life-giving spirit; and iv) a level of physical or material reality that characterizes the inhabited empirical world of human subjects. If this stratification is a mark of Platonism, then we see it as a kind of trunk from which different branches diverge. One is Christian idealism that dispenses with the level of living being as a necessarily distinct ontological category and, more crucially, explicates the ontological reducibility of the physical to the noetic in a certain way. It takes the physical world to consist in being a system of appearances organized by the imposition of certain immaterial causal constraints on the human mind in accordance with the celestial transmission of the divine ideas. In the Christian idealist

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[42] For pro-Augustinian and Platonic readings of Aquinas's theory of cognition see John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock *Truth in Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2000), and Lydia Schumacher *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).
[43] *de Gen. ad. lit.* XII.16
[44] *ST* , Ia.74.4
[45] *ST*, Ia.75.3
[46] As we have seen, following Gerson's definition of Platonism as a special king of 'topdownism'.

tradition the world-transcendent *logoi* are taken to be both noetic inasmuch as they are ordained by the divine mind (and executed by the pure intelligences of heaven) and physically creative inasmuch as their content determines the order and thematic character of human sensory experience. In this way, the *logoi* remain operative transcendentally and explanatorily prior to the physical world they encode. The resulting system of appearances, experienced as the physical world of human habitation, with its thematic character, is subject to empirical laws of nature as found in scientific investigation; yet on the idealist view these are consequential upon or logically sustained by the transcendentally operative laws of sensory organization.

While idealism does not deny the two-way causal traffic between the mind and body in the empirical order nor the fully objective and public character of the physical world, it sees itself as being in a position coherently to do so because it does not take the physical to be something that is in itself mind-independent and ontologically fundamental. It regards the empirically immanent as logically sustained by the transcendent at the level of sensory experience, the site of the genesis of our epistemic access to the empirically immanent. Since both Scholasticism and (Christian) idealism are fundamentally motivated by a desire to appreciate the reality of Christ, we may invoke a Christological metaphor. The divine and human natures of Christ are able to be unified without any admixture or confusion *because* they are unified by a divine rather than a human person. So idealism would maintain that similarly the physical can be preserved in its full integrity and lifted up into the dignity of the spiritual *because* it remains, in any created order, strictly subordinate to and ontologically dependent on the spiritual. One can understand the Scholastic temptation to see in the incarnational reality of Christ a cosmic pattern, and in following this, seeing the mind and body as synthesized into a higher unity that in sublating them equates them. But in Christ the divine and human natures are never equated nor sublated into a third nature as the monophysites and Eutychians maintained. Even in the person of Christ the asymmetric dependence of the human on the divine is an enduring reality, and the elevation of the former in the order of grace would be threatened if this dependence were disrupted. Similarly, idealism contends that the material, in all its particularity and concrete sensory immediacy, can only be justly valued and intelligibly understood if its asymmetric ontological dependence on spiritual realities is recognized.

Having traced one path of the development of Christian Platonism into Christian idealism, it is worth pausing to emphasize my intentions. The thesis as a whole is not intended to be a work of historical exegesis but a piece of concept-driven, constructive philosophical theology which draws upon key figures in the tradition on a particular reading. Similarly, in this particular case, I am only arguing that that there is available a plausible reading of the intellectual history of Platonism in which idealism may be seen as a late-stage development. Noting the fact that Platonism may be developed along the lines of Aristotelian-Scholastic metaphysics rather than that of idealism, and the historical fact itself, serves to qualify the

strength of the claim I am making. Idealism was and is a way of developing the topdownism of the Platonist worldview, but not the only way. Although I may question whether other developments are as preservative and faithful of the Platonist topdownism, my first purpose is to explore the value of idealism for Christian theology. Just as with Aristotelian-Scholastic metaphysics, idealism may be evaluated independently according to standards of conceptual coherence, economy, fecundity, and explanatory power. But even these evaluations are aided by using historical case studies as sources of evidence. Idealism is both an endogenous intellectual development of Platonism and also one that historically was precipitated by its conformity to the demands of Christian theology. Exploring these developmental moments thus serves to clarify understanding of the relevant concepts and their value. When we consider the motivations of Christian theologians and philosophers, whether in the case of Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, or Berkeley, we can expect to learn more than we would through a wholly independent and ahistorical evaluation. I am not interested in the historiography of the Platonic tradition or even in making particular exegetical claims so much as exploring and ultimately demonstrating the virtues of idealism for Christian theology, especially the dogmatics of creation.

Having invoked the theological perspective in the point above[47], we arrive at an opportunity to consider its greater significance. A likely reservation about idealism, or the idealist development of Platonism as I have described it, is that it might seem to deflate or degrade the created value of matter and the physical world. If the Incarnation (together with the doctrine of the Trinity) is the central doctrine of the Christian faith, does not idealism threaten the redemptive and eschatological significance of the body? The objection might be thought of as a charge of Gnosticism on the one hand or a charge of Origenism on the other. Indeed, it may be that this worry is what motivated Maximus the Confessor to view the spirit and body of human nature as synthesized into a personal unity and in related ways to deviate from the patristic idealist tradition as it had developed up to his time.[48] The human nature assumed by the Word in the redemption of Christ is a composite nature of body and spirit. As such, does it not follow that the body is as much a vehicle for the communication of grace as the spirit, or even that the communicated activity of grace inseparably involves both? It will be useful to have this objection in mind at the outset of my exposition, because its very force can be used against it, to intensify the attraction to idealism.

In an important sense, the "Maximian worry" anticipates a still further objection concerning transubstantiation, that the idealist, in denying the reality of material substances, is in conflict with the Tridentine constitutional formulation regarding the replacement of the substance of the eucharistic antitypes by the substance of Christ's body and blood. Here it is important to recognize several things.

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[47] In the first full paragraph of p.19.
[48] See Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus Confessor* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), IV.4.

First, in regard to the eschatological significance of the resurrected body, that the order of grace is different from the order of glory, the latter only being properly eschatological. Second, that in regard to the order of glory, revelation about the state of the body is still quite hidden. Think of the transfigured body of Christ on Mt. Tabor, John's cautioning words that we *shall* be (at the parousia) has not yet been revealed[49], and Paul's repeated reference to the distinction between the psychic body of Adamic human nature and the spiritual body that the elect shall enjoy in the post-resurrection kingdom[50], which is only analogically (and sacramentally) related to the psychic body. All of this might very well incline us to think that the body in the order of glory is finally revealed in truth to be what it is made to be *now* but we fail to recognize with our fleshly senses and fleshly minds[51]—something whose being is dependent on spirit. After all, the visible things pass away, "only the invisible things are eternal"[52], and "flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of heaven".[53]

And yet it seems clear enough that in the order of grace, the body is of the greatest importance in view of the Church's singular understanding of the Incarnation. The Word of God came to us by taking flesh in the womb, affirming every stage of biological development up to the full flower of manhood. In performing miracles, he demonstrates his transcendent power over the order of nature, but always in a way that reciprocally affirms the value of the natural order in its very conformity to his words. His Passion was certainly nothing less than the endurance of bodily torture, and medical analysis of the evangelists' testimony confirms that the "blood and water" that flowed from the pierced side of Christ on the cross is consistent with a build-up of pleural fluid around the heart as a predictable consequence of severe scourging at the center of the back, just as he is recorded to have suffered, explaining the surprise of Pilate at the quickness of Jesus' death when he realizes that the scourging was overdone.[54] In preparing his institution of the eucharist, Jesus steadfastly resisted any attempt to allegorize his teaching: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?", his followers complained, to which the insistent reply is given, "Truly I say to you, unless you *gnaw*[55] on my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you".[56] And lest his resurrection appearances be misinterpreted as ghostly apparitions, he eats with his disciples and invites them to inspect his wounds.[57] There can be no doubt, therefore, of the reality of the body of Jesus Christ in all its visceral immediacy, in his birth, death, and seat at the right hand of the Father, mediating for us as a High Priest, in communion with the Father in heaven and on earth at the sacrifice of

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[49] I John 3:2
[50] 1 Cor 15:44-46
[51] Col 2:18
[52] 2 Cor 4:18
[53] 1 Cor 15:50
[54] Mk 15:44
[55] Using the Greek verb *trogon*, rather than the less connotatively bestial *phagon*.
[56] Jn 6:51-53
[57] Jn 20:27

the Holy Mass. It follows, too, that our bodies are no less real as we are made in his image, to grow into his likeness, and that the "dust" of our bodies, their material constitution in nerve, tissue, cell, and molecule, by which they influence and are receptive to the physical world are equally real and "lifted up" through the life of the Son of Man who descends from heaven.[58]

None of this is controversial from the perspective of traditional, orthodox Christianity. In fact, all of this is merely to recount one of the main lines of emphasis of orthodox Christianity against the Christological heresies that in one way or another devalued or misconstrued the status of the human body or the flesh[59] that composes it. The genuinely controversial question is what to make of this at the level of a theory of metaphysics, so that we might understand what we believe. What does revelation teach us about what is ontologically basic, about how precisely to describe the relation between mind and matter, spirit and body, invisible and visible? Is there a clear relation of priority as Platonism maintains? Is there additionally a relation of ontological dependence as idealism maintains?[60] These are not idle questions. Addressing them would seem to be necessary for an understanding of our Lord's revelation, not only of what he taught but of who he is. The fathers and great theologians of our tradition have always recognized this and so should we if, like them, we wish to be faithful to the Gospel, in our preaching and in our worship.[61]

In Origen's 'temporal interpretation' of noetic priority within the cosmic hierarchy, matter is created after the fall of pure spirits. In reaction again this and in effort to reassert the original created goodness of matter, Maximus overcorrected in his sublation of the spiritual and the physical in the synthesis of human nature. But given this synthesis, it is not difficult to understand the Scholastic hylomorphic view as a self-conscious attempt to 'preserve' this Maximian insight. In fact, however, the purported insight confuses something the Christian idealist understanding of the Platonic hierarchy had already made clear in the time of Gregory of Nyssa and Basil[62], and it was this idealist line that was preserved in Scotus Eriugena and modernized—updated to reflect modern intellectual development in science and philosophy—in Berkeley[63], Edwards[64], Butler, and Newman.

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[58] Jn 3:13-15.

[59] It is interesting to note here the contrast between the visceral, sensory immediacy of *flesh* versus the abstract philosophical conception of *matter*. As a language that is at once holy, theological, and vulgar, Hebrew has no word corresponding to *matter* or *soma*, only the concrete *saer*, which also expresses the intimacy of kinship, as in 'blood relative' in English.

[60] And as Heb 11:3 strongly suggests.

[61] One might even say it is the founding insight of, the principal motivation for, systematic theology that as the source of truth and its authoritative teaching is a catholic unity, so how we understand one doctrine in our reflection will effect how we understand others.

[62] See C.J. McCracken, "Stages on a Cartesian Road to Immaterialism," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 24:19-30, and Richard Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion* (London: Duckworth, 1988), Ch.4.

[63] Berkeley's influence on succeeding figures like Arthur Collier is documented in H.M. Bracken, *The Early Reception of Berkeley's Immaterialism: 1710–1733* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965).

Orthodox doctrinal tradition has never deviated from the assertion of the ontological reducibility of the physical to the spiritual, of visible to invisible. The very presumption that such an assertion carries with it a Gnostic tendency, or that it does not do justice to the incarnational dimension of the Mystery of Christ, is itself telling of the danger of the Maximian/Scholastic syntheses of spirit and matter. True enough, the human soul does not temporally pre-exist its embodiment. But, thinking within the transcendental framework that is proper to theology, it is correct to say that the soul unlike the body is ontologically substantial in its memory, intellect, and will, that it is ontologically prior to the body, the latter being asymmetrically dependent on it. It can exist without the body and does so exist between death and resurrection, since the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is God of the living. This priority is not dissolved at the resurrection but is the condition of its possibility. The physical body was made to serve as the medium of participation and communion in the life of Christ and this is indeed ultimately realized in the *eschaton*. Yet the very 'mediumhood' of the body, what makes it such a medium, is that it expresses in an intelligible way the intentions of its agents. It can only do this because it is public, objective, and *logico-rubristic* or proto-sacramental. According to Christian idealism, all of these features of body as medium of communication are grounded in the sensory organization, the nomological system of control over the possible sequences of human sensory experience instituted by God and executed by angels. Just as the Mosaic law, instituted by the Word and revealed by angels, is not dissolved by the revelation of Christ, so in the *eschaton* the system of appearances is not dissolved but elevated in transparency to the glory of the Lord in the *Parousia*, as Jesus' human body was not destroyed but elevated in its transparency at the Transfiguration when, briefly, the eternal glory of the Lord broke into the temporality of creation in a perfect way.

I.3 Cosmos and Eucharist: A Starting Point in Liturgical Theology

In the present work I want to suggest that an expositional metaphysics for a theology of the eucharist is found in phenomenalistic idealism, an idealism centered on the creative hierarchical relation of the Lord to man as its essential core. In the previous sections I introduced, interrogated, and specified some of the philosophical terms of my thesis. Here in this section I want to do the same for some of the key theological terms. In the next section and final section I will engage in some methodological reflection.

In carrying out a project of theology internal to the life of faith, arising from the shared personal life of worship in the Church, the question I want to answer is this: given the vision of the complete shape of the liturgy, in its fullness and unity *par excellence*—the eucharistic synaxis, or Mass—what kind of

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[64] See especially "Of Being" and "Mind" in Jonathan Edwards' *Works*, Various eds. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957–)

created order—of space, time, and matter—must the Lord establish so that the very movement of creation is attuned in all its springs and workings to that shape, to facilitate it, to condition it in its full potential, and to make it possible and intelligible? Any answer here should be able to explain how God's creation is directed towards the goal of establishing the body of Christ, the community of Christian disciples, in its essentially liturgical constitution, centered on the reality of the eucharistic sacrament. For by it, in the words of Pope Pius XII, "this union [of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ with its Head] during this mortal life receives, as it were, a culmination".[65]

Given this explanatory condition, we should expect any answer to conform to the canon of *mysterium fidei*[66] in regard to the eucharistic mystery. Whatever our theology of the eucharist, it should reflect an awareness of the theology as it has been in the whole scope of tradition, from the Platonist mimesis theology of the early Church, from Thomas' sacramental theology, to Tridentine and later understanding. When the Church adopted the spirit of the Liturgical Movement and accepted for her own the views of its scholars, especially in Pius XII's *Mediator Dei* and the conciliar *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, she already gave this critical and comprehensive theological understanding an authoritative formulation. At the bottom of this understanding is the impulse to say that the worship of the Church is the essential mode of its participation in the Mystery of Christ. Therefore this should be our starting point not only for any wider theology of the sacraments and liturgical activity, but, at least occasionally, for our systematic treatment of doctrine, especially those doctrines that can be shown directly to relate to the same mystery.

In the neo-patristic tradition of liturgical theology influential on the French School, but appropriated authentically in the 20th century liturgical school of Maria-Laach, Dom Casel, Dom Warnach, Dom Dix, Pius XII, Louis Bouyer and the wider Liturgical Movement, and ultimately by the Church in Vatican II's Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy, we accept that "the Mystery of Christian Worship is the core of the entire Catholic liturgy, the re-enactment in, by, and for the Church of the Act of Our Lord which accomplishes our Salvation", and "the central property of the liturgy…is the unique mode in which Christ's redeeming act is permanently renewed and partaken of by the Church. Understanding this mode is the very clue to the understanding of the whole liturgy".[67] The mode is not theatrical, not imaginative, nor physically realistic (viz., a repetition of the historical sacrifice). What then is this mode of renewal and participation? Again in the words of Pius XII:

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[65] *De Mystici Corporis Christi*, 81.
[66] Or as it is often put, invoking the famous phrase of the *De Gratia Dei Indiculus*: "*Legem credendi statuat lex supplicandi*".
[67] *Mediator Dei*

The holy liturgy, therefore, is the public worship which is offered to the Father by our Redeemer as Head of the Church; it is also the worship offered by the society of the faithful to its Head, and through Him to the Eternal Father; in a word, it is the whole worship of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is the Head and its members.[68]

And Bouyer, referring to Pius XII tells us:

The liturgy…is hierarchical because it is carried out in dependence on the hierarchical ministry of the Church and because it is closely connected with the proclamation of saving Truth which was committed to the same apostolic ministry.[69]

This is to say that the received word of truth is what constitutes the corporate body of worship, so that liturgical functions go hand in hand with the greater ministerial functions. The words of life entrusted to the apostles, and through them to lower ministers, are what nourish and create the body of the Church. The apostles (or their vicars in the episcopate) are the organs of the body. The words are its life-blood.

Christ, the one Mediator, established and continually sustains here on earth His holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity, as an entity with visible delineation through which He communicated truth and grace to all. But, the society structured with hierarchical organs and the Mystical Body of Christ, are not to be considered as two realities, nor are the visible assembly and the spiritual community, nor the earthly Church and the Church enriched with heavenly things; rather they form one complex reality which coalesces from a divine and a human element. For this reason, by no weak analogy, it is compared to the mystery of the incarnate Word. As the assumed nature inseparably united to Him serves the divine Word as a living organ of salvation, so, in a similar way, does the visible social structure of the Church serve the Spirit of Christ, who vivifies it, in the building up of the body.[70]

Inner subjective piety must not be suppressed but fed on the "objective content of Christian faith and the sacraments, in other words, upon the Mystery". "Feed my lambs"[71]—is not only an injunction but a part of instituting a hierarchical provision for the sacramental distribution of the Mystery. Traditional forms of devotion and asceticism are to be encouraged, but their mode of operation works from the outside in, and

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[68] *Mediator Dei*, 20
[69] Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956), ch.3, p.35.
[70] *Lumen Gentium*, 8
[71] Jn 21:15

this is complementary to the action of the sacraments, which works from the inside out. The Incarnation, the assumption of a human nature by the hypostasis of the Word of God, communicates the graces of his divine essence through the mystical corporate communion of the human essence.

In Bouyer's neo-patristic theology, supported by his extensive historical scholarship, the catholic liturgical-hierarchical identity of the Church is founded on the liturgical-hierarchical identity of the cosmos itself. The cosmos is (and in proper idealist fashion, I would want to emphasize, is nothing over and above) a revelation of the word. The visible portion is the revelation of the word to man. This first step in understanding what this means is to note that the traditional conception of the liturgical identity of the Church described above is bound up with the great Biblical theme of the People of God. Bouyer traces this to its origins in the covenant theology of the Old Testament and the *Qahal Yahweh*[72], the great liturgical assembly in Exodus 19 when the Israelites become holy, God's kin, simultaneous with their hearing the proclaimed word of God from Moses, making thanks and praise to him and sealing their liturgical response with sacrifice. Only on two other occasions is such a great *Qahal* recorded: when Josiah convenes the people of Judah to hear the newly uncovered Book of the Law and renew the covenant under the presiding of Hilkiah the High Priest[73]; and again when the scribe Ezra calls the people to hear his newly made Bible, when the released captives had been freed to return to the ruins of the holy city. Bouyer goes on to argue that because in the post-Exilic period this was transposed to the observance of the Sabbath and the Jewish meal prayers, the *Berakot*, this was the interpretative context for the institution of the Christian Eucharist at the Last Supper in the Apostolic period. He thus explains the continuity of the early Christian Mass with the Biblical theme of covenant holiness, as found in both the universal and domestic character of the Jewish family and the ancient Jewish liturgical cult, with its hierarchy and grounding in angelic cosmology.

Patristic evidence for the same theme, and the claim that the early Church understood the eucharistic liturgy in just this way, is abundant. Just to mention one source briefly, consider the apostolic age text of *1 Clement*. The immediate occasion for Clement's writing is to chastise the local church of Corinth for taking it upon themselves to depose their appointed presbyters. In order to establish the injustice of this action Clement builds a complex but consistently sustained argument that the legitimacy of the ordained Church hierarchy derives from Jesus Christ, the revealed word of God, by way of apostolic authority through its own hierarchical distribution of ministerial offices; that this was in turn derived from the hierarchy of the ancient Jewish priestly-prophetic tradition; and that this was in turn derived from the liturgical character of the celestial hierarchy; all of which is grounded and unified as a

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[72] Bouyer, *loc. cit.* The "assembly" or "church" of God. The Hebrew *qahal* is translated as *eccelesia* in the Septuagint.
[73] 2 Chr 23:1-4

whole in the sovereignty of the Divine Lord, who rules the cosmos as he rules the Church. The parallels between legitimate local worship, the hierarchy of the apostolic ministry of preaching and the celestial liturgical hierarchy are not accidental. Whether visible or invisible, the hierarchy of salvation ministry goes hand in hand with the hierarchy of the liturgy. Thus Clement does not hesitate to invoke theme of the People of God in all its cosmic significance, even as it unfolds personally in the life of the individual:

> Whither then shall one depart, or where shall one flee, from Him that
> embraceth the universe? Let us therefore approach Him in holiness of soul, lifting up pure and
> undefiled hands unto Him, with love towards our gentle and
> compassionate Father who made us an elect portion unto Himself.
> For thus it is written: *When the Most High divided the nations, when He*
> *dispersed the sons of Adam, He fixed the boundaries of the nations*
> *according to the number of the angels of God. His people Jacob*
> *became the portion of the Lord, and Israel the measurement of His*
> *inheritance.* And in another place He saith, *Behold, the Lord taketh for Himself*
> *a nation out of the midst of the nations, as a man taketh the first*
> *fruits of his threshing floor; and the holy of holies shall come*
> *forth from that nation.*

But he does so finally to make the concrete point about order of the local community:

> Unto the High Priest his special "liturgies" have been appointed…let each of you brethren
> (including laity) make eucharist to God according to his own order, keeping a good conscience,
> and not transgressing the appointed role of his "liturgy".[74]

The same Lord who first called Israel and established a correspondence between the numbers of men and angels, even he, so Clement implies, and as Bouyer and Dom Dix point out, has instituted these rules of ecclesiastical governance. The Church eucharist is a corporate action depending on the cooperation of each order. Such offering to God is the Church's defining activity.

According to Dix, the unity of the eucharist requires a unified logical development or "shape", the structure of which should express the function of each order, in which all faithful are in common agreement, of one mind. This constitution is enabled by the Spirit but enacted by the divine command of

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[74] 1 Clement 40, 41

Christ at the Last Supper, "Do this" (*poieite*—plural form).[75] Enrico Mazza points out that in accordance with the "mimesis" theology of the early Church (especially, perhaps, of the Roman Church), the rite of the eucharistic liturgy was understood to be identical with the Last Supper, an ontological possibility intentionally instituted by Jesus's "Do this" command, and realized by the liturgical assembly as it fulfills that religious duty.[76]

Nor was Dix alone in this view. Per Chrysostom[77], the word of Christ at the Last Supper was efficacious "once and for all", like the words of creation in Genesis. So the Mass of the Church is a liturgical sacrament that identifies us through anamnesis (of the Holy Spirit) with or mystically represents the Last Supper, again because of the sacramentally creative and singularly efficacious words of Christ— "Do this in memory of me", and the Last Supper is itself the sacrament of the eschatological supper, the marriage/banquet feast of the bride/kingdom won on the Cross. Thus the earthly liturgy does not imitate the heavenly and the heavenly does not imitate the earthly. They both imitate the Last Supper and in so doing they participate hierarchically in the cosmic unity, the body-cosmos, the eschatological liturgy, the song of praise of the Last Day, the new creation, each according to his office, his membership in the body.

The idea of the eucharist as the eschatological sacrament takes the shape of the liturgy and fills it in with certain thematic details. First is the creative power of the commanding and eulogizing Word, the arch-form of all liturgical directives. Second is the expressive, dialogical, relational, or symbolic character of the body—"This is my body". This tells us what body/matter/soma is. Third, it follows that if body is symbolically expressive or expressive in a way that can be shared, then it is word made flesh. But the Word makes himself flesh. Christ is the self-expression of God, God's theology. So body is the word spoken by God. It is not material in the sense of a mind-independent spatial medium, a substrate or a principle of individuation. But if body is not material it is spiritual or as we would say *mental*, not analytically or conceptually, but metaphysically. If we can receive it and indeed share in it and its creative power then we must do so in virtue of our minds, even if this mental sharing and reception is itself expressed in bodily images, in words made flesh. This does not diminish the body. It uplifts it.

In the Liturgical Movement's view[78] the constitutional shape of the Church's liturgy is perfected for all time in the sacramental reality of the Last Supper. It is thus the shape of the liturgy in any time period, from the first assembly of the People of God when they received the Mosaic law to the current

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[75] Dionysius's exposition in *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of the rite of synaxis is a reflection of this early Apostolic description of the eucharistic liturgy, as are the other patristic mystagogies.

[76] Hence no need for an epiclesis in the eucharistic prayer, as none appears in the early Church liturgies.

[77] *De proditione Judae hom*. 1/2, 6, PG 49:389-390

[78] Bouyer, *loc.cit.*, especially credits the Swedish scholar Yngve Brillioth's *Eucharistic Faith and Practice Evangelical & Practice* (London: SPCK, 1930), pp.18-69.

rites of the Mass.[79] Therefore any liturgical theology that would seek support in the doctrine of creation should understand the four elements of the Mass and their "consubstantiality"—mystery—as enshrined in the mold of creation: communion (*communio sanctorum*), sacrifice, eucharist, and memorial (*memorio Christi*). The first two elements show us 'society in condenscension'. The last two show us 'society in con-ascension'. From these two groups we can derive the two great cosmic movements from the shape of the liturgy. Condescension is the agapic ecstasy of the Creator, the Christian *proodos* (the *pro odos*, the "foresong" of creation, the chanted liturgical rite of heaven that will become the victory hymn of salvation). Con-ascension is the erotic ecstasy of the creature, the Christian *epistrophe*, the worshipful turning of the heart in the Church's life of grace.[80] The eucharistic element is anagogic and anaphoric. The memorial element, in line with the work of Protestant theologians like Brilliot[81] and Jeremias[82], must be understood as it was in the early Church theology. That is, memorial is not a reminiscing of deeds in the past but a supernatural identification with those deeds in the eschatological present. The Last Supper and Cross are not simply remembered or repeated but they pull, or rather the activity of Christ in them pulls, us through the liturgical celebration into his Passover. There is also of course a secondary and derivative sense of the memorial element in the temporal, recollective, '*attentio*' dimension appopriate to finite creation in the life of the Church, though strictly speaking this does not belong to the eucharistic celebration as such. In the expansive life of the world in the Church, it is essential to human receptivity of Christ's economic communication of his Paschal Mystery. The repetitive character of the laws of nature is one of their marks as laws. This may be derived from their liturgical quality, just as our temporal liturgical works, our calendar and offices, prayers and psalms, are repetitive, though their goal is the very overcoming of this worldly temporal repetition as they enfold the created order into the sacred service of the Church.

By taking all of this as our starting point, as the focus of our interpretive lens, we may examine the eulogistic nature of the created order and see in it a prologue or prefatory[83] dialogue to the creation of the visible Church, the human Church on earth. And since the Church is one, this means that the eulogistic, hierarchic, and katabatic-ministerial character of the order in fact betokens its liturgical character; what is more, finally, that it is a kind of eucharistic synaxis and, in light of ours, ultimately a unified Mass together with us, by the Word of God in the unity of the Spirit. There is no way adequately to describe the Mystery that is the essence of the Church's worship, not in philosophical language or in any other parlance. It contains within its own activity a kerygmatic dimension. As the Sacrament of the

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[79] And, to anticipate myself, this is so even before the visible world began, in the heavenly liturgy
[80] The two movements will be important elements of the appropriation of Platonism into Christian idealism for the work of the following chapters, as they were historically.
[81] *In loc. cit.*
[82] Joachim Jeremias *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 2011).
[83] In the double sense of 'before', temporal but also 'in front of' (the presence of God).

Word in his Church, it speaks for itself. Worship is the reception, creative action, and return of the Word of God[84], its sowing, flowering, and harvesting. But so fruitful is this Mystery that it colors and shapes all human activity that encircles it, and especially the rational activity of the mind that seeks in love and joyful expectation to prepare itself for the feast.

So the shape of the liturgy, the elements of the Mass, the identity of the Church as the People of God, the liturgy's historical and actual angelic cosmology, and the wider vision of a "sacramental universe" implicated in the Church's liturgical identity draws us to a cosmic theology, a theology of creation that is informed in its first impulse and in all unfolding details by the eucharistic theology of our Church in its living, concrete reality, informed by the Roman Canon, the anaphora of the *Novus Ordo*, and other eucharistic prayers of living practice. Any elaboration of this theology will require a companion philosophy that can justify its claims and make them systematically coherent. Over the course of the present work I want to recommend and develop such a philosophy in Christian idealism, because of the traditional way in which it conceives of the God-world relation, the spirit-matter relation, the way it makes the relation of substance and appearance found in transubstantiation a genuine *mysterium fidei*, the way in which it shows the heavenly and earthly church are pre-eminently unified in Christ's sacramental *operator*, even in the order of nature, as the physical world is ontologically realized in the way the angelic liturgy of the word hierarchically participates in the Mystery of the Incarnate Logos by ordering the system of human sensory appearances.

Benedict XVI writing as Cardinal Ratzinger in the *Spirit of the Liturgy*[85] says that liturgical theology is symbolic theology. Liturgy works on the mid-level between historical reality and the *eschaton* of the Paschal Mystery; and also between the 'false day' (in what was mistakenly believed to "open the eyes") of the original sin and estrangement from God and the new day of the Sun of Righteousness, in the dawn of the day star, in the luminous darkness of Sinai and Tabor. This is a period of symbolic intelligence, in which perceptible symbols remain, but now open up to the invisible realities they contain. This is the sacramental period; the veil of the temple is rent, but we have not fully entered into the sanctuary, remaining in the court (at best, during the liturgy). This transformative process, occuring within Church worship is what he calls '*logike latreia*', the "logicizing" or spiritualizing of man within the liturgy, using the word *logike* in the ancient Greek sense, similar to that of '*oblationem rationabilem*' in the *Quam oblationem* of the Roman Canon, a 'spiritual offering'.[86] In the liturgy we pray to God to eulogistically make of us such an offering together with his Son.

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[84] "For as the rain and snow come down from heaven…So will my Word be which goes forth from my mouth... It will not return to me empty" (Isaiah 55:10-11).
[85] *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000).
[86] 1 Pet 2:5

I.4 On Angelic Cosmology and Method

One of the most striking supplications in the Roman canon is the following text from the Post-Consecration Epiclesis:

> Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens Deus, iube hæc perferri per manus sancti Angeli[87] tui in sublime altare tuum, in conspectu divinæ maiestatis tuæ; ut quotquot ex hac altaris participatione sacrosanctum Filii tui Corpus et Sanguinem sumpserimus, omni benedictione cælesti et gratia repleamur. (Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen
> (*Humbly we implore you, almighty God, command that these gifts be borne by the hands of your holy Angel(s) to your altar on high in the presence of your divine majesty, so that all of us, who through this participation at the altar receive the most holy Body and Blood of your Son, may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing.* [*Through Christ our Lord. Amen*]).

The explicit invocation of the cultic function of the angels, at this juncture of the prayer, after the memorial invocation of the sacrifices of Old Testament righteous and before the commemoration of the dead, is a vivid mystical representation of the unity of the cosmic Church. The cultic function of the angels in particular reminds us of the apocalyptic vision of the angel with the golden censer performing the heavenly liturgy of the saints[88] and the intercessory liturgical function of Raphael in the Book of Tobit.[89] The action of the anaphora, in this epiclectic moment, which is the work of Christ in the presiding minister, effects a union of the People of God through the cooperation of the angels, not only those on earth, but the truly catholic People, the cosmic whole whom God has made his own, on earth and under the earth, in participation with the court of heaven, the same we wait upon to descend from heaven, the New Jerusalem. This vision has unfolded in salvation history stepwise with the revelation of the word and God's purpose in creation of making a people his own, making spiritual creatures to be like Him.

In his *Mystagogy*[90], Enrico Mazza remarks that in Theodore of Mopsuestia's mystagogical homilies the earthly liturgy does not relate to the heavenly by way of participation and the angels contribute nothing to effecting their eschatological union, which is solely achieved by the redemption of Christ. Yet Theodore's understanding is rather exceptional in this regard. In Chrysostom's homilies, the idea of cosmic liturgical participation is quite explicit. In commenting on the baptismal rite he says:

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[87] The oldest known version of the text found in Ambrose's *De Sacramentiis* has the plural "angels".
[88] Rev 8:3
[89] Tob 12:12
[90] *Mystagogy: A Theology of Liturgy in the Patristic Age* (Pueblo Pub Co., 1989).

The angels who are standing by and the invisible powers rejoice at your conversion, receive the words from your tongues, and carry them up to the common Master of all things. There they are inscribed in the books of heaven.[91]

This idea is also explicitly contained in the *Cherubikon*, the hymn for the offertory procession that begins the eucharistic Liturgy of the Faithful in the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, "let us [we faithful assembled here] *mystically represent* the cherubim, that we may sing the thrice-holy hymn [the Sanctus of the anaphora, which will follow in due course] to the life-giving Trinity". Explicit references to the interaction of the angels with the celebration of the eucharist are mentioned in all of the historically significant rites[92], from the Canon of the Roman Missal, the (other) eucharistic prayers of the Novus Ordo, the anaphora of the (Alexandrine) Liturgy of St. Mark[93] and that of the *Apostolic Constitution*. Indeed, in the case of the Roman canon, the reference is quite detailed. The inclusion of the *Sanctus* itself is a theological commentary and what is happening in the eucharistic rite, and even before its inclusion in the ancient liturgies there was already such a theology. If Bouyer is right, the Jewish *berakot* and *tefillim* that are continued in the Apostolic writings, already contained such an understanding.[94]

In what follows—particularly in Chapters II, IV, XIII, IX— I shall be exploring the thesis that the angel spirits, the pure intelligences of heaven, play a cooperative role in the creation of the visible world, a role that is liturgically executed and included within their ministry of salvation. Put concisely, the argument I make in each of these chapters is this. If we already believe, as the revealed content of faith, that the angels participate in God's ministry of salvation to man, that they perform a liturgical office and worship the Creator, and that they execute a mediating control over the phenomena of nature (all of which has strong Scriptural support), then we ought to be well-motivated theologically to seek to understand the unity of these roles. I aim to show that the metaphysics of idealism can facilitate just such an understanding.

Here it may be worthwhile to step back and say something to address the likely concern, as much instinctive as reflective, that there is something fanciful and non-academic, something out-of-place, *gauche* even, in writing about angels. Every reader will at least be aware of the potential for such a response in general, even if she does share it herself. And speaking generally, I think this presents current

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[91] Stav 2,20, quoted in Mazza, p.125

[92] Including rites other than the eucharistic. Tertullian in *On Baptism* refers to the mediating cooperation of the angel at baptism, conferring the waters with the "power of healing". This reminds us of the pool of Bethsaida in Jn 5:4. "They [the angels] used to work temporal salvation, now [in the sacramental age instituted by Christ] eternal; they used to give freedom from illness once a year, but now they daily save communities, death being destroyed by the washing away of sins…".

[93] Text in A. Haanggi and I. Pahl (eds.) *Prex eucharstica. Textus et variis liturgiis antiquoribus selecti,* Spicilegium Friburgense (Friborg, 1968), 435, as cited in Mazza.

[94] Bouyer, *Eucharist*, Chs.IV-V.

theology with a useful measurement of just where it stands in regard to its recent past and the reception of its traditional heritage; a way to gauge just how *post*-liberal, how consistent it is in its current make-up in recognizing the errors of modernism in its historicist biblical hermeneutics and eschewal of metaphysics; and a benchmark for how far a theology of *ressourcement* has been carried out. In this self-examination we should think through whether our suspicions or skepticism about angels is the product of a sustained inquiry made in intellectual honesty, or an obeisance to the 'practical' social exigencies of the secular culture in which we live and work. And if we think we have set ourselves free of such coercion in some aspects of our faith, do we have good reasons for bracketing the traditional teaching in regard to angels?

Can we worship in the eucharistic liturgy and believe that what we are doing is not joining in some civic social event or meeting up with neighbors to lift our sentiments, but actually *worshiping*, hearing the word of God, sacrificing to Him, and being sacramentally changed into His Word—can we believe all of this and yet believe that when we sing the *Sanctus* that this alone merely represents some fanciful sentiment that perhaps helps to focus our minds in the right way? How did we learn to sing the *Sanctus*? Was Isaiah writing about an authentic oracular vision, a God-given revelation inspired by the Holy Spirit, but then quietly interspersing something of his own invention and dressing it up for effect? Can we believe that the Lord is really present and in sacrificial communion with us but without his angels? Do we believe in the communion of saints, but only *human* saints? Can we believe that Scripture is authoritative but that the hundreds of explicit and detailed references to angels, uniformly distributed throughout the canon and bound up with almost every significant narrative of salvation history from the Fall to the last vision of the New Jerusalem, the mysteries of the Gospel from the Annunciation, Nativity, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, are again somehow to be bracketed and set aside to be subject to the historicist interpretation that we reject for all other cases? On what basis is it exactly that we think Augustine and Aquinas are to be taken seriously when they write about law and ethics, sin and grace, salvation and the Trinity, but not when they write about angels? Do we really believe that Christ has won for us the victory over death, and therefore that the soul is separated from the body at death, but that there could not be spirits who were never embodied in the first place? Are Adam and Christ the only sons of God?

These remarks also provide me with an opportunity to reflect on method. If I am not doing 'speculative theology' in the pejorative sense nor history of ideas or liturgy, and not high systematic theology in the most conventional and expected sense, what then is the method? Here I think it is important to realize that there is no contradiction in a method that recognizes: on the one hand, that theology has a primary and ultimate dependence on God's revelation—that any value found in the human work of theology is merely the influx of the truth of God's own theology, namely his incarnate Word, into the human mind; and on the other hand, that we should make a (at least locally) systematic effort to

discursively reason about and form a set of concrete inferences about some theological subject—in our case the connection between liturgy and the metaphysics of creation—that represents our current best efforts to receive, interpret, and coherently articulate what we take to be the consequences of the word of God as it has been given to us so far. These conclusions may even be things we want to regard as principles and organize into a more or less systematic metaphysics, without them ceasing be, for all that, provisional and continuously open both to criticism and new revelation. In fact not only are these points non-contradictory, we might well say that *in order* to honor our unconditional theological dependence on the one great Theologian, we must be as expressive and explicit about our current understanding of his teaching as we can be, lest we deceive ourselves and remain in or fall into some prejudice that would be effective by being hidden.[95]

Accepting this, I can say that the method here to be used is that of speculative theology, not in the more contemporary pejorative sense of an airy, idiosyncratic musing that takes the articles of faith as a jumping off point. Rather it is that of the more traditional sense of seeking fullness of faith through faith, or a reflective seeking of the fullness of truth by truth. As the spiritual pursuit of 'contemplation', taken in the classical sense, this is how Clement of Alexandria[96] defines faith itself, as "an insight through grace", as "a wisdom working through itself". The goal of this method is what in the early Church was called *gnosis*. While it was understood that such knowledge may be presented as a scientific reconstruction of faith, because it is the product of reflection, the subject worked on is not a set of concepts handed to us but "something united to us, rooted in us, living, and expanding life". What distinguishes genuine theological knowledge of the orthodox or traditional kind from the heretical versions (most prominently that of the early Gnostics who used the same term) is precisely that it never asserts itself or its own claims against the wholeness of truth as preserved in the Church up to that time. Speculative theology is individual but not egotistical. Only by working from the interior of the Church, with a faith formed within it and constantly united to it in its wholeness, can faith journey into *gnosis*, into a scientific knowledge that has any chance of being universal and so preserving its identity across times and places, into what we would call an orthodox systematic theology. And yet it must proceed from individual efforts of original theological speculation because ultimately the "confession of the Church" is "the *total and original speculation* of believers, as the unmediated portrayal of their inner, total faith".[97]

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[95] In formulating the methodological point this way I am following Karl Rahner, "The Hermeneutics of Eschatological Assertion," in *Theological Investigations*,vol. 4, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore, Md.: Helicon, 1966), p.328, who writes "whoever rejects *metaphysical* considerations and principles in theology, as being incompatible with the word of God and his sovereign dominion, does not in fact set himself free for the unchallenged lordship of the word of God, but becomes the slave of unspoken and hence more dangerous metaphysical prejudices".

[96] *Miscellanies*, 2.2, quoted in Moehler, "Unity in Diversity," in *Unity in the Church*, p.175

[97] Op. cit. p.179

Part A – Making the Theological Case for Idealism: The Conceptual Content in Traditional Context

Chapter II: A World as Liturgical Language

II.1 Introduction: Trinitarian Themes

In the last chapter I located the present work in relation to certain focal points of interest to theologians, including creation metaphysics, history of Christian philosophy, and liturgical theology. I introduced the driving question of the thesis: What does God need to produce in creation, and with what organization and system of governance, in order to accomplish his predestined purpose in Christ? What sort of space, time, and matter does God need to make in order to make the Eucharist? In sections 2 and 3 of this chapter I ask after what it means to consider the character of creation in this way. If creation is the outer action of the Word's eternal eucharist to the Father, we should expect this to be reflected in the character of creation, coordinated around the mystery of the Cross and ordered to its celebration. To explicate this idea, I introduce the notion of the absolute primacy of Christ and its relation to the biblically revealed angelic ministry. In sections 4 and 5 I argue that by taking transubstantiation as a *mysterium fidei* in the traditional sense, and so as a canon for theological reflection, one becomes motivated to adopt an idealist metaphysics in order to account for the unity and continuity of the sacramental and creation economies. If God's consecratory activities in the sacraments are able to effect the work of our redemption, then, on pain of seeing the economy of redemption separated from the economy of creation, we should aim to understand 'substantiation' on the same model as transubstantiation. This would be to regard the mysteriousness of the Eucharistic sacrament as anticipatory in the very objectivity of the physical world.

In Von Balthasar's trinitarian theology, the cosmic centrality of the Son's eucharistic sacrifice to the Father, the Paschal Mystery of the Cross, is regarded as a temporally interpolated stage in the eternal life of the Trinity itself, the Son's eternal response to the Father, which is "made in absolute spontaneity and in absolute 'obedience'. Both take place in a generous, eucharistic availability [*Geloestheit*] that matches the limitless proportions of the divine nature".[1] For many trinitarian theologians, it is tempting to say that it is from these intra-trinitarian relations that creation derives its reason for being and its purposive end. For the Father's full self-expression in the Son has its counterparts in the Son's eternal truth of all things, their knowledge and delight in this Truth, and the diverse way in which the goodness of this knowledge may be enjoyed forever.

The Father expresses his own fullness in the Son, so that the Son imitates God (his "world of ideas") in every possible way. At the same time, we must maintain that the Son, in responding to

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[1] *Theo-Drama, Theological Dramatic Theory, Vol.IV: The Action*, Graham Harrison, trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), p.330.

and accepting his Father's self-giving, is ready to pour *himself* forth in any way the Father may determine.[2]

Given the plan to bring about creatures endowed with freedom, the ultimate form of the pouring-forth will be that of the Eucharist, which, as we know it, is intimately connected with the Passion, *pro nobis*. This "readiness", or active, eager obedience, can and must also be understood as a spontaneous "offer", so that there be no question of the Son being "forced" to do something by a will that is exclusively the Father's. Creation, if it is to be free, can only be envisaged and decided upon[3] by the entire triune God; it follows that this decision must be regarded as standing from all eternity. This being so, we are justified in thinking backwards from the Eucharist—the Son's ultimate self-giving—to the covenant that it makes possible, and from there again to the creation that gains its meaning from the covenant. Covenant and creation are not only rendered possible by the Son's "eucharistic" response to the Father, they are "surpassed" by it, since both of them can only become reality within the embrace of the Son's response.

One of the major themes of the present work is the suggestion that a systematic Christian cosmology ought to understand the divine offer to participate in the eucharistic life of the Trinity, poured forth on creation through the Son, in the Spirit, as providentially extended to all rational creatures. Going a step further, we might wish to say that not only is the reason and wherefore of creation implied in the intra-trinitarian relations, but also a created order of certain kind, a community of free, intelligent creatures who may, according to a harmonious arrangement of the whole, match the eucharistic response of the Son in various limited but ultimately unified ways. To anticipate a concept to be understood more fully in Ch.IV, this is to say that there is an implication of hierarchical movement in the eucharistic logic of the Trinitarian relations, and so of a cosmic hierarchy, a systematic framework at the foundations of the creation intended to facilitate the Eucharist, a world within a Church of angels and men.

Scripture tells us not only that God makes all of creation, that it remains absolutely and continuously dependent on him as its sovereign, but that he makes it in a very peculiar way: he makes it through *words*, that is, by *speaking it into existence*. Consider the following:

Let all your creatures serve you; for you spoke and they were made. (Judith 16:14)

The stars shone in their watches and were glad; he called them, and they said, 'Here we are!' They shone with gladness for him who made them. (Bar 3:34)

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Or perhaps "purposively intentioned" would be a better phrase, to more clearly avoid any suggestion of deliberation, which is a mark of spiritually defective nature.

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth. Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood forth. (Ps 33:6,9)

These passages cannot be interpreted anthropomorphically, as if a collection of material elements "listens to" and then complies with the order of the Lord as an army obeys its commander (after all, the "host" is made from the breath of his mouth—they are invisible spirits). Rather these passages tell us that his command *is* the creation, the *esse* of matter is the fiat-logos of the Creator, plain and simple. Already we have the strong suggestion that the physical world is not ontologically fundamental, that it is constituted by the particular facts of divine ordinance. We also have the suggestion that there is an order of execution in the creative commands, wherein the heavenly intelligences, who are spirits made directly from the breath of God, are the bearers and executors of the creative commands, resulting in the *standing forth in awe*, or liturgical ontological establishment, of worldly creatures. Already we have the hint that the hymn of glory is inscribed in creation. But if creation does not sing on its own, anthropomorphically, as an overly literal reading of Old Testament poetic theology would suggest, how exactly is the earth filled with the glory of the Lord? In the words of Pope John Paul II,

This hymn of glory, inscribed in creation, awaits a being capable of giving it adequate conceptual and verbal expression, a being who will praise the holy name of God and narrate the greatness of his works (cf. Sir 17:8). This being in the visible world is man. The appeal which goes up from the universe is addressed to him as the spokesman of creatures and their interpreter before God.[4]

Interestingly, the concept of anthropomorphism is the key to the riddle; not in the sense of the mistaken belief that nature is already animate or spiritual like man, but in that nature is made to be uplifted by man in the his liturgical ministry. But Scripture and tradition teach that man's liturgical office through the creation medium is enjoined to one already in progress. The whole interaction between man and nature is itself already the ministerial work of the celestial liturgy. Just as man is made to be spiritualized through the angelic ministry of salvation commissioned by Christ, so the earthly domain below man in the chain of being is made to be anthropomorphized through man's liturgical ministry. In both cases, the liturgical ministry is one in which the higher serves the lower as a sacrifice of praise to the Creator. The visible half of creation that we call 'nature', while seemingly 'governed' by laws that are independent of us, in fact has its very order as a result of and in subordination to the mental dialogue between God and his intelligent creatures. The nature of this fundamental relationship, so characterized, is what the systematic theologian seeks to expose. The metaphysics of idealism will serve to focus on the status of creation as a

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[4] John Paul II, "Creation Reveals God's Glory", from *Catechesis on Creation*, 1986.

liturgical medium of communication and anagogy among God and his rational worshipers. It gives clear voice to the idea that nature is a system of accommodated revelation, measured words made through and for the eternal Eucharist of the immeasurable Word.

II.2 Logos Cosmology and the Absolute Primacy of Christ

In Scripture we are told that it is the Word of God, which is also intimately related if not identical to his Wisdom, through, by, and for whom all things are linguistically made.

> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. (John 1:3)

> …for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. (Col 1:16)

> but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. (Heb 1:2)

> O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. (Ps 104:24)

> He has ordained the splendours of his wisdom. (Sir 42:21)

Thus Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, as the coeternal Logos of John's prologue is the word that God speaks in sustaining all of creation. Chapter 8 of Proverbs confirms this in revealing to us that Christ is the divine Wisdom that, as one of the Trinity, was the motivation and instrument for the Father's act of creation in the Spirit.[5]

The mystery of Christ as the creative Word, then, in all its multiform significance is the key to any understanding of the doctrine of creation. For my purposes—and given the liturgical focus established in I.3, in which the Church in its living tradition is the People of God constituted by the Word—this will amount to two recurring points of emphasis: that the created order manifests the sovereignty of the Lord as a living, personal command that *goes forth*[6] with the causal efficacy to transform that which receives it; and that the goodness of the divinely ordered creative purpose reaches its comprehensive and unifying fullness in Christ, the ultimate living, personal command that goes forth

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[5] "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old…Then I was by him, *as* one brought up *with him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing always before him". (Prv 8:22, 30)
[6] Is 55:11, *cf*. Ps 19:1-5.

among whom he creates to draw them into the final reality of divine sonship that he embodies. The incarnate Word of God is the comprehensive plan for creation, its way, its truth, and its life, the full expression of God's sovereignty and beatifying action. If this first aspect involves Christ's kingship, the second involves his priesthood. While the offices of priest and king are separable in account or in conception, we know that in the reality of Christ to which we, the Church, are called they are inseparable. They are inseparably united in the third office of Christ, that of prophet. As the eternal word of God, he is the ultimate revelation of God to his creation, that we might have the knowledge of God that he has of himself. Christ is perfect theology.

Thus the consummation of the Israelite prophecies, the Messiah, the Son of David, is a royal priest, and his order a royal priesthood, a holy nation. The royal priesthood of Christ is implicated in the whole testament of creation, beginning with the first creation narrative of Genesis—"And He saw that it was good"—which introduces the theme of creation as eulogy. Why does God create with His Word of Power and then bless what he has created? Because blessing, the author is telling us, is an integral part of the act of creation. It is not just a nice reflective sentiment; it tells us that the whole character of creation finds its meaning as presided upon by the authority of the triune God who breathes his Word and words into it.

All of this is summed up in the thesis that tradition calls the Absolute Primacy of Christ. Taking its mandate from the text of Col 1:18 (*hina genetai in pasin autos proteuon*).[7] It is the idea that the glorification of a human nature, which is the reality of the God-man, is the final purpose for creation and so the ultimate reason for creation.[8] The thesis gives a very straightforward answer to Anselm's "Cur Deus Homo" question, and deflates some of the puzzlement that leads to the question, because it removes the presupposition that Christ's primacy was only relative to the Fall, that the Incarnation only became necessary to accomplish salvation as a result of the Fall and would not have happened otherwise, leading to the "Fortunate Fall" problem.

The Absolute Primacy of Christ is another name for the biblical teaching that Wisdom is "the first of all creatures", that the union of God and the Church in the person of Christ is the reason for creation, its purpose, the reason why it exists. In order to make Christ—the hypostatic union of human and divine nature, the God-man—the Trinity has to make man; to make man He has to make animals, plants, microorganisms, earth, air, water, stars, matter-energy, space-time; and in order to make all of visible creation subject to the "royal-priestly" or divinizing influence of Christ the God-man, he has to make the relationship between human nature and the rest of visible creation one in which the organization of human

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[7] "That the primacy might his in all things".
[8] See John Dun Scotus, 'De Predestinatione Christi Eiusque Matris,' *Ordinatio* III, dist. 7, q.2. For an English translation, see the first of the titular questions in Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M., *John Duns Scotus, Four Questions on Mary* (Saint Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 2000).

sense experience is the locus of creation. In this way the dynamic between thought, word, and action is fit to communicate the influence of spirit to body and of body to spirit so that spirit, which is active, intelligent, and affective or volitional, can rule over and lift up visible creation into conformity with divine life. In order to create such a visible world, He has to make sure that human sense experience is organized in a systematic way, itself being ruled by His creative commands so that it is essentially nomically necessitated and yet contingently dynamic and open-ended, yielding effects to the free choices of its intelligent users, just like a language, a thing that, being both regular (because regulated by intelligence) and contingent on user activity, is meaningful because it is passively respondent and *phoric* to the intelligent intentions of minds. And in order to make *this* kind of visible world, a world as language between God and man, he has to make it collaborative on both sides and ramified in its intelligibility, with linked levels of communication and influence, a hierarchy of power and knowledge from God the Spirit, to created pure intelligences[9], to embodied intelligences, and to bodies.

As the first reason and ultimate end of creation, Christ the Royal Priest relates to his created order through a *covenant*. The laws that create a world are a covenant with man. In the Incarnation, God becomes subject to his own laws and faithful to the covenant in a unique way. As the God-man he is doubly faithful to the covenant, as God *and* as man. In Him the name of God is hallowed and by Him the name of the man, Jesus, is put above every other. From this perspective, desiring to understand the covenant in philosophic terms, we should ask the question (just as we have in previous section in regard to the eucharist): What kind of space, time, and matter does God need to become man?[10] To become incarnate in history in the way of the historical Jesus, to create the Church through the cross, to constitute the eucharist and the post-resurrection *parousia*? Does he, for example, need these to be substances for such purposes? Or after all, in light of the primacy of Christ (and in particular primacy with respect to the created order) does he need these to be *subordinate to his final purpose in the Incarnation*, an incarnation that will be revealed, unfold, and develop in the seventh day through the work of the Holy Spirit?

Again consider Scripture:

> O Lord, thy word endureth forever in heaven. Thy truth also remaineth from one generation to
> another; thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day
> according to thine ordinance, *for all things serve thee*. (Ps 119:89-91)

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[9] The first explicit reference to angels in Scripture is Gen 3:24—the Cherubim guarding the way to the tree of life with a fiery sword—though they are implied in the creation of light and the heavens and ultimately, if we follow Augustine, in the creation of the day (more on this in Ch.IX). The last is Rev 22:8-9, "I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of the book…". Interestingly, both references to angels have to do with the tree of life (the last by way of the broader description of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, the kingdom which bears similarity to Eden, having a throne from which the waters of life flow).

[10] Recall that this central motivational question was introduced in the first chapter.

"All things serve thee". As in the case of Psalm 33 above, there are two ways we can interpret this: one way is the naïve or primitive, animistic way in which we imagine that items in the physical world move themselves, that they are really intelligent, and not only intelligent but spiritually intelligent to the point that they are aware of God and presumably self-aware, so that they can voluntarily serve him. The second way is what I will develop in the chapters that follow[11] as the "angelic-phenomenalistic way", in which we read it as "All things (that happen), all phenomena or appearances are what they are because of your call of duty, that is, they appear through a course of service to thee, in that phenomenal appearances are performed by intelligent agents in an act of divine service, acting on the created receptive faculties of the human mind. Since Christian cosmology does not allow for such agents to be any other than angels[12], we have thus an angelic-phenomenalistic interpretation. Interestingly, the same passage clearly rules out the possibility that God's own agency acts exclusively and without mediation in bringing about phenomena; and in effect, the only possibility for such mediatory, ministering agents are angels, which is supported by many other passages (including other Psalm 119 passages). "Angelic phenomenalism" or the angelological version of Christian phenomenalistic idealism that is my subject, is the result of combining this angel-hypothesis from Psalm 119:89-91 with Gregory of Nyssa's phenomenalistic-idealist interpretation of Heb 11:3.[13]

It is a familiar teaching of Scripture and tradition that angels are ministers of public service (*leitourgika pneumata eis diokonian apostellomena*[14]):

> I am going to send an angel in front of you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Be attentive to him and listen to his voice…(Ex 23:20-21)

> The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. (Ps 34:7)

> Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. (Lk 22:43)

As servants of the Lord, they are ministers of his justice, assisting man in Christ's work of salvation. In the Old Testament, any theophany or appearance of God occurs in conjunction with an angelophany or the appearance of angels, e.g., at the binding of Isaac, Jacob's striving with God at Peniel[15], Moses'

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[11] In XIII and IX.

[12] They cannot be the work of pagan gods or goddesses, for instance.

[13] For a theological survey of angels in the Bible see Gerhard Kittel, "Angelos" and Gerhard von Rad, "Mal'āck" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard von Rad , ed., Geoffrey Bromiley, trans. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964). For a study of Pauline angelology see G.B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956).

[14] That is, liturgical spirits with an apostolate of fellow-service (Heb 1:14).

[15] Gen 32:28. See also D.S. Russell *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964).

reception of the Law on Mount Sinai[16], the consummation of Gideon's offering[17], and others[18]. They always mediate his presence, and this is confirmed in the New Testament, with the revelation that the Lord is Christ, even in the end when he will take up his position as the head of the Church, his body, in the nuptial union:

> When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. (Mt 25:31)

Following Augustine, we should distinguish the 'pure spirits' whom Scripture calls the "sons of God", or sometimes his "holy ones", from the concept of 'angel', which means messenger, and so properly refers to their office whereas 'spirit' is the name of their nature. As Paul says, "Are not angels spirits in the divine service [or liturgy], sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?" (Heb 1:14). Angels, then, are ministering spirits whose apostolate, as we know it, is to reveal, announce, assist, mediate the covenant[19], and in so many ways participate in the salvific work of Christ. Indeed, Christ is the king of the angels, as the seraphim proclaimed to Isaiah: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts".[20] He is the Son of God in whose image the sons of God are made.

> But less well known is the teaching that they are also causal governors and elemental regulators:

> I saw another angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud…and when he shouted, the seven thunders sounded. (Rev 10:1-3)

> The Lord prepared his throne (*ton thronon*) in heaven…Bless the Lord all ye his angels, mighty in strength, who perform his bidding, ready to hearken to the voice of his words. (Ps 102:19-21)

Scripture describes them as causally responsible for various phenomena of nature, such as earthquakes, volcanoes, lightning, eclipses, the phases of the moon, storms, pestilences, and droughts.[21] To them is

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[16] Gal 3:19

[17] Jg 6:22

[18] Gen 22:11, Ex 3:2, Num 22:31, Jg 13:21

[19] According to the New Testament, the angels delivered the Law to Moses: "You received the law as ordained by (the disposition of) angels" (Acts 7:53, but cf. also Acts 7:38, Gal 3:19, Heb 2:2). Yet through the Incarnation and Paschal mystery, we receive the Gospel through the Holy Spirit. The parallelism here is clear: from spirits we received the written law of the Lord; from the Holy Spirit we received the living Law himself. Even the pattern of historical revelation is hierarchical, modeled on the living hierarchy of the cosmos.

[20] Is 6:3; cf. also Ps 24:10 and Rev 4:8.

[21] Mt 28:2, Gen 19:13, 24, Ex 19:18, Deut 33:3, Sir 43:8, Is 24:23, 2 Sam 24:15-17.

attributed the power of effecting human experience through the elements[22], through burning coals, pools of water, winds, and lightning.[23]

Angels are ministers of grace in the predestined plan of salvation, supporting man in his spiritual needs, leading him into the Promised Land, defending him against enemies, and announcing the Mosaic Law[24] and the Gospel[25] to him. And yet this supernatural role is an extension of a common one in which the angels are so closely connected with the operations of nature that we may interpret natural phenomena as the effects of divine power mediated through their cooperation. To complete the picture and to show the way the angelic-kerygmatic office is unified we need only draw attention to the revealed fact that the angelic spirits are themselves *assembled*[26] before God, that is they are an *ecclesia*, within a hierarchical arrangement[27], who thus perform liturgical rites proper to their order:

> And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. (Rev 8:4)

The angels not only rule the gifts of creation, they rule them eucharistically, because the love of the Creator reigns in their hearts. This means that the "physical world" is eucharistic and liturgical—with man in view—"all the way down". Even the elemental laws of phenomena are a work of the angels, performed in obedience to their divine charge.[28] It is their uprightness of will, freely affirmed through an analogue of a sense of conscience, that prompts them to perform their office of "giving back to God" in a cooperative fashion—with their own labor mixed in—the good he has given them; not literally giving back so that the antitype vanishes, but given back to Him by being transmitted to others in charity.

So even in its fundamental laws, the nature of the universe is moral/personal/ecclesial: angels carry out the divinely prescribed transition states in which the causal laws of nature consist because they want to do what is right, to please the Creator and further the beauty of his plan by their cooperation. And in performing this function, they not only act within the invisible order, but the product of their loving obedience is directed at the manifestation of order to the human mind. This is the angelic-human *exidus* and *reditus*, *proodos* and *epistrophe*, interpreted as the procession song of the cosmic liturgy. Human-angelic interaction is spiritual: they speak directly to us, providing admonitions, ideas, communicating, effecting, interpreting God's Providence to us. This is why the abuse or perversion of the office is so

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[22] Col 2:8, 20.
[23] Is 6:6, Jn 5:4, Ps 104:4.
[24] Acts 7:38, Gal 3:19, Heb 2:2.
[25] Lk 1: 11-20, 26-39, Mt 1:20-25, Lk 2:8-14.
[26] Job, Ps, Rev.
[27] Eph 1:21, Col 1:16, 2:10, and 1 Pt 3:22.
[28] Col 2:20, Gal 4:3.

destructive and oppressive. The fallen angels have the power to suggest thoughts, incipient images, and play on our will through images.[29]

In the new creation proclaimed by Christ and the apostles, the eschatological breaking in of the glory of the angelic order into the human terrestrial order, is proportionate to the extent to which we, as the community of the Church, bring it about, intellectually by recognizing the transparency of nature and seeing the causal agency of the angels behind the phenomena, and liturgically by making this transparency apparent to others, with the liturgy of common prayer and worship, sacrifice and communion, the model for so doing.

In the view I will develop[30], the ministerial function of the pure intelligences subsumes their role as the agents of natural phenomena, because the divine ordinances that they execute, the messages they announce, include the very words that God uses to creatively sustain the visible world. By synthesizing Biblical angelology with the metaphysics of phenomenalistic idealism, we infer that it is God's commands to the angels about how to regulate the order of human sense experience that not only institute the acts of supernatural revelation but indeed the constant, sustaining acts of natural revelation, which create the physical world as an objective reality and as a liturgical medium.

My claim will be that the angel spirits are the causal agents that execute the divine prescriptions for ordering human sense experience. As pure intelligences, they can "hear" our mental states to a limited extent that includes our motor volitions and communicate with us directly at the mental level, bringing about sense experience for us. It might even be that each person's "guardian angel" is the one responsible for executing the psychophysical laws that relate the person's mind and body.[31] Other angels may coordinate these effects in turn by distributing the instructions about how such human volition-sensation sequences are to be received and caused by the assigned guardian angel, collectively bringing out what, at our empirical viewpoint, we interpret as the intra-environmental phenomena and body-environmental interactions of nature.[32] This world governance is a song of praise, in which they align their will with the Lord's, freely bringing about the order of the world *by communicating* directly at the level of the mind. They communicate with us by directly causing our sense impressions or sensations *as of a world*—with the angels able to "hear", or receive in awareness, some of our volitions and actively respond to them by communicating among each other, causing further sensations, and so allowing human beings to causally influence each other.

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[29] See, e.g., Aquinas, *ST*, Ia.111.3
[30] In IV.4-5 and in more analytic detail in Ch.VIII.
[31] This would be supported by a common patristic interpretation of Deut 32:8, which may indicate a one-to-one pairing of the sons of man with the sons of God.
[32] Under the thesis of phenomenalistic idealism, all phenomena, including those purely intra-environmental, are logically sustained by the organization of human sensory experience, so the total order in its total effect is a cooperative enterprise among the angels within the celestial hierarchy.

This is the view to be developed in the chapters that follow.[33] The governance of human sensory experience is one of the main ways the angels serve God—they obey his commands for the unfolding pattern of potential human sensory experience and so idealistically regulate the visible world under the divine sovereignty. This governance is also the way they preach the Gospel. In the very act of participating in creation, they preach to us the glory of the divine Wisdom. Romans 1:20 tells us that this glory has been perceivable in the physical world, and this has been the very work of angelic preaching. If we already accept the Biblical witness of the role of angelic preaching in regard to supernatural revelation, in accord with the oracular visions of the prophets and the annunciation of the Gospel, then not to extend this kerygmatic office to the work of natural revelation risks severing the orders of nature and grace. Acts that share in the governance, that sustain the creation of the visible world itself, are the same acts that proclaim the wisdom and majesty of the Creator. Angelic co-participation in creation is an act of love. Like the absolute act to which it is subordinate, it is philanthropy. It participates in the philanthropy of God in Christ that was the primary reason for act of divine creation in the first place. If God made man in love and finished making man in the ultimate act of love in the Incarnation and Passion ("It is finished…" [*te teleste*]), then angels participate in the divine creativity by imitating the creative love of man. Philanthropy is the creative force that sustains the world, in its most literal and fundamental sense.

From this position we can dogmatically articulate that the reciprocation of this love is the human subcreative participation in the cosmic liturgy: visible creation is the work of the angelic hymnody and the invitation to join in that song of praise to the Creator through the eucharist, through our earthly liturgical rites and mysteries, to have our expression lifted up by the hierarchical movement of creation, through a coordination of our thoughts, words, and actions. To produce the synaxis of the Eucharistic liturgy, the agape feast of the paschal mystery, requires among other things that we, as a community, as a household, produce bread and wine (or their analogues) and bring them to the priests as free offerings. Even this requires cooperation in the cosmic liturgy. This is not metaphor. Agriculture, winemaking, breadmaking, and other traditional arts, are only possible through an understanding of certain laws of nature, certain nomic necessities, that constitute certain natural processes, e.g., soil fertility, plant propagation, mechanical elaboration, and fermentation. This culture, in the purest form of the word, is coordinated human activity that follows and subordinates itself to the world's ruling economy, not as the that term is commonly used to refer to the perverse imitation of it, but the divine ministry of salvation, spiritually executed, which alone is responsible, as the prophets repeatedly tell us, for all that we see when look at creation.

As our human Church hierarchy contains ranks of ascending scope of ministerial oversight, so too does the celestial hierarchy, traditionally regarded as dividing into three triads. The triadic ranks of the

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[33] See footnote 30.

angelic hierarchy, as Dionysius explains it, are ordered by their knowledge of creation which they receive from God and each other in a proportionate degree of immediacy: the more directly the knowledge is received from God, the greater it is. This knowledge of creation would in turn mean a responsibility for ordering a higher level of nomic organization in the visible world. In developing the theory of Christian idealism I will have occasion[34] to introduce three broad categories of angelically-mediated sensory organizational activity—phenomenal, physical, and socio-historical. And there are in the Dionysian celestial hierarchy three triads of angelic ranks whose domain of governance match these categories. Just as the domains of organizational activity encompass each other in an implicate order, the angelic hierarchy is structured so that the internal uplifting activity, the *theosis* that is its purpose, its reason for being, is holistic, being unified in the divine wisdom of the Logos.

   With the help of Dionysius' treatise on the celestial hierarchy, to be examined in Ch.IV, we can distinguish certain choirs or ranks in the celestial hierarchy by the level at which they operate, by the level of physical reality at which they implement laws—e.g., psychophysical, macrophysical (in the phenomenological sense, which, note well, would include anything observed under a microscope), and socio-historical. This gives us a natural way to understand Paul's talk of "elemental spirits" as performing a different cosmic function from thrones[35], dominions[36], presiding spirits[37], and messianic messengers or announcers. The Divine Wisdom is seen in the way the different commands appropriate to the different levels of the hierarchy are implicate and ordered with respect to each other, so that the lower actions subserve or conform to the goals of the higher (just as the lower creatures of earth depend on man to help their actions contribute to the great eucharistic prayer). Christ the Divine Wisdom knows how to put the Father's will into a hierarchy of prescriptions that all work to create a world ("and God saw of the whole that it was very good"[38]), one that is uplifting and glorifying. The cosmos is made to have this uplifting motion, one achieved in the hierarchic order, because the glorification of a human nature is the first idea of creation—the reason for everything else. The God-man is the first-fruit of creation. He is the total plan. In fact, therefore, this proposal can relate the two parallel and corresponding structures—of the visible and invisible order—in a special explanatory relation. The structure of the laws of nature is what it is *because* it is a consequence of the prior structure of the angelic hierarchy. Given the divine intention for the latter, this means that the structure of the laws of nature is ultimately a consequence of Christ in the Eucharistic mystery, God's predestined plan for the liturgically-realized glorification of human nature.

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[34] In IV.4-5 and again in V.6.
[35] Col 1:16, but *cf.* also Ez 10:17, Dan 7:9.
[36] Eph 1:21, Col 1:16
[37] Rev 1:4, 3:1
[38] Gen 1:31

II.3 Idealism and the 'Protosacramentality' of the Physical World

To recall the central question introduced in I.3, I want to ask: given the vision of the complete shape of the liturgy, in its fullness and unity *par excellence*—the eucharistic synaxis, or Mass—what kind of created order must the Lord establish so that the very movement of creation is attuned to it, to propaedeutically condition it? In other words, given the particular theological portrait of the liturgy drawn in I.3 and above, how does God make the world *protosacramental*, the kind of world that is made in, by, and for the sacramental mystery of Christ?

Here I want to suggest and argue that the protosacramentality of the physical world requires that it be a language, a system of signs that refer in an arbitrary yet meaningful way (because regular and uniform) without a resemblance or conceptually necessary connection to what they signify. With such a sign system as a base there can be a sacramental order, built on that prior intelligibility in the relation between God and man. Sacramentality will presuppose the arbitrary meaningfulness of the physical in order to construct its own meaningfulness which is a layered meaningfulness of grace and character[39], with intentional action and hierarchical conformity to Christ's institutions—not merely to Christ in the abstract, but to what the historical Jesus commanded. This layered meaningfulness presupposes the arbitrary meaningfulness of the physical as its bedrock, on which it lays its own matrix of action, words, and constraints of validity. Only by taking for granted the intelligibility of sensory signs and our interpretation of them can we use the derived notions of causal connection and resemblance logically to construct sacramental signs embedded in a pre-existing *lebenswelt*. As we know, e.g., that water cleanses, sinks, drowns, conveys, sustains life, that oil gladdens, soothes, fuels, and embalms, we can use these intelligible signs to construct the sacramental signs of baptism that take them for granted. The meanings of natural or sensible signs do not follow by their own self-sustained or self-explaining or self-revealing order. If they did then the necessity of their order, flowing from its own fixed physical self or 'essential nature', would have to be a strict necessity lacking the conventional flexibility of meaning derived from the intentionality of a mind. The physical order could not then be conformed to an order transcending it, sacramental, salvific or otherwise.

The road from the intelligibility of nature to the intelligibility of sacramental signs—which introduce causation and resemblance relations—would be blocked if nature's intelligibility were already the result of causation or resemblance. It is because the sensible signs of nature are only contingently necessary that there is the imaginative freedom to use them to mean something else, something by way of a relation of causation and resemblance, only in this (sacramental) case a relation of causation and

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[39] In the technical sense of sacramental theology—namely a permanent mark (*sphragos*) or sacramental seal for a positive disposition for grace. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 1121.

analogical resemblance between the outward sensible and the inward spiritual. The meaning of a sacramental sign, because it makes use of relations of causation and resemblance that are superadded to the sensible meaning, becomes *strictly* or transcendently necessary. There is no possibility of a sacrament being something other than what it is in the order of grace, in the economy of salvation. The sacraments are instituted by Christ and carry with them the transcendent creative power of his word. But if the sensible signs used in sacraments were meaningful because of their own intrinsic power, their own endowed and self-revealing essence, then their connection with what they signify would be as strict as any sign in the sacramental system, and no sacramental meaning could be layered on top of them or built out of them. In other words anything other than arbitrary meaningfulness among sensible signs introduces a source of strict necessity, competing with the authority of the divine command insofar as it would bind the sensible signs across all imagined possibilities, precluding the possibility of sacraments, which depend on the contingent necessity of sensible signs for their own strict necessity. There can no intrinsically meaningful content in nature, no authority in creation that would compete with the authority of the Creator's divine command. The same Author whose commands institute the sensible order of the physical world must be the same who institutes the sacramental order in the economy of salvation. He must use the sensible to prepare the moral and historical, as a temporal language in which to write the truths of the eternal law.

The point is not that sacraments have to make use of some pre-existing language or other—or that deliberately socially constructed meaning such as sacramental meaning can only take place against a backdrop of non-deliberately socially constructed meaning. Rather the point is that any deliberately constructed meaning must take place against the backdrop of a prior non-constructed meaning that while meaningful must be meaningful in the arbitrary way a language is meaningful, so that it is flexible enough to be used as an iconic figure or image in the Christian sense. To have this flexibility the meaning of the physical must not be logical or strict. The meaning of the physical while non-strict and so flexible for layered use must also be regular and uniform with a certain kind of non-strict but genuine nomological *necessity* so that it can be assumed as common knowledge and common expectation intersubjectively for communal activity, like liturgical worship.

There is a comparison to be made here with what God does when he uses a layered meaning to reveal the law and the prophecies as figures or types for later revelation. Sacramentality work similarly. A sacrament goes one step beyond allegorical type or figure and reveals/creates a hidden reality as such, as hidden, whereas the allegorical type merely signifies. The allegorical or typological has directionality or relatedness but it does not, as such, reveal and create the reality it signifies in the way a valid sacrament does. This sacramental possibility is opened up after Christ. He can institute sacraments through his

commands as a man because he is the Word of God who has come in the flesh. This is the new creation. It is created-revealed as sacramentally hidden.

Let me pause here to consider the objection that the mode of idealism I advocate appears to render God a benign deceiver and to instrumentalize the Incarnation and the sacraments, effectively denying them as objects of contemplative devotion. The objection presupposes the metaphysics of realism. God is only a deceiver if we, in the discursive framework of metaphysics and theology, go beyond the warrant of our experiences to affirm that their content is experience-transcendent and ontologically basic, as realism does. This move, on which realism depends, will receive critical focus in VII.4, where I develop a larger argument against the coherence of realism. By contrast, it is argued that idealism can maintain simultaneously the public objectivity and empirical immanence of matter, the physical world, the body, etc., exactly because it denies the body and the physical world such experience-transcendence. Why should this trivialize the body[40] or deny the incarnational sacraments as objects of contemplative devotion? To the contrary, I have been arguing that because it is the spiritual res and not the physical sacrum tantum that is the active source of sacramental grace, realism risks supplanting the true object of devotion with a philosophical idol.

In V.5, I introduce the principle of "analogous fields of discourse" as a way of distinguishing between different orders of intracosmic being and causation and then use this principle as a tool in demonstrating the coherence of idealism and as a weapon against the competing claim of physical realism. The idealist can say that physical causes do not compete with spiritual causes because they belong to ontologically distinguished fields, the spiritual causes being basic and the physical being derived. But the theologian who adheres to physical realism must say that (at least some) physical causes are just as ultimate as any spiritual or mental ones. Unlike the realist, the idealist can grant that in the divine economy supernatural occasions can be added to physical ones, because, viewed transcendentally, the latter just are occasional or instrumental causes themselves. This accords with the protosacramental conception of physical creation, the Christological realignment of space, time, and matter to the axis of the Cross. God does not create new laws for water to become a thing that sacramentally cleanses the spirit. But in one *Logos*, one system of laws, he makes water protosacramental in its arbitrary or natural connection with cleansing, healing, drowning, and genuinely sacramental after the Incarnation. This pattern, like every other created pattern, unfolds in time and in the predestined sequence of the plan of salvation to which the angels, as beings of the *aeon*, who have the intelligence to grasp the simplicity of a universal decree for all time, contribute their mediating agency, just as do our own ecclesiastical hierarchs.

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[40] Recall that a version of this objection was considered and responded to in I.3.

In this respect the formula of transubstantiation only summarizes the sacramental theology of the fathers. The signifying occasional powers conferred by one command (or one consequence of the eternal command) have been replaced by a new one that adds the conferral of a new power, a power of saving grace, yet in such a way that the sensory effects of the old command are retained.[41] In transubstantiation the natural "powers" are not replaced any more than the species, they must have the same status; they must be no more related to an internal necessity of the "nature" of a thing than the conferral of saving grace. The bread of the consecrated host still nourishes and "effects" human senses as does ordinary bread. Consider the words of Gregory of Nyssa in regard to baptism, in *Oration de Baptismo Christi*: "But this blessing water does not confer [regeneration by its own power any more than it does other things by its own power]…Because *we are accustomed* to cleanse the body, therefore we use it in the mystic action…".[42] He continues with the question "How does the water of baptism regenerate?", and points out that this is not so different a question from how does the word create *ex nihilo* by mere fiat. If he can do the latter, is it any wonder by comparison that he can do the former. Which is more mysterious generation or regeneration? We should expect the same fiat-logic to operate in both. As Cyril of Alexandria says: "Boiling water can burn no less than fire itself; and thus is the water of baptism imbued with divine power and efficiency".[43] There is no place for transcendentally fixed natural essences here. All creation must be attuned to mystery of the sacraments.

Ambrose, in *De Sacramentis*, makes the point quite clear:

When it comes to the consecration [it is the word of Christ that is effective]…what is the word of Christ? [The same word that effected the reality of creation, as Scripture reveals]...Thou seest therefore how effective is the word of Christ…If, therefore, there is such a power in the word [to create from nothing]…how much more is it effective [to consecrate or transubstantiate sacraments].[44]

Creation of nature is more miraculous and incomprehensible than sacramental consecration because the latter only effects that "things previously existing, should, without ceasing be changed into something else….". This is basically an early statement of transubstantiation. For Ambrose it is not a new idea in Christianity but an unfolding consequence of the idealist (or liturgical fiat-logos) manner of creation as revealed in the Old Testament theology where the divine miracles wrought for Israel seem intended to reveal (among other things) that ordinary natural substances are nothing over and above the meaning they

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[41] There is a parallel here with the relationship of the old and new covenant.
[42] Translated by H.A. Wilson. From *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. 5, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace ed. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893).
[43] *In Ioan*. 10,3-5 PG 73,244.
[44] IV.15, T. Thompson, trans. (New York: Macmillan,1919).

have as fixed by what God wills for human experience. A bush burns without being consumed, iron floats, wood sweetens water, water comes forth from a rock. Just so in the sacraments, says Ambrose, the old species of the bread and wine can become the flesh and blood of our Lord because there was no connection between those species and bread and wine other than the idealist sustaining of these facts by divine intentional policies, which same policies can result at times in what seem like aberrant miracles or enduring sacramental realities.

The 'dispositive theory' of sacramental causality, necessary to explain anti-Donatism and reviviscence and the distinction between seal (character or *sphragos*) and grace, is comparable to the Last Supper-Cross theology explained in the earlier section. On this theory the sacramental rite signifies/becomes the symbolic reality (Last Supper-Cross, in the case of the eucharist) that in turn signifies/becomes the eschatological reality (the Passover that Christ eats with us at the feast of the Parousia). Billot's theory of the 'intentional causality' of the sacraments applies for even stronger reasons than the ones he gives in the case of the sacramental causes to the case of so-called "physical causes" themselves. Physical phenomena "being essentially signs, exist as such only in a significative order of realities and hence are incapable of carrying 'physical' (we might say 'mind-independent') force:

> There is a special 'force' or power added to the sacraments by God's institution, but it is such as is consistent with the nature of sacraments as signs: 'Used by God as the principal cause, they truly, and not merely verbally, cause that intentionality which is a disposition exigent of grace: inasmuch as the symbolic force, which by its own nature can do no more than signify, is lifted up to an effective application and investiture of its meaning.[45]

This expresses at once the way physical phenomena, as intended from the beginning of creation to be so elevated sacramentally in the dialogue between the Father and the Son incarnate in his Church, ought to be in themselves merely significative. Being such, they are well-suited to the sacramental elevation insofar as they already served as medium of figurative communication. Now as *sacramenta tanta*, they are a medium of communion and divine participation in the one cosmic liturgy.

> The efficacy of sacraments flows through the union which they cause with the mystical body of Christ, the visible Church: inasmuch as the sacrament, by uniting the recipient in a special manner to the Church, expresses Christ's will to confer grace upon him if he places no obstacles.[46]

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[45] See Billot, *De Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, ed. 7, aucta et emendate, Romae, 1931, vol.1, pp.137-138, quoted in Bernard Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1957), p.339.
[46] Leeming, p.355

II.4 Idealism and the 'Apophasis of the Real'

Just as the idealist, unlike the physical realist[47], can say that physical things genuinely possess the sensible qualities that we ordinarily ascribe to them, so that a brick in the sun genuinely possesses its heat, redness, and other sensible qualities—in the same way the idealist can say that the eucharist genuinely possesses its sensory appearance. She can say this in a way that is not *ad hoc*, but as something consistent with the ontological structure of the created cosmos more widely: that the *genuine* belonging of qualities to physical continuants is determined by the contingent nomological organization of idealist creation, something whose normative force flows directly from the sovereignty of God. The idealist is faithful to the miracle of transubstantiation as *mysterium fidei*, a canon for *lex credenda*—seeing in the transformative power of consecratory words a creative instrument used in creation *ex nihilo* now enjoined liturgically by human beings following the hierarchical pattern of the angels.

William Hamilton once speculated that Christian philosophers would have embraced Berkeley's immaterialism were it not for its perceived conflict with the doctrine of transubstantiation.[48] This is a serious challenge, especially in light of the tradition of *mysterium fidei*, that liturgical practice is canonical for right belief. If the dogmatic formulation of the Eucharistic mystery requires the attribution of substantiality to the offertory gifts of bread and wine, should not this then serve as a norm for Christian philosophical theorizing? It would be one thing if the notion of substance at work were the common, pre-philosophical one that the Berkeleyan phenomenalist can happily accept. But the notion, ostensibly, is rather one that must be conceived of as something independent of its sensible species, since these remain after consecration and the two are clearly distinguished in the Tridentine decrees.[49] However, Christian idealism *does* distinguish the physical object from any of its sensible appearances (qualia) and even from the extensive collection of them, so that there is a meaningful and satisfactorily explicated sense in which material things like bread and wine have a lawful but invisible ground or principle for their identity; it just happens that this identity is a consequence of the system of appearances organized by the celestial intelligences under the divine authority, and so its 'substantiality' is ultimately immaterial, being constituted by mental facts. This is far from an ad hoc contrivance to avoid the challenge, since such a distinction is not only important for the explication of the theory of theistic idealism but something that motivates it in the first place, in effort to offer a superior alternative to other metaphysical options. There is nothing in the conciliar decrees to indicate that 'substance' must be understood in Aristotelian

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[47] At least the critical scientific realist cannot say this. The naïve realist can, but as we shall see in Chs.VI-VII, the realist has other explanatory difficulties and in fact no version of realism is coherent, being unable to make sense of the phenomenology and scientific facts about perception at the same time.

[48] William Hamilton, 'Idealism; with Reference to the Scheme of Arthur Collier' in his *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature, Education and University Reform* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1855), 185–201.

[49] 13th Session, Ch.IV and Canon II

hylomorphic terms, or Lockean substrate terms, or Kantian terms, and of course it would be a mistake to expect that the Church would canonically enshrine any such position.[50]

In point of fact, and perhaps surprisingly, in its relation to the mystery of the eucharist, idealism might be thought better to reflect the content of the sacrament, as unpacked by the doctrine of transubstantiation, and so do justice to it as *mysterium fidei*, as a canon for orthodox belief. Let me explain. Unlike physical realist systems of metaphysics, idealism rejects the thesis that there is in matter some non-mental essence, substrate, or principle of individuation. And so neither does it claim that the sensible qualities of a physical item, as manifested in appearances, are necessitated, logically or naturally, by its material essence, intrinsic substantial qualities, quiddity, intrinsic form, Lockean solidity, or modes of extension. According to idealism there are no such things. The status of the item as *object*, its thinghood or substance in a *de dicto* sense, is constituted by facts about how human sense experience is organized and these in turn are grounded in no authority other than the absolute sovereignty of God. For this reason, idealism has no difficulty in accepting the suggestion that the individuation of a physical item, its substantiality or whatever allows it to persist through changes, should be separable in account and in reality from its sensible qualities; since the former rests in the free, eternal creative purposes of God and since he has made this freedom an intelligible condition to us when we reflect on the meaning of our sense experience.

Reflecting, then, on the linguistic nature of sense experience and the contingent necessity of its meaning, we know that there is nothing apart from the divine will that should keep the sensible qualities of a physical item attached to its substance. The substance is wholly in virtue of and nothing over and above facts of divine creative intention, so that should the divine will decree that the same sensible qualities be collected together within the system of appearances as the manifestation of some other physical item—e.g. the body and blood of Christ—not only is there no barrier to accepting this within the metaphysics but, as will be made clear, the metaphysics itself is as if set up to make such a possibility— the possibility of transubstantiation—as intelligible as the fact of substantiation generally, albeit more unusual.

To put it another way, for an idealist metaphysics transubstantiation is of the same order as substantiation, acts differing not in their causal order but only in their place within the total divine economy. It is important to note that on the idealist theory to be developed, bodies as opposed to mere physical items are individuated by their psychophysical relations, so that the body of Jesus is *his* body because it and not some other body is in the right nomic relation to his human mental faculties to be immediately sensitive and effective to it. Thus the contingent or non-strict necessity of the relation of 'substance' and sensible attributes as found in the sacrament is for idealism canonical of the manner in

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[50] But neither does such omission means that all alternatives are equal because equally irrelevant.

which to conceive the relation of substance and sensible attribute at large within the physical world. This makes the classical, patristic notion of *mysterium fidei* something truly enshrined within the doctrine of creation, and makes very clear and concrete the manner in which the whole world is indeed a sacramental system. Note that it is not as if the mysteriousness were somehow diminished or explained away in idealist metaphysics. Rather that very mysteriousness of the Eucharistic sacrament is seen to be anticipatory in the very objectivity of the physical world. Idealism thus practices what we might call an 'apophasis of the real', in opposition to physical realism which identifies the real with the terms of theoretical or folk physics.

Sacramental theology requires a recognition of a *res tantum*, a *res et sacrum*, and a *sacrum tantum*. By giving a concrete interpretation to what it might mean for the world to be created liturgically through Word and Wisdom, through the Son of God who is the head of the Church, and by a ministry of salvation that is inseparable from the creative and governing office, idealism shows the latter, as pertaining to the form of the sacramental rites, is smoothly continuous with the ecclesial activity that is the work of visible creation, the way even 'mere nature' is revelatory—to the eyes of faith—of the *everlasting*[51] which is veiled and yet newly disclosed in Christ. This mystery, this plan for the fullness of time, is something to which the only fitting response is worship and participation in the same means by which one has received it.

Rather than trying to align the sacramental model of *res tantum*, *res et sacrum*, and *sacrum tantum* with a physical realist metaphysics, which already identifies the externally real with the physical (whether hylomorphically or otherwise), idealism can align the sacramentally real with the spiritual, just as it should be. Physical realism is an awkward fit with a high sacramental ontology because it has already used up the category of the real, of the *res tantum*, in its physical ontology, in its interpretation of empirical theory, the theory of *what* is created at our empirical viewpoint, rather than the *how* of visible creation understood within the absolute *what* of creation at the transcendent viewpoint. Idealism reserves the category of the real for the prephysical, for the mental or spiritual; it thus can use the category in its ontology of the activity of creation, aligning the sacramental reality of the invisible with the reality that underpins the objectivity of what is visibly created. Similarly by using the category of the physical exclusively for the sensible, the idealist has no trouble in showing that the sacraments, like the physical world more generally from which their forms are drawn, are immanent within the human empirical viewpoint, forming the content of human experience in a mode of ontological immediacy. For physical realism, by contrast, the category of the physical is at the very least heterogeneous and perhaps a disjunctive kind, as it includes both the sensible and insensible.

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[51] The Hebrew *kedem*, literally meaning 'before' or 'eastern' and containing the roots for 'blood' (dawm) and silence' (dowm), could be translated as 'eternal', 'divine', 'hidden', 'or 'otherworldly'.

Even leaving aside the arguments to be explored later for the incoherence of physical realism and the very real difficulties it faces in articulating an account of perceptual contact with physical items[52], in any given sacramental rite, what is it that determines whether or not the sensible qualities that constitute the form of the sacrament, the *sacramentum tantum*, are suitably related both to human sensory consciousness and to physical items to enable a genuine channel of participation between them in the experience of receiving the sacrament? What determines whether the oil and water the initiate senses are the same ones sensed by the assembly of the faithful and the consecrating hierarch, the same that were drawn from the earth days before? How do the sensible species of the Eucharist that the communicant tastes belong to the same bread and wine that were conscecrated? By understanding the physical world to be logically created by contingent but nomically necessary causal constraints on the course of human experience, the idealist maximizes both the secrecy of the activity of the spiritual reality underpinning physical creation and the accommodation of what is created to human cognitive capacity. There is no conceptual difficulty, then, in understanding how sacraments operate on the same ontological plane as the work of creation, performed and received. Sacramental forms are drawn directly from the universal sensory qualities that feature in the content of human sensory consciousness and whose actual and potential realizations as such content sustain the physical world, differing from ordinary experiences of creation only by the nature of the divine intentions they manifest and solely in virtue of the authority inhering in those intentions, just as miracles differ from ordinary "natural" phenomena not in terms of their content or "metaphysical mechanism" of occurrence but solely in virtue of the divine realities they reveal.

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[52] In Chs. VII and VI, respectively.

Chapter III: Early Idealist Theories of Creation

III.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will examine how the metaphysics of phenomenalistic idealism arose in historical context, first as a theological development from Neoplatonism and then into the vision of the cosmic liturgy, focusing here on the work of Plotinus and Gregory of Nyssa, and pseudo-Dionysius in the next chapter. One of our main goals is to see how this prepares the way for the developments of both Berkeley's metaphysics and a neo-patristic angelic cosmology.

The very possibility of the emergence of idealism in pre-Cartesian philosophy was famously rejected by Miles Burnyeat decades ago.[1] The strength of Burnyeat's claim and the persistent way in which he made his argument triggered a series of historical studies and a considerable weight of counter-evidence.[2] So much so, that I am comfortable in taking Burnyeat to be refuted and in regarding the positive characterizations of key figures in the tradition as exhibiting idealist commitments. Again, it is worth emphasizing that my primary purpose is not historiography but constructive philosophical theology, with the ultimate purpose of dogmatic understanding. For these purposes, I do not intend to settle any contention over which historical reading is best. It is enough that the idealist reading is one that is available and plausible. To my mind two of the most convincing cases (Scotus Eriugena is another[3]) are Plotinus and Gregory of Nyssa, and so it is partly for this reason that they are singled out for study in this chapter. To say that idealism emerged in antique philosophy is not to say that it was a uniform or homogenous idealism which emerged. Nor is it to say that the key figures made idealist commitments for the same reasons. And yet there is something of a common doctrinal core, or core of content, that I will here seek to identify at least in part.

One of Gregory's main concerns in Christian cosmology is to understand how visible things are created by that which is invisible (Heb 11:3). He is moving against the Platonic and Origenist conception of a world fashioned out of matter that is coeternal with God, to set over against this "impression on a blank receptacle"-view of creation the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. Gregory is seeking an understanding of the Church's orthodox teaching on creation, using the most fitting philosophical resources available to

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[1] Myles Burnyeat, "Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes Saw and Berkeley Missed," *Philosophical Review* 91 (1982): 3-40.

[2] Richard Sorabji, "Gregory of Nyssa: The Origins of Idealism," in *Time, Creation and Continuum. Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (London:Duckworth, 1983), pp. 287-96; C.J. McCracken, "Stages on a Cartesian Road to Immaterialism," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 24:19-30; Eyjólfur Emilsson, "Cognition and its Object," in Lloyd P. Gerson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1996), pp. 217-49, esp. pp. 245-49.

[3] Dermot Moran, "Idealism in Medieval Philosophy: The Case of Johannes Scottus Eriugena." *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, 8 (1999): 53-82.

him, namely the Platonic divine ideas tradition as it existed in his own time. In the syncretic developments of Plotinus' metaphysics, the sensible world of bodies and physical phenomena is a free, eternal emanation of soul and intellect. By a hierarchical arrangement in which individual minds with noetic powers (the "higher soul"[4]) participatorily descend (through the capacity of the "lower soul") into the lower material realm, the total order of the physical world is mimetically produced. But how exactly should a Christian interpret this in accord with revelation? Does it mean God creates the world through ideas in his own mind inasmuch as the world is nothing more than the pattern of human acquaintance with such divine ideas? If so, is this acquaintance fundamentally cognitive, sensory, or both[5]? Is the soul's descent or projection to bodies constitutive of the mimetic production of the material realm or is the emanation of the material realm something that ontologically precedes this descent? The language of projection[6] might suggest this, and yet Plotinus is faithful to the Platonic doctrine that ontological / explanatory priority is correlated with relative noetic simplicity (not relative spatio-temporal simplicity). For as he says, it is not the soul that is in the body, but the body that is in the soul.[7]

What I want to examine initially is how the Plotinean exposition of the Platonic doctrine of divine ideas, with its conception of the physical world emanating from the mind, might be developed into Christian idealism. Specifically, I want to show how the ontological priority relation of emanation, involving relative noetic simplicity and productive power, and intended to solve the one-many problem, is a useful analytic philosophical tool that is ripe for being 'phenomenalistically idealized' by Christian philosophy, and when done yields the kind of robust metaphysical theory needed to square with the traditional Christian doctrine of creation. Secondly, I want to identify Plotinus' critique of Aristotle's Categories and his argument for the immateriality of *ousia* as an important stage in the development of Platonism into idealism, one that prepares the way for Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa's immaterialist view of God's creation.

In order to appropriate some of the concepts of idealist theology from their historical context, I want to fill out some of the genealogy of Christian idealism up to the work of Gregory of Nyssa, by showing how Plotinus' emanation relation adapts the theory of divine ideas into an analytic tool that is in turn disposable for adaptation into the metaphysics of phenomenalistic idealism. Because emanation analytically involves *virtuality*, a certain ontologized mimesis relation, it is positioned to explain the one-many relation: virtuality is a relation of *exemplar* causality, holding between a prior (*ta protera*) and its copies (*mimeta* or *eidola*), which it has the power to produce *per se* by an active principle. This feature of

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[4] *Enneads* VIII.vi.4-8
[5] A strictly cognitive interpretation might give us something close to the concept of Malebranche's "vision of all things in God", whereas the latter option anticipates the Berkeleyan view to be developed.
[6] *Op. cit.*
[7] *Enneads* IV.iii.9-27

Plotinus' theory of the divine ideas, when phenomenalistically adapted, makes the divine ideas into the sort of immaterialist structuring principles that serve to sustain the existence of the physical world in its immanent objectivity. When the divine ideas are conceived of as rules governing the organization of human sensations, it gives *particular* sensations the right kind of relation to the organizational rules, namely that of being instantiations of the sensory universals that feature in the content of the rules themselves. The details involved here will become clearer in Ch. VI, when the sensory universals are formally presented within a theory of perception. In Ch.VII, I will show how the phenomenalist's claim might be true—that the physical world is logically sustained by the regularities within and among sensory experiences—by sketching in some detail a construction of things in space and by extension the amplified physical world of empirical theorizing. Then, in Ch.VIII, I will consider how the sensory regularities might themselves be guaranteed by immaterialist laws governing the temporal distribution of qualia over minds.

III.2 Emanation and the One-Many Relation in Plotinus's Theoretical System

'Emanation' as conceived by Plotinus is a relation of ontological dependence that can be understood by first introducing the explanatory relation of *virtuality*, or mimetic ontological dependence, and then attending to the cosmogenetic movements of *proodos* and *epistrophe*. Following the suggestion of some commentators[8], I shall interpret the description of these movements in Plotinus as assertions of efficient and final causality. Emanation, I shall argue, is the relation of virtuality (relative simplicity, or simplicity *pros hen*, plus productive capacity) together with final causality. By favoring a non-literal reading of Plotinus' theoretical philosophy—especially the account of the Three Hypostases and the relation of emanation existing between the noetic and the physical realms of being—I aim to show that Plotinus's work takes the Platonic theory of divine ideas a significant step closer to Christian idealism.

In the opening pages of his monograph on Plotinus[9], Lloyd Gerson points out that the so-called Three Hypostases are better understood not as hypostases but as principles (*archai*). This is because even though Plotinus calls them hypostases he does not intend this to be a technical designation, since throughout the Enneads he speaks of the 'hypostasis' of a great many things. They are rather *principles* in the sense of the Latin word *principia*, and have the full range of roles that ancient and medieval authors confer upon the word: source, origin, premise, foundation. This follows from Plotinus' general

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[8] cf. John Bussanich, "Plotinus' Metaphysics of the One" in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, Lloyd Gerson ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[9] Lloyd Gerson *Plotinus* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

explanatory strategy, modeled on that of Middle Platonism[10] as laid out in the *Didaskalikos*, in which these hypostatic principles are related to one another in a hierarchy of ontological dependence.

Commentators have long been at labor to explain all of the various roles that Plotinus intends the Principles to have. The task is somewhat precarious because of the way Plotinus' writings have been packaged for us by Porphyry, who edited the Enneads. One can find Plotinus saying different things about the Three Principles in almost all of the Enneads. Nevertheless we can put together a fairly thorough picture, extracting what seem to be the most important aspects. First among these is the One. The One is, in Aristotelian language, the Pure Act. It is the Transcendent, Perfect Unity, and Pre-Eternal. By an act of emanation (understood as we have formulated it: virtuality plus final causality), Intellect proceeds from the One. Intellect is variously Being, or the Forms, thought of as the external activity of the One, or being virtually or by participation what the One is eminently. Like the One, it is self-contained, subsistent, and eternal. It is also described as Perfect Vision (the vision of the One) in a reoccurring metaphor of intellection as a kind of vision, a vision that takes itself as its own object and that "comes about" or is facilitated by the Light that radiates from the One, which is of course itself.[11] The "turning towards" (*epistrophe*) or perfect contemplation of the One is the internal activity (*energeia tes ousias*) of Intellect, the self-contained and self-abiding activity proper to itself, from which its powers (*dynameis*) flow.[12] Next, emanating from Intellect, is Soul. Soul is the Principle of Life, striving, and aspiring—that mode of volition which for the first time in the Chain of Being has a *need*, as Soul is less than perfect, not possessing within itself the fullness of Intellect's divine ideas but, as Intellect's external activity, possessing some or other of them *virtually* or by way of participation. It is the paradigm of that mode of contemplation that contemplates something other than itself.[13] And if Being and the Forms are eternal, then Soul, the animate principle of nature (*physis*), is at the level of *sempiternality*, since even though the principle is permanent, the concept of time has entered at this level.[14]

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[10] As outlined in Chapter I, Section 2, the tradition of Middle Platonism comprises the influence of the received Academic interpretation of the *Timaeus*, Xenocrates (theory of Ideas), Antiochus (hypostatization of perception), Posidonius (incarnation of the soul), and the many doctrines of the *Didaskalikos* generally (including that of ideas as thoughts in the mind of God). See R.E. Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), for a useful further reference.

[10] *Enneads* VIII.vi.4-8

[11] Presumably the metaphor is drawn from the Allegory of the Cave, where Plato makes use of the same conceit. Each of the three (or really four) levels of intelligibility in the allegory is marked by that which through illumination provides for intelligibility at that level: reflected firelight, firelight proper, and sunlight.

[12] The ontological priority relation of emanation is closely linked in its exposition with Plotinus' doctrine of 'double activity' (see, e.g., *Enneads* V.iv.2). Eyjolfur Emilsson's *Plotinus on Intellect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.23-50, contains a useful discussion of this doctrine.

[13] It is for this reason that Plotinus says all life is a form of (external) contemplation (or contemplation without cognitive identity). See *Enneads* III.viii.2-5.

[14] As the point would suggest, Plotinus' view about the nature of time is another noteworthy instance of his break with Aristotelian doctrine in favor of the similar but more laconic view found in Plato. The view is presented in the seventh tractate of Ennead III where Plotinus rejects Aristotle's claim that motion (change) is prior to time and that

The 'emanation' by which the three principles proceed from one another is to be understood via the notion of *virtuality*, as I have indicated. For Plotinus, emanation is virtuality plus final causality. Virtuality itself is a somewhat opaque notion, not surprisingly considering the total explanatory role Plotinus intends it to serve, and ultimately it might best be understood as Christian idealism does. But for Plotinus we can at least say that it is schematically that analogous relation of ontological dependence holding between the three principles of being, which includes asymmetric productive capacity and relatively (*pros hen*) noetic simplicity. This means that virtuality logically includes the metaphysical reducibility relation holding between a transcendent universal and its concrete particulars, which it generates in its activity *ad extra*. Insofar as it (partly) characterizes the emanation relation pertaining to the principles, the relative notion of productive agency involved in virtuality is—at all levels—transitively closed. This means that even the product of a product owes its being to, or simply is the effect of, the first cause; and the first, though it may be the remote rather than proximate cause, is still rightly speaking the *primary* cause.

We begin to see how virtuality, as subsuming the one-many relation and productive causality, features as a stage in the development of Platonist metaphysical theory (en route to Christian idealism) when we consider where the categories enter into Plotinus's explanatory picture. They enter, it seems, at the level of Intellect.

> Intellect, by its intellective act, establishes Being, which in turn, as the object of intellection, becomes the cause of intellection and of existence to Intellect—though, of course, there is another cause of intellection which is also a cause to Being, both rising in a source distinct from either.
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> Now while these two are coalescents, having their existence in common, and are never apart, still the unity they form is two-sided; there is Intellect as against Being, the intellectual agent as against the object of intellection; we consider the intellective act and we have Intellect; we think of the object of that act and we have Being.
>
> Such difference there must be if there is to be any intellection; but similarly there must also be identity [since in perfect knowing, subject and object are identical].
>
> Thus the Primals are seen to be: Intellect; Existence (*On*); Difference; Identity; we must include also Motion and Rest: Motion provides for the intellectual act; Rest preserves identity as Difference gives at once a Knower and a Known, for, failing this, all is one, and silent.[15]

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time is thereof the measure of motion. Plotinus denies that the notion of measure is in any way involved with time and favors the reverse order of priority, reinvoking Plato's phrase that "time is the moving image of eternity".

[15] *Enneads* V.I.iv, Stephen McKenna's translation and bracket insertion.

The 'Primals' are our first categories, of which Intellect and Existence are included but not exhaustive. From these first 'Platonic' categories come the derivative and more familiar 'Aristotelian' categories. The category of quantity for example is derived from Difference, and so also makes its appearance at this theoretical/explanatory level. We do not yet have true *plurality*, or real distinctness, because we still have the identity required for the *self-intellection* that marks Being and the intellectual act. But we do have the seed or potential for plurality, and this insofar as we have the many objects of the intellectual act (which are all still identified), namely the Forms. As Plotinus goes on to say,

> So too the objects of intellection—identical in virtue of the self-concentration of the principle which is their common ground—must still be distinct each from another; this distinction constitutes Difference.[16]

At the next level, the engendered copy of this proto-quantity, with the admixture of the individual noetic mind, animal, or matter as the case may be, will become real distinctness and plurality. It makes sense that counting, or the category of quantity, presupposes being and unity. For what is counted? What is one?

At the level of Soul, we have that which was present at the level of Intellect but now only in imitation. As less perfect copies of the Forms and self-thought of Intellect, we have the reason-principles and forming-principles of Soul. These principles are like the pure intellective acts of the Forms but now with an addition of potentiality; they have a need and striving for the pure state that is their origin. The forming-principles (*logoi*) are *Forms-to-be-realized*. In the mythic language of the *Timaeus* which the Middle Platonists seized upon, they are the contemplative, organic seeds 'taken' from the Divine Mind by the Demiurge in order to fashion the things of the world. They also have a strong resemblance to the *seminal principles* (*spermatikoi logoi*) of the Stoics, a kind of "sister-notion", which are very important in any attempt to explain various kinds of substantial, as well as accidental, change.[17]

In V.1.viii of the /*Enneads*, we are given the historical origins of Plotinus' explanatory system, with the doctrine of the Three Hypostases at its core. The first source chronologically is Parmenides' arguments for *i*) the identification of Being and Intellect; and *ii*) that being/essence is necessarily self-limiting, has "fixity", and thus is not the unbounded cause of Being. Secondly, he finds confirmation of the correctness of his Three Hypostases in Plato's Republic, with its tripartite theory of the soul, under the simile of the Man, the Lion, and the Menagerie of Beasts. And the doctrine of hypostatic tripartition is

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[16] Ibid.

[17] See Chapter I, Section 2. Having been all but forgotten in the Meckanickal Philosophy of the Early Modern Era, *seminal principles* reappear under the name "supra-mechanical causes" in the writings of authors who attempt to explain certain phenomena beyond the purview of the New Physics. (Boyle, for example, cites them as necessary in order to explain the consistency of growth patterns across species but also such things as animal instinct—the solicitousness of the mother bird for her young is one of his memorable examples [*Christian Virtuoso*, WB 12 446].)

repeated in the *Timaeus* as well as the *Parmenides*. The latter is the most explicit of the Platonic sources in affirming the tripartition doctrine[18] and for this reason it is the most direct influence. It speaks of a Primal One, which is a pure unity, a One-Many, and a One-and-Many. These principles emerge as the arch-categories according to Plotinus' understanding of the unfolding dialectic in the late Platonic dialogues. The so-called "method of collection and division" that appears in the *Sophist* marks the advent of the categories of Identity and Difference that are introduced in Plotinus' Principle of Intellect, which we now understand corresponds to the One-Many of the *Parmenides*. The development of the method and the use to which the categories of identity and difference can be put begins in the *Sophist* and is carried into the *Parmenides*.

Given the particular flavor of Plotinus' Platonism, there is good reason to think that Plotinus was particularly concerned with the late Theory of Forms, involving as it did the one-many problem of the *Parmenides* and *Sophist*. Plotinus therefore made the paradigm-copy or mimesis relation central to his own metaphysics. Indeed there is evidence that Plotinus took the problem of how to get a many from a one as the central problem of metaphysics.[19] Plotinus' simplicity category, and so the relation of virtuality, is his own take on how simultaneously to solve the one-many problem and to account for the archetype-copy relation.[20]

III.4 The Critique of Aristotle's *Categories*

We have already seen how Plotinus' derivation of the category of quantity differs from Aristotle, and this is characteristic of his dialectical[21] derivation of the categories more generally, according to his distinct prior commitment to an understanding of *noesis* as primarily non-discursive and the virtual as less simple than its principle, by way of an ontological projection or mimesis itself caused by its ruling idea. In *Enneads* V.1 and VI.3, his treatises on Aristotle's *Categories*, he criticizes Aristotle for identifying

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[18] Plotinus calls it "Plato's Triplicity".

[19] Ennead V.1.v. The point is also discussed by Witt in the context of Plotinus' reading of the *Timaeus* and how it differed from Albinus' by being non-literal and by demoting the demiurge to a place below the Good of the *Republic*, now identified with the One. But now if the demiurge is demoted below the One, an account must be given of how it proceeds from it, since everything must proceed from the One. Yet, if the creation story in the *Timaeus* is not to be taken literally then why think of the descriptions of the cosmogenetic movements of *proodos* and *epistrophe* (or what people usually have in mind when they think of emanation) as literally movements? Following Bussanich, we might just as well understand them as figures for the relations of efficient and final causality.

[20] See John Rist, "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy" in Lloyd Gerson, ed., *The Cambridge Compantion to Plotinus* (Cambridge: Cambrdge University Press, 1996), pp.390-391, 399-400, for an account of how Plotinus' theory of virtuality is taken up by medieval Christian philosophers, under the guise of 'analogy of imitation'.

[21] Correspondingly, the expository form genre is different. Plotinus uses the diatribe form, with an imagined interlocutor.

motions (*kineseis*) with incomplete activities (*energeiai*).[22] The identity, he thinks, fails in both directions: there are motions which are complete activities, and there are incomplete activities that are not motions.[23] One may view the criticism as stemming from the deeper disagreement over the ontological status of time and its relation to psychic and physical activity, as mentioned above: time enters with the psychological condition of striving characteristic of an ontologically dependent being that cannot rest in its own activity because its whole being emanates from or is participated by the activity of another, simpler being.[24] The relevant simplicity here may pertain to beings within the same hypostatic domain, as well as to terms characterized by the very same category, such as psychic or psychosomatic events. In Plotinus' analogical reasoning the concepts of simplicity and complexity[25] are sometimes used to signify a distinction relative to the category of quantity, as, for instance, Intellect is simpler than any of the Forms relative to quantity. But Intellect is also simpler than the Forms relative to its content and proliferation: all of the Forms in the intellectual realm have copies in this world, but Intellect itself has no correspondent outside of itself. To put it less figuratively, Intellect in contrast to the Forms is not that which makes something other than itself intelligible, and so in this respect is *simpler* than any Form. Still another use of the term simple is found in the assertion that the World Soul is the simplest of souls. In this case the relevant sense of simplicity seems to be that in which the universal is simpler than the particular.[26]

In the case of motions and activities, Plotinus will consistently view the motions of souls as simpler activities than the motions of psychosomatic motions, which are themselves simpler than the motions of bodies. Each motion is progressively dispersed and relative in its identity to spatio-temporal qualifications. So for him, Aristotle's examples of complete activities, such as seeing and living, are on the one hand just as temporal and so just as reasonably regarded as being incomplete (relative to the simpler noetic motions of the higher soul) as Aristotle's examples of putatively incomplete activities, such walking and cutting. On the other hand, these and other putative motions may be properly regarded as complete activities when considered in themselves as concrete occurrents but without their spatio- or

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[22] *Phys.* III, 201b 31–2; *Meta.* XI, 1066a 20–1; *De an.* III, 431a 6–7; *E.N.* X, 1174a 14–23. See Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, pp.34-39, and Michael Wagner "Plotinus on the Nature of Physical Reality" in Gerson (1996).

[23] *Enneads* VI.i.11-21

[24] If this seems reminiscent of Augustine's treatment of time in XI.20, 26, 27 of the *Confessions*, this is probably no accident. The fact that Augustine, like Plotinus and Gregory of Nyssa, adopts an idealist view of time becomes one more mark by which to trace the development of Platonism into idealism.

[25] There is no one locus for reference here, but most of the significant passages of exposition occur in his doctrines on purely metaphysical topics, the subjects of the tractates of *Enneads* IV, V and VI.

[26] That said, the terms simple and complex are *pros hen* analogical even along particular categorical fibers. For instance, from the above discussion it seems safe to conclude that the original is always simpler that its copies, simpler in respect of origin and order of being. But the relation of simplicity holds all the way down this fiber so to speak, albeit in a relative way. A copy of the original for example is simpler than a copy of itself, and simpler than *any* copy of a copy. Along this fiber, the ellipse, as an abstract conic section, is simpler than the orbital path of a planet, which is simpler than the figure drawn in a diagram of a planetary orbital path, which is simpler than the figure in a photograph of the drawn diagram, which is simpler that the figure in a painting made from the photograph, and so on.

loco-temporal qualities. *X* pruning a tree branch *Y* is complete at every moment of its existence: at any moment the transitive event *X is cutting* is complete in itself and may well imply *X has cut*, consistent with its completeness. For Plotinus, this amounts to a legitimate *per se* identification of the motion because it is the ontologically prior and relatively simple causal source of the activity that is the activity's ground of being or substance[27], not the spatio-temporal form-matter composite or the telic visible organization as Aristotle would have it. For Plotinus, then, all motions *per se* are complete, albeit potentially recurring, activities.

This conclusion has important consequences for his theory of emanation and the virtuality condition. We saw that one way of explicating virtuality in the relation among the three principles was in terms of the doctrine of double activity, whereby the relatively simpler productive principle—the internal activity—has the mimetic copy as its external activity, which is in turn the copy's own internal activity. Or as Plotinus says, "productive movement has a double existence: first, without regard for its existing in another thing, when this is intended by it, and, second, as existing also in that other thing".[28] Now, in the context of his theory of *kinesis*, formulated as a critical revision of Aristotle, this wider theory subtends the account of the categories of action and passion, or active and passive motion, with the consequence that the kind of productivity involved in emanation and the generation of a many from a one is absolutely *active motion*. Once more, his conclusions are in stark contrast to Aristotle. Whereas the latter could regard bodily substances as variously active or passive, depending on the nature of the substance and the change ascribed, for Plotinus bodies, or any item determined by spatio-temporal qualities, to change is always to change *passively*.[29] Insofar as human beings as embodied souls (or "ensouled bodies") change, only those movements that are soul-initiated or *psychic* are productive; the motions of limbs, the twitching of muscles, are all passive.[30] Thus as a piece of his wider emanation theory does Plotinus arrive at what becomes a canonical Neoplatonist dictum on causation, adopted by Augustine[31] and celebrated in medieval and early modern Christian philosophy, that the lower in the order of real being cannot act on the higher and in the case of the lowest, namely material things, *they cannot act externally at all but are merely the external activity of souls*.

Again, the root cause for this and other of the multiform dialectical positions in the treatises on Aristotle's *Categories* is the distinctive view that Plotinus take of substance. For him there is no ground for taking some of a physical substance's sensible qualities as essential and others as accidental, neither is it legitimate to identify the substance with its telic physical organization or composite particularity. The

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[27] V.3.xv.13-14. cf. VI.6.xiii.55-7
[28] VI.1.i.23-5
[29] III.6.vi.50-2
[30] VI.1.xix.9
[31] As discussed in Chapter 1, Section II, as well as by Gregory as we shall see shortly.

only viable candidate for substancehood is the relatively simple, productive forming-principle (*logos*) that is causally responsible for the unity and sequentially unfolding combinations of sensible qualities that we experience and so use to identify bodies. This substance, then, is a purely spiritual, sempiternal item, itself the external activity produced by a Platonic divine idea, existing at the level of Intellect along with the *nous* that is the 'higher soul' or true self of every human being. It is worth presenting the following passage in full, to highlight the striking parallel of Plotinus' thinking with Gregory of Nyssa's phenomenalist development of this idealist revision of Aristotle:

> It has been asserted regarding the qualified thing that, by intermixing and
> blending different qualities and in consort with matter and quantity, it
> effects substance for the objects of sense experience; and it has also been
> asserted that what common [as opposed to strict, or philosophically precise]
> speech designates as a "substance" is just this conglomerate of many things,
> so that a substance is no longer the particular thing itself but a qualified thing. Even then,
> however, the real existing forming-principle (e.g., of fire)
> would still indicate more the particular thing, while the shape it effects
> indicates more something qualified. Likewise, the real forming-principle of
> a human being is the particular existing human being, whereas the qualitative
> superfluance associated with corporeal nature as such is in reality an
> image of the forming-principle and exists rather as some qualified thing. Just
> as if, for example, the visible Socrates were the real human being and yet an
> image contrived in his likeness, and whose reality amounts to so much
> colour and paint, was designated to be Socrates - so too, since there exists a
> real forming-principle to which the real Socrates conforms, the Socrates
> experienced sensorially is strictly speaking not Socrates but so much colour
> and configuration of parts which in reality are imitations of real existents
> encompassed by his forming-principle.[32]

III.5 Gregory's Phenomenalistic Idealism

Gregory of Nyssa may well be understood as adapting the Platonic doctrine of divine ideas into a Christian idealism: in his system the divine ideas become *phenomenalistic* creative structuring principles, the rules by which human sense experience is organized. There are two key moments in this. First is the

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[32] VI.3.15.24-37, quoted in Wagner, *loc. cit.*, pp.136-137.

subsumption of the Plotinean theory of virtuality, providing the core understanding of the relation between divine ideas and the sensible world, into the relationship of the invisible fiat-*logoi*, the creative words of the Creator's Wisdom, and the visible world of creation. The second moment is the continuation or inference from Plotinus' revision of Aristotle on substance and coming-to-be, in which a substance is properly understood as the (invisible) intelligible forming-principle (*logos*) that unifies and causally grounds all of the accidental qualities that may conglomerate to the (virtual) thing as manifested in sense experience, including spatio-temporal qualities that Aristotle would have regarded as completed or essential.

As would be the case for Augustine, Gregory takes the latent and partial truths of Neoplatonist metaphysics and brings them into fruitful modification by the Scriptural teaching on creation. Where there are elements of pagan pantheism or atheism or merely ambiguities tending towards these, Gregory must depart from Neoplatonism or resolve the ambiguities in favor of a Christian interpretation. Crucially, Gregory must develop Neoplatonist metaphysics in a way that secures the existence of the physical world as a reality that is both objective and wholly dependent on the sustaining power of its Creator. He wants to do justice to the Biblical account of an objective world created by a God who remains asymmetrically existentially independent of it, a God who is thus both transcendent and immanent in his relation to it. It is to this end that he will find Plotinean metaphysics both a useful theological resource and a philosophy in need of correction. Gregory takes this on as part of a larger project to understand the categories of soul and body, with a view towards understanding the fate of the self, the bearer of personal identity, after death and continuing into the bodily resurrection. This is the concern at the discursive forefront in his dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection*.

For Gregory, following his interpretation of Heb 11:3, the doctrine of creation by the invisible word of God (and by nothing else) is at the heart of the whole mystery of our relationship with God, summed up in the world 'faith'. Knowledge, hope, and the moral law all proceed from it. In a fascinating train of thoughts within the dialogue, Gregory goes from considering the origin of the soul and warning us not to think of God creating it in any way familiar to us from our study of the composition of material bodies; to warning us against attempts at understanding creation altogether—leaving it as an article of faith because it is not logical; to stating positively that God creates purely by the supreme efficacy of his will and through no other intermediary (e.g. a coeternal material substrate, as used by Plato's demiurge). The creative will has to be the will of a monotheistic God (rather than, say, the wills of the 54 prime movers in Aristotle's cosmology). But he will not have it that in creating the soul God uses his own nature as material (contra the Manichees). When God creates our souls he does create something

immaterial or spiritual which is to that extent like His own nature since he is a spirit.[33] On the other hand when God creates material bodies (which in creating us he does at the same time), he seems to create something utterly unlike himself, something limited, sensible, and spatial. How, then, can something such as matter come from something so unlike itself—namely a spirit? With the Platonic and Manichaean views precluded, and notwithstanding the biblical point about it being mystically understood through faith, Gregory meditates on the fact that all of the qualities (*poiotētes*) that characterize the category of matter and that set up the puzzle about their origin are never found alone; they cannot self-subsist and only when they come together do we say that there is a body. However, since those qualities are all mental[34], why not say that they are all caused by (the divine) mind and that it is the mental action of bringing them together by the divine mind that constitutes them as a body? This explicitly reiterates Plotinus' reasoning on the nature of physical substance.

> But even about this we can say so much: i.e. that none of those things that we attribute to body is itself bodily; neither figure, nor colour, nor light, … ; it is the combination of them all into a single whole that constitutes body; seeing then that these several qualifications which complete the particular body are grasped by thought alone, and not by sense, and that the Deity is a thinking being, what trouble can it be to such thinking agent to produce the thinkables *whose actual combination generates for us the substance of that body*?[35]

This already comes very close to saying that God causes the ideas in us and that this divinely willed-and-so-ordered sequence of causings is what constitutes bodies and indeed the whole sensible world. Notice that I am not claiming Gregory is here denying the existence of matter altogether. Rather, Gregory is continuing the Plotinean move of demoting matter's existential status from something substantial to something derivative. In effect, Gregory has taken the Plotinean theory of divine ideas as noetic structuring principles whose external activity is the organization of virtual forms (that cause our sense experiences), and so the *psychic* or sensible world, and replaced matter with the divinely created receptive capacities of the human mind, the creaturely endowment of a capacity for sensation and a conceptual apparatus primed to interpret sensation in characteristic ways. On this view, it is the mind's receptive capacity for sensory cognition that is the "carbon paper of the universe", the receptacle that

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[33] Jn 4:25. *Cf.* Augustine*, Confessions*, VII

[34] Or "thinkables" to use Gregory's term in the passage quoted below.

[35] *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson, trans., from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. 5, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, ed. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893.) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2915.htm>, New Advent <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2915.htm>,, Kevin Knight, ed., emphasis mine. The passage corresponds to *de Anima et Resurrectione*, PG 46, cols124B-D in Migne.

Plato identified with space. The divine ideas contain eminently what the human mind contains virtually[36] by conscious experience. In the *De Opificio Humanis*, Gregory turns these dialogical musings of the character Macrina into a formally argued position:

(i) There is no conception of matter beyond its sensible qualities. No one quality of a body is essential to it.

(ii) Each of the qualities (*poiotētes*) of a body can be distinguished from each other and from the body.

(iii) In fact, these qualities have *no logical connection* with each other.

(iv) If you take away all the qualities there is no body remaining (no substrate).

(v) Each of these qualities is intelligible-perceivable, hence mental.

(vi) Therefore, it is the concurrence of mental qualities that creates a body

But,

if the perception of these properties is a matter of intellect, and the Divinity is also intellectual in nature, there is no incongruity in supposing that these intellectual occasions for the genesis of bodies have their existence from the incorporeal nature, the intellectual nature on the one hand giving being to the intellectual potentialities, and the mutual occurrence of these bringing to its genesis the material nature.[37]

This is the full statement of canonical phenomenalist idealism, once unpacked. In the *De Anima* he had already said: "…these little souls gaze upon the world, but their eyes are blind to Him *whom all this that we see around us makes manifest*".[38] On this metaphysical view of creation, God does not make the world and (then us) such that we then come along and perceive it—no, he not only makes the world, he

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[36] And perhaps at two steps removed.

[37] *On the Making of Man*, XXIV.2, H.A. Wilson, trans., from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. 5, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, ed. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893.), New Advent <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2914.htm>, Kevin Knight, ed. The passage corresponds to *de Hominis Opificio*, ch.24, PG 44, cols 212-13 in Migne.

[38] *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, emphasis mine.

makes it manifest to us. It is not just because of him that it exists, it is because of him that we see it. In fact it is in making it manifest to us *that* he makes it, its reason for being is to be revealed to us through the senses—that is what the world is, a sign system, a means of communication, a language, by which God speaks to man. The world is the mode of communication that pertains to this human nature. God has chosen *this way* of speaking to us, and this is what our perceiving and our being perceptible through our own bodies means.

We are told "The creation proclaims outright the Creator".[39] How? By its beauty or intricacy of design? Not so much by these as by it weaving together in union elements that are essentially opposed to each other; in fact, by the non-logical regularities that characterize the world as we discover it, by these behaving in ways that are predictable yet contrary to what would seem to be their own individual essence in order to form some larger purpose.

> We see all this [union of contraries in the physical world] with the piercing eyes of *nous*, nor can we fail to be taught by such a spectacle that a divine power, working with skill and methods is manifesting itself in this actual world….[40]

How does God manifest himself in the world? Not by showing himself directly, because he is not identical to any part of the world. No, but by using the world as a medium of revelation to the mind of man: that is, by ordering the world in a way that suggests necessary connections that are not determined by logic or intrinsic material essences, God seems intentionally to be making manifest to man that such necessities are an indication of the utter dependence of the world's character on his regulatory activity.

Gregory is convinced that God shows himself in nature through the unity of (phenomenal) opposites. This is a unity found among the qualities of the world in their peculiar worldly combination and sequence. Biblically, it is the Book of Ben Sirach that emphasizes the point.

> Look upon all the worlds of the Most High; they likewise are in pairs, one the opposite of the other.[41]

> All things are twofold, one opposite the other, and he has made nothing incomplete.[42]

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[39] *De Anima*, quoted by Gregory in reference to Ps 19:1, but *cf.* Wis 13:5 and Rom 1:20.
[40] *De Anima*
[41] Sir 33:15
[42] Sir 42:24

This unity cannot be explained from within the world system itself, since the very conceptual intelligibility of the world presupposes it.[43] While Gregory himself does not extrapolate to such a conclusion, we may perhaps be tempted to infer such a unity from the Trinitarian operations. This would be to see the unity of opposites as an image of the *free necessity* of the Incarnate Logos, the Son of God who in his personal freedom as God subsists in and so glorifies what is wholly unnatural and thus "opposite" to Him, namely human nature and through it all finite, created being, "without confusion, division, or separation" (in the Chalcedonian formula). Is not the ultimate unity of opposites this "first-fruit" of creation; and so the sacrificial philanthropy, the free identification of the powerful with the weak, all contained in the reality of Christ the God-man, the wisdom that characterizes the creation that is ordered to this glorified end? In short, the personal intelligence, omnipotence, and Providence of God are indicated in the unity of opposites found in nature for the very strong reason that the ultimate unity of opposites, the hypostatic union of the infinite and finite, is itself the foundational reason for finite being.

Thus following Scripture and the philosophical lead of Neoplatonism *a la* Plotinus, Gregory not only sees no need for a philosopher's notion of a material substratum or intrinsic material essences in the natural world, but believes that God has "gone out of his way", so to speak, to arrange the world transparently to reflect the dependence of its order on his will. It is important to emphasize here that, on this interpretation, Gregory is not denying the existence of matter altogether. He is not denying that there are physical things and facts and a physical world composed of them. What he is here interpreted as claiming is that the existential status of physical things is derived from divinely-instituted immaterial grounding principles. So he is here interpreted as denying, in effect, only the existence of matter as a substance.

What then are the conditions in which the divine will acts, so as to determine the manner in which God brings together thinkables at the level of human experience? In his study of Gregory of Nyssa, Von Balthasar[44] points out that for Gregory creation is characterized by *diastasis* or *diastema*, the *aeon* or "spacing" (*espacement*), or "finition" (the term I prefer). This is the logical constraint (or system of constraints) that makes every finite being what it is and not another thing, and also the psycho-temporal condition of sensible matter. One important idea here is that visible creation is providentially governed by the imposition of divinely-issued nomic constraints within a prephysical but temporal framework, something that will be constructively elaborated in Ch.VIII. This is part of the way to the linguistic model

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[43] Philo of Alexandria, *The Contemplative Life, Giants, and Selections*, David Winston, trans. (Paulist Press, 1980), p.115, quotes the text of Gen 15:10 in support of the claim that God makes a world that exhibits a union of opposites. Like Justin Martyr in his *First Apology*, Philo is concerned to show that ancient Pagan "wisdom" about cosmology was already found in an undistorted form "in Moses". So Heraclitus, e.g., talks of opposites but not as Moses had.

[44] *Presence and Thought: Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa* (Communio Books, Ignatius Press. 1995).

of the cosmos, the Berkeleyan idea of a world as language. The other important idea is that in reflecting on the difference between the transcendent simultaneity of the act of creation and the prephysical but temporal governance of creation (the *diastasis* or *aeon*), we recognize that both are still distinct from the unfolding duration of that governance at the human empirical perspective. Corresponding to this last, Gregory recognizes the concept of the *odos*, the path (as found within the human creature's empirical frame of reference) from the beginning to the end of creation. "It is an ordered unfolding" , a "manifestation" or *distention*[45] of the members of being.[46] Given his phenomenalistic understanding of the relation between sensible matter and intelligible or spiritual realm of being as discussed in this section, namely that matter is produced by the order by which God divinely decrees that qualities 'conglomerate' in consciousness, it is tempting to understand the relation between the *diastema* of creation and its manifestation similarly.[47]

In the preface to his study of Gregory, Hans Boersma expresses theology's need for a "participatory or sacramental ontology", which "is essential to a genuine appreciation of the goodness of the created order, including the embodied, measurable world of space and time".[48] Boersma believes he finds more than the rudiments of such an ontology already in Gregory, and correctly identifies Gregory's phenomenalistic idealism in regard to the question of the ontological status of matter as a significant part of what facilitates the participatory ontology. To understand matter as something synthesized by God in the unity of human consciousness accords it the immanence it needs to be the true object of sense experience that we ordinarily take it to be, to be truly 'for us' in its essential ontological character, truly 'formal' in the sense of sacramental theology, *and* equally to be as objective, publically available and fact-bearing as we ordinarily take the physical world to be, to be truly responsive to the divine creative command or 'real' in the sacramental theological sense. Among the implications of such an ontology is the truth that the physical world of space, time and matter is 'penultimate' to borrow Boersma's word, that they "require a readjustment of eschatological proportion in order to participate forever in the life of God".[49] In the chapters that follow I want to show how, following Gregory's lead, phenomenalistic idealism can be developed so as to clarify the penultimate character of the physical world in the light of sacramental theology. If the contingent necessity of the natural order shows it to be a form of revelation, a

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[45] *cf.* Augustine, *Confessions* XI.20, 26-7, on human psychological *distentio* as the essence of time. This fits nicely with Gregory on the *odos* of creation, but it also, as in other discussions, sharply raises the question of the relation between angelic consciousness and the construction of objective phenomenal time, a subject to be visited in Ch.VIII.
[46] von Balthasar, *Thought and Presence*, Ch.1, n.37 , citing *De Mortuis* III, 520 C.
[47] I will have more to say constructively about how these three levels of creation (the absolute transcendence and simultaneity of the divine act, the prephysical but temporal celestial governance, and "all things visilble" or the consequential projection of this governance at the human empirical viewpoint) and their relations may be understood in VIII.4 and IX.2.
[48] *Embodiment and Virtue in Gregory of Nyssa: An Anagogical Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), vii.
[49] Ibid.

divine language written and read in the minds of human creatures, then that language may be a medium of Christian worship as much as it may be received in Christian faith. One might understand miracles then, particularly those recorded in Scripture, in the Exodus of Israel and in the Gospels, as supernatural revelations *about* natural revelation, signs from the Creator about the status of his visible creation as medium of language, that he invites man to participate in the creativity of divine life with Him and that the language, the natural order, will be adapted to reflect the growing intimacy of its speakers.[50]

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[50] We shall return to this point explicitly at the end of Chapter V.

Chapter IV: Dionysian Hierarchy and Symbolic Theology

IV.1 Introduction

In Chapter III, we took up the subject of the Christian development of Neoplatonist metaphysics. As a representative case study, we examined Plotinus' ontological hierarchy founded in the three hypostases and the fundamental priority relation of emanation, with its constituent notion of virtuality. We saw how this relation was adapted into a Christian cosmology by Gregory of Nyssa. In his critique of Aristotelian hylomorphism, Plotinus had denied that any sensible or physical item could be a substance in the primary sense, arguing instead that the unity and conglomeration (*sumphorêsis*) of sensible qualities that we subsequently identify as physical items must be explained by a simpler, purely intelligible principle. Following this, Gregory proposes the thesis of phenomenalistic idealism as a way of understanding how the Christian God makes the physical world by spiritual means. In his phenomenalistic interpretation of the emanation relation, the supreme personal reality of the Trinity produces visible creation by bringing together within the unity of created minds certain characteristic combinations and sequences of immaterial *poiotētes*, sensible qualities like shapes, colors, and tones that, being themselves 'thoughts' (*ennoiai*) and concepts (*noemata*), or 'thinkables', are understood to be existentially mind-dependent. With his further emphasis on the sovereign Creator's free organization of these phenomenal qualities in the order of nature—the "union of opposites—and the concepts of *diastasis* and *odos*, we begin to see the mutuality between the orthodox doctrine of creation and metaphysics of idealism, in which visible creation is virtual divine speech, the expression of words spoken from the divine mind about the possible courses of human sensory experience.

In this chapter the subject of the Christian development of Neoplatonist metaphysics continues. Here our case study will be the symbolic theology of pseudo-Dionysius, proposed as a method of Biblical and liturgical exegesis, and his vision of the cosmic hierarchy as a union of the invisible and visible Church. In Dionysius' vision, Gregory's conception of the "union of opposites", within the context of a Christian version of phenomenalistic idealism, sets the standard for the best way to do theology, the way God himself does theology, expressing himself through the activity of the Logos in Christ. On this picture, the incarnational reality that is Christ, in which the supreme God fully becomes what he is not, is the ultimate "union of opposites". For creatures, this has an important implication. The way for *them* to become what they are not—to become divinized in Christ, the goal of the Christian life and the primary reason for the act of creation—is for them to receive God's own theology in the manner in which it was given: firstly, to use the perceptual symbols of Scripture and the sacramental rites of the Church liturgy as a way to be raised up beyond the limits of our minds by obediently allowing their splendid power to bring

us before God, training our minds in images in order to see through them; and secondly, by participating ourselves in the cosmic structure that brings these images to us, taking our own part in salvation history as Christians by fulfilling our liturgical office in the Church's cosmic hierarchy, from seraph and cherub, to bishop, to laymen and catechumen.

Dionysius' vision of the cosmic hierarchy is focused in the lens of worship and for him as for Bouyer and the 20th Liturgical Movement, it is preeminently in the liturgy that we encounter the Mystery of Christ. We are to ascend to God the same way he descends to us, from the Transcendental Unity of the Godhead, to Christ, to finite intelligence and invisible creation, and finally to the human world of sensible appearances. The *reditus* path of ascent is not a Platonic myth of the soul's migration through abstract realms: it is the concrete activity of the Church at worship, in which created persons share in divine life by administering sacred knowledge to those who depend on them.

Dionysius' symbolic theology takes us a step closer to appreciating the singular contribution of Berkeley's linguistic model of human sense-perception, both in its theological significance and philosophically as a kind of propaedeutic to Christian idealism. In effect, Berkeley's theory takes Dionysius' lesson about the apophaticism of Biblical and liturgical theology and shows how the same is true of God's revelatory work in nature itself. In the resulting idealism, the physical world is understood to be a visible language for man to learn about God's providential intentions towards men, a natural-nomological symbolic theology, that signals its status as such by resisting, at the psychophysical level, any assimilation to mathematical reasoning or *a priori* logical affinities. In creation, as in Scripture and liturgy, God condescends to order base incongruous images into words that express, transparently, their status as words, and so reveal the Author and his power as their Speaker. Following the Dionysian reasoning, this is appropriate to man's created (sensory-*cum*-noetic) cognitive nature and hence limitations. As Dionysius says, it is characteristic of man to learn intellectual things through sense-images; it is almost essential to or definitive of him or at least his cognitive state.

> For it is quite impossible that we humans should, in any immaterial way, rise up to imitate and to contemplate the heavenly hierarchies without the aid of those material means capable of guiding us as our nature requires.[1]

At the same time, Dionysius develops and integrates this theology of mystical ascent alongside the notion of the Church as a continuous cosmic hierarchy that unifies those of heaven and earth, and so paves the

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[1] *Celestial Hierarchy* 121C-D, p.146. All references to the Dionysian corpus are as reproduced in the edition translated by Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987).

way to integrating phenomenalistic idealism, *a la* Gregory and Berkeley, with angelic cosmology. The divine revelatory words descend to man by the power of the Spirit via a chain of mediating influences, from angels to prophets, apostles, hierarchs, and liturgical ministers. This cosmic, structured arrangement is what Dionysius, somewhat uniquely in the Christian tradition, calls 'hierarchy'. It is the notion of the Church as a continuous cosmic ministry of spirits, unifying the purposive activity of heaven and earth. Dionysian mystical theology thus integrates angelic cosmology, Scriptural exegesis and mystagogy or sacramental theology. The hierarchy is a gift created by God for the purpose of bringing all rational creatures into conformity with the divine likeness. But this likeness is a likeness to the perfection of eternal life. Therefore the manner in which it is realized must reflect the end state. It must follow the pattern of the Incarnation, a pattern of spontaneous, sacrificial con-descension and of adoring, receptive con-ascension in response. In the foundational cosmic society of the hierarchy, these moments are unified in the movement that is the life of God in his creature, just as we saw in our focus on the shape of the traditional liturgy.[2] This feature of the Dionysian world-system is also, therefore, what makes it so apt for synthesis with angelic cosmology and its liturgical extrapolations, to be explored in Chs.VIII and IX.

IV.2 Mystical Ascent Through Incongruous Images

As for others in the early Christian tradition, Dionysius regards the ascent of Moses to meet with the LORD on Mt. Sinai in the fiery darkness as the model for mystical ascent to knowledge of God as mystery. As self-transcending, it is an 'unknowing', not to be measured by any familiar human standard of knowledge.[3] As Paul Rorem points out, for both Gregory of Nyssa[4] and Dionysius mystical ascent is most concretely realized in the sacramental rites, with Moses serving as the prototype of the hierarch (or bishop) who must purify himself, withdraw from those who are not so prepared to receive the sacred mysteries, and call around him those chosen assistants with whom he will enter the altar[5] and, through ritual participation, transcend the sensible (and indeed conceptual) forms of the rite to contemplate the hidden divine realities they present. Following the received Alexandrian formula, mystical ascent is a three-stage process of purification, illumination, contemplation. To practice this mystical ascent is to liturgically experience the '*mystika*', the hidden divine realities, within the providential arrangement of the cosmic hierarchy. The administration and reception of this hidden wisdom under accommodated

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[2] Ch.I, Section 3, especially pp.14-18.
[3] *Mystical Theology* 1001A, p.137.
[4] *Life of Moses* II, 152-170, PG 372C-380A, as referred to by Rorem (footnote, p.137). But one finds the same description of ascent to a knowledge of heavenly realities in Gregory of Nazianzus' *Second Theological Oration*, *Oration 28: On the Doctrine of God*.
[5] Ps. 40:2

representations is the "more suitable"[6] theological method of "dissimilar dissimilarities" that Dionysius believes is the path to *gnosis* preferred by the great Judeo-Christian theological tradition.[7] This method of ascent must be regarded for Dionysius as distinct from affirmative and negative theology, even from their dialectical combination.[8]

In the *Mystical Theology*, Dionysius presents us with the well-known schema of affirmative and negative theology, as two complimentary approaches to the reality of God. These two theologies move in opposing directions across the metaphysical order, each beginning at the pole where the other ends. Affirmative theology ends in expounding "analogies of God drawn from what we perceive… of his anger, grief and rage, of how he is said to be drunk and hungover…these latter come more abundantly than what went before…".[9] The ascent of negative theology traces the salvation and glorification of humanity in Christ. The ascent corresponds to the Neoplatonic *epistrophe*, which, as we saw in Ch.III, is half of the double activity of the emanation relation, wherein 'the many' produced as the external activity of 'the one' are drawn back to their source and are constituted in this attraction as their own internal activity, from which their powers proceed. In Dionysius this movement of ascent becomes interpreted as the *erotic* contemplation of the Church's liturgical anagogy, the process by which human beings, having been initiated into the sacred mysteries of Christ, united together as his body, are lifted up to the Father as an offering just as he was, joined together in sacred company. As a method of theology, it is what he describes as the method of "dissimilar similarities", practiced both by the Old Testament theologians[10] and in the Christian era by the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the liturgy.

It cannot be equated with negative theology because the method aims at a contemplation of a reality that is beyond negation, which after all is intelligible only within the context of discursive reasoning. Negative theology does not adequately deliver a knowledge of God any more than affirmative theology. What we can identify as a genuine "mystical" theology, however, is something different from both. In the opening chapters of the *Celestial Hierarchy* Dionysius describes it as a way of training our minds for self-transcendence by reaching for God in the most incongruous sensible images. Having

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[6] CH 141A-B – More suitable, that is, in comparison with any discursive theology, whether affirmative or negative.

[7] Rorem's early monograph, *Biblical and Liturgical Symbols within the Pseudo-Dionysian Synthesis* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), traced the lines of synthesis among angelic cosmology, Biblical exegesis, and mystagogy in Dionysius. See also Andrew Louth's *Denys the Areopagite* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), and Eric Perl's *Theophany: The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), especially Chs. 6 and 7, for interpretative positions similar to my own.

[8] For alternative readings that do in fact identify mystical ascent in Dionysius with negative theology or some dialectical combination of affirmative and negative theology see Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God : Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and René Roques, *L'Univers dionysien. Structure hiérarchique du monde selon le pseudo-Denys* (Paris. 1954).

[9] MT 1033B, p.139

[10] Dionysius' term for the prophets and authors of Scripture.

journeyed across the ontological landscape between the divine transcendence of God and his dependent worldly creatures in both directions, affirmative and negative theology jointly acquaint us with the inadequacy of any self-initiated movement of the human mind to God. What option remains? Only to leave aside any human theology whatsoever, to let God's own theology come to us as it does in Scripture and liturgy, and having received it, to let it upliftingly work in and through us. This is what he means when at the very beginning of the *Mystical Theology* he instructs Timothy to

> leave behind you…all that is not and all that is [both negative and affirmative theology, which are self-driven], and, with your understanding laid aside…By an absolute abandonment of yourself and everything…you will be uplifted to the ray of the divine shadow.[11]

This method, which Dionysius demonstrates in the *Celestial Hierarchy* and the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. is initiated by the thearchy, by God himself. Man only receives and participates in this theology, being transformed into what he is not in the process. It is not carried out in isolation or by retreating from the sensible world, but always hierarchically mediated by the cosmic Church, the sacramental Christ. The purpose of theology is the self-transcending of our limited mental capacities, to share in the knowledge of God possessed by Christ. Theological representation at its best, is *mystical* representation that comes to us in the fullness of our sensory capacities and keeps the content of our knowledge hidden, that is, the pure, unmixed transcendent reality that it is

As Dionysius goes on to describe affirmative and then negative theology in the text of the *Mystical Theology*, leaving off in the end with an apparent recapitulation[12] of the ideal of mystical ascent (in the fashion of the Mosaic prototype), it is tempting to identify the ideal of mystical ascent with negative theology, since the latter had been the method described just before this. Furthermore, in Chapter Two, he seems to make this identification explicit in saying "to praise the Transcendent One in a transcending way, namely through the denial of all beings".[13] This tempting interpretation, however, should be resisted. The text ends by recapitulating the very point made in the passage quoted above, "the Supreme Cause…is beyond assertion and denial". The discursive denials of negative theology, therefore, cannot be the route to divine contemplation. They cannot move the mind past itself, and this is as true of the "higher stages" of conceptual-intellectual denial as at the lower. Yet negative theology clearly has value as a way to praise God and to gain some discursive knowledge of the Transcendent One, however limited its value might be. The same must be said for affirmative theology, which Dionysius devotes

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[11] 1000A, p.135
[12] 1048B, p.141
[13] 1025A, p.138

himself to in the *Divine Names*. But if neither of these is an adequate theology, there must be a preferred third option. And this is the method Dionysius will demonstrate in the *Celestial Hierarchy* and the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. What distinguishes the theology of these texts is that they are initiated by the thearchy, by God himself, man only receives and participates in this theology, being transformed into what he is not in the process. Unlike the pagan 'theology' of Neoplatonism, this theology is not carried out in isolation or by retreating from the sensible world. It is always hierarchically mediated by the cosmic Church, the sacramental Christ, from the throne of the thearchy to the phenomenal elements of nature.

Chapter Two of the *Celestial Hierarchy* explains the theological method of dissimilar similarities.[14] First is the basic recognition that "The source of spiritual perfection provided us with perceptible images of these heavenly minds [the angels]".[15] This echoes similar statements regarding affirmative theology in the *Mystical Theology* and the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, where he says "However, the divine ray can enlighten us only by being upliftingly concealed in a variety of sacred veils which the Providence of the Father adapts to our nature as human beings".[16] So far this may simply sound like a reminder of the value of affirmative and negative theology when used together in complementarity. Our limited minds with their mode of sensory cognition may require the adaptation of sensible images to understand God, and since negative theology balances this out, the two together might be thought adequate. Speaking specifically of the case of our knowledge of angels, though all these points are intended to generalize to a knowledge of the divine, we might think that the corrective check of negative theology is enough to keep us in recognition that "We cannot...profanely visualize these heavenly and godlike intelligences as actually having numerous feet and faces...".[17] This seems straightforward. But:

> What if someone therefore thinks that the scriptural imagery for these minds is incongruous and that the names given to the angels have the inadequacy of a pretense?...if one looks at the truth of the matter...Now these sacred shapes ['Word', 'Mind', 'Being', the 'higher' conceptual names for God] certainly show more reverence and seem vastly superior to the making of images drawn from the world. *Yet they are actually no less defective than this latter* [the perceptual figures], for

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[14] Here as in other parts of the text, he is taking angelology as a particular branch of theology to serve as a case in point about theology more generally. In fact, the deliberate eliding of 'theology proper' and angelology comes to show itself as a deliberate and reflexive effort to show the indispensability of angelic mediation in hierarchical revelation, which all authentic revelation is.

[15] CH 124A

[16] EH 121C, p. 146

[17] 137A

the Deity is far beyond every manifestation of being and of life; no reference to light can characterize it; every reason or intelligence falls short of similarity to it.[18]

In other words, suppose that someone were to argue that negative theology is superior to affirmative theology or that conceptual theology were superior to perceptual theology insofar as the former in each case uses terms that are 'closer' to the reality of God, and so show greater praise for Him. Such an argument, says Dionysius, would commit a dangerous fallacy. Considering the complete Transcendence of the reality of God, there is no human conception, conceptual or perceptual, affirmative or negative that is adequate to him. In relation to the divine infinitude, there is no sense in regarding any finite discursive or analogical theological conception as 'closer' to the reality of God than another. In fact, to keep the mind resistant to that very trap, Dionysius introduces us to the following idea, something the Old Testament theologians and early Church Fathers, chiefly the Apostles themselves, already knew: "Then there is the scriptural device of praising the deity by presenting it in utterly *dissimilar revelations*".[19] This inverts the logic of the would-be argument above. To keep us from the illusion of thinking that there is something about perceptual symbols that make them unfit for representation of the Deity and what is godlike generally, including the angels, we might well think that the cruder and more corporeal, the more incongruous, the images the better. Any would-be objector forgets that the purpose of theology is the self-transcending of our limited mental capacities, to share in the knowledge of God possessed by Christ. Theological representation at its best, is *mystical* representation that comes to us in the fullness of our sensory capacities and keeps the content of our knowledge hidden, that is, the pure, unmixed transcendent reality that it is:

> Since the way of negation appears to be more suitable to the realm of the divine and since positive affirmations are always unfitting to the hiddenness of the inexpressible, *a manifestation through dissimilar shapes is more correctly to be applied to the invisible*. So it is that scriptural writings, far from demeaning the ranks of heaven, actually pay them honor by describing them with dissimilar shapes so completely at variance with what they really are that we come to discover how those ranks, so completely removed from us, transcend all materiality. Furthermore, I doubt that anyone would refuse to acknowledge that *incongruities are more suitable* for lifting our minds up into the domain of the spiritual than similarities are....High-flown shapes could well mislead someone into thinking that the heavenly beings are golden or gleaming

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[18] CH137B-140A, 140C, p.149, emphasis mine.
[19] 140D

men…Indeed the sheer crassness of the signs is a goad…So, then, forms even those drawn from the lowliest matter, can be used, not unfittingly, with regard to heavenly beings.[20]

In the context of Dionysian mystical theology, the method of dissimilar similarities is good Biblical and liturgical theology because it follows the logic of Divine Wisdom in creation. Paul tells us that Divine Wisdom is human foolishness, and we see this not just in the Passion of Christ and the response of the baptized who join their sacrifice to his in what looks like folly to the world (the death of martyrdom), but already in the pattern of creation which, as described by Gregory, brings together opposites. Dionysius makes the christological abduction of the phenomenal "union of opposites" clear and explicit. The primary wisdom on which creation is patterned is the Incarnation, and this is the ultimate incongruity, the ultimate application of a dissimilar shape to the invisible, the God who transcends being becoming what he is not so that what is not may become him through the grace of this mysterious love. It is the sacramental present in which we live as much our eschatological hope. It is the way we are to do theology, the way we are to worship and contemplate, moment-to-moment and once for all time. This is an instance of self-similarity across scales within the created order. As the ultimate union of opposites in the Incarnation is the primary reason for creation, this pattern is repeated even within the visible side of creation, and not accidentally, since it is in this that its symbolic or linguistic or representative character consists, a cosmos *as* liturgy. In the Old Testament this insight belonged exclusively to Israel, now to the universal Church. In short, the hierarchical movement of *proodos* and *epistrophe* in creation already reflects the liturgical dimension of salvation in being a union of opposites on different scales. Love is a "divine madness" says Socrates in the *Phaedrus* and Paul speaks of the divine foolishness of the Cross that is wiser than the wisdom of men and appears to pagan philosophers as folly.[21] The incarnate love of God in Christ is divine but looks like madness to human beings. Indeed because of our sinful nature, it looks like madness *because* it is divine. Divine Wisdom is human folly, and mystical theology is good theology because it internalizes this precept. This is the truly mystical theology of scriptural revelation and Church mystagogy, superior to merely negative discursive theology, and which transfigures any dry, ponderous or overly discursive affirmative theology in its light.

IV.3 The Cosmic Hierarchy

An understanding of the method of dissimilar similarities for mystical ascent cannot be separated from the Dionysian notion of *hierarchy*. It will be foundational for my own elaboration of the metaphysics of

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[20] 141A-B, 141 B, 141B, 144B, emphasis mine.
[21] 1 Cor 1:21-25.

Christian idealism and of great importance in establishing the overall coherence of the argument for it as an argument from liturgical theology and particularly from a theology of the Eucharist.[22]

As any careful, reflective theologian would be, Dionysius is quick to disclaim[23] any pretense to a knowledge of the inner workings or relationships among angelic society, their inner life or the nature of their interaction with God. Nonetheless, with so many scriptural references to angelic society, and indeed reference to their society as a *qahal* or *ecclesia*, the oft-referred to liturgical assembly[24] of God and those angels closest to him[25], we are encouraged to believe that God desires that we know something about these inter-workings and relationships and has already revealed much about them to us. For as he says, not only this but God has revealed to us that we are to be like the angels[26], fellow-workers (*syndouloi*) with them[27], in serving God liturgically with them in one cosmic Church by ministering to those ranked below us (the lowest being those outside the Church altogether), which is characteristic of liturgical action, celestial or ecclesial, in imitation of Christ.

> He made the heavenly hierarchies known to us. He made our own hierarchy a ministerial colleague of these divine hierarchies by an assimilation, to the extent that is humanly feasible, to their godlike priesthood.[28]

But what exactly is a hierarchy? If were are not careful, we are likely to superimpose our own everyday understanding shared with secular culture. For Dionysius, by contrast, what is characteristic of hierarchy—besides the fact that it is a divinely instituted gift as the core structure of the *diastasis* in which the empirical *odos* of creation enfolds—is that in it two superficially contrary movements are united in a single dynamism, anagogy through oblation, according to the figure of Christ.

> If one talks then of hierarchy, what is meant is a certain perfect arrangement, the image of the beauty of God which *sacredly works out the mysteries of its own enlightenment* in the orders and levels of understanding of the hierarchy, and which is likened towards its own source as much as permitted. Indeed for every member of the hierarchy, perfection consists in this, that it is uplifted

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[22] As described in Chapter I, Section 3, and moving forward to a final consideration in Chapter IX.
[23] DN 593B, p.53
[24] Ps 89-5, 7; *cf.* also Job 1:6 and 1 Kings 22:19-23, not to mention almost the whole of John's *Apocalypse*.
[25] Lk 1:19; *cf.* also Dn 8:16, 9:21 and Mt 18:10.
[26] Mt 22:30
[27] Rev 22:9
[28] CH 124A, p.147

to imitate God as far as possible, amore wonderful still, that it becomes what scripture calls "fellow workman for God" and a reflection of the workings of God.[29]

Thus it is the hierarchy, the communal, personal reality at the heart of the structure of the cosmos, the hypo-structure and characteristic arrangement of the divine *oikonomia* that facilitates and conditions the method of dissimilar similarities. It seems to be God's own work in creation that *is* revelation in and through the hierarchy. Each member is "uplifted to imitate God" by ministering to those below him in the hierarchy, just as in the overall movement of the divine economy the divine nature of the Logos, likeness to which members are being conformed, is condescending from simplicity to complexity in proclamation, and anagogical in the offertory life of the Risen Christ.

> Think of Melchizedek. He was filled with love for God and he was a hierarch…They [the "experts in sacred learning"] described him as a priest so as to make clear to sensible men that his task was not simply to be returned to the true God but, rather as a hierarch to lead others in their uplifting toward the one true God.[30]

Chapter Three of the *Celestial Hierarchy* concludes with an exhortation to those practicing mystical ascent through the hierarchy's liturgy to follow the pattern of purification, illumination, and perfection, the very pattern that Dionysius had described in the *Mystical Theology* as the way of unknowing for which Moses's ascent on Mt. Sinai is prototypical.

The work of theology is one way of describing the ministerial office of the hierarchy. It is as much prophetic and Scriptural as it liturgical and ecclesiastical. Just as the angels transmitted knowledge to those "near the angels", so these men in turn transmitted knowledge to other men below them in the hierarchy, becoming what we call prophets, in the case of Zechariah, Ezekiel, Daniel[31], or apostles, bishops, martyrs, and saints in the Christian era. If we take seriously the suggestion that the cosmic hierarchy, so understood, is foundational in the cosmos, in accordance with the thesis of the absolute primacy of Christ, we have an additional insight into references to 'natural', pre-Christian revelation in Scripture[32]: such revelation was already an instance of the hierarchy at work, drawing all men to Christ through the angelic ministry and its distributive chain.

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[29] 165B, p.154

[30] CH 261A, p.172.

[31] *Cf*. Dan 8:16: "Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision".

[32] Most famously Rom 1:20, but also *cf*. the discourse of Sir 42:15-25 and Wis 13:5.

And here is another item for your understanding of the hierarchy. It was revealed to Pharaoh by the angel presiding over the Egyptians and to the ruler of the Babylonians by their angel that there is a concerned and authoritative Providence and Lordship over all things. Servants of the true God were established as leaders for those nations, and the manifestation of things represented by the angelic visions were revealed by God through the angels to certain sacred men near the angels, namely Joseph and Daniel. For there is only one ruling source and Providence in the world, and we must not imagine that the Deity took charge of the Jewish people alone and that angels or gods, on an equal footing with him or even hostile to him, had charge of the other peoples…The single Providence of the Most High for all commanded angels to bring all peoples to salvation, but it was Israel alone which returned to the Light and proclaimed the true Lord.[33]

This suggests to us a particular reading of the historical development of Israel's election and the corollary judgment of the other nations, to which Paul makes reference in Romans. Judgment is contingent on a free response to a call that God, under the universal scope of his Providence, makes to all people. And, furthermore, this call is made through the mediation of the angelic ministry, which apparently includes, per Dionysius, a hierarchical presiding of spirits over nations as social groups.[34] In fact, the content of the angelic revelation is, at least in part, the reality of the cosmic hierarchy of which their ministry and particular revelations are an instance. What better way to show pre-Christian peoples that the true God is one sovereign Lord over the whole cosmos, than to have this message conveyed by the very structural framework that exemplifies this sovereignty? The purpose of this structure is to move intelligent creatures to their absolute Creator through a transmissive chain of personal knowledge and charity, in which upward movement is achieved by ministering to the lower, in which ascent is achieved by descent, following the divine Wisdom, the primal pattern of Christ the God-man.

If we synthesize the idea of angels presiding over nations and so revealing to them the sovereignty of the one God with Paul's reference to pre-Christian natural revelation, we are led to the conclusion that the same celestial-hierarchical mediation responsible for the visions to "sacred men" was responsible in a more regular and quotidian way for the mediation of the knowledge of God "clearly visible in the things that have been made". In other words, so the suggestion goes, there is a continuity between *i)* the special, individual revelatory visions given to Jacob, Joseph, and the prophets of the Judaic kingdom; *ii)* to the special, individual revelatory visions given to rulers of gentile nations; and *iii)* the phenomenal regularity that is given to all in the immanent yet intersubjectively coherent sensory experiences of ordinary waking life. They are all manifestations of the mediating angelic governance of

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[33] 261B-C, p.172
[34] *Cf*. Dan 10:13, 20 and Rev 1:20

human sensory consciousness within the divinely instituted cosmic hierarchy, instituted for the purpose of uplifting all intelligent creatures in a communal movement of shared knowledge and love of God. This conception of the continuity of angelically-mediated natural and supernatural revelation is something a fully developed idealist metaphysics can hope to make coherent and specific in its details.

IV.3 The Celestial Hierarchy and the Visible Creation Economy

Angels move in circular, straight, and spiral paths, indicating their various offices of receiving divine instruction and knowledge, ministering and mediating that knowledge to creatures, and yet never ceasing to be drawn after the "Beautiful and the Good".[35] All three motions correspond to movements of the human soul to God through different types of knowledge.[36] The meeting place of human and angelic movements is indicated by the straight line paths. For the one (the angel) is ministering, while the other (the human) is being ministered to, and, tellingly for Dionysius, via the sense-images of Scripture and liturgy. What I propose is that it is consistent with such an understanding of the hierarchy to extrapolate from the ministerial use of these images to the external sensibles of the physical world itself, the qualitative scenes that feature in our sensory experience and that we recognize as thematically world-suggestive. This lesson makes sense if the phenomenal workings of nature, the governance of the physical world, are included within the angels' ministerial office. Yet just as Dionysius is, as should be any orthodox theologian, we have to be clear that all movements and indeed all being, in the "realm of what is perceived" or elsewhere, have their origin, preservation and goal in the Beautiful and the Good.

We know that on account of their proximity to God in the hierarchy, the angels possess relatively simple and universal knowledge of the divine plan for creation:

> Their thinking processes imitate the divine…since it is they who first are granted the divine enlightenment and it is they who pass on to us *these revelations* which are so far beyond us.[37]

Would it not seem fitting, then, that these revelations be natural ones in particular, in addition to the supernatural ones, the scriptural theophanies? If the primary reason for creation itself is the glorification

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[35] DN 704D-705A, p.78

[36] 705A-B

[37] CH 180A, p.156, CH 180B, p.157, emphasis mine. Like God, the angels' knowledge of sensibles is an active knowledge of cause and order. They do not have sensations but they can cause them: "Scripture also says that the angels know the things of earth not because these latter may be perceived by the senses but because of the proper capacity and nature inherent in a Godlike intelligence" (DN 869C), just as "the divine Mind does not acquire the knowledge of thing from things. Rather, of itself and in itself it precontains and comprehends the awareness and understanding and being of everything in terms of their cause"(DN 869A-C, p.108).

of a human nature in Christ, then the orders of nature, grace, and glory are all unified in the three-fold ministry of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King. As imitators of Christ in the hierarchy, angels and men, by different degrees, share in this threefold office. For the angels, as for us, this ought to mean that their prophetic role in the ministry of salvation is one with those of priest and king. Following the same reasoning applied to the case of the supernatural visions of the prophets of Israel, the content and manner of revelation of the Mosaic Law should exemplify something of the hierarchy that delivers it. As Dionysius says,

> these ordinances [the Mosaic law] are themselves a copy of the divine and the sacred. Yet theology quite clearly teaches that these ordinances were mediated to us by angels so that God's order might show us how it is that secondary beings uplifted through the primary beings.[38]

Part of what God revealed in the Law is the sacred moral order of the cosmos, the cosmic hierarchy with its anagogical function. What better way to learn this than to receive the Law of God by angel spirits? In this way, characteristic of the "mimesis theology" of the early Church's understanding of its sacraments[39], and the traditional view of orthodox tradition since, the image or sign exemplifies the reality it signifies. The form is transparent to the radiating splendor it mediates, so that whoever perceives it—and understands it with the same Spirit whose beauty radiates to her—is not set at a remove from it but instead becomes a transparent sacred vessel for the same splendor; the perceiver is transformed into what she receives and so magnifies the same beauty, which, in the divine logic of the hierarchy, grows in the sharing.

One more reason to think that the angelic salvation ministry is collectively achieved in the hierarchy together with the governance of the phenomenal order is the way knowledge and power are distributed in the celestial ranks. The order of the hierarchy parallels the structure of revealed knowledge. As we have seen in the previous sections, God's own theology in the work of creation is facilitated by the transmission of knowledge downward through the hierarchy:

> And this first group passes on the word of that the Godhead is a monad, that is one in three persons, that its splendid providence for all reaches from most exalted beings in heaven above to the lowliest creatures of earth.[40]

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[38] 181A
[39] As discussed in Chapter I, Sections 5.
[40] CH 212C, p.166

The order of angels is in analogy with the earthly ecclesiastical order—priests uplifting laity, and so on[41]—a threefold group forming a "single hierarchy".[42] Directness of participation seems to be spelled out by the degree to which they share his activity, which depends on power, which depends on degree of conformation to the divine.[43] In Dionysius' schema (again, something he attributes to his teacher Hierotheus) there are three ranks of angels, and three orders within each order. In the same spirit of Plotinus' virtuality relation, with its relative analogical notion of intellectual simplicity, and Dionysius' mystical theology as described above, the cosmic hierarchy exhibits self-similarity across different scales. So each triadic rank of angels is effectively a *mikro*-hierarchy in itself, with all angels participating in it possessing a common liturgical-ministerial charism possessed by all of the orders above but none of the orders below. This is in accord what we might call a "hierarchical principle of eminence". As he says: "the superior ranks possess in eminent degrees the sacred attributes of their inferiors".[44]

In accordance with the arrangement characteristic of *hierarchy*, each rank receives instructions from the beings above who possess greater knowledge, or the same knowledge in a more eminent way, and in turn transmit that knowledge to the ranks below them, with plurality and complexity proceeding in the descent. All together from highest to lowest the orders are: seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, powers, authorities, principalities, archangels, angels. The fact that the seraphim are described by Isaiah as "many-eyed" indicates the universality of their conceptual knowledge of creation.[45] The name 'dominions' (or 'lordships', *kyriotes*) for the first order of the second rank is an example of the method of dissimilar similarities at work, as they possess none of the harsh or tyrannical character that the name would suggest to us, challenging us to rethink or repent of our notion of true dominion.

> The divine source of all order has established the all-embracing principle that beings of the second rank receive enlightenment from the Godhead through beings of the first rank.[46]

If this is true and phenomenalistic idealism is true[47], then 'angelic phenomenalistic idealism' would seem to follow as a consequence since creation is revelation and angels reveal according to their office. Like covenantal theology, phenomenalistic idealism blurs the lines between natural and supernatural revelation: Old Testmaent angelic theophanies, then, would not be discontinuous from the normal

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[41] 196C
[42] 201A
[43] 208C, 209C
[44] 285A, p.175
[45] "Indeed, to sup up, the Deity first emerges from secrecy to revelation by way of mediation by those first powers" (CH 305B, p.180).
[46] CH 240D, p.168
[47] Even in the bare form we have already encountered in Gregory—see Ch. III.

governance of the natural world—they punctuate and would make obvious the constant angelically-mediated regularities "in the background".

As argued in the section above, the angelophanies recorded by Ezekiel and Daniel show the inter-celestial references of the orders to each other, the inseparability of their annunciatory office from their liturgical office—as in, e.g., the cherubim who wears a "holy stole".[48] "This [internal] arrangement is copied by our own hierarchy…". The process of establishing the earthly hierarchy—itself the theological work of the celestial hierarchy—began in Exodus with the instructions to Moses and Aaron on the construction of the tabernacle and the rites of the priesthood. What we must now consider is that, given the division of labor within the celestial hierarchy, the special, miraculous work of the angelic salvation ministry in human history is but so many conspicuous instances of the work of the higher angelic orders, which must be coordinated with the more natural and everyday regulatory activity of the lower orders. Such is fitting to the character of a hierarchy, provided as a divine gift for the primary purpose of sanctifying creatures in Christ, governed by the principle of eminence. So then, as noted, the visions of the prophets and righteous would be special miraculous cases of the ordinary, natural revelation coordinated by the angels, perhaps with the lowest "guardian" angels causing those ordinary visions—or generally conscious sensations—the organization of which constitutes the world. It is this angelology that will inform our analytic treatment of idealist metaphysics in Ch.VIII.

The angelic ministry brings men to salvation by facilitating—in very holistic sense, across macro-historical and micro-physical scales—the Incarnation. They do this by participating with God in the governing of a visible world that unfolds at the human empirical perspective, by which it appears to us as progression from star dust to organisms, to human beings, to Israel, to Christ. If the work of this sacramental economy is shared by the celestial hierarchy, we should expect that the work itself, in its manifestation and purpose, should reflect the hierarchy, which is internally organized by descending degrees of divine knowledge and corresponding power and freedom. Thus those closest to God and highest in knowledge should have the widest scope, the most senior managerial oversight (or 'presidence'[49]), in the participatory work of the visible creation economy, the divine project of preparing the Church, as maiden attendants preparing the bride of Christ.[50]

So, then, the most primordial rank of those intelligent beings in God's company is hierarchically ordered by enlightenments coming from the source of all perfection, and they rise up to it with the

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[48] Ez 10:68 (LXX)

[49] Perhaps this word better captures the liturgical character of the office and is closer to the traditional '*praesidentia*' of the Latin Fathers and Aquinas.

[50] Or equally as "friends of the bridegroom", as the Alexandrian fathers often referred to them, who come to lead the bride to him.

help of no intermediary. For them…Such lights are all the more hidden because they have to do with what is all the more conceptual, and they bring all that much more simplification and union…Then by this rank [of angels] the second one, and by the second the third, and by the third our hierarchy is hierarchically uplifted, in due proportion and divine concord and according to the this regulation of the harmonious source of order, toward the source beyond every source and consummation of all harmony.[51]

In accord with this picture, then, I might, however speculatively, suggest the following schema for thinking of the hierarchical division of governance within the visible creation economy:

<div align="center">

God

     _/   _

World Order		Celestial Hierarchy
Moral, Socio-Historical	--	First Triad
Physical	--	Second Triad
Phenomenological	--	Third Triad

</div>
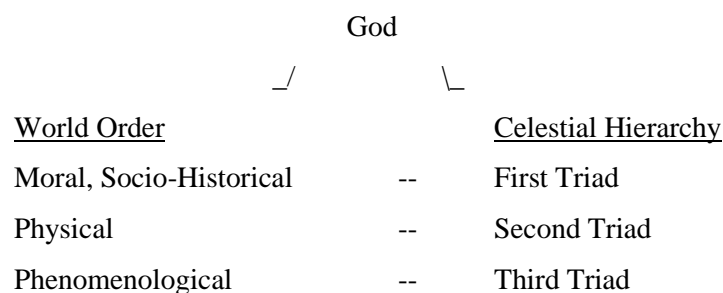
The ranking is from highest knowledge to lowest knowledge, from seraphim, to powers (*dynameis*), to angels. '*Dynameis*' means variously powers, potentialities, hosts, and miracles in Scripture. The name of the angelic order suggests that these are really all attributed to the same source, namely the pure spirits of heaven.

Since the whole purpose of the hierarchy is the divinization of intelligent creatures, the distribution of the divine light to them through each other as a cooperative *ecclesia*, it follows that man—and especially man-who-has-not-yet-received-the-Gospel—is the lowest order in the hierarchy. But notice that this implies that the inanimate physical world has no categorical rank within the hierarchy whatsoever. This makes sense if the physical world represents or simply is the *odos,* the dynamic unfolding revelatory communication of the angelic messages to the human within the scope of their ministry, just as phenomenalistic idealism claims. In contrast to the Neoplatonist ontic hierarchy that has matter occupying the lowest place but with qualities eerily similar to the attributes of God (infinitude, eternality), Dionysius' personalist, Christian, cosmic hierarchy has no place for impersonal matter. On this view, matter, material things, or the total ordered collection of them that we call the world have not been left off the hierarchy, they have been assimilated to the status of revelatory work through images, in the same category with the content of prophecy and liturgical rites. One commentator, Dom Denys

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[51] 272D, p.173.

Rutledge, confirms as much in discussing the Dionysius conception of man as microcosm, a creature who as embodied spirit already contains within his being the being of other bodies. Rutledge states:

> Similarly for Gregory of Nyssa, considered by some to have been one of the principal sources of the pseudo-Denys; all reality is essentially spiritual, *the material, sensible character of this world has no existence apart from man*, yet though it will be finally resumed into the spirit, in the sense that it will be 'spiritualised', it will still remain.[52]

In a way I hope is clearer now than before (for example., when discussed in Chapter II), we see that the development into phenomenalistic idealism is almost anticipated in the doctrine of the absolute primacy of Christ. Of course it is not surprising that Christology impacts the doctrine of creation, just as it impacts theological anthropology. If the primary purpose of creation is the glorification of human nature in Christ, the final marriage of the lamb and the Church, then the rest of creation must find its subordinate place within this plot, either facilitating it cooperatively with the Trinity via the gift of intelligence, or being the effect of such intelligent cooperative facilitating, either being the messenger or the message.

The common source of the angelic and human hierarchies is the Trinity and their common goal is divinization.[53] Their common "High Priest" is Jesus, king of men and angels, whom God exalted above every rank and name.[54] Thus the common dynamic movement of the unified, cosmic hierarchy is the administration, the execution of the commands of Jesus Christ, under the unity of the offices of Priest, Prophet, and King.[55] How does the Trinity provide for us, for our divinization, through the cosmic hierarchy with Jesus at its head? "…by means of the variety and abundance of composite symbols".[56] Dionysius is here referring to the outward signs of the sacramental rites, in which the sacred knowledge of Church hierarchs is revealed to us "through the means of verbal expression and thus corporeal but at the same time more immaterial [more than that of the prophets and Scripture authors] since it is free from writing".[57] The spiritualizing progression from the written theology of Scripture to words and images of the liturgy is itself paralleled, in proper fashion according to the reflective logic of Dionysian hierarchy, in the division of the eucharistic synaxis into a Liturgy of the Word and a Liturgy of the Eucharist. The second is, on the cosmic scale, the response to the divine generosity that has brought us into existence and

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[52] Denys Rutledge, *Cosmic Theology, The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Pseudo-Denys: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 1964, p.13. He also cites Etienne Gilson's *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: 1954), p.126, in confirmation of this claim.
[53] EH 376B, p.198
[54] Phil 2:9-10, Eph 1:20-22
[55] As Newman describes it in the Preface to the Third Edition of the *Via Media*.
[56] EH 376B, p.198
[57] 376C, p.199

given us a hierarchy, a response whose sacred elements, the symbols, have been hierarchically provided. This use of perceptible symbols, both for con-descending theological expression and con-ascending theological response, could well be described as a "making human" or "making theology human", as it represents an accommodation of divine revelation to our sense-perceptual nature but in a way that is mystical, so that what it holy and spiritual abides in itself and remains hidden. As had other Church Fathers before him[58], Dionysius believes the hierarchical pattern of ecclesiastical revelation is reflected in sacred history, in the transmissive conduit of the Apostolic *kerygma*, which is simultaneous with the establishment of Christian liturgical practices and the creation of the early churches. In this way too the hierarchy "made human what was divine".[59]

Thus do the perceptible symbols take on a beatific sense in the light of Christ and what he reveals it is to be human. The logic that confirms the superiority of Dionysius' theological method of dissimilar similarities follows from the logic of Christ's condescension. The Paschal Mystery with its Ascension and Pentecost finalizes and seals this idea: the inferior is lifted up and put above every other, and the Holy Spirit is Himself directly poured out on the human hierarchy. The Church is not only what hierarchically distributes this truth, this divine Word made human, across time and space, it is, in her Eucharistic liturgy, the final encounter, the perfection contemplation of Word in flesh, sacrifice and thanksgiving, memory and communion. This is a communion of the holy things for the holy people of God, men and angels. The angels and the invisible Word enact the mystery of Christ through an analogue of the Mass, only they use us, our sensory consciousness to make the words material, to make them sacraments, an activity completed when we in turn offer them back to the Father through the priesthood of Christ.

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[58] E.g., the author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1 Clement, Justin, the Shepherd of Hermas, Ignatius and Irenaeus.
[59] 376D, p.1199

Chapter V: Berkeley and the Immaterial Language of Embodiment

V.1 Introduction

It is a remarkable idea that the existence of the physical world, in its empirical immanence and objectivity, might be logically sustained by the way God organizes the unity of sensory consciousness and decrees the succession of sensory conscious episodes in relation to human volition. As we have seen, the idea does not emerge whole cloth with Berkeley. It can be understood as a Christian development of Platonic thought in a line from Plotinus and Augustine, both of whom seized on the key thesis of the immateriality of *ousia*; and it was more or less explicitly stated by Gregory of Nyssa in his effort to interpret Scriptural revelation about the nature of matter and work out its eschatological implications. Yet Berkeley is the one who first makes the idea—which is a synthesis of the Christian doctrine of creation with the thesis of phenomenalistic idealism—the centerpiece of his metaphysics and theoretical philosophy.

As with the ancient figures who exhibit idealist commitments, Berkeley should not be read as a subjective idealist (where this refers to Kant's interpretation) or as denying matter altogether (where this would include matter in the vulgar sense).[1] It is a mistake to read Berkeley this way or to understand my own constructive position to be developed in Chs. VI-VIII as advocating anything similar.[2] This is one reason for introducing Berkeley in Ch. V as a working scientist and author of the Theory of Vision, rather than an airy metaphysician, and for emphasizing his commitment to a principle (introduced in V.4) which allows him coherently to accept matter and material causes in the vulgar and even scientific senses while denying it in the philosophical. It is one of the express goals of the thesis to resolve these and other ambiguities critical to the formulation and appraisal of its idealist position, a lesson explicitly drawn from Berkeley. Berkeley's view of the physical world and the phenomalistically reductive anti-realism about the physical world of the kind the thesis advocates are not versions of physical nihilism nor 'subjective idealism' in Kant and Hegel's sense, a reduction of the physical world to an arrangement of particular ideas in individual minds.

In order better to understand this view and the ideas that lie at its heart and how they put us in a position to appreciate the linguistic organization and ontological priority relations among the things God produces in the act of creation, I want to consider in some detail the context in which Berkeley himself presents them, the arguments he makes to promote them, and how his scientific and theological

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[1] This relates back to the by now familiar distinction needed to clarify the ambiguity of 'matter', which is at once a term of common sense and a term of metaphysics.

[2] Berkeley is himself clear in anticipating and rejecting this mistaken interpretation in the *Principles*, Secs. 29-35.

commitments are affected by them. Rather than diving straight in to Berkeley's mature writings on

theoretical philosophy, chiefly his *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, I want to

show Berkeley first as a scientist and perceptual psychologist, as the author of *An Essay Towards a New

Theory of Vision*, his first major publication.[3] The merit of such an approach is that it provides us with a

wider range of understanding of Berkeley's thought as a whole, as many of his metaphysical conclusions

are anticipated in those of his vision science, but not conversely. The *Theory of Vision* shows Berkeley

variously engaged in both descriptive and theoretical natural science[4] as well as metaphysics, albeit the

latter less so and in a manner more musing and tentative than in the *Principles*. This puts on display

something quite significant for understanding the whole of Berkeley's thought, namely how the various

intellectual disciplines, applied and theoretical, are interrelated. The *Theory of Vision* thus serves as an

instructive prolegomenon to the metaphysics of the *Principles*, though not because this was his purpose in

the *Theory of Vision*, as an earlier generation of commentators interpreted him.[5] To the contrary, as a later

generation of commentators has corrected[6], Berkeley's immaterialist metaphysics helpfully may be seen

to stand on work in the theoretical science of perceptual psychology, work whose insights are independent

and indeed still relevant.[7]

V.2 The Language Model of Vision

Berkeley advocated for a strong form of natural revelation in which the triad of God, man, and

world are interrelated as speakers to a language. His natural theology built on his early work in optics and

perceptual psychology, which had inaugurated a revolution in the science of vision. On the received

paradigm[8], the structure of visual space was thought to be perceived through a process of *a priori*

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[3] Good overviews of Berkeley's philosophy can be found in A.A. Luce *Berkeley's Immaterialism.* London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1945, Harry Bracken *Berkeley*. London: Macmillan Press, 1974, and Kenneth Winkler *Berkeley: An Interpretation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

[4] Which for him are importantly distinct, as distinct as the latter is from metaphysics or theology. This will become clearer in what follows.

[5] E.g., George Pitcher. *Berkeley*. London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1977 and D.M. Armstrong. *Berkeley's Theory of Vision*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1960.

[6] See especially Margaret Atherton, *Berkeley's Revolution in Vision* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) and Robert Schwarz, *Vision: Variations on Some Berkeleyan Themes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).

[7] This is not to suggest that Berkeley's philosophical conclusions proceed from arguments all of whose premises are furnished by his science. This is not the way Berkeley understood the relation between the intellectual disciplines of science and philosophy. In classical fashion, for Berkeley metaphysics and theology engage being at a fundamental level that is ontologically prior to that at which scientific inquiry proceeds. It therefore must proceed from assumptions which, if derived at all, are derived from philosophy itself.

[8] Berkeley cites in particular the work of Descartes, Hobbes, Kepler, Scheinerus, Wallis, Barrow, et al., including (though somewhat more indirectly) Kepler and Malebranche. See, for example, *Theory of Vision*, 4, 29, 40, and 75. Together with Berkeley's linguistic model the geometric theory is very much represented in contemporary perceptual psychology where it is known as the TAD (taking account of distance) computational model. See Ralph

geometric calculation, of the mind's taking certain abstract data of spatial measurement from visual sensations and arriving at a conscious idea of perceived distance, size, and dimension by the use of reason in accordance with relevant mathematical theorems. Through a profound and still influential critique, Berkeley developed an alternative theory on which visual sensations in themselves entirely lack spatial qualities and only seem to have them because of their experiential association with tactual and kinaesthetic ideas. These tactual ideas have no common content, resemblance, nor any logical connection with colors and eye movements, but because of the association enforced by experience as regulated by the phenomenological "laws of nature", we "read into" vision the ideas of tangible space as we read into the shapes of ink on the printed page the ideas of a story.[9]

This is the so-called "language model" of vision, and from it Berkeley extracts two principles that become the foundation of his immaterialist metaphysics and natural theology. One is that physical space is really tangible space, something that is only intelligible insofar as it enters into human sense experience; the second is that, just as the sense-modal qualities of vision linguistically signify to us what motor and tactual sensations we can expect to have, so more generally the regular sequence and coherence of our experiences—the order that leads us to take them as evidence of a three-dimensional space of physical objects in which we are mobile occupants—has the same distinctively *linguistic* significance. The patterns of natural phenomena are not logically necessary yet they exhibit a fixed, regular order that does not depend on our own will. In the fourth dialogue of the *Alciphron*[10], Berkeley uses this insight to make one of the most original contributions in the history of natural theology. Relying on the widely accepted Augustinian treatment of the problem of our knowledge of other minds, Berkeley points out that the same inference from analogy applies to our knowledge of the divine mind: God speaks to us in a visible language; he prescribes a regular pattern to our experience, an act that not only creates for us an objective sensible world but a medium of communication, a language by which he signifies his presence, majesty, rationality, and providential ends, a language that we too may use to bring our lives into conformity with such ends. Creation is not a work of design, an abstract form applied to an insensible substrate: creation is revelation, the product of directly inspired mind-to-mind speech.

The position Berkeley takes in elaborating his New Theory of Vision is much more subtle and consistent with later developments in vision science than is usually recognized.[11] Not only does Berkeley

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Norman Haber and Maurice Hershenson, *The Psychology of Visual Perception* (New York: Holt, Rinehart,& Winston, 1980).

[9] See, e.g., sections 51, 73, 126-128, and 143 of the *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision*.

[10] See *Alciphron*, Fourth Dialogue, X-XII. For a contemporary Orthodox affirmation, see Dumitru Staniloae, *The Experience of God* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998), pp.17-23.

[10] Rom 1:20

[11] Indeed, the Berkeleyan legacy is very much alive and well represented directly in the work of psychologists such as Edward Boring, "The Moon Illusion" *American Journal of Physics* 1(1943):55-60, and Arnold Trehub *The*

deny that distance is a visual quality or that there is any quality in the visual field causally connected with distance; he also denies that we have visual ideas or sensations of *any* spatial quality, neither distance (which is the basis of geometrical relations that characterize space, including concrete physical space), nor orientation, nor direction (the basis of "handedness" or chirality), nor size, shape, motion or dimensionality. Physiologically, the organs of vision are only adapted to the reception of optical sensations of light and color. Colors are presented with a concrete set of values that vary across several dimensions (hue, saturation, brightness) and thus in this way *do* possess some degree of 'purely visual' qualitative structure. But any physically significant spatial structure and articulation can only be the result of the way these qualities and their variation are normally connected with tangible interpretation, through psychological associations with kinaesthetic sensations, tactual sensations of resistance, pressure, gravity, pleasure and pain. This includes foreground-background relations, segregation, blending, interposition, surrounding, and symmetry, as well as perceptions of figure, number, and motion. None of the purely visual qualities overlap in content with that of our tangible sensations; and these alone furnish us with ideas of space and present the qualities mentioned above, viz., distance, size, and direction. For Berkeley, the key association seems to be that of tangible extent with visual extent[12], so that tactual homogeneity of resistance is associated with homogeneity of color, yielding the tactuo-visual concept of 'surface' as the exterior of volume.

As Schwartz and Atherton point out[13], Berkeley's disagreement with the "optic writers" or vision scientists of his day was not over whether the perception of space was direct or indirect—all writers agreed it was indirect. The disagreement arose through Berkeley's contention, contra the optic writers, that the nature of the psychological derivation by which visual sensations were processed into ideas of space did not consist of abstract geometrical reasoning from pure visual sensations. Instead the processing involved the contingent connections of visual information with tangible ideas of space through learned associations.

Cognitive Brain (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991) not to mention the fact that Berkeley's empiricist associationism is the indirect inspiration for the currently fashionable "enactive" approach to perception as a function of sensorimotor intentionality. The link in the chain is the phenomenology of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (*Phenomenology of Perception*, Colin Smith, trans. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965)). The former in particular, in his *Thing and Space: Lectures of 1907*. Volume VII of *Husserliana* (Kluwer, 1997), adopted a rather canonically Berkeleyan approach to the idealist construction of space and spatial objects via the sequential coordination of kinaesthetic sensations. Ernst Mach, *The Analysis of Sensations and the Relation of the Physical to the Psychical*, C. M. Williams, trans. (La Salle: Open Court, 1984), and his influence over Gestalt psychology and theories of perception, represents another important transmitter of Berkeleyan phenomenology.

[12] Though this is something of an oversimplification because, as we will see, even the perception of tactual extension is synthesized in the unity of consciousness through the coordination of various data such as the orienting datum of the downward pressure of gravity, the feelings of pleasure and pain and the kinaesthetic data of freedom and resistance of bodily movement.

[13] *loc.cit.*

Beyond their different empirical consequences, the old optic theories and Berkeley's New Theory also impute a different epistemological status to space. If we need nothing more than our visual sensations plus certain geometrical ideas to experience space, it must be because visual sensations are *apt* data for the application of spatial reasoning. If geometrical relations apply to them directly, then even if our distance perceptions are not direct, there must be *some* inherently spatial qualities presented by our visual sensations and therefore some immediate knowledge of space through vision. Common content between geometry and vision, or rather the direct visual perception of (Gaussian) distance, would imply the existence of unoccupied space or what Berkeley calls "pure space". This would make space substantival and hence external (ontologically mind-independent). It would contradict the claims of Sec. 116 of the *Principles*, "that we cannot even frame an idea of *pure space* exclusive of all body". For Berkeley, pure space is an abstraction, a verbal substantive with no idea or concrete apprehension answering to it. All ideas of space are in fact ideas of potential kinaesthetic freedom or resistance, as the space is variously empty or occupied.[14] Also, if the language theory of vision were false, then this would encourage the belief that natural necessity were just logical necessity and that we could infer the structure of the world through *a priori* reasoning on the basis of sense-data or see it directly. Either way the result would be that the physical world would be self-significant or self-interpreting, that it could be conceived and understood in its empirical immanence apart from the context of divine revelatory action, apart from the creature's immediately occurring relation to the authority of a creative, intelligent, governing spirit. And this Berkeley thinks, as well being disconfirmed by reflection on the phenomenological and scientific facts, leads to atheism or idolatry.

V.3 The Heterogeneity of the Senses and the Confinement of the Sensibles

With the reader now having some understanding of what is at stake philosophically and

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[14] In the thought experiments by which Newton sought to argue for the explanatory necessity of absolute space (*Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica, in Schol. Def.* VIII), he asks us to imagine water swirling in a spinning bucket or two metal spheres attached by a rope spinning around each other. At the same time we are to imagine that all other objects are annihilated. The swirling water is turning with and so stationary with the spinning bucket, and the metal spheres are uniformly rotating around and so stationary to each other. With no other objects to which the motion could be relative, unless we conceive of space as itself absolute it would seem that we are forced to say the swirling water and the rotating spheres really are stationary. But the observable effects tell otherwise, for centrifugal force causes the water to rise at the edges of the bucket and the rope between the spheres to become taught. A Berkeleyan would point out, however, that when we imagine the rope being taught and the water rising at the edges we are imagining sensible effects observed from our first-person, embodied perspective. We have not then imagined the annihilation of all other bodies. Even "supposing all the world to be annihilated besides my own body", if it seems to us that "pure space" remains this only means "that I conceive it possible for the limbs of my body to be moved on all sides without the least resistance: but if that too were annihilated, then there could be no motion and consequently no space". For a more in-depth discussion of Newton's "bucket argument" see Nick Huggett, *From Zeno to Einstein* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), pp.122-124.

theologically, consider again the central point Berkeley makes in developing his language theory of vision, that there is only an arbitrary, contingent connection between visual ideas (as signs) and the tactual ideas they give rise to in our minds (including ideas of perceiver-relative space). This proposition seems counterintuitive to us at first, since the regularities of this connection are constantly affirmed in experience and most people rarely reflect on the connection[15]; but when we do, we recognize the qualitative dissimilarity between the two and the possibility of alternative correlations. Some examples include the experiments with orientation-inverting goggles[16] and, perhaps more interesting from a practical and theological perspective, the use of "reverse perspective" in Eastern Christian iconography (particularly Byzantine and Russian).[17]

Berkeley himself has several quick points of consideration that are at least kernels of arguments for the contingency of the connection between touch and vision. One is that, given the distinctness of the respective sense organs and the contingency of human physiology more generally, there is no reason to suppose that the *minimum visibile*, the physiological threshold of optical sensitivity, might not have been less than the *minimum tangibile*. In his own words,

> Because our eyes might have been framed in such a manner as to be able to see nothing but what were less than the *minimum tangibile*. In which case it is not impossible we might have perceived all the immediate objects of sight, the very same we do now: But unto those visible appearances there would not be connected those different tangible magnitudes that are now. Which shews the judgments we make of the magnitude of things placed at a distance from the various greatness of the immediate objects of sight do not arise from any essential or necessary but only a customary tie, which has been observed between them.[18]

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[15] Berkeley himself is careful to address this difficulty. See, e.g., sec. 66 of the *Theory of Vision* where he compares the phenomenological situation of visual signs relating to the tactual ideas they signify to one where there were only one universal human language: despite the arbitrariness of the connection between words and objects, we would easily but mistakenly come to think of the sound of the word as somehow necessarily connected with the object it signifies.

[16] Or imagine simply looking through a spy glass and trying to stab an enemy with a sword, like Don Quixote tilting at windmills.

[17] The use of reverse perspective is a very compelling way to demonstrate Berkeley's point about the language theory and what we learn about the immaterial nature of space from our perception of it, because the icons are widespread in geography and history, and, nowadays, universally accessible. A similar expository use can be made of the phenomenon in early Flemish painting of using color cues for distance. Once one becomes accustomed to the significance of these cues (which happens surprisingly quickly) one can see the "non-standard" perspective effects with ease. Such effects serve to remind us of the same contingency pertaining to standard perspective, which goes unnoticed because of its very regularity.

[18] *Theory of Vision*, 62, p.194.

Another simple observation is that there is actual variation in vision (including visual extent) without corresponding variation in touch (including tactual extent), thus demonstrating the possibility of their dissociation.[19] Additionally, perceptual judgments of size and distance may be dissociated from visual sensations but not from tactual ones as a result of the application of conceptual categories, so that a castle is judged to be far away if it takes up a small portion of the visual but not the tactual field. A castle is thus judged to have the same constant size ultimately as a function of tactual determination, even when it varies in visual extent.[20] More generally, even the customary non-tactual cues such as faintness and blurriness that we take to be significant for visual spatial perception are easily recognized to be logically independent from the spatial qualities whose synthesis they coordinate.[21] Why could not faintness and blurriness of the visual sensation as easily signify proximity and small magnitude as distance and great magnitude?[22] Is there anything in the nature of the sensations themselves that would permit this or is it only the prejudice of experience that tells against it? Given their physiological nature, sight and touch present us with qualitative sensory content of two distinct kinds, which is confirmed on introspection. They are both human ways of sensing. But apart from this what intrinsic qualitative connection could they have? What have light and color to do with the kinaesthetic feelings of the body? Berkeley will make this "heterogeneity of the senses" the core insight of his perceptual psychology.

In expounding the New Theory, Berkeley stepwise considers the classical problems of space perception, refuting the purported solutions of the geometric theory and establishing the explanatory success of his own linguistic alternative. These include the Moon Illusion, the Barrow Illusion, and the Inverse Problem. Space is defined by orientation (or direction) and distance among units of qualitative content (of some sort or another). Thus the main topics for a theory of space perception are distance and situation, with size, figure, number and motion being relevant as entering into the change of distance and situation or the nature of spatial occupancy.

If Berkeley can show that essential attributes of space and the spatial qualities of objects (and even therefore of 'objecthood' itself, which is spatially individuated) are constructed through transmodal associations in conscious experience, then he will not only have established the explanatory success of his theory, he will have shifted the preponderance of evidence towards phenomenalistic idealism and away from physical realism in the domain of metaphysics. This is what emerges from Berkeley's work in vision science, as charted below.

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[19] 54-61, pp.190-193.

[20] *cf*. 57, although Berkeley's example here is of a tower.

[21] 58, p.192.

[22] Berkeley makes the comparison with facial expressions as signs of emotions (65). Anger and shame could be indicated as well by wide eyes and smiles as by a furrowed brow and blushing.

New Theory			Geometric Theory		
Input	*Psych. Mediation*	*Output*	*Input*	*Psych. Mediation*	*Output*
Faintness, blurriness, convergence, accomodation	Association with tangible ideas	Distance	Visual lines, visual angles	Application of geometric ideas, calculations	Distance
Faintness, blurriness, convergence, accomodation	Association with tangible ideas	Size	Visual angles, distance	Application of geometric ideas, calculations	Size
Color variation, eye & head movements, kinaesthetic sensations of resistance and gravity	Association	Situation	Visual lines, visual angles	….	Situation

In summary, the New Theory denies common sensibles of figure, extension, motion, and number and asserts the heterogeneity of the pure sensibles and the "confinement thesis" (explained below). The geometric theory assumes common sensibles, recognizes heterogeneity of *some* pure sensibles (such as audible tones and tangible distance) but not others (such as visible extent and tangible extent); it recognizes a confinement thesis for some pure sensibles (such as tastes and pains) but not others, such as visual figure, extension, and motion, as these are thought of as common content between vision and taction. Consequently the New Theory supports a replacement of the 'substance, attribute, mode ontology' of physical realism, which the geometric theory supports. In its place it establishes an idealist physical world ontology of logically (mutually) independent pure sensibles, which must be synthetically constructed in the organization of perceptual consciousness. Whereas the geometric theory had it that sensory ideas represent non-sensory substances, attributes, and modes by means of necessary

mathematical connections or real resemblances, implying the double exemplification of a common quality in both a sensation-dependent and sensation-independent way, the New Theory claims that sensory ideas represent nothing more than other sensory ideas through logically contingent connections in the metaphysics of the mind. These connections/associations, as the "laws of nature", are analogous to the relations among words and sounds, bespeaking an Author of nature who acts as such by decreeing the causal order of our sensations.

To recognize the confinement thesis for a particular set of sensibles is to recognize that these are incapable of instantiation or realization apart from the subjective mental act of sensing, that they are 'confined' to acts of sensing and indeed to the sense-modal realm of which they are pure sensibles. For this to be true means that the sensible qualities are ways of sensing or ways of 'being sensibly appeared to', that they therefore cannot manifest themselves outside of particular episodes of sensory consciousness, as features of the content of sensory awareness within those episodes. To put it more reflectively, it follows from the confinement thesis about sensible quality X that X is existentially dependent on episodes of sensation. This is not to say that X itself is particular rather than universal, only that it is concrete and immanent rather than abstract and transcendent. It also means that X is, in its fundamental ontological character, entirely mental rather than physical or material, because it is asserted to be incapable of concrete mind-independent realization. But this is not to say that from the perspective of a subject undergoing an episode of sensory consciousness that X presents itself in its sensory realization as something thus mental. It may be that to grasp this fact about X's true ontological character requires further intellectual reflection.

Whereas it is uncontroversial that some sensible qualities like tastes and pains fall within the scope of the confinement thesis, it is not generally agreed to in regard to others, particularly visual qualities. Why are we tempted to deny the confinement thesis in regard to these in a way we are not so attempted when it comes to tastes and pains? No one would think that headaches were the sort of thing that could exist apart from episodes of headache-experience, or tastes of bitterness outside of particular episodes of subjective gustatory experience.[23] What it is that is different about visual sensing that makes us more inhibited or even biased against endorsing the confinement of visual qualities, particularly (visual) figure, motion, and number?[24]

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[23] Note that no claim is being made here that such confined qualities can only be realized within *veridical* experience. This would certainly be false, as hallucinatory experiences may serve equally well to acquaint subjects with the nature of a sensible X. My use of the terms 'sensory experience' and 'episode of sensory awareness' is intended to be neutral with respect to veridicality status.

[24] Notice that these are the qualities that are (abstractly) thought to 'resemble' the traditional Lockean 'primary qualities' of (abstract) geometric figure, motion, and number. Berkeley's exposition consistently takes on this very contention in his direct engagement with Locke. See Secs. 130 and 132 of the *Theory of Vision*, but also Secs. 9-20 of the *Principles*, where as a part of his argument for metaphysical immaterialism Berkeley attacks any conventional

Part of the answer lies in the phenomenology of visual experience which, in order to function well, encourages the bias against the confinement thesis. Berkeley both acknowledges and explains this by his linguistic theory, as any theory of perception must. Part of the defense of his position on the confinement thesis for vision rests on the relative explanatory success of his model versus that of the optic writers in regard to the range of problems of perception that any theory must solve. Another part of the answer lies in the illegitimate use of abstract terms as if there were real abstract ideas corresponding to them. Berkeley's case against this use rests on his wider case against abstract general ideas in explanatory discourse.[25] To imagine that there is some common content of figure or motion that is equally well instantiated in vision and tactition, or in vision and in some mind-independent way outside of sensory experience, is to posit an abstract (and indeed transcendent) universal quality of figure or motion. Berkeley does not think there is any credible reason to suppose such entities exist and that the mistaken conception of such abstract universals is a pernicious source of philosophical confusion and even infidelity. Beyond all of this, Berkeley will embark on a direct argument for the confinement thesis in regard to visual qualities of figure, motion, and number in the *Theory of Vision* and even more pointedly in the *Principles*. The heart of the argument is an appeal to the concrete phenomenology of vision, in which the supposedly spatial primary qualities are inseparable from (the 'secondary quality' of) color as regards phenomenal organization. But even here the positive position of Berkeley's theory—that the pure sensibles of vision and tactition are utterly heterogeneous—contributes its force. The final area of resource for a denial of the confinement thesis comes from the confusion of the distinct domains of explanatory discourse and their relations of explanatory priority.

V.4 Analogous Fields of Discourse: Or *Odos* and *Diastasis* Revisited

One of Berkeley's first tasks in refuting the "optic writers'" geometric theory of vision is to expose the spurious grounds that lend their theory the deceptive air of plausibility. Among these is the failure adequately to separate the explanatory domains of optics and physiology from the domain of psychology. Scientists tend to use words like 'image' and 'extent', but also 'eye', 'retina', 'thing', ambiguously to mean something in the external physical environment or something that explains the psychological process of perceptual consciousness. In the former meaning the item in question may be physically proximal but nonetheless posterior to the psychological process of perceptual consciousness; such

Lockean foundation for a primary / secondary quality distinction. Locke had supported this by combining a perceptual direct realism about spatial qualities with a representative theory (perceptual indirect realism) about colors and bodily sensations, and so the main of Berkeley's effort is directed at this basis. The dialectic is explored in more detail in the first of the *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*.

[25] This "anti-abstraction" argument is most carefully expounded in the Introduction to the *Principles*, but also more briefly in Secs. 127 and 130 of the *Theory of Vision*, and Secs. 1-5 and 22-24 of the *Principles*.

environmental items are explananda of the psychological process so on pain of circularity cannot directly contribute to the explanation of that process.

Berkeley's point here is more generally relevant and worth pausing to consider. There seems to be a persistent confusion in the history of psychology of identifying the "retinal image"—so-called—with some visual sensation. The problem is that sensations are states of phenomenal consciousness, the retinal image is not. Confusion is encouraged by the use of the word "image" to describe the pattern of light that strikes the retina, in accordance with seemingly analogous cases of optical images, such as "mirror image" or photographic "image". Again, the difference is that the retinal image, unlike any other environmental optical image, is supposed to be a stage in the process *by which* sensations of visual awareness come about; it is not itself an object of visual awareness, nor could it be. Under special circumstances the image may become visible, but such awareness would not be awareness of the retinal image. The retinal image would remain a precondition for visual awareness of the retina, but itself invisible. The same confusion can occur in regard to other (external) optical "images" insofar as they are considered as transmissive conditions on which the state of visual sensations depend.

Even in Berkeley's own writings there seems to be some discrepancy between the phenomenalistic description of physical objects and the equal status of visual and tactual ideas in the *Principles* and the asymmetric weight given to tactual ideas in the *New Theory*. Happily, though, it is a discrepancy that Berkeley himself addresses and explains, making the reader's task of interpretation a relatively straightforward one. Since the *New Theory* was concerned to explain vision only, it was sufficient for Berkeley to give us a psychological account of visible ideas and their objects of awareness. With his agenda turning explicitly to a defense of the metaphysical thesis of immaterialism, Berkeley must now be ready to address the status of sensory ideas and their objects more absolutely and fundamentally. There, but not in the *New Theory* does it become appropriate for him to explicate a proper understanding of the nature of physical space and the status of the objects of tactition,[26] Throughout his work Berkeley consistently adheres to certain methodological maxims that justify shifts in explanatory agenda corresponding to shifts in disciplinary domain. The one we must single out here in particular is what I would like to call the Principle of Analogous Fields of Discourse (PAFD).[27]

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[26] See, e.g.,, his arguments again the modernist notion of 'pure space' or absolute space, and the positive argument for the immateriality of space in Secs. 116 and 117 of the *Principles*. Here Berkeley very quickly but incisively argues, in particular, for the kinaesthetic significance of physical space.

[27] This is a conscious modification of the term "Principle of Autonomous Fields of Discourse" coined by Bertil Belfrage, "The Scientific Background of George Berkeley's Idealism", in Gersh and Moran (2006). The author highlights this as a relevant systematic principle of Berkeley's thought. I prefer my modification because it is more faithful to the way technical explanatory terms such as 'cause', 'effect', and 'principle' are used—internally autonomously, yes, bur more accurate to say--*analogously* across explanatory-semantic fields.

He articulates the principle most precisely in his treatise on motion, where he is concerned to show that while in the study of physics, both ancient and modern, causal properties are attributed to objects of nature, this is only in a secondary sense. The attribution is coherent within the mundane framework of understanding but thereof constrained by that same framework, so that "The thing is explained physically, not by assigning the really acting and immaterial cause, but by demonstrating its connexion with a mechanical principle".[28] Thus mechanical explanation only requires subsumption under a law, e.g., Newton's third law of motion in the case of bodily collision.

> A body in motion is dashed against another at rest; but we use an active mode of expression, saying, that the one impels the other, *and not improperly in mechanics, where the mathematical rather than the actual causes of things are considered*.[29]

Real causes are the content of metaphysics and theology, mathematical hypotheses are the content of mechanics. Whereas "In physics, sensation and experience, which only reach apparent effects, are admitted", "in mechanics, the abstract notions of mathematicians are admitted" and "In primary philosophy, or metaphysics, we treat of immaterial things, causes, truth, and the existence of things"[30]. Ordinary discourse, mathematical natural science, and philosophy therefore all represent three distinct but hierarchically related explanatory frameworks, with three analogously related notions of cause corresponding. We can sketch this methodological picture as follows:

3 Kinds of Cause in Science:

(A) Secondary or Corporeal Cause as treated in physics, employing merely a phenomenal notion of succession or experienced order.

(B) Mechanical Principles, e.g., axioms, postulates, or other mathematical hypotheses which are 'causes' of physical phenomena in the sense that, when the physical descriptions of phenomena are categorized using abstract mathematizable concepts, the mechanical principles may entail them as logical consequences.

(C) Real Primary Causes, as considered in metaphysics and theology, which must always be spirits or otherwise immaterial entities.

The three kinds of cause correspond to three hierarchically ordered fields of inquiry and explanatory discourse, viz., descriptive, theoretical, and sacred science. The first two might be thought of more generally as 'natural science' or the last variously as philosophy, metaphysics, or theology. Each field

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[28] *De Motu*, 69.
[29] 70, emphasis is mine.
[30] 71.

represents an internally consistent explanatory enterprise, and one moreover that is analytically or conceptually 'autonomous' in the sense that its conceptual content cannot be exhaustively analyzed, translated, or defined in terms of some other field. There is no discursive reducibility relation between them. However, and crucially, the fields are not wholesale independent. From the conceptual-explanatory framework of philosophy itself, metaphysics can be understood asymmetrically to set limits on the explanatory power of natural science (just as natural science itself sets limits on the explanatory power of ordinary, pre-theoretical folk explanations). Natural science's explanatory significance is asymmetrically dependent on explanatory achievements in philosophy. Berkeley makes this clear in his discussion of the relation between physics and metaphysics. The notion of 'cause' shared between them is an analogous one such that the semantic field of its use in physics acquires both its power and limits from its semantic field in metaphysics. More specifically, for instance, one finds that the pair of explanatory terms 'cause / effect' are related across the internal nesting structure of the discursive fields in such a way that the 'cause' of the lower or more restricted field becomes the effect of the one above it. Descriptively, the regularity of succession in experience prompts us to say that one when one object collides into another the first causes the motion of the second. But in the theoretical science of mechanics we say that both motions are effects of a relevant mechanical principle (of gravity or motion, say). Finally in metaphysics we recognize that even the applicability of mechanical principles is but an abstractly descriptive regularity and as such an effect of some spiritual agency (that is, from the phenomenalistic perspective, a higher-order organizational effect a spiritual constraint on human sensation).

Berkeley's *Theory of Vision* shows us the PAFD in action. For Berkeley's linguistic model, as an alternative to the geometric one, proceeds, and he believes improves, on the subject of vision by carefully distinguishing the relevant fields corresponding to optics (theoretical science) versus physiology (descriptive science) versus psychology (a theoretical science autonomous from optics) versus philosophy (in which the ontological nature of the sensible objects of perception is regarded). The *causes* of one field become the *effects* of the other, via an analogous semantic chain running through the discursive fields. Other terms are also discourse-specific such as *minimum visibile* and image. Most of the *Theory of Vision* is carried out in the field of psychology, with optics and physiology thus providing relevant information to the investigation of such questions as psychological effects and givenness in perception. The psychological conclusions themselves then provide material for the philosophy of the *Principles*, in which 'causes' described in psychology are regarded as effects.

The geometric theory of the optic writers could seem plausible only when the inferential steps of the mechanics of optics could pass into conclusions about the physiological and psychological processes of perception, or where lines and angles could be assumed to characterize the psychological data of vision. On the one hand the optic writers took for granted the spatio-structural articulation of the visual

stimulus—exactly the organizational effect that perceptual processing is intended to explain—and on the other hand they wanted to pretend as if the non-mathematized descriptive physiological processes of vision could be capable of carrying out the same geometrical calculations that only the writers' themselves, as scientists, were reflectively capable of. Berkeley's rigorously defended methodological commitments exposed the illegitimacy of these putatively explanatory perceptual models.[31] They also put him in a position to offer a credible alternative, one that in consistently adhering to such commitments could recognize that not only are size and distance not visually sensed, but that there is no common content, spatial or otherwise, between sight and touch. In particular, what we think of when we think of physical space, or make spatial judgments, or even when we introspect the apparent spatial character of visual awareness is really a kinaesthetic-relative space, one that is significantly *our* space, the space we inhabit, only because of the contingent way in which the content of our sense-modalities are brough together and succeed each other in consciousness.

V.5 The Idealist Construction of Space

To my mind, and for the present purpose of continuing development of Christian idealism, the central insight of Berkeley's *Theory of Vision* is that all spatial organization in perception is the result of contingent associations between heterogeneous and confined sense-modal contents and the special 'coordinating data' of kinaesthetic sensations.[32] If alternative structures of association between visual sensations and the spatial content of tactile sensations are possible then the association must be contingent and hence visual space is not immediately perceived. Berkeley's theory of vision shows how visual space and objects are mediately perceived by being physiologically and psychologically constructed. If we follow Berkeley's scrupulous methodological commitments—as represented in the PAFD—then we cannot simply take for granted the givenness of spatial segregation and unitization in the visual field, since this is to attribute qualities to visual sensations that are properly tangible. It is to confuse the pure visual sensibles of color pattern with the pure sensibles of kinaesthetic pattern.[33] By making this mistake we are led to believe that visual figure, number and motion are common between vision and tactition,

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[31] As mentioned, along with the thesis of the heterogeneity of the senses this is the heart of his critical treatment of the consensus regarding the solutions of the classical problems of the moon illusion, the inversion of the retinal image, and others.

[32] In addition to Atherton and Schwartz, see Gary Hatfield, *The Natural and the Normative: Theories of Spatial Perception from Kant to Helmholtz* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), Ch.2, for an examination of Berkeley's *New Theory*. While Schwartz is the most sympathetic to my own evaluation of Berkeley's idealist insight, all commentators agree on the present interpretation of what is central for Berkeley.

[33] In a sense, this is as much an error in explanatory order as the geometric theory's attribution of angles to visual input and mathematical reasoning to visual processing. Here we are talking about the synthesis, the association, the conscious unity of visual signs and tangible ideas, but in both cases an *explanandum*, something that should be regarded as a psychological product, is assumed in the description of the optical-physiological input

rather than the mediated heterogeneous sensibles of total perception in which the sense-data of vision and tactition are co-presented, associated, and phenomenologically unified in consciousness. Not only is this true for the organization of sensible qualities into discrete units and hence figure and motion, but even for the structure of space.

The experience of coexistence within the sense of touch is foundational for the idealistic construction of space. In Berkeley's analysis visual sensations provide ideas of space only indirectly through imaginative associations with tactile sensations. Tactual sensations themselves acquire spatial significance indirectly through imaginative associations with each other. But there is a basic sensational quality proper to the sense of touch that enables all other spatial qualities. You could call it a quality of tactile *extension*, but this is already a kind of non-basic abstraction from it. Really it is a sensation of kinaesthesia, of the body's immediate responsiveness to the subject's will. It is the fact that certain acts of will, sensorimotor intentions, are directly coordinated in a certain way with sensations of resistance and free motion that provide the subject with the experience of the body's spatial extension through their (those of the kinaesthetic sensations) relations with each other. And through the same organization of sensorimotor intentions and kinaesthetic sensations that systematically yield the experience of a unified spatially mobile body, other qualitatively segregated items are discovered mediately through the body as being sources of kinaesthetic resistance. When coordinated in certain patterns of temporal succession these sensations are imaginatively associated to yield total, trans-modal sensory experiences of surfaces lying in definite spatial relations to the perceiver's body and so to each other, yielding the interpretation of a spatially unified environment and ultimately, at the intersubjective level, of a spatially unified world.

Take for example Berkeley's explanation of how we perceive situation, that is, the place an object is located. He takes this up as a challenge of the classical "inverse problem", or the problem of showing how we visually perceive objects as erect and in their perceived right-to-left orientation when it is the horizontal and vertical inverse of this visual image that 'appears' on the retina. In line with the linguistic model of distance and size perception, Berkeley's solution is to claim that we do not visually sense situation at all, not any more than we visually sense distance or size. Strictly speaking (that is, descriptive-scientifically, in accordance with the PAFD) we only visually sense color variation, as a careful attendance to a physiological description of sensing demands (this optical information alone is what our eyes are sensitive to). Rather we have learned to associate certain color patterns with the kinaesthetic sensations of certain eye and head movements and to coordinate these with the proprioceptive experience of the rest of our own body and its attendant feeling of the downward resistance of gravity. So it may visually appear to me as if there is bird perched on a tree branch above me and to my right. But speaking psychologically this is the result of mediating psychological processing, namely the co-existence or co-presence of a visual sensation of a certain characteristic 'bird-on-tree branch' color pattern, with

kinaesthetic sensations of my head and eyes turning in certain characteristic ways with respect to the longitudinal axis and downward orientation of my body, established by the sensation of resistance under my feet.

More generally, in Berkeley's phenomenalistic idealism the physical world of space and objects is constructed by 'coexistence', 'succession', and 'suggestion', in a detailed account of divine psychophysical linguistics, the theoretical study of the language in which the physical world is created as a divine-human dialogue. It is the 'co-ness' of coexistence, the togetherness, the 'belonging to' of phenomenal experience, that is the key to objective worldly reality. This is characteristic of the way, for instance, visual figure is presented together with and inseparably from termination of relative homogeneity of color (intramodal coexistence), or the sight of the coach in the window with the sound of the engine (transmodal coexistence), or the way the visual appearance of the coach in imagination is suggested by the sound of the engine (suggestion), or the way the simultaneous visual appearance of the coach and a loud sound of the engine follow upon the faint sound of the engine (succession). But notice that this notion is dependent on human capacities of sensation and the actual successions of sensation we experience, per the divine ordinances. Despite their contingency, these regularities are as much regularities for different subjects as they are for the same subject at different times. I would suggest that there is something typically communal, participatory, and ecclesial about this feature of reality, with revelatory-faith[34] dialogue at its heart. The 'co-ness' or togetherness that gives the world its objective character is both a co-ness for me and for you, which, when discovered[35] makes of the two of us an 'us', that is, a pair of minds united in our receptivity. The togetherness of the subjects follows logically from the togetherness of the experienced sensory qualities and the fact that they are themselves intersubjectively available and actually experienced in qualitatively similar ways across subjects as they are across different times by the same subject. So when in my conscious experience I find qualities trans-modally presented as together, say a color quality and a quality of tactile solidity, this spatiotemporal coexistence becomes the phenomenal binding glue that prompts me to interpret my sensations as *of* a stable, persistent entity, or in common parlance 'an object'. This same source of the objectivity of the physical world, the way the phenomenal experience of the human mind is externally organized, is also the medium of association among human subjects themselves, as their respective natures, situation, and relations to one another unfold in the context of the possibility of shared experiences, which qualitatively match each other in content and structurally match each other in successive organization. Whatever else

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[34] Following the logic of the exposition of faith in the opening of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, Chapter 11, faith is the converse side of the (asymmetric) relation of revelation that characterizes the God-man relation, which includes creation, in which the visible is made from the invisible (11:3).

[35] Which may well be *ab initio* in some given episode of life, say a child learning a name by the ostension of a parent

we might be able to conclude about the source and nature of the external control that governs our experience, we know that with respect to the sensory character and organization of our conscious lives, we are treated and addressed with equal intention and can take this for granted in expressing ourselves and communicating with each other. This is what it sounds like to describe and metaphysically theorize about the very mundane fact (the most mundane, *literally*?) that we possess a common world.[36]

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[36] For most of our lives we operate in a mundane framework of understanding, from an empirical perspective within the physical world, so that we take it for granted in scientific and everyday discourse. In metaphysics and theology it is appropriate that we no longer take the subsistence and organizational unity of the physical world for granted and seek to explain it.

Part B – Christian Idealism: An Analytic Exposition

Chapter VI: The Nexus of Mind and Matter in Perceptual Consciousness

VI.1 Introduction

At this stage in the overall argument we are still concerned to develop the central thesis of Christian idealism, the idea that the existence of the physical world, in its empirical immanence and objectivity, might be logically sustained by the way God organizes the unity of sensory consciousness and decrees the succession of sensory conscious episodes in relation to human volition. In Chapter V we explored Berkeley's unique contributions to and applications of this thesis. In particular we explored his language model of vision, in which the spatial content of vision, including distance, magnitude and direction, is an idealist construction afforded by the regular and thematic way in which certain visual and kinaesthetic sensations are experienced together in consciousness, so that with the aid of memory, imagination, and other cognitive capacities, ordinary visual sensations come to signify tactual ones and so acquire spatial meaning. We also examined Berkeley's claim that there is no common content among the pure sensations of the various sense-modalities (the "hetereogeneity of the senses"); the claim that *all* sensory qualities are existentially confined to sensory consciousness and not merely those traditionally regarded by Locke and others as the appearances of secondary qualities (the "confinement thesis"); and his Principle of Analogous Fields of Discourse (PAFD), in which the mind-world nexus is stratified into three hierarchical explanatory domains, the metaphysical, the physical or natural scientific-descriptive, and the mechanical or natural scientific-theoretical.

In V.4 we considered Berkeley's account of the idealist construction of space in psychological terms, adhering to the methodological stricture imposed by his PAFD, which precludes attribution of spatial arrangement and unitization to sense-data, the core sensory qualities pertaining to a given sense-modality. With these results in mind let us turn to the task of providing an exposition of the idealist theory of perception and then show how the structure of the physical world may be understood to be metaphysically reducible to the nomological organization of human sensory experience.

It is important for theologians to appreciate the relevance of philosophy of perception to metaphysics and therefore to understanding the doctrine of creation. In the study of metaphysics we are seeking an account of how the categories of mind and matter are related, and more generally of what within creation is ontologically prior to what, or of which created existents are basic and which are derivative. Such an account is a proper part of the exposition of the doctrine of creation, of professing

how the cosmos God creates is ultimately arranged and organized. In sense perception the categories of mind and matter, the two candidates for possessing the status of being ontologically basic, come together in the most frequent and conceptually salient way. While memory, imagination, and judgment are ways in which the mind may be in conscious relation to the physical, it is sense-perception that constitutes the individual subject's foundational access to the physical. In the creed we confess our belief in God the Father, who creates all things, visible and invisible. Already here we have a clue to the fundamental status of the perceptual modality to our basic metaphysical categories. Dogmatics must give an exposition of visible creation as it is actually presented to us in perceptual consciousness, as that which has significance for us at our empirical viewpoint. Conversely, any systematic understanding of what God creates must be coherent with an account of how we can have perceptual—and thus cognitive—access to creation as it is conceived dogmatically.

This is more challenging than theologians often recognize. Most of the time we take for granted that the sensible appearances presented to consciousness place us in cognitive contact with physical objects. Pre-critically, we assume that these objects are both genuinely characterized by the sensible qualities presented to consciousness and non-mental "things"—persistent, space-occupying entities with their own distinctively physical intrinsic attributes and independent causal powers. In fact, however, when we reflect on the phenomenological features of perceptual experience and the factors relevant to a scientific explanation of how they are produced, it becomes very difficult to maintain the pre-critical position. In the present chapter, I introduce this "problem of perception" along with an idealist solution that involves an ontology of sensory universals, or *qualia*, and a definition of physical objecthood in terms of nomic and phenomenal relations among qualia. Such an account of objecthood also allows us to give an elegant account of the mundane causal order of perceptual experience across normal and deviant episodes in a way that explains why genuine physical objects and events are taken to be causally efficacious in producing perceptual episodes.

VI.2 Realism, Idealism, and Perceptual Theory

Any theory of perception must be aimed at treating the "problem of perception". There are two aspects to the problem which must be distinguished and yet recognized to be connected and to exhibit parallels. Metaphysically the problem is to determine the relation between the immediate object of perception and the physical items that enter into our physical theories, ordinary or scientific.[1] Set up in

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[1] The metaphysical version of the problem of perception is structurally similar to the epistemological version, which emphasizes the corresponding complications that arise from the purported justificatory gap between the information that is strictly available to the subject from introspection of the subject's experience and the implications carried by the perceptual judgments that the subject is prompted to make on the basis of these experiences.

this classical way, the problem is what G.E. Moore described as that of determining the 'belonging to' relation.[2] Moore introduced the term 'sense datum' to refer to the immediate object of perception, as presented to sensory awareness within a conscious mental episode. Until a theory of perception determines what the belonging to relation is, the sense datum retains a metaphysically neutral status, neither mental nor physical, neither public nor private, capturing only what sensibly appears to the perceiving subject, whatever is available within the content of sensory awareness for conscious attention. Moore's own example involved that of a white, rectangular array in the visual field (the sense datum) and an envelope (a physical item). On account of our practices of conceptual interpretation and perceptual judgment, we would all agree that there is at least some practically significant relation of 'belonging to' between these two items, whatever it turns out to be on investigation. Even at this bare conceptual level of description the items are different enough that the relation cannot be one of identity. The qualitative character of the sense datum, as sensibly presented to Moore on a particular occasion, is dependent on the perspective from which he views it. Its color and shape would both visually appear differently under suitably variant conditions of lighting and situation. But the envelope, as a physical item, is not conceived to be thus perceiving-relative. Moreover the envelope, as a 3-D continuant, is conceived of as existing at places and times when the sense datum need not be. The envelope is conceived of as having a reverse side even when this side is not given to sensory awareness, and the frontal side of the envelope, which is given, is conceived of as temporally persisting (together with the spatially-whole envelope of which it forms a spatial part) through times at which it is not viewed, at times, for example, when Moore turns his head away or before he comes into the room.[3] The sense datum may for all that be determined, on investigation, to be identical to the frontal face of the envelope, as it would be on a so-called "naïve" or "strong direct" realist theory, but still in that case it would not be that the sense datum was identical with the total envelope itself.

Perceptual theories fall into two broad categories according to their determinations in regard to the 'belonging to' relation: (ontologically) direct theories and (ontologically) indirect theories. Direct theories take the relation to be an ontologically intimate one such as constitution, existential instantiation or the mereological relation of part-whole. Indirect theories take the relation to be some ontologically weaker relation of resemblance, causal dependence, or even some combination of the two (perhaps with

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[2] Moore (1910).

[3] To express it in Husserl's terms (see Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologische Philosophie* (Husserliana Volume III, 1976), the point of Moore's exercise is to note the difference between the naïve or "natural attitude" of everyday life in which we pass unreflectively from what is immediately given in the structure of sensory consciousness—the sense datum—to our interpretation of that datum as an envelope But in the phenomenological attitude of "transcendental philosophy" we can suspend interpretation and judgment and reflectively attend to the qualitative character of the sensory given. In result, we discover that the envelope and sense-datum are two non-identical objects of consciousness.

the addition of further factors as well). Direct theories in turn divine into those that are paired with the metaphysical thesis of physical realism and those paired with the thesis of (phenomenalistic) idealism. Recall that physical realism claims that the physical world (consisting of physical space, time, items, and facts) is ontologically fundamental and independent of the human mind, while idealism denies both claims. For this reason, while potentially agreeing as to the nature of the 'belonging to' relation, direct perceptual theories may differ significantly as to their claims about the metaphysical status of sense data. For instance, a direct (physical) realist will claim that, being ontologically intimate with realistically construed physical items, sense data inherit the mind-independence of the physical items to which they belong; whereas the idealist will claim that physical items are logical constructions from the phenomenal presentations in which the (thus mental) sense data that belong to them occur, so that, because physical items need not be capable of an ultimate non-mental existence, there is no barrier to their being derived entirely from the actual and potential phenomenal presentations that belong to them.

Bearing in mind the difference between physical realism and idealism, we may usefully recognize the broad three-fold division of perceptual theories as direct, indirect, and idealist. Notice that while it would be logically permissible to combine an indirect perceptual theory with the denial of physical realism, it is very difficult to conceive of the motivation for doing so. The reason for dissenting from a direct theory would be some inferred incongruity or mismatch between the nature of sense data and the nature of physical items. But without the belief that physical items, or the physical world more generally, form part of ultimate reality, what could prompt one to discredit the intuitive pre-theoretical commitment formed on the basis of experience that physical items genuinely possess the qualities that they are phenomenally presented to us has having? Indirect theories come at the cost of attenuating our perceptual and hence primary epistemic access to the physical world. For this reason, historically significant examples of indirect perceptual theories, such as those of Descartes, Locke, and the 20th century 'critical realists'[4], are always paired with physical realism, while phenomenalistic idealism is always paired with a direct perceptual theory.

A theory of perception must not only answer the question posed by the problem of perception in Moore's sense, that of determining the 'belonging to' relation. It must also give a satisfactory account more generally of how perceptual contact with physical items is achieved in a way that accommodates the known phenomenological and scientific facts. On the phenomenological side, a perceptual theory must show how contact is achieved through a sensory appearance that is both qualitatively appropriate to the kind of item perceived and respects the potential qualitative indistinguishability of a given item-

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[4] See Michael Ayers, "Ideas and Objective Being" in Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, eds., *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth Century Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), *Locke: Epistemology and Ontology* (London: Routledge, 1991), and Durant Drake et al. *Essays in Critical Realism: A Co-operative Study of the Problem of Knowledge* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1916).

perception with episodes of illusion and hallucination. On the scientific side, a theory must show how phenomenologically appropriate perceptual contact is compatible with the scientifically described conditions of causal production, distal and proximal.

Let us reflect on each of these two desiderata in turn. Imagine a case where every time I look at a yellow school bus I have a perceptual experience as of a red balloon, or an experience presenting me with the sensory quale of a red balloon. Obviously, in light of the gross mismatch between the phenomenal content of my experience and the true sensible character of the yellow school bus, such an experience cannot be considered a genuinely perceptive one. Failure of perceptual contact would remain even if every time I looked at a yellow school bus I had the same red-balloon-type sensation. We may suppose further that when I looked at a red balloon I had an experience as of a yellow bus, and in particular a yellow-school-bus-type sensation. In that case even despite the unique one-to-one correspondence between objects and the phenomenal content of my experiences I could not be credited with seeing either the yellow school bus or the red balloon. The reason simply is that, although there may be evidence that I am 'tracking' the yellow school bus and so in some sense psychologically in an information-bearing relationship with its spatial presence, I am not registering the presence of the school bus in a way that is phenomenologically appropriate to its sensible character. There may be systematic covariation and thus grounds for recognizing such 'tracking' to amount to a form of cognitive contact, but this is analogous to case of radar detection, not perception. While we speak loosely in everyday language of an operator seeing an airplane when he looks at certain blip on a radar screen, strictly speaking we recognize a significant difference between this and genuine perceptual contact. Phenomenologically appropriate perceptual contact must allow us to understand certain basic facts about perceptual contact, namely that it enables demonstrative identification (even if this is just pre-conceptual, bare selective attention or discrimination and recognition under varying contexts), and that it puts certain aspects of an item's sensible appearance on display in a way that makes them available for cognitive scrutiny. These conditions are not met in the cases above.

For a perceptual experience to be phenomenologically appropriate to its object, some non-veridicality may be tolerated among the sensory qualia presented to me, some (though not total) mismatch between the object's sensible character and the phenomenal content of the experience. If, due to whatever pathology, I were to see the yellow school bus as red, or the red balloon as yellow, I would still be credited with seeing these objects, as long as there is some sufficient amount of the object's true sensible character that does match the phenomenal content of my experience so that at least some of its sensible character would be available for demonstrative identification and cognitive scrutiny, say the object's shape or spatial relationship to my body and other environmental objects.

On the other hand, consider a case of hallucinating a certain circular patch of orange and then looking at an actual orange before one at the breakfast table in such a way that the hallucinated orange patch spatially overlays the actual orange. Or consider a case of seeing a mirror image of a stone pillar in a museum, where the image spatially overlays a real pillar[5]. Here the problem is not that the sensible appearance consciously presented to the subject is inappropriate to the object's own sensible appearance—indeed, by hypothesis there is a perfect match between them—rather the problem is that the object does not seem to be causally responsible for the experience in the right way. In the case of the orange, one problem is that the actual orange on the breakfast table is not the initiator of the causal process that is responsible for my hallucination. The neural process that is the proximal cause of my experience was, say, initiated by the ingestion of a psychotropic substance instead. Similarly in the pillar example, even though there is no hallucination involved and even though the phenomenal content is appropriate to the would-be perceptual object, the pillar perceived is only the mirror image of the one behind the subject, not the one in front of him. Interestingly, even when the would-be object is the initiator of the causal chain leading to the phenomenally appropriate experience, we would still be loath to credit the subject with perceptual contact because of the possibility of "deviant causal chains". Suppose through a sufficiently clever configuration of mirrors, the pillar visually displaced by the mirror image is the very same one in the mirror image. In that case, the optical conditions of the transmissive process intervening between the candidate object and the subject's neural process are too deviant to credit the subject with perception. One potential problem is that the candidate object and the phenomenal content of the subject's experience may lack the appropriate patterns of counterfactual dependence: slight changes in the subject's position might result in drastic changes in phenomenal content or even eliminate the pillar as the initiator of the causal chain altogether. At the very least then we can say that the object targeted for perceptual awareness must be the initiator of a nondeviant causal chain and must stand in a relation of systematic covariation with other possible experiences possessing appropriately matching phenomenal content[6].

The challenge for a theory of perception is to offer an account that shows how perceptual contact it achieved with physical items under the appropriate sensible appearances and through the appropriate (object-initiated, nondeviant) causal chains. The difficulty of providing an account of how this is possible is what generates the "problem of perception". It consists in the mutual incompatibility among the following three propositions, each of which seems well-supported:

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[5] H.P. Grice, "The Causal Theory of Perception", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 35 (1961), pp. 121–52.

[6] While necessary, even these conditions are not sufficient to ensure that the causal process leading to an experiential episode if of the appropriate type for perceptual contact. For more on examples like those above and how they should be treated theoretically, see David Lewis, 'Veridical Hallucination and Prosthetic Vision,' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy,* 58 (1980): 239-249.

(i)   Perceptual access to physical items is unmediated.

(ii) Physical items are mind-independent.

(iii) Sense data (the immediate objects of sensory awareness) are mind-dependent.

Any two together are tenable, but not all three. Direct and indirect realism agree on (ii). Direct realism and idealism agree on (i). Indirect realism and idealism agree on (iii). (i) and (ii) capture the most intuitive features of perceptual experience based on its phenomenology, which we are inclined to accept prior to philosophical reflection and analysis. The main support for (iii), which puts pressure on the theorist to give up either (i) or (ii) is from the fact that the qualitative appearances by which physical items are presented to sensory awareness are in various ways *dissociated* from the items of which they are putative presentations. Some of the factors that contribute to this dissociation come from the familiar facts of illusion and hallucination, other factors come from the way modern science has come to describe the physical properties of observable items in terms of micro-structure, energy distribution and, ultimately, abstract mathematical properties, so that the significant features of the physical environment that feature in causal explanations of organism's perceptual episodes make no reference to the phenomenal content of sensible appearances. A perceptual theory may therefore account for informational contact with the physical in terms of tracking or systematic covariance between environmental and psychological features, but with no account of how such tracking counts as genuinely *perceptual* contact, with contact achieved through the phenomenal qualitative features that an item is presented as having in sensory awareness. Alternatively, a perceptual theory may account for phenomenologically appropriate contact by attributing subjectively presented qualitative features to physical items, but with no plausible account of how such features play a perception-appropriate causal role in cases of veridical and seamlessly indistinguishable illusory cases.

The assumption that prohibits a perceptual theory from accomplishing both accounts in a harmoniously unified way is that of physical realism, which takes physical items to be non-mental and ontologically basic, part of an ultimate account of what there is. If physical items are non-mental, how could they have the apparently mental qualities which are presented as belonging to them in sensory consciousness? And if they are ontologically basic, how could they fail to be responsible for producing perceptions of them and for imprinting their qualitative character on the content of perception? Science cannot be expected to help the realist address the problem of perception. To the contrary, the very scope and method of scientific investigation limits it to a discovery of physically-functional structure rather than intrinsic content, be it of space-time or matter. The very success of science is due to the fact that it limits the scope of its theorizing to what is either directly empirically detectable or what may be shown to have

empirically detectable logical consequences. This important point is one that I shall return to in a further evaluation of realism in Chapter VII.

In the sections that follow, my aim is to sketch a Berkeley-inspired idealist theory of perception that attempts to solve the problem of perception by providing an account of how phenomenologically and causally appropriate perceptual contact with physical items is made. In Ch.VII, my ambition will expand to a broader consideration of how the physical world is idealistically constructed. The idealist theory may be argued for recognizing the following Berkeleyan theses, familiar from Chapter V. First, the thesis of the heterogeneity of the senses: this forces us to recognize intrinsically dissimilar sensory qualities for each sense-modality, most significantly colors (hue, saturation, and brightness, or even just hue), sounds (or even just pitches), tactual uniformity and variegation (though even these require an admixture of co-presented kinaesthetic sensation), in addition to proprioceptive qualities such as kinaesthesia and (foot-ward) gravitational pressure. Kinaesthetic components combine in consciously experienced simultaneity (of durational extent) to produce tactual sensations of uniformity or variegation (intuitively roughness and smoothness), resistance and penetrability. This leads to the thesis that kinaesthesia and proprioception when co-presented with pure visual sensations of color pattern spatially organize the visual field into up/down and right/left hemispheres and ultimately to an egocentrically forward depth dimension, yielding complex visual sensations of shape, contour, distance, occlusion, symmetry, and other 'higher-order' *gestalten*, or 'transposable' stabilities invariant under various temporally extended environmental actions, including sensorimotor changes in bodily position, route of approach, and reversing of route of approach.

The heterogeneity of the senses forces us to recognize that the concomitance and regularity of the sensory qualities which feature in the content of sensory awareness are the logical product of the way the pure, intrinsically unrelated sense-modal qualities are unified in consciousness and sequentially related in ways that are regular at the level of experiential order. If, furthermore, we adjoin to this the confinement thesis, and recognize that the sensory qualities themselves are incapable of an ultimate non-mental realization, then we have a compelling alternative to physical realism. Rather than thinking of the physical environment as causally imposing its own mind-independent structural order and imprinting its own qualitative character on experience, these two theses in combination invite us to consider the alternative hypothesis of phenomenalistic idealism, that the regularity and thematic character of the physical world is the logical product of the systematic causal constraints on human sensory experience, deriving the qualitative nature of its very spatio-temporal and material core from the way sensible appearances are disposed to present themselves to human consciousness.

VI.3 An Ontology of Sensory Universals

Now that it is clear what demands a theory of perception must meet, how does an idealist theory propose to meet them? Idealism takes the state of perceptual consciousness to consist in act of sensory awareness and a qualitative given presented to the conscious subject. Additionally, under standard circumstances the sensory-qualitative given will be schematized under some interpretation, typically involving the deployment of conceptual resources. This interpretative element need not be voluntary nor the result of conscious reflection. So, like a sense-datum theory, idealism takes perceptual consciousness to admit of an act-object analysis; and furthermore, it takes the phenomenally conscious (intentional, not 'real' in the Scholastic sense) object to feature a minimal core of sensory-qualitative content and typically an interpretative element as well. The sensory core of perception will consist in what Berkeley calls the "pure sensations", namely those qualities confined to a certain sense-modality, which may be structured, coordinated, and syncretized in variously complex ways, including various higher-order relations, which, when presented as a unified totality, is coextensive with the total intrinsic character of sensory awareness and is a candidate for an interpretation as a physical scene.

To my mind, the most promising strategy for explicating an account of sensible creation in phenomalistic-idealist terms and simultaneously for providing an adequate theory of perceptual consciousness, is to introduce an ontology of sensory universals and to regard total appearances as complexes of sensory universals[7], bound together synchronically and diachronically by the structure of consciousness. This account will allow us to understand in some detail how the physical world of space, time, and objects is constructed out of the elements of sensory experience. More specifically, in accordance with Berkeley's confinement thesis, our preferred strategy is to define sensations as ultimate realizations of a *quale*, a sensory type or concrete universal. With the sensory realization of a quale as fundamental, we may then define sensory awareness of a quale as merely just such a realization (indeed an ultimate realization) of a quale in an episode of conscious awareness, the intrinsic character of the quale being self-revealed insofar as it is of the nature of episodes of conscious awareness to be so self-revealing.

For a given sense modality *S*, let us say an *S*-modal quale is a determinate *S*-modal sensation-type: it "forms or has the capacity to form"[8] the content of an *S*-sensation. In addition to the commonly recognized five sense modalities, this definition will hold for the special class of bodily or somatic qualia,

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[7] It should be understood that the individuation conditions for sensory universals are determined by the intrinsic qualitative character of what is given in sensory consciousness, which includes primitive sense-modal qualities that are intrinsic-qualitative rather than spatiotemporal ones, so that if there are two copies of the same Munsell color chart on the table, with each chart containing 50 color squares, then there are still only 50 color qualia instances on the table and not 100 (of course not counting the color border of the charts, the color of the print and the color of table surface itself).

[8] Here my exposition follows that of Foster in Chapter 6 of *The Case for Idealism*, but also *The Nature of Perception*, pp.188-195.

which feature so centrally in the idealist construction of space. In accordance with Berkeley's claim about the heterogeneity of the senses, it is important to start by first defining the *S*-modal qualia. This done, we define total sense qualia from *S*-modal sense qualia in a straightforward way, as complexes of *S*-modal sense qualia unified by phenomenal co-consciousness, or "co-existence" to use Berkeley's term. In this way, a total sense quale is a determinate total sensation type forming or having the capacity to form the content of total sensory awareness within a given phenomenally unified episode of sensory awareness. It follows that (*) ultimate non-sensory realization of sense qualia is impossible and that a quale exists (as the sensory universal that it is) if and only if it is capable of sensory realization, or of forming the content of sensory awareness within a conscious episode of sensation. As Foster points out[9], this same strategy, while respecting the confinement thesis, also enables us to distinguish sensing from imaging not functionally but intrinsically, deriving imaging from sensing: to image a quale is to form a transparent conception of a quale. This explains why the capacity for imaging a certain quale essentially involves a perspectival conception, a knowing of what it is like consciously to sense such a quale.

The present definition and theory of qualia owes many of its details to the theory of A.J. Ayer's mature phenomenalism, which was itself a late-flowering development of the long-standing British phenomenalist tradition of Berkeley, Hume, Mill, and Russell.[10] Ayer in particular gets credited for embracing the move from sense-data as particulars to sense qualia as universals—a move pioneered by the American pragmatist tradition of C.S. Peirce, William James, C.I. Lewis, and Nelson Goodman[11]— and adopting it for phenomenalist theoretical purposes. In his own words,

> Anything counts as a quale that a person is able to pick out as a recurrent or potentially recurrent feature of his sense-experiences, from a two-dimensional colour expanse to a complex three-dimensional *gestalt*".[12]

With this definition Ayer allows qualia to be both simple and complex, primitive and derived, intramodal and transmodal. Goodman, he notes, would have restricted visual qualia to the primitives of color, place, and time and what can be defined wholly in terms of them. Because Ayer is interested in the theory of knowledge rather than developmental or perceptual psychology, he allows himself a greater—indeed total--range of sensory pattern to come under the scope of his technical term. Qualia are moreover neutral

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[9] *In loc. cit.*, pp.102-107
[10] See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Mill (1865/1967), Russell's *Analysis of Mind* and *Analysis of Matter.*
[11] See James, *An Essay on Radical Empiricism*. Lewis, *Mind and World Order*, Goodman, *The Structure of Appearance*.
[12] A. J. Ayer, *Origins of Pragmatism* (London: Macmillan Press, 1968), p.309.

with respect to explanatory theorizing, whether everyday or scientific theorizing, so their "reference is solely to the quality…irrespective of provenance'.[13]

We noted above that it is important to distinguish the class of somatic qualia because of their role in the idealist construction of space and what I will call the 'somatocentricity'[14] of qualia or of the total (transmodal) sense field. As we saw with Berkeley's *New Theory*, the somatic qualia of downward gravitational resistance and kinaesthetic sensations of eye, head and limb movements act as coordinating data for the somatocentric organization of other (putatively environmental) sensory qualities. Because of the way (tangible) spatial and somatic (in particular kinaesthetic) sensory types are concretely inseparable as such (in virtue of what they intrinsically are, in a self-revealing way in consciousness), there is no ultimate non-sensory realization of tangible spatial types. Because of the way visual spatial types are concretely inseparable from tangible spatial types, there is no ultimate non-sensory realization of visual spatial types. From the above it follows that there is no ultimate non-sensory realization of physical spatial types. This means that, again in accord with the Berkeleyan theory, physical space is a nomological construction or coordination among the concrete sensory experiences of human beings.

What we soon would like is to be able to show how it is reasonable to suppose that there is such a nomological organization of sensory qualia.[15] This would establish the coherence of idealism and shift critical attention to the question of the coherence of realism. Even in the domain of perceptual theory, the idealist can feel confident that he has a leg up on the realist. For it is by rejecting the realist assumption and by adopting a phenomenalist definition of physical objecthood that the idealist can solve the problem of perception. The very coherence of the account thus acts as an onus-generating rejoinder to the would-be physical realist, a challenge to account for our perceptual access to the physical world understood as something ontologically primitive and independent of the facts of human sense experience. Given the explanatory success of the idealist account, the challenge to the realist now presents itself as one that leaves him with a burden to achieve the same success but with resources of only dubious value. This challenge will become sharper in the next chapter, when we move out from an account of perceptual access to a wider consideration of the idealist's construction of the physical world. Once the theory of everyday or commonsense physics is shown to be logically sustained by facts of an idealist kind, facts having to do with the thematic character and organization of sensory experience, it strikes one that a physical realist alternative would have to avail itself of facts of a rather abstract kind, facts stipulating entities that enjoy an ultimate non-sensory realization. But given the truth of the confinement thesis, such

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[13] Ibid., p.310.

[14] Borrowing the term from H.H. Price, *Perception* (London: Methuen, 1935), Ch.1.

[15] This will be taken up in two stages over Chs.VII-VIII, first by showing how the nomological organization of sensations is sufficient together with our conceptual endowment for logically creating the empirical world; and second, by showing how there could be such a prephysical nomological organization.

entities (and therefore the facts involving them) would not resemble anything found in the content of sensory experience and therefore would not be things of which we can form any transparent conception through sense-imagination or memory. This strongly suggests that the only conceptual resources to hand for such a project would be those of an *a priori* genesis or of a highly abstract nature. Either way, being non-phenomenal they would have a hard claim to being physical (they would probably have to be logical or mathematical) or even physically relevant, since either way they would be theoretically inert with regard to empirical evidence.

VI.4 Perceptual Error and Objecthood

On an idealist theory, partial and total hallucinations are regarded as episodes in which a subject is in an unmediated psychological relation to sensible qualities—i.e. individual sensible attributes—that lack the kind of unity that characterizes the object of perception. The (potential) subjective indistinguishability of such episodes is then explained by the qualitative similarity among the qualities themselves. This is an ontological solution and an "object-side" solution. It is an object-side solution in that it seeks to explain the similarity of perceptive and deviant episodes by appeal to a genuine qualitative similarity located in the object of awareness. On such a view, we maintain that the psychological relation of awareness is exactly the same across perceptive and deviant episodes, being unmediated in both cases, in accord with (i) above. It is an ontological solution because it accounts for the structural difference among perceptive and deviant episodes in terms of the contrasting ontological status of their objects: perceptions are episodes that involve a direct relation of awareness to sensory qualia that belong to a collection of such qualia that are so related to each other that they possess a qualitatively replete and endurant structure; whereas illusions and hallucinations involve the same direct relation of awareness to impoverished collections of sensory qualia, possessing relatively less coherence and endurance. The difference is a matter of degree on such an account, and this is desirable since it puts us in a position to explain the fact that there can be subjectively seamless transitions between hallucinations, illusions and veridical perceptions. Indeed, the subjective seamlessness of the transitions would be explained by the fact that the ontological status of the respective objects itself differs only by degree.[16]

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[16] The need for a theory of perception to account not only for the subjective indistinguishability of perceptions and deviant episodes but also the possibility of seamless transitions between them is brought into focus by Foster (2000), who makes the difficulty of accounting for such seamlessness the point of an aggressive attack against strong direct realism (Part Two, 4, III). But see Mark Johnston, "The Obscure Object of Hallucination," *Philosophical Studies* 103 (2004):113-183, for a thoughtful direct realist defense to this challenge. He takes other naïve realists and disjunctivists—and in particular Hilary Putnam, *The Threefold Cord: Mind, Body, and World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999)—to task for being dismissive of this explanandum. Johnston himself goes on to offer a non-disjunctivist solution that is also both ontological and object-side; it involves a hylomorphic ontology of sensible

The phenomenon of illusion and hallucination suggest that the sensible natures of things can be mimicked, or dissociated from the physical particulars that possess them. On reflection this is already obvious from the phenomena of mirror images, wax statues, and artificial flavors, among others. If the sensible appearance of a thing can be dissociated from it, then either sensible appearances are universals that are multiply instantiated, or what we regard as 'things' are merely constituted by individual sensible qualities that bear certain nomic (phenomenological) relations to each other and can recombine to form multiple 'things'. In fact I shall consider and endorse both options. On the view I propose, a physical object just is a lawfully related series of potential appearances that trace out a continuous and fairly enduring path through space-time, with a fair amount of structural coherence (relative to surroundings) among its constituent appearances. A 'dissociated appearance', such as one finds in illusion and hallucination, is just a collection of appearances (or possibly even a single one) that is less enduring and less structurally coherent. What hallucinations suggest is only that just as dissociated appearances can arise from optical activity, so too can they arise from nervous activity. Just as a mirage, Fata Morgana, or mirror image arises from interference with the rectilinear propagation of light waves, so can interference with the working of neural processes give rise to an appearance qualitatively similar to 'an appearance of *x*' where this is no *x*, i.e. a complex of sense qualia qualitatively similar to but ultimately lacking the unity of the complex that we identify with *x*.

Customarily, we assume that an appearance is always an appearance *of* some spatiotemporal particular (or a complex scene of such particulars). But this can be understood in one of two ways. On a hylomorphic conception, there is a substance with a material substrate that allows the substance to gain and lose attributes over time while maintaining its unity and identity. But there is an alternative conception, on which the substance is constituted by, and is nothing over and above, the individual appearance qualities that would manifest themselves under certain conditions to suitable observers. This is what is sometimes called a "phenomenal conception"[17] of physical objects. Though it may be paired with physical realism to yield a "phenomenalist direct realism", we shall be endorsing the phenomenalist view in connection with idealism.

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universals that are fully instantiated, partially uninstantiated, and totally uninstantiated by physical particulars in veridical perception, illusion, and hallucination respectively. Though I am sympathetic with Johnston's understanding of the dialectical situation and his strategy against the disjunctivist, he leaves unanalyzed and unexplained what it is for a physical particular to "instantiate" a sensible universal, and so crucially to account for how this is different from the way such universals feature in the presentational content of hallucinations while remaining "uninstantiated". Because the idealist has no intention of distinguishing instantiation in the content of sensory awareness, veridical or otherwise, from physical instantiation, he is untroubled by this problem.

[17] Though one finds such a conception in Berkeley, and even earlier as we have seen in Plotinus, Gregory of Nyssa, Scotus Eriugena, the term was introduced by the nineteenth century psychologist Gustav Fechner. See Michael Heidelberger, "The Mind-Body Problem in the Origin of Logical Empiricism: Herbert Feigl and Psychophysical Parallelism" in Paolo Parrini, Wes Salmon & Merrilee Salmon, eds., *Cogprints* (Pittsburgh University Press, 2003), pp. 233--262.

Insofar as the conscious character of hallucination is accounted for by a description of the object-side of the perceptual relation[18], our sense qualia version of phenomenalistic idealism is similar to a sense-datum theory. Veridical perception is distinguished over and against illusion and hallucination by what the mind is phenomenally aware of, just as we naively or pre-philosophically assume to be the case. Perception is distinguished by the ontological nature of what falls on the object-side of the awareness relation, namely a complex of sensory qualities having the kind of enduring qualitative stability or completeness characteristic of physical continuants. The same psychological relation of awareness and similar sensible qualities obtain in subjectively similar perceptions and hallucinations. There is no shell of attributes covering the material kernel of the physical item that would keep perception from reaching all the way to it. Instead of an insensible material substrate, there is a characteristic structure, a lawlike organization of sensible qualities by closely-knit phenomenal spatiotemporal relations, perception of which induces us to identify the structure as a physical item and to classify it in various ways according to our concepts, theories, and customs.

The sensible appearances presented in experience are typically sense qualia possessing the complex structure of a total scene. They are structured in the sense that they involve intrinsic qualities (colors, textures, but also spatial qualities such as shape, size, etc., and temporal duration), relational qualities (being before me and to my right, being oriented away from me by such and such degrees, surrounding color c, being articulated against color c, etc.), and higher order relations constructed out of both of these. Notice that relational qualities can be constructed out of individual n-ary relations with up to $n - 1$ places of the relation occupied by particulars, e.g. relations such as x_surrounds_color_c, where x is a variable but c is a constant term, i.e. a name.

The sensible appearances that form the content of awareness in hallucination are also complex qualia; only in hallucination they are structurally impoverished, lacking the coherence and consistency of genuine physical continuants, that is, the qualia brought before the mind are not sensibly spatiotemporally related to other qualitatively similar qualia so as to form a maximal collection of lawfully related qualia. By lacking such coherence and consistency, such hallucinated appearances lack the nomic potential for availability at different times and places. It is this that makes them relatively less objective and public and so less likely to be attributed causal properties or feature in the content of physical theory.

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[18] The need for an object-side solution is imperative given the fact that hallucinations can be a source of new knowledge by acquaintance, new sensible quality apprehensions. This is also emphasized by Johnston as one of the motivations for such an account. In a sense, however, the fact that hallucination as well as perception can be a source of new knowledge by acquaintance was already emphasized in Herbert Feigl's "The 'Mental and the 'Physical'" in Vol.II of *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), where he claims that sense qualia can be objects of knowledge by acquaintance and gives an early statement of the "knowledge argument" against materialism.

Like Ayer's sense qualia, I want to conceive of sensory universals as structured and determinate qualitative characteristics of the given, and I want to claim that these form the object of sensation in perception as well as the object of sensory consciousness in deviant episodes. The content of sensory awareness in various deviant episodes is formed by organized qualitative wholes, just as it is in perception, the difference again being that only the complexes that are the content of perception possess the organizational features that allow us to construct physical continuants out of them. So in this respect, too, idealist perceptual theory has an affinity with the sense qualia theories of Lewis, Goodman, and Ayer generally: phenomenalistic idealism embraces the claim that sense qualia are immediate objects of experience in a way that physical continuants are not. But, and this must be strongly emphasized, the fact that idealism grants such immediacy only to the qualia and not to the larger physical continuant does not compromise the *directness* of perceptual experience nor the idealism of the physical world so perceived. It does not compromise the directness because, in accordance with idealism's metaphysically reductionist view of the physical, physical continuants are just persistent collections of lawfully related actual and possible appearances (i.e. qualia); so the relation between a certain appearance, or quale, and the physical continuant is rather ontologically intimate, indeed it is mereological. So though I posit a form of perceptual mediation in the perceptual consciousness of physical particulars, i.e. that we perceive physical particulars *by* or *in virtue of* perceiving (or, if you prefer, 'sensing', to emphasize the conscious immediacy) a sensory quale, this is no more dramatic a form of mediation than that involved in perceiving a house by perceiving one of its facades or perceiving a table in virtue of perceiving its surface. In deviant episodes, where the quale does not belong to a maximal collection of lawfully related qualia, sensing can never pass into perceptual consciousness but must remain hallucinatory or otherwise deviant. There is no threat to idealism on this view because the sensory qualia are mental; they are sensory types that entirely depend on being present to a mind for their realization, in accordance with the confinement thesis, and may well be qualitatively affected by other qualia to which they are sensibly related in a total episode of sensation, e.g., as in the phenomenon of color contrast, and this will typically be understood in terms of phenomenological or perceptual-psychological laws (e.g., laws of perspective), or laws that determine sense-qualitative presentational / organizational effects given sense-qualitative conditions and arrangements.

By consenting to the sense qualia theory in claiming that sensible qualities are concrete sensory universals or repeatable attributes of the content of sensory awareness, idealism takes as primitive something that is apt to be public and objective, something that may be identical across temporally distinct episodes of consciousness for the same subject as well as for numerically distinct subjects. Indeed one of the chief advantages of taking sensible qualities to be universal is that are thereby not essentially

private.[19] The other reason for taking sensible qualities to be universals is to explain the similarity of the given across different experiences. This, of course, requires taking the unity of the universal as primitive. To return to a point made in Ch.II, logically constructing the physical world from an ontology of sensory universals also has the theological advantage of allowing us to understand the physical world as a protosacramental medium of participation.

The ontology of sense qualia allows one to develop a phenomenal conception of particular physical objects because it allows one to account for the unity of the physical continuant that is the perceptual object in terms of structural features that obtain among a certain class of appearances, features that are lacking among the otherwise qualitatively similar appearances that are the content of awareness in hallucination. These structural features, whether spatial, temporal, or qualitative, are themselves either actually sensed or imaginative projections from the (possible) sensory qualitative presentations of those that are actually sensed. In this way we can explain the distinctive unity of the physical particular that is the perceptual object without appealing to a material substrate that would threaten the directness of our perceptual contact with physical items or the reductive idealism of our metaphysics.

VI.5 An Idealist View of Physical Causality

How does the idealist's phenomenal conception of physical objects, as applied to the account of the subjective indistinguishability of veridical perception and deviant episodes, link up with the analysis of the causal conditions of perception? It turns out that the structural attributes that make a collection of appearances those of a unified physical object are the very same attributes that account for its distinctive role as initiator of the causal chains that lead to perceptual experiences of it.

Here it will be necessary to invoke the distinction to which we have had frequent recourse, that between metaphysical and scientific explanatory frameworks, as explored in Berkeley's Principle of Analogous Fields of Discourse and Gregory's of Nyssa's distinction between the *diastasis* and *odos* of creation, the transcendental perspective of how creation of the physical world comes about and the perspective of how creation unfolds as empirically presented to one embodied within it. We know that from within the empirical perspective of creation, whether in everyday of scientific mindset, the nomological regularity of our sensory experiences is suggestive of a physical world of three spatial dimensions in which we are embodied mobile occupants along with other persistent physical entities and properties. But the systematic organization of our experience is also suggestive of a world in which these

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[19] This is strategically desirable in itself, but it also seems necessary to account for the fact that hallucinations are no more essentially private than veridical perceptions. The documented phenomenon of *folie a deux*, a type of shared psychosis, independently suggests this. See Enoch and Ball, *Uncommon Psychiatric Syndromes (*London: Arnold Publishing, 2001).

objective entities and properties are themselves objectively conformed to certain discoverable patterns of causation. In fact it is hard to imagine the sensory qualitative stability and coherence of physical continuants without also imagining their conformity to certain standard patterns of causal influence and sensitivity. The very somatocentricity of the organization of the field of sensory awareness and the corresponding idealist construction of physical space already implicates the mind and body in a certain relation conforming to identifiable patterns of psychophysical causation. The regularity of the sequences of volition/kinaesthetic sensation pairs, the way sensorimotor volitions result variously in co-presented sensations of tactual resistance or the continuity of kinaesthetic freedom is, as we have argued, what coordinates the spatial organization of the field of somatic qualia (i.e., what constitutes the spatial extension of the body) and eventually that of the total sense field. The same sensorimotor patterns suggest both the causal influence and responsiveness of the body in relation to the mind. And the same more widely-projected, regular sequences of somatocentric sensations in which we instrumentally use the body to explore the stable, persistent qualities of the environment are at once suggestive of regular causal patterns not only between distal objects and the body but between distant objects themselves and their dispositional properties. As a subject moves around the scene before her, the shape, size, position, color, sound, and appearance generally of various objects in the scene change in actual ways as manifested in the subject's successive sensations and also suggest further possible changes in the subject's imagination. These same changes typically result, deliberately or not, in the interpretation of the objects, precisely on account of the same stability and coherence that make them continuants, as being endowed with certain causal properties, certain dispositions to effect and be effected by certain conditions, whether of objects' surfaces to project or reflect light, of objects to move and be moved (or resist being moved) by others with certain velocities (are lack thereof), etc.

The locally maximally (qualitatively) coherent and maximally (nomologically) consistent collection of appearances that constitutes a physical continuant will have the causal power to effect human perceptual experience precisely in virtue of the same structural features that give it its stability and endurance. The technical notion of causation that will be of use for an idealist understanding of physical causality is a variant of the late counterfactual theory of David Lewis[20], on which causation is understood via the notion of *influence*. According to Lewis,

> where c and e are distinct events, c influences e if and only if there is a range c_1, c_2, … of different not-too-distant alterations of c and a range e_1, e_2, … such that if c_1 had occurred, e_1 would have occurred, and if c_2 had occurred, e_2 would have occurred, and so on.

[20] "Causation as Influence", *Journal of Philosophy*, 97 (2000):182–97.

The alterations are supposed to be changes in *whether, when, and how* an event occurs. Lewis then formulates a notion of causation as a relation between events such that there is a chain of influences between them.

The notion of causation that I have in mind is parallel to Lewis' notion of influence in certain ways. Here I am expressly interested in the way within the mundane explanatory framework we might speak of causation between appearances (temporal stages of portions of physical objects) and perceptual episodes. So, in addition to alterations of whether and when, we should consider qualitative alterations of the actual appearance and corresponding alterations of the perceptual episode. For any actual appearance of an object there will be a (indeed, an indefinitely large) range of qualitatively similar appearances that are alterations of the actual one by size, shape, brightness, etc.. This follows from the way we have constructed physical continuants from sense qualia, in which the continuants relate as spatiotemporally divisible wholes to qualia as their spatiotemporally indivisible parts. If the object to which the actual appearance belongs is a genuine continuant, then all of these alterations will also belong to the very same continuant physical object. This follows from its local maximal coherence and maximal consistency and to some extent its endurance. Now the fact that the alterations belong to a single object means that, speaking physically, the object itself is the truthmaker for the corresponding counterfactuals, if c_1 had occurred, e_1 would have occurred, ..., etc, even if speaking metaphysically we know that whatever explains the collective qualitative unity of the object is the ultimate truthmaker.

According to the account of the phenomalistic idealist, the qualitative unity of continuant objects and their appearances is, like every other sensible feature of the physical world logically sustained by the nomological organization of human sensory experience. But this is a statement from the perspective of metaphysics, a claim about how things stand in an ultimate account, *sub specie aeternitatis*. From this perspective, according to Berkeley's PAFD principle, only minds are causes. At present however, in the context of perceptual theory, we are considering how things stand from within the mundane perspective of what gets idealistically created, speaking not about the system of control over the course of human sense experience, but the empirical order of what that system of control gives rise to as we interpret it in everyday and scientific discourse. From that perspective we can indeed say that the physical object is the cause of a given sensation, that it is the truthmaker of the relevant counterfactual claim, even if metaphysically we acknowledge that this a logical consequence of facts that are wholly nonphysical. Speaking in physical terms we can say with John Stuart Mill that the object is the cluster of the "permanent possibilities of sensation"[21], even if we recognize that a nonphysical order governs the clustering and permanence, so that metaphysically what sustains the object and constitutes it in its identity

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[21] Mill, *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1865) in J. S., *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, vol.9, J. M. Robson, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967).

are facts of a nonphysical kind. As with the distal environmental object, so similarly for other physically mediating conditions and processes. The transmissive process and the other conditions on the (physical) causal chain between the appearance and the perceptual episode are still conditions on which the perceptual episode depends. But they are all only (physically) causally responsible for a *given* pair of appearance-perception alterations. In other words, given that this or that appearance alteration (including the actual one, of course) had occurred, the intervening transmissive conditions and neurophysiological response would be conditions on which the occurrence of the corresponding perceptual episode counterfactually depends. The appearance alteration will be an alteration along some dimension of *where*, *when*, or a qualitative dimension; as such, it will determine a corresponding change in the perceptual episode, which will counterfactually depend on suitable intervening conditions, suitable *relative to the alteration*. So the causal relevance of the intervening conditions is by way of the sensory qualitative appearance or candidate object in question; they are causally relevant in that they are nomically necessary for the selection of *that* appearance as opposed to another. But the object itself has a distinguished causal role in that it is (speaking physically) the nexus of the possibilities that support the various counterfactual statements concerning the alteration pairs. It is in this way that an idealist can allow there to be a causal influence of the physical object on perceptual experience, an influence flowing from its particularity. In the perspective of metaphysics we can say that this particularity is logically sustained by facts of nonphysical sort, even if in ordinary and scientific discourse we ignore this sustainment and focus instead on the empirically immanent order that is idealistically sustained.

In denying that the physical world is in any of its aspects ontologically primitive or mind-independent the idealist is at odds with our everyday intuitions, and this may seem to make him vulnerable to certain objections arising from the specific ways in which his claims may seem to conflict with what pre-philosophically we take ourselves to know about the physical world. Pre-philosophically we tend to assume that the physical objects we perceive around us exert a causal control over our sensory experiences. More specifically, we believe that the immediate causes of our sensations are the neural states of our brains. By contrast, idealism holds that all physical objects and the behavioral patterns that they exhibit—including our brains—are themselves created by a transcendental or non-physical system of causal control over our experiences. But we have already seen how the idealist can accommodate our everyday intuitions and scientific commitments with this core metaphysical commitment. By following Berkeley's PAFD we can distinguish the metaphysical explanatory framework in which the idealist thesis is operative from the various subordinate theoretical frameworks in which we are interested not in the causal order of ultimate reality but merely the causal order of the idealistically created physical world as it is manifested and interpreted within the system of appearances at the human empirical viewpoint. If we prescind from metaphysics, in which we regard physical facts as ontologically derivative of mental facts,

we are free to regard some physical facts as secondary truthmakers for others and even for some psychic facts, such as those pertaining to the psychic states of a biological organism. The same strategy serves the idealist in dealing with questions about the status of the physical world prior to the historical existence of human organisms or questions generally about the status of the physical world in remote spatiotemporal regions. An account of physical causation in terms of chains of suitably covariant transmissive conditions and phenomenalistically identified candidate objects allows us to move naturally across different explanatory frameworks—regarded now as analogous fields of discourse—depending on our mode of inquiry and explanatory purposes.

Chapter VII: The Construction of the Physical World

It is time to take stock of what we have accomplished so far by developing the idealist theory of perception in Ch.VI, en route to a full-fledged Christian idealist understanding of creation. Christian idealism is a metaphysics or theory of ultimate (contingent) reality according to which the distribution of qualia over minds at times as governed by a suitable nomological framework logically creates the physical world, so that the physical world is not itself ultimate but something that derives its ontological status from mental facts. So far we have demonstrated that the metaphysics of Christian idealism can deliver a coherent account of our perceptual experience of physical items and our attribution of causal powers to them in appropriately matching ways. More specifically, by adopting an ontology of sensory universals, or sense qualia, and a phenomenalist conception of physical objecthood, we may claim that the sensory qualities constituting the phenomenal content of sensory awareness are the same qualities that constitute the spatiotemporal parts of genuine physical continuants, so that our perceptual contact with physical items is unproblematically direct, being compatible with the facts of illusion and hallucination, as well as the scientifically theorized patterns of psychophysical causation. The key to the success of this explanatory strategy was the fact that the idealist, unlike the physical realist, is free to embrace a phenomenal conception of objects, taking the qualitative features of what we immediately perceive to be features that genuinely characterize the physical items of which we standardly take them to be presentations.

Still looming, however, is the deeper question of how the central thesis of idealism could be true. How could it be that the physical world is logically created by mental facts? More specifically, given the shape our development of idealism has taken, how could a phenomenalist ontology of sensory qualia and their logical or qualitative relations as conscious experiences be a sufficient set of resources for erecting the ordinary word that we take ourselves to inhabit? How could the organized distribution of such qualia, enriched with whatever further mental factors, be enough to sustain the extensive variety and robust objectivity of physical existence? To address these questions, I will propose a series of syntheses within the temporal patterning of successively unified conscious states, where the "pure" sense-modal sensations are organized into the various regularly associated themes that characterize the experience of things in space. The concepts appropriate to this everyday physical world can be understood as descriptively encapsulating the various world-suggestive themes, as we find them, and presupposing their regular associations. This notional physical theory of persistent things in 3-D space indispensably interprets and

is prompted by the regularities of qualia distribution within sensory consciousness. So too, we may plausibly suppose, do the more refined theories of empirical science interpret the regularities of the notional theory using their own definitions, concepts and hypotheses. In VII.2, I will present the series of constructive syntheses that take us to the level of the notional physical theory and consider the logical structure of empirical theory more generally in VII.3. Finally, we will be in a position to express a forceful critique of physical realism by contrast in VII.4, and discuss the import of our conclusions for systematic theology in VII.5.

Let us begin by recalling our definition of sense qualia. For a given sense modality *S*, we defined an *S*-modal quale to be a determinate *S*-modal sensation-type, and we defined total sense qualia as complexes of *S*-modal sense qualia unified by phenomenal co-consciousness or "co-existence". In this way, a total sense quale is a determinate total sensation type forming or having the capacity to form the content of total sensory awareness within a given phenomenally unified episode of sensory awareness. The confinement thesis immediately followed from this: an ultimate non-sensory realization of sense qualia is impossible and a quale exists (as the sensory universal that it is) if and only if it is capable of sensory realization, that is, of forming the content of sensory awareness within a conscious episode of sensation. Acknowledging that sense qualia exhaust the ontologically immediate content of sensory awareness, together with the negative implications of the confinement thesis, already moves one away from the tenability of a direct physical realism. But notice that the confinement thesis has the positive implication that qualia may exist without being actually sensed; it is enough that they have the potential to be sensed.

As we prepare to elaborate on the details of idealism's central claim, one thing seems clear: if the physical world is to be logically constructed from relations among actual and potential sensations, the unitive power of the conscious mind, that of the personal subject to whom a quale might be given, must play a fundamental role. The customary concomitance of certain tactual and kinaesthetic qualia with certain visual qualia is, in virtue of our definitional scheme, tantamount to an associational basis in the experienced unity of sensory consciousness. For if qualia are sensation types as described above, then the regular ontic conjunction of certain qualia is thereby the experienced concomitance of certain qualitative features as the content of sensory awareness. But the converse is also true, because of the biconditionality of the confinement thesis.

We noted, too, in the previous chapter that it is important to distinguish the class of somatic qualia because of their role in the idealist construction of space and the 'somatocentricity' of qualia or of the total (transmodal) sense field. To articulate this construction in the manner outlined in V.4, we may further distinguish these somatic qualia into proprioceptive, tactual, and kinaesthetic qualia. The body, as an individual is constituted as a complex of stable somatic qualia and thus as a tactual/kinaesthetic/visual

continuant. Its 'centricity' consists in the fact that it alone of all the sense qualitative continuants in the course of my experience has an immediate connection with a subject's will, as well as having a representative or member quale realized in every one of my tactual experiences. More specifically, we recognize the (contingent) fact that certain volitional states are immediately succeeded by certain somatic sensations in regular way; and it is this regularity which is primarily operant in the subjective discovery of the stability and persistence of various other complexes of qualia. Using the regular concomitance of volition-somatic sensation pairs and sequences, experience presents the subject with various configurations of qualia, unified by conscious compresence. Those with maximal (local) qualitative coherence relative to others suggest themselves not only as stable—and therefore as segregated items or objects—but also as a continuous spatial projection of qualia within a subject's present sense field. As we saw with Berkeley's *New Theory*, the somatic qualia of downward gravitational resistance and kinaesthetic sensations of eye, head and limb movements act as coordinating data for the somatocentric organization of other (putatively environmental) sensory qualities.

It is interesting to note how the present theory, though different in many respects from William James' psychological theory, is nonetheless similar to it in several important ways. For one, James as a radical empiricist in the tradition of Hume sought to ground the spatial unity of sense qualia in the temporally extended compresence of phenomenal awareness, reflected in affording the possibility of joint attention:

> Whatever sensible data can be attended to together we locate together. Their several extents become one extent. The place at which each appears is held to be the same as the place at which the others appear. They become in short so many properties of *one and the same real thing*.[1]

This means that a spatially unified transmodal sense field is constructed from the mental subjective unity of coexistent sensations. Spatial unity among qualia is logically derived from the fact that they are[2] co-presented within a single durational period of phenomenally experienced time, what James famously called 'the specious present'. Notice that co-location of qualities as grounded in the potential for joint attention may serve as the relation that in turn grounds the individuation of unified *concreta*, what in common parlance we call 'physical objects' or simply 'objects', and what James calls 'one and the same real thing'. This serves the idealist strategy of explaining the real existence of physical things, but as things nonetheless derived from facts of a non-physical kind. Furthermore, James takes the objective

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[1] William James. *Principles of Psychology*. pp.182-184, as quoted by Ayer (1968).
[2] Or, as we will want to assert more carefully, "*could be* co-presented".

reality of sensory qualitative spatial extension to be grounded in the projection of the temporally patterned sensibly given via the suggestions of imaginative associations, much as Berkeley had.

> We get to conceive of the successive fields of things after the analogy of the several things which we perceive in a single field. They must be out and alongside of each other, and we conceive that their juxtaposed spaces must make a larger space.[3]

and

> through these constant changes [retracing eye, head, and body movements] every field of seen things comes at last to be thought of as always having a fringe of *other things possible to be seen* spreading in all directions round about it.[4]

We can accommodate these same insights, just as Ayer had in his discussion of James, and helpfully regard them as internalized in the present elaboration.

VII.2   The Logical Construction of Things in Space

The phenomenalistic idealist proposes that physical space and its qualitative occupants are the logical product of the systematic way in which the subjective experience of space is coordinated between subjects. The subjective experience of space is in turn the product of the intermodal spatial organization of the tactual and somatic fields, and the intermodal spatial organization of the visual and tactual fields. In the former case, spatial organization of the tactual and somatic fields is the product of the qualitative overlap among temporally successive fields and their temporally structured components, so that facts of spatial extension are constituted by facts of qualitative persistence through temporal extension. Finally qualia from the other sense-modalities are spatially referred to the visuo-tactual field, yielding a spatially unified, total subjective sense field. The spatial organization of subjective experience thus breaks down into the stages of constructive synthesis to be described below, facilitated by the phenomenological facts of coexistence, succession, and suggestion, as befits the Berkeleyan strategy sketched in V.4. Due to their organizational importance, it is worth pausing at the outset to reflect on each in turn.

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[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., p.186.

Phenomenal Coexistence refers to the fact that some sensations, whether from the same or different sense-modalities, are jointly experienced within the same durational (temporally extended) span of sensory awareness. Given the above definitions of sensations as temporally individuated realizations of qualia and of qualia as determinate sensation types that are *presentational*, or objects of awareness, in virtue of being self-revealing in regard to their intrinsic character, we can say that phenomenally coexistent qualia are *co-presented* within a single episode of sensory awareness, or that they are *strictly co-conscious*. By being co-presented and yet qualitatively distinct aspects within some more complex sensed pattern, phenomenally coexistent qualia are thus potential objects of joint attention, though this need not mean that they are experienced as simultaneous, as a single act of sensory awareness is able to take in a temporal spread of phenomena. In being co-presented, phenomenally coexistent sensations are components of a single total experience, be it intra- or trans-modal (it is *total* in the sense of being maximally inclusive, so that there is no larger [intra- or trans-modal, respectively] experience of which it is a part). Phenomenally coexistent qualia are thus components in a more complex quale having a determinate temporal pattern, realized within the time field of a single sensation.

Phenomenal Succession refers to the phenomenally experienced quality of succession, or the sensed relation of 'coming-immediately-later-than' in some presented temporal pattern. Like phenomenal coexistence, this relation can hold between qualities within the same sense modality as well as across different modalities. Qualia that are experienced as successive are a special case of those experienced as coexistent. Instances of the former are always instances of the latter, though not conversely. For this reason, successive sensations will be experienced within a single span of awareness (a total sensation) whose content forms a determinate temporal pattern, one that includes the relation of succession between component sensations within its structure. Unlike coexistence, however, which is symmetric, succession is anti-symmetric: if quale *y* succeeds quale *x* then *x* does not succeed *y*. In fact we can introduce the converse relation of *precedence* or of 'immediately coming before' so that we can say if *y* succeeds *x*, then *x* precedes *y*.

Let us consider three examples that will serve to illustrate the phenomenon of succession in various ways, and which we may develop further in ways that will serve to illustrate other constructions.

For a given sense modality S, let $S_1, \ldots, S_{10}$ be sensations. Let $S_1 \wedge S_2$ represent the coexistence of the sensations S_1 and S_2, and let $S_1 > S_2$ represent their succession (to be read 'S_2 succeeds S_1').

Example 1: I hear a diatonic C scale, C-D-E-F-G-A. My hearing of the scale consists of the series of total auditory sensations $(A_1, \ldots, A_5)$, each of which consists of, say, two notes of some temporal duration ordered by phenomenal succession, so that

$$A_1 = C > D$$
$$A_2 = \qquad D > E$$
$$A_3 = \qquad\qquad E > F$$
$$A_4 = \qquad\qquad\qquad F > G$$
$$A_5 = \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad G > A$$

Example 2: I see the flight of a bird from one tree branch to another. My viewing of the bird's flight consists of the series of total visual sensations $(V_1, \ldots, V_n)$, each of which consists of, say, the durational presentation of change of a 'bird-color pattern' in a way that is temporally continuous, so that the changes of visual quality are presented as temporally patterned in such a way that change of visual quality has immanent temporal flow of direction and succession. So we have

$$V_1 = \text{Bird-color pattern}_1 > \text{Bird-color pattern}_2, \ldots, V_n = \text{Bird-color pattern}_{n-1} > \text{Bird color pattern}_n$$

Example 3: I stand at the back of a room and see a wall in front of me, with a picture in the center and a door to the left. As I walk forward the picture becomes larger but continues to occupy the center of my visual field while the door too becomes larger but also moves leftward to the edge of my visual field and eventually disappears. My movement within the room consists of a series of total (transmodal) sensations $(E_1, \ldots, E_n)$, each of which consists of a component kinaesthetic sensation of walking (or of standing in the first and last instance) with a co-existent visual sensation of the wall with the picture and the door (or really a 'wall-', 'picture-', and 'door-color pattern') succeeded by another component kinaesthetic sensation of walking with a co-existent sensation of the wall with the picture and door (or merely of the wall with the picture in the last instance). So we have

$$E_1 = (K_1 \wedge V_1) > (K_2 \wedge V_2), \ldots, \ E_n = (K_{n-1} \wedge V_{n-1}) > (K_n \wedge V_n)$$

In the examples above although we are supposing that each total sensation contains merely two component sensations ordered by phenomenal succession this is for the sake of simplicity of exposition and not intended to be an accurate description of the complexity of an actual case, either in its compositional or transmodal paucity.

Using the notion of phenomenal succession, it is helpful to introduce two further phenomenological notions, that of qualitative overlap and qualitative continuity.

Phenomenal Overlap refers to the relation among total sensations of possessing some third sensation as a common component, corresponding to the common structural component of the qualia of which they are realizations. The relevant total qualia may be intra- or trans-modal. But they must be internally structured by (phenomenal) succession, and thus must present some subqualia as standing in the relation of succession. We then say two sensations x and y overlap if and only if there is some third sensation z such that z is a component of x in which it is presented as succeeding some other sensation but not being itself succeeded by any sensation, and a component of y in which it is presented as being succeeded by some component sensation but not itself succeeding any other component sensation.

In Example 1, each successive pair of total auditory sensations exhibit overlap. So A_1 and A_2 both contain a component auditory sensation of D (the second tone of the scale), which is presented as the phenomenally successive tone of A_1 and the phenomenally predecessive tone of A_2. For similar reasons, A_2 and A_3, A_3 and A_4, and A_4 and A_5 all overlap, but no other pairs overlap.

Example 2 and Example 3 are also examples of overlap. In Example 2, because V_1 = Bird-color pattern$_1$ > Bird-color pattern$_2$ and V_2 = Bird-color pattern$_2$ > Bird-color pattern$_3$, V_1 and V_2 overlap in virtue of having Bird-color pattern$_2$ as the common component, smoothly "bridging them" and an important part of the reason why the series of sensations counts as seeing the flight of the bird as a continuous motion, rather than some staccatic sequence of motions. The same is true for Example 3 for similar reasons, prompting the following definition.

Phenomenal Continuity refers to the condition of sensations that stand in the ancestral relation or transitive closure of phenomenal overlap. In other words, two sensations are phenomenally continuous if and only if there is a series of sequentially overlapping sensations (realizations of overlapping total qualia) of which they are the first and last members.

Again in Example 1, any two total auditory sensations in the series A_1…, A_5 are continuous with each other, being connected by a series of successively overlapping sensations. So A_1 and A_5 are continuous because they are connected by the series of successively overlapping total auditory sensations A_2, A_3, and A_4. The same is true for A_1 and A_4, A_2 and A_5, and indeed for any (unordered) pair in the series A_1, …, A_5. Similar considerations apply to Examples 2 and 3.

Suggestion refers to the imaginative projection of a quale along some phenomenally continuous qualitative dimension. It involves a kind of interpolation or extrapolation of relations experienced among coexistent or strictly co-conscious sensations within a total sensation to relations among total sensations themselves, just as continuity involves a kind of extrapolation from overlap, which in turn extrapolates or analogizes from succession experienced within a total sensation to a relation between total sensations. The imaginatively projected relations may be relations of succession or of mere coexistence, and so may be projections of overlap and continuity. If suggestion is an imaginative projection of qualitative continuity under a relation of coexistence, it may furnish the idea of location *at a place* where the subject is not; if it is an imaginative projection of qualitative continuity under a relation of succession, it may furnish the idea of being *at a time* (when) the subject is not.

At each synthetic stage, the principles of synthesis are similar, the effects being as described below. Notice that in accord with the thesis of the heterogeneity of the senses, sensations in different sense modalities cannot themselves overlap, as they have no common qualitative components (no color is a component of an auditory sensation, no sounds is component of a visual sensation, and so on). Yet once they enter into sensed temporal relations, then these temporally patterned total (transmodal) sensations do become capable of overlap in respect of their transmodal components. This is the key to understanding how the unity of the conscious mind and its phenomenological organization may furnish the physical world with its logically basic stock of facts, exploited by the idealist's explanatory strategy.

In general there need be no fixed *a priori* bound on the complexity of a total sensation nor of the complexity of an overlapping component or series of (potentially all different) overlapping components. Supposing that A_n, V_n, and T_n are names for auditory, visual, and tactual sensations, the total sensations

$$E = (A_1 {}^\wedge V_4 {}^\wedge T_2) > ((T_8 {}^\wedge T_3) > V_2) \text{ and } E' = ((T_8 {}^\wedge T_3 > V_2) > (T_1 {}^\wedge T_5 {}^\wedge V_{10})$$

will overlap in respect of the common component $(T_8 {}^\wedge T_3) > V_2$ forming the last component sensation of E and the first component sensation of E'. Notice that, as in the case of Example 3, this common component is itself temporally structured and transmodal. Such complex overlap is the key to understanding how qualia from one sense modality may, through suggestion, acquire the organizational effects of qualia from other modalities. This is what will allow us to pursue the Berkeley-inspired tactical line of regarding spatial organizational of the visual field as acquired from that of the tactual-somatic field, in virtue of the way the two are co-presented and (phenomenally) temporally organized in sensory consciousness.

The Tactuo-Somatic Synthesis

At this stage the various somatic qualia that are coexistent, kinaesthetically successive, and qualitatively overlapping through successive kinaesthetic sensations are organized via these relations into a qualitatively integrated somatic field. Per Berkeley, the somatic field acquires spatial significance through the distinct qualities of kinaesthetic and tactual sensations, especially of gravitational pressure or conversely egocentric downward resistance (or 'foot-ward' resistance), but more generally the distinct qualities of enactive freedom and resistance. By being coexistent, successive, and qualitatively overlapping with these sensations of free and resisted movement the integrated complex of somatic qualia acquire orientation around a subjectively central (intuitively, a longitudinal, head-to-foot) axis. They are distinguished as those sensations possessing qualitative overlap of kinaesthetic freedom and resistance amid successive acts of sensorimotor volition, thus experienced as being (more or less[5]) under the immediate causal control of the mental subject. By being distinguished in this way and subject to the effects of suggestion, these sensations establish a domain of potential somatic sensations ordered by orientation and distance, conceptualized as a single physical continuant that is the subject's body.

The Tactuo-Visual Synthesis

At this stage the color patterns presented by visual sensations, which are themselves organized into a unified field through relations of coexistence, succession, and qualitative overlap, become spatially organized through their sensed relations with tactuo-somatic sensations. By entering into the relations of coexistence and succession with tactuo-somatic sensations, sensations of the visual field become co-presented and temporally organized with those of the spatially organized body. Color patterns are experienced together with sensory awareness of the determinate spatial extension of the subject's body, so that both visual sensations of color patterns and somatic sensations of bodily location and movement become components of total (transmodal) sensations.

At this stage the body is further distinguished by the fact that the visual qualia which belong to it are those "occupying a series of spatial positions which, in relation to the positions occupied by other overlapping sets of qualia, differ only minimally"[6] in successive time-fields (temporal patterns of total tactuo-visual sensations).

In many cases the visual and tactuo-somatic sensations will be co-presented as temporally successive, particularly in cases where changes in color pattern are sensed to succeed kinaesthetic

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[5] The relevance of this modifier is to allow for the fact that some parts of my body are not under a control that is *as* immediate as other parts. I cannot move the ulterior bone of my finger without moving the bone proximally joined to it. Other parts I cannot move at all but are so frequently coexist and overlapping with it in regard to somatic sensations such as pain, pleasure, heat, and cold (not to mention visual continuity with the moveable parts) that they are conceptualized as so many parts that form a continuous whole.

[6] Ayer, 1968, p.324

sensations of eye and head movements. Such temporally organized tactuo-visual sensations will themselves stand in relations of phenomenal overlap and so of continuity. Through such temporally structured qualitative continuity, tactuo-visual sensations will suggest imaginative projections of still greater continuity both of succession and coexistence, so that the same spatial organization of the body itself is consciously related to the visual field. This has two effects. One is analogously to extend the same continuities that attend tactuo-somatic spatial relationships to pairs of sensed and unsensed visual qualia. The other is to introduce spatial relationships to co-presented visual qualia and so to spatially structure total visual sensations themselves. It is in this way that the visual field acquires the significance of being in fronto-parallel position with respect to the eyes and so of having a correspondingly determinate spatial relationship to the rest of the body, in terms of distance as measured by tactual extent and orientation as measured from an a somatocentric and hence egocentric origin. This is the way, per Berkeley, visual sensations come to acquire the status of being tactually significant cues or signs that we read as a visible language.

Consider the tactuo-visual sensations in which kinaesthetic components of hand movement are co-presented with tactual components of resistance and co-presented with visual sensations of the same color pattern. When these overlap each other as complex component sensations, the resulting continuity is a continuity of coexistent tactuo-visual sensation[7], which suggests an imaginative projection that serves to ground our conception of surfaces and also of suggesting the organizational effects of tactual uniformity to visual uniformity, ultimately leading to the covariation of visual and tactual extent. This is what happens when I run my hand along a desktop. The successive co-existence of tactual and visual homogeneity, of solid cold smoothness and (relatively) uniform color pattern, yield imaginatively projected tactuo-visual continuity. Then, even with eyes closed and hand resting on the desktop I experience not a singular source of resistance but a *surface* extending in various direction and affording so many possibilities of further sensed resistance. Or again, with eyes open and hands at my side, I interpret the visual homogeneity before me as something solid, cold, and smooth, something thus possessing the same tactuo-somatic and hence spatial significance as the desktop I felt with my hand.

The outcome of the tactuo-visual synthesis is the spatial projection of tactuo-visual qualia into the future and the present, in accordance with the stability of certain sensory routes in which kinaesthetically coordinated and overlapping tactuo-visual component sensations play a decisive role. Future spatial projections will be prompted by tactuo-visual qualitative continuity within a stream of experience over some kinaesthetically driven sensory route, temporally extending already-experienced relations of succession. Present spatial projections will be prompted by repetition (tolerant of some minor variations)

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[7] This is what psychologists call "haptic perception". See M. Grunwald *Human Haptic Perception – Basics and Applications* (Basel: Birkhaueser, 2008).

of some continuous tactuo-visual pattern in response to the reversal of a sensory route, temporally extending already-experienced relations of coexistence to unsensed locations, that while unsensed are nonetheless simultaneous with the content of current sensations. In this way, the spatiotemporal projections of suggestion should be understood to involve the aid of memory as well as the imagination.

By way of illustrating the first point, consider again Example 3, in which I see a wall in front of me, with a picture in the center and a door to the left. From my initial position I experience the picture and door as co-presented within a single total visual sensation. As I walk forward the door continues to move leftward (as well as become larger) in my visual field in what may be much the same way that the flight of the bird moved across my visual field in Example 2. But in contrast to the case of the bird, the overlapping visual sensations in this case are coexistent with tactuo-somatic sensations of walking, itself an experience of motion (indeed of overlapping kinaesthetic sensations), so that, perhaps after reversing and retracing my sensory route and finding that the same series of total sensations results, I will not interpret the door as moving as I did the bird. What is more, at some point in my forward trajectory the door will have disappeared beyond the leftward edge of my visual field. But because of the continuously overlapping way in which my visual sensations succeeded each other, I will, in accordance with the imaginative projection of the space of my current visual field, come to interpret my position and visual sensation of the picture as one that is *physically* coexistent with the unsensed door.

Through such actual and suggested qualitative continuities, the concept of physical coexistence has its effects more pervasively, so that sensation components come to have their "fringe of other things possible to be seen spreading in all directions". In this way the unified coordination of tactuo-visual space comes to acquire the significance of being the phenomenal, logically unbounded 3-D space that we interpret as physical space. And its occupants come to acquire the significance of being 3-D continuants, stable in their sensory affordances and potential for re-identification and perceptual scrutiny.

Synthesis of the Total Sense Field

Finally at this stage qualia from other sense modalities are incorporated into the spatiotemporal framework of tactuo-visual continuants and form with them the content of physical theory, the notional physical world of our everyday mindset. It is not as if all along the subject was bereft of sensations in other modalities, only that as a matter of logical priority, those modalities that furnish the richest set of data for our spatial concepts, the somatic, tactual, and visual, must already have established an egocentric and transmodally integrated spatial framework in which sounds, smells, and tastes may then then be co-located and interpreted as belonging to tactuo-visual continuants.

VII.3 Idealism and the Logical Structure of Physical Theory

By so many constructive steps we hope at least preliminarily to indicate the ways in which, by being thematically regular and consistently ordered, and so suggesting a programmatic interpretation, sensory experience both logically creates the notional physical world and epistemically warrants our beliefs and theories concerning it. The notional physical world is a world of qualitative continuants in a unified 3-D space that we ourselves inhabit as mobile occupants, a world of objects that are observable at different times and places and by different observers, and that can exist unperceived. Of course while our beliefs in such a world are evidentially supported by our sensory experiences they clearly involve commitments that go beyond anything strictly contained within the content of our sensations. This is clear from the fact that our constructive syntheses have been facilitated not only by the content of what we actually experience but certain imaginative projections suggested by the qualitative patterns of what we experience. Or indeed, to put it in other words, this is simply the point, by now familiar, that our descriptive physical theory is conceptually autonomous. There is no way, by demurring from what we already take ourselves to have warrant for endorsing on the basis of our sensory experiences, deductively, analytically, or in any other *a priori* manner to establish either that our sensory experiences genuinely exhibit the fully specified characteristic orderliness we customarily take them to exhibit, or that such a notional world as satisfies our physical theory exists. Nonetheless, we are justified in claiming that the organization of sensory experience (retrospectively[8]) logically creates the notional physical world.

For one thing, our experiences ordinarily will be *perceptual* experiences in addition to being sensory ones, in which we not only sense qualitative content but interpret the content of sensory awareness using conceptual resources of the physical theory (of the notional world), whether innate or acquired. For each physical concept there will be a standard collection of sensory experiences in which the concept legitimately may be deployed. It will be this collection of experiences that individuates the concept, a collection such that the subject is credited with possessing the concept if and only if for some critical number of experiences contained in the collection, he deploys the concept when having those experience and does not deploy it in others.[9] Such concepts may be thought of as bare recognitional capacities enabling demonstrative identification, which may be proto-linguistically structured and holistically sensitive to other concepts of physical theory in various ways. The details of such a typology of experiences for the purposes of a theory of concepts do not concern us here. The point is that, by

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[8] That is, only after we have accepted its existence and character as we ordinarily do. As long as we are not nihilists about the physical world, and do not pretend to be satisfying the radical skeptic on his own terms by, e.g., showing that any of our perceptual judgments possess indefeasible certainty, then in the absence of defeating evidence we are free to use the assumption of the existence and ordinarily accepted character of the world as a means to gather the kind of information about the regularities of sensory experience recorded by the physical theory. See Foster (1982, pp.229-32).

[9] Perhaps some small number of 'false positives' may be tolerated.

presupposing the effects of suggestion in our constructive synthesis, such concepts will transcend aspects of the sensory order that prompt them and make further aspects of the same order newly discernible. And thus, relative to such a theory of concept possession, the thematic regularities and consistent orderliness of sensory experience will be sufficient to warrant certain of the perceptual judgments in which these concepts feature. But what is more, as long as they are guaranteed by a suitable nomological framework, we may claim that the sensory regularities together with the interpretive resources of our concepts logically create the physical space, time, items, properties, and facts that feature in the notional physical world.

The regularities of the notional physical world, thought of as an interpretive theory of sensory experience, will themselves be refined in precision and enriched in descriptive resources by scientific theory. In accordance with the PAFD, the relationship between the regularities posited by scientific theory and those of the notional physical world will be structurally analogous to that between the notional physical theory and the most immanent core of the physical world, the stratum of sensory regularities. Altogether then we may think of physical reality as stratified into (at least) three conspicuous levels of organization, phenomenological, notional, and scientific. Each higher level being an interpretative theory of the kind of orderliness exhibited by the level below it, a level that in turn logically creates it relative to some suitable framework of law and endowment of human conceptual resources.

Notice too that the details of the logical syntheses closely resemble those contained in the definitions of 'coherence' and others that were relevant to the criteria of objecthood and perceptual causation that were stipulated in connection with the idealist theory of perception developed in Ch.VI. This is no accident. The criteria were deliberately chosen to allow the idealist to take advantage of the fact that, unlike the realist, he can allow the sensible qualities that form the ontologically immediate content of our sensory awareness to feature as basic ingredients of physical objects as well. He can thus vindicate the forceful impression, accepted by common sense, that sensible qualities genuinely belong to the objects as they appear, that redness, heat, solidity, rectangularity and smoothness genuinely pervade the surface of the brick exposed to the sun, as it appears to me when I hold it in my hand and examine it. But if the idealist vindicates one claim of common sense he can do so only by abandoning another: he does not require that perception reach beyond the mind in order to make contact with physical objects. He can allow a physical object to be identified by the sensible qualities it presents because he takes a physical object to consist in a set of potential appearances, nomologically organized in respect of their qualitative and spatiotemporal relations.

This was the strategy pursued in the context of developing an idealist perceptual theory, and we saw how it allowed the idealist to solve the "problem of perception", of providing a coherent theory of how we succeed in perceiving physical objects that accords with the empirical facts of causation and the

phenomenological facts of standard and nonstandard appearances. We are now in a position to see how this explanatory strategy is an adjunct of the central claim of the idealist's metaphysical position, that it is the nomological organization of sensory experience that logically creates the physical world. For our constructive syntheses show how, accepting the very same ontology of sense qualia, the sensed relations among qualia presented within sensory awareness may be thought of as projected or analogized to relations between total sensations themselves. Most crucially, these projections allow us to formulate straightforward logical constructions that do not require us to accept anything conceptually physical or non-mental. The constructions were formulated only with the use of logical and phenomenological concepts, in particular the three key concepts of coexistence, succession, and suggestion. In this way the syntheses gave the facts we took for granted in our definitions of perceptual object and physical continuant a rigorous footing. But, thereby, they also show how purely mental facts (involving phenomenological content, relations, imagination, memory, and concepts) may be bridged to a coherent theory of physical object perception, and so with the notional physical theory and empirical theory more broadly given the stratified layers of dependence we noted among these.

What this all means, finally, is that if we can show that there could be a suitable nomological framework that guaranteed sensory experience to be organized in the way it is as characterized by our physical and more broadly empirical theories, then we will have established idealism as a coherent metaphysics, a coherent theory of ultimate (contingent[10]) reality. To be 'suitable' means such a nomological framework would have to be idealistically acceptable and so appeal only to facts and entities that are wholly nonphysical. Given what we have established in our syntheses, it would be enough to show that there could be laws governing the distribution of qualia over minds at times in ways that globally conformed to the world-suggestive pattern characterized by the logical constructions of our physical theory. The syntheses themselves showed how physical space and its occupants could be an idealist construction, or logically sustained by the organization of experience. In seeking a nomological framework to guarantee the relevant distribution of qualia, all the idealist need take as ontologically primitive would be qualia of the various sense-modal and temporal sorts. Crucially, of course, he will have to exploit the immanent durational content of sensory awareness and the binding relations of phenomenal coexistence and succession. Note that phenomenal time, as the durational content of sensory awareness or the temporal pattern in which qualia are presented, is different from physical time and mental time. Physical time is only discernible in the notional and scientific physical world in connection

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[10] The qualifier here is especially important for theologians. Christian metaphysics will make use of premises drawn from articles of faith, doctrine, and Church tradition, but its subject is the ontological structure of creation, of that created reality that is ultimate and as it stand to that which is derived. For creation to be ultimate is for it not to be created through the mediation of something else. Created spirits, for example, may be ultimate while remaining contingent, that is, without thereby being such as to possess an absolutely necessary existence.

with a standard of measurement fixed by some recurring physical process. Mental time is the time *in which* sensations occur and are themselves temporally extended. These distinctions will become clearer in the context of elaborating the idealist nomological framework in Ch.VIII.

VII.4 Against the Claims of Physical Realism

Before turning to the subject of the nomological organization of experience explicitly in the next chapter, it may be helpful to pause and consider in more technical detail the import of the idealist claims both positively and negatively. Positively the idealist claims that physical facts and entities are constituted by mental facts. Negatively he claims that physical realism is incoherent. To make this and related claims more perspicuous, let me define the following terms.[11] One set of facts F is said to *constitute* another set of facts F' if and only if the set F' holds in virtue of the set F and is nothing over and above F. Intuitively the notion of fact constitution captures the notion of ontological mediation, so that if F constitutes F', then exhaustively the obtaining of F' is by means of the obtaining of F. Any instance of fact constitution would entail an instance of logical consequence, since if F' is constituted by F then any possible world in which F obtained would be a world in which F' obtained. As with logical consequence, the relation of fact constitution may but need not be analytically transparent or even *a priori* discernible; it need not entail deducibility, even supposing complete information. T Let us say that if F' is the fact that x exists, then x is *logically created* by F if and only if F' is constituted by F. If a fact (or facts) is not constituted by any other set of facts than it is *basic*, and an entity is *ontologically primitive* if the fact of its existence is basic. Notice that a basic fact need not be logically necessary. What exists and what does not may well be effected by logical creation, but logical creation need not be supposed to be the only type of creation. As another special case of fact constitution, let us say that F is *nomologically selected* if it is at least partly constituted by facts about the obtaining of certain laws.

The idealist claims that the basic core of physical facts is constituted by mental facts and that in particular physical space and its occupants are logically created by mental facts. The phenomenalistic idealist claims that the basic core of physical facts (those that are basic relative to the set of physical facts) are constituted by facts about the nomological organization of human sensory experience, together with other facts about human psychology (e.g., that we are endowed with certain conceptual resources that enable us to interpret sensory experience in the way characterized by our physical theory). He thus will say that the existence of the physical world is nomologically selected by the laws of phenomenological organization. Let us call these laws the *laws of creation*.

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[11] The definitions more or less follow those of Foster (1982, pp.5-7).

We made reference to the basic core of physical facts. This is to take notice of the fact that the physical realist (and the idealist) may well be committed to nomological selection or logical creation within the physical realm itself, by taking either the everyday or scientific image of the world as basic and the other as derivative. In the latter case, the most likely candidates for basic entities are facts about fields and energy distributions, conservation laws, the geometrical structure of spacetime, or something still more exotic. In one sense this is just another way of describing the stratification of physical reality into dependent levels. But the realist is likely to regard the direction of ontological dependence as being inverted from the epistemological direction in which the idealist regards it. He will come to see the advance of empirical theory from the notional to the scientific not merely as progressively interpreting the organization of experience but as an expansion of our ontology in the direction suggested by a realist construal of the scientific theory. After all, the orderliness of experience calls for explanation, and the physical realist will see the postulates of physical theory as items to which we are justified in attributing a mind-independent and (in some scientifically refined cases) fundamental existence on the basis of an inference to the best explanation (IBE), as providing the best causal explanation for the outcomes of experiential organization, even if it is only on the logical basis of experience that empirical theory can develop. It is intuitively plausible to believe that the increasing conceptual sophistication of empirical theory gives us a reason to use it as a guide to metaphysics and so to posit a reality ontologically independent of its sensory origins, which in our 'critically sophisticated' moments we identify as the physical world. Yet despite this intuitive plausibility, when pressured in certain ways I think this makes the physical realist liable to the charge of incoherence.[12]

The definition of fact constitution, and so of logical creation and nomological selection, should be seen as well motivated from the start, since even within the realm of physical facts there are clear and intuitive examples, some trivial, and some more substantial. So, for example, the fact that this object behaves gravitationally is constituted by the facts that this object is a golden bowling ball and the fact that all golden bowling balls behave gravitationally. None of these facts is even physically basic, however. The latter fact is itself constituted by the fact that all golden bowling balls are bodies and all bodies behave gravitationally, or more specifically that they behave in accordance with the Law of Universal Gravitation, $F = G * (m * m') / r * r$. This latter fact *is* physically basic, at least according to our best empirical theories. This same basic fact nomologically selects the fact that, neglecting friction, all bodies accelerate in a gravitational field at the same rate relative to the center of mass; and this nomologically selects the fact that a golden bowling ball and a golden golf ball both dropped from the top of Tower of London will hit the ground at the same time. To take a more interesting case, one could reasonably claim within the framework of physical realism, as indeed many philosophers do, that the fact that an object

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[12] Discussed below, p.147ff.

possesses a color is constituted by the fact that the object possesses certain microstructural properties, the fact that these have certain effects on the way the object reflects and absorbs light and the way this in turn has certain actual and potential effects on human observers. Obviously, the realist who pursues such a strategy will want to make similar claims for other sensory qualities that we ordinarily ascribe to objects in accordance with our everyday practice.[13] The realist can concede the conceptual autonomy of the everyday physical theory, and so the truth and analytic irreducibility of our everyday physical ascriptions, while insisting on the obtaining of genuine relations of ontological dependence between the truth-making facts (that an object possesses a certain color, say) and those facts discovered through scientific theorizing which prove to enter into the ultimate scientific explanations.

To take a final example of fact constitution, even as a physical realist, one might reasonably claim that the existence of material bodies is constituted by the existence of space, certain space-pervading intrinsic qualities[14], and a set of laws governing the arrangement and dynamic distribution of these qualities over time. The idea would be that as long as the laws ensured that (i) the quality pervaded regions of space remained exhaustively non-overlapping (geometrically) and (ii) that changes in quality distribution were spatiotemporally continuous, then the quality pervasion of space would coincide with the notion of material occupancy of space. In this case, the existence of matter would be nomologically selected. This possibility is afforded by the fact that space and matter are so intimately associated, matter being individuated by the region of space it occupies. A metaphysical theory that made this claim would count as a version of physical realism, but one in which only space and not matter was ontologically primitive.[15]

Notice that in each example the possibility of nomological selection within the explanatory framework of physical realism is a consequence of that fact that empirical theorizing only permits us to infer the existence of structural properties, either of composition and arrangement, or disposition, including disposition to effect human experience. In the case of the logical creation of color (and so of other appearance properties) this is what motivated the suggestion the color was constituted by facts about microstructure and disposition to effect human sensation, since these and not facts about appearances are what enter into its ultimate scientific explanation. Pushed to its logical terminus, the realist's explanatory strategy requires us to identify the physical world with something increasingly removed and eventually inaccessible to observation. Yet due to the limited scope of empirical theory, the realist can offer no transparent conception even of what a candidate ontologically primitive physical thing might be. The

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[13] See, e.g., Frank Jackson, "The Primary Quality View of Color", *Philosophical Perspectives*, 10 (1996): 199–219.
[14] The 'pervasion' of a spatial region by a quality may be understood simply as the instantiation (at a moment in time) of the quality by all points within the region.
[15] Indeed, it could be that facts (i) and (ii) are themselves nomologically selected, so that the existence of matter would be logically created by the existence of space and some (other) basic set of laws.

shape of this tendency, however, is at odds with something that any metaphysical theory about the physical world must be prepared to recognize, something I will call 'the indispensability of the psychophysical link-laws' (IPLL thesis): the physical world must possess its psychophysical laws essentially, since if did not it could not be our physical world, the world that forms the ontologically immediate content of experience and empirical theorizing. This unhappy combination of commitments—realism combined with the epistemic limits of empirical theory and the IPLL thesis—can be shown to lead to incoherence. For the realist, the psychophysical laws (those determining effects on human experience) must be only contingently attached to physical reality. For he believes, in accordance with his realism, that physical space, time, objects[16], and properties are ultimately and mind-independently realized. But if they are mind-independently realized then the fact that they cause certain sensations in us cannot be essential to their existence. But if they do not cause sensations in us then, contra the IPLL thesis, they cannot be the content of our perceptual experience, our physical concepts, and physical language. And yet, if the external reality of the physical realist is not necessarily identical to the one that forms the content of our experience, then it is not the one that forms the content of our experience in the actual world (since identity in the actual world implies identity in any possible world).[17]

The realist must still see psychophysical laws as the way in which his external world, believed in on faith or an IBE inference, projects itself on to the human empirical viewpoint and so makes epistemic contact with the dependent levels of physical reality that we have described. But rather than viewing these in the straightforward manner that this pattern of discovery suggests, he will see the lines of epistemic and ontological dependence running in reverse directions. The idealist sees them as running in the same direction, in accordance with the PAFD, and the phenomenological and cognitive syntheses described above by which the physical world of experience is constructed. The status of psychophysical laws takes a different complexion on these contrasting positions, but only one of them is consistent.

What makes the realist particularly vulnerable to the charge of incoherence is something that follows from the limited scope of empirical theory, in combination with the IPLL thesis. Our physical concepts and language are not only required to make perceptual-causal contact with the physical objects and properties they are about, they also are required to serve the needs of scientific theorizing. And science is an enterprise whose whole methodology consists of observational tests, observational predictions, and structural explanations that are typically abstract and become meaningful only by standing in logical relations with the observable. Science requires that its claims have empirical relevance. Any claim about the unobservable must, through some chain of derivations, stand in a formally logical

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[16] Or at least objects would be included in this list barring the space-selective version of realism considered above.
[17] Foster (1982) has drawn attention to the particularly sharp way in which this indispensability problem manifests itself in connection with the realist conception of space (which as a space must have its geometry essentially, but as *our* physical space must physical geometry contingently, a claim he calls 'the nomological thesis').

relation to a proposition about the observable. The realist thus becomes torn between two incompatible claims about the world that is the object of empirical theorizing: on the one hand that, per physical realism, it has its psychophysical laws contingently; and on the other hand, per the IPLL thesis, that is has them essentially. In regard to space, and therefore its occupants, the realist must insist that physical space has its geometry essentially (as does any space) while also maintaining, per the IPLL thesis and the nature of empirical theory, that it has its geometry contingently, as whatever geometry is nomologically selected by an ultimate set of laws, including either as consequences or primitive members the psychophysical laws by which the regularities of human sensory experience are selected.[18] The problem for the realist, in regard to physical space and the greater physical world, is that the stricture of his realism precludes him from recognizing that the sensory origins of empirical theory together with its epistemically limited scope requires that the physical world possess modal properties that track the modal properties of the sensory organization rather than the modal properties of a fundamental and mind-independent reality. Because of the way in which it identifies this parity of modalities, among the sensory and physical, the IPLL thesis helps articulate this problem in a manner especially acute. Without taking into account the essential relation with experiential effects and thus the way in which we actually experience space or the greater physical world of which it forms a part, the realist has no way to account even for an inferential epistemic relation between experience and our conceptual constructions, notional or scientific, regarding physical space or the physical world. This undermines the justificatory account of how the postulates of empirical theory should be given a metaphysically realist construal. Prior to experience and theorizing in response to it, there is no independently conspicuous way to understand what the intrinsic nature of the physical world is or how it could be conceived.

The situation might be different if the realist could insist that we have, or at least could look forward to having, some transparent conception of space and its occupants in non-sensory but still concrete terms, a conception that would allow us to conceive of it as *the kind of thing* for which a distance metric is necessary for its identity and yet for which causing a certain pattern of experiential effects is merely contingent to its identity. We might think that we have such a conception of space, but this is due to the fact that we so frequently operate in the everyday mindset, in which we assume that color, tactuo-somatic extension, kinaesthetic freedom and resistance, and egocentric orientation genuinely characterize the same space that features in the mathematical hypotheses of modern physics and that is causally responsible, together with its occupants, for the pattern of our experiential effects. In other words, we tend to assume that the sensible appearance of space is ultimately and mind-independently realized. That is,

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[18] Even if one thinks that space is essentially relational, with dimension and metric as its invariants, distance at least is nomologically selected, and indeed by those laws which refer to experiential effects; all told, the physically relevant geometry is the one that comes closest to achieving nomological uniformity, or constant nomological relevance of each distance relation over all pairs of points for which it obtains. See Foster (1982, pp.130-75).

our everyday intuitions support the suggestion that we can transparently conceive of a substantival space precisely because our everyday intuitions tend in the direction of physical realism. But once we critically reflect on these assumptions and recognize them as unfounded, we are forced to recognize that all of the qualities by which we transparently conceive of space are sensory qualities, whose realizations are confined to the mind. Another candidate option might be the abstract geometric properties of space. But being abstract, they tell us nothing about how such a thing is capable of being a medium for material occupancy in the concrete way that we experience occupancy immanently within the content of our sensations. The geometric characterization is therefore opaque and of no help in forming the kind of transparent conception that the realist would need. Finally the realist might try to appeal to the more theoretically refined qualities of particle mass, charge, or spin which may seem to be intrinsic characterizations of matter, and then claim that space is the kind of thing that serves as medium for occupancy for such intrinsically characterized matter. The idea here would be that even though such a description of space on its own would be opaque, when combined with the characterization of matter in the explanatorily primitive terms of scientific theory it becomes indirectly transparent. The problem with this suggestion, however, is that on closer scrutiny the properties attributed to matter by scientific theory are either interpretive place-holders for abstract mathematical properties or properties that characterize matter in purely relational or dispositional terms or both. In the case of mass, for example, while superficially intrinsic, it is strictly defined as that property, whatever it is, by which material objects attract other massive objects in accordance with the Law of Universal Gravitation.[19]

VII.5   Realism and Idealist Theology of Visible Creation

The realist's position is incoherent because he has no way, while insisting on his realism, to explain how we make perceptual contact with physical items, realistically construed. Without doing this he has no credible way to explain how we make epistemic contact with them. The idealist, as we have seen, has a coherent way to account for this. The realist's account of perception would proceed by abandoning the confinement thesis and allowing sensible qualities to be ultimately realized outside of sensory experience. But then, within the framework of realism, this would be to give up on explaining the empirically discovered causal facts about how sensory experience is produced in a way that allows us to attribute a causally productive role to the sensible qualities perceived (a position we called[20] 'phenomenalist direct realism'). Alternatively the realist could accept that the immediate objects of sensory awareness are confined for their ultimate realization to sensations, but insist that we still have

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[19] A similar analysis applies to the other examples—charge is a disposition to attract or repel other charged particles, in accord with the mathematically described Coulomb force, and so on.
[20] VI.4.

epistemic access, however opaque, to an ultimate physical reality through an IBE inference, as that causally potent structure that controls the course of our sensory experience, so that the order of the latter reflects at least some structural features of the order of the former (indirect or representative realism). There are also hybrid versions of the two.[21]

As noted, the realist's best argument will begin by pointing to the fact that the orderliness of sensory experience is not self-explanatory, for one thing because the order itself is only specifiable in the conceptually independent terms of physical theory, as "the kind of order that *would be* imposed by a world that was *ultimately* realized in the way the terms of our physical theory are actually *sensorily realized*". Secondly, the realist will insist, quite correctly, that the orderliness exhibited by sensory experience is too great, too much a deviation from the expectations of a random distribution of qualia, not to require an explanation. And since the explanation of the orderliness cannot come from the experiential realm itself, the only (*sic*) and therefore putatively best alternative is to construe the terms of physical theory or scientific theory or some combination of both in a metaphysically realistic way, so that we ought to commit ourselves not just to the (however indispensable) descriptive adequacy of empirical theory but to its ultimate metaphysical truth, to an ultimate non-mental world

As we have now shown, it is claiming the physical world to be ontologically basic and independent of the human mind that puts the realist in the difficult theoretical position of explaining how the physical world, construed as thus ultimate and independent, contributes to the character and regularity of human sensory experience. Naively or pre-philosophically we tend to assume that the causal properties by which physical objects effect our experiences are intimately related to the sensory qualities by which they are presented to us within the content of those experiences, so that the objects are stamping or *impressing* their own character on us via the perceptual experiences that they cause. This would mean that the physical objects and properties, together with the psychophysical laws under which they causally influence our experience, are what logically sustain the order and character of those experiences (this in turn would give reductive physicalism about the mental an air of plausibility). But our anti-realist argument shows that these assumptions, when critically evaluated, prove to be incoherent. The idealist, however, is quick to point out that a certain (reversed) structural analogy suggests a more fruitful explanatory approach. Insofar as empirical theory is epistemically limited to functional structure and prescinds from intrinsic content but is constructed on the basis of ordinary sense experience, why not regard the existence and identity of physical items as nomologically selected by purely phenomenological laws? After all, if the intrinsic nature and internal organization of what is logically mind-independent are only relevant to empirical theory in virtue of imposing appropriate constraints on our experience—the

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[21] Here we are more or less retracing the dialectical stages of the realist Hylas' response the critique of Philonous, the idealist in Berkeley's *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous.*

constraints that yield the systematic course of actual and potential experience from which we construct our knowledge of the physical world—then we are free to explain these causal constraints by any contingent nomological framework that logically entails them. This is the option we shall explore.

Curiously, idealism can be understood to rescue realism in this regard, salvaging part of what lends it its intuitive plausibility. Realism seeks to justify the conceptual autonomy and singularity of physical theory as the only empirically adequate way of interpreting the thematic regularities of our sensory experiences. But realism's effort undermines the empirical immanence of the physical world. For all its conceptual autonomy and theoretical expediency, physical theory never ceases to be a way of interpreting something ultimately nonphysical, viz., our human sensory experiences. Thus, when it is metaphysically theorized to the point of putatively providing an ultimate explanation of the sensory regularities it is forced to misidentify the *real* physical world with something possessing a mind-independent and logically basic existence which is, thereof, no longer permitted to terminate in the features of sensory experience in the description of its intrinsic and categorical content. The physical world never ceases to be a logico-theoretical construction *about* the regularities of experience. Being subordinate to the ends of human observers, its ontological status remains bound by the limits of accessibility to the human empirical perspective. At the same time, the descriptive resources of physical theory strictly outrun those that are available at the phenomenological level, and do so, crucially, by presupposing the effects of imaginatively projecting the qualities of experience in inexhaustibly complex ways, and thus building into themselves conceptual commitments to publically objective times, places, entities and events. But this conceptual autonomy should never be mistaken for ontological independence and fundamentality. Yet with no explanatory alternative this is exactly what happens in practice. The physical world is expanded into an ultimate external realm that includes the experiential realm. This is the intuitively compelling viewpoint of physical realism. It takes the physical world to be enclosed within itself. This is what makes it so congenial to metaphysical naturalism and so incongruous with traditional Christian theism.

Careful philosophical reflection shows that physical realism, while intuitively compelling on its face, is in the final analysis self-undermining. But it is here that Christian idealism comes to the rescue of physical realism. Christian idealism can do justice to the conceptual autonomy of physical theory and its commitments to a public and historical world of objective facts and forecasts without having to divorce them from their ontological intimacy with experience. Without compromising the world's empirical immanence, idealism can say that the analytically irreducible complexity of the physical world described in its own objective terms is, not the way ultimate reality *is*, but merely the irreducibly complex way that sensory experience is organized. Given that such a reality is what gets presented at the human empirical viewpoint, the idealist takes physical theory to be ultimately only the best description of the way in which

experience is orderly and systematic. It is organized *as if* such a physical theory *were* as the realist imagines. But it is only thus appropriately descriptive because God in his wisdom and providence has systematically ordered human experience in this physically described way, precisely because it is just such a world that he intends to create for us by decreeing that experiences conform to this world-suggestive pattern.

This way of construing the relationship between a physical theory that internally presupposes that experiences are as if realism were true and a sensory organization that logically sustains it is something we have already come to accept in connection with Berkeley's Principle of Autonomous Fields of Discourse, which was applied most recently in accounting for physical causation within the context of an idealist perceptual theory.[22] The principle was motivated by the need to account for the relative structure among different domains of explanatory discourse, those that are conceptually autonomous but which stand to each other in metaphysically determinative relations. In particular we accepted that the truth of descriptive natural science was delimited by the truth of metaphysics, just as the truth of theoretical natural science was in turn delimited by descriptive natural science, and further that the domains were internally nested so that what are regarded as causes within the delimited domain are regarded as effects within the proximally delimiting domain. Regarding the empirical domain not only metaphysically but *theologically*, as the visible creation, application of the PAFD corresponds to the distinction between the *diastasis* and the *odos*, between visible creation viewed from the ultimate or external *perspective in which it is understood to be created* and creation viewed from the epistemically original or internal *perspective of that which is created.*[23]

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[22] VI.4.

[23] These two perspectives are not to be confused with the notions of *creatio originalis* and *creatio continua*. Both are properly theological notions that are as such creation-external, being relevant to the explanatory domain of Christian metaphysics. *Creatio continua* must not be confused with what is pursued in the discursive framework relevant to the creation-internal perspective, such as theories of evolutionary biology or other empirical theories, e.g., when Jurgen Moltmann states "This means the theory of evolution has its place where theology talks about continuous creation…" in *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (ET London: TCM, 1985), as reprinted in *Problems in Theology* I, p.196. If we are trying to understand what God creates, then empirical theory, the theory we take up within the internal perspective of what is created, *is* relevant to addressing this question. But when we address this question we are not addressing ourselves to how God creates, and we are not taking up the perspective and discursive framework relevant to inquiring after *creatio continua*. The distinction needed to understand *creatio continua* is not between one or another kind of empirical theory, even between natural science and a sophisticated, humanistic social or historical theory. The relevant distinction is between empirical and transcendental perspectives of creation itself *in toto*.

Chapter VIII: The Ultimate Reality as a Community of Minds

VIII.1   Introduction

Recall that positively the idealist claims that physical facts and entities are constituted by mental facts; negatively he claims that physical realism is incoherent. My goal has been to argue persuasively that the negative claim is true, that the positive claim is offers a coherent answer to a dogmatic question of traditional Christian theism: how is God's creation productively ordered?. The negative claim involved several stages. First we noted the conceptual difficulty surrounding the realist's burden of accounting for the fact of perceptual contact with physical items in a way that is phenomenologically and causally appropriate. Given the confinement of qualia and their irrelevance to scientific explanations of perceptual causation, it is difficult to conceive of how conscious awareness of qualia can enable perceptual access to physical items construed as mind-independent and ontologically basic. Further pressure was applied to this difficulty by highlighting the epistemic limits of empirical theory from which physical realism makes its hypostasizing ontological leap. Finally these difficulties were brought to a head by noting the incompatibility of realism with the IPLL thesis. Altogether we concluded that realism is incoherent.

Our sketch of the logical construction of the physical world via the synthesis of qualia, prompting the interpretive empirical theories of the notional and scientific levels of physical reality, accomplished half of the task of showing the coherence of the idealist thesis. The sensory regularities together with the human psychological endowment are sufficient to logically create the physical world. But the sensory regularities themselves call for explanation. With the incoherence of the realist strategy of taking these regularities to be causally controlled by the same physical world they sustain, the idealist is now dialectically free to entertain spiritual and indeed theological explanatory hypotheses. What is needed is a way of understanding how there might be a prephysical nomological framework within which human sensory experience is organized. This requires an ontology of human minds as ontologically basic subjects, a prephysical temporal dimension, a source (or sources) of non-human rational, spiritual agency, and a systematic way of ensuring that individual human experiences are collectively organized in a way that is intentionally guaranteed to be harmonious. It will be the purpose of this chapter to show how there could be a prephysical nomological framework composed in this way.

Idealists and realists agree that our experiences are organized in a distinct manner—marked by the "constancy and coherence" highlighted by Berkeley and Hume—a way that not only differs from a random distribution but one which renders them systematically and conspicuously amenable to physical interpretation, in terms of the regularity both of the thematic character within and the sequential relations

between episodes of sensory experience. These were the regularities exploited in the syntheses that we used to demonstrate how the notional physical world, and by extension the scientific physical world, were logically created by facts about these sensory regularities. As we noted, however, the realist offers an alternative explanation of the sensory regularities. He will say that they are causally controlled by objects and properties that are the reification of features of the descriptive scientific theory. viz., that the sensory regularities give us an IBE inference to a realist interpretation of the scientific physical theory. By contrast, the idealist will say the sensory regularities that logically sustain the physical ones are themselves causally controlled and logically sustained by facts of a nonphysical—in fact, mental—kind. We recognized that physical theory is epistemically limited to relational structure, consisting of ascriptions of causal-functional profiles to physical items that only terminate in transparent descriptions of intrinsic content when referring to abstract mathematical features or the qualitative content of sensory experience. This means that there is an explanatory asymmetry between empirical regularities and the regularities of sensory experience: the latter may be understood (retrospectively) to entail the former as logical consequences, whereas the converse relation does not hold. When it is the facts of sensory regularity that logically sustain the physical regularities, it is viciously circular to see these as grounded in turn by physical ones, even if they are from a physical order on a different compositional scale; even the spatiality of the physical is one more regular feature logically sustained by the sensory facts.

The IPLL thesis helped to bring this point into focus. Since the facts described by physical theory are an interpretation of the sensory regularities that prompt it, physical facts are logically sustained by the sensory regularities; and so the identity of physical theory's subject matter remains bound by that logical connection. By reason of the way in which it is logically constructed from its phenomenological base, the physical world inherits the modal properties of the immanent world of the human empirical perspective, not the (quite different) modal properties of the abstract putative "world" that is the reification of scientific theory. Whereas the latter could be, the physical world that is the subject of our empirical theorizing could not be the world that it is if human sensory experience were organized differently or not at all. One way to state this lesson is to say that we must account for the special, nonrandom distribution of qualia over minds and times as an order of natural necessity that is metaphysically prior to the physical order of necessity.

VIII.2   Christian Theism and the Problem of Creative Laws

To explain this order requires appeal to facts of a nonphysical kind. The order in question would require knowledge and causal power with respect to the mind. This leads to the hypothesis of supernatural mental agency, and it is at this stage that theism and Christian doctrine explicitly enter into our

explanatory discourse. The Judeo-Christian God is one who is supreme in the perfections of knowledge and power. He is an almighty Spirit, the Father *immensae maiestatis*, and is said to possess an eternal Wisdom, with Whom He creates the world[1] that would otherwise have no existence.[2] In the New Testament this hidden wisdom is moreover preached to have been ordained by God "before the world began, unto our glory" (1 Cor 2:12), and identified with the mystery of Christ, in whom the pre-ordained creative plan is revealed and brought to fulfillment. The Christian God is therefore appropriately attributed and positioned with respect to human minds to act as their maker and governor, to issue wisely intentioned creative ordinances that take their effect in the organization of human experience for the purpose of creating a world for us, forming us "unto our glory". Following the same Nyssan, Dionysian, and Berkeleyan vision that we have traced in the early chapters, the theologian Louis Bouyer puts it thus: the nomic regularities of the cosmos are linguistic, depending on "a personal God who remains absolutely transcendent and who therefore, in his activity *ad extra*, his creative activity, *can combine contingency and rationality*".[3]

The Christian God is uniquely well-suited to play the role of guaranteeing the (contingent) nomic necessity of the phenomenological laws of creation posited by idealism. The question now is, how are we to imagine that God uses the phenomenological laws in the genuinely creative way that idealism describes? There is an important sense in which the same question arises for any theistic account of God's world-creative activity that accords a creative role to fundamental laws of any sort, even ultimate laws of nature, as would be envisaged by the physical realist. If there are any basic nomological facts, then, certainly for a theist, they nevertheless must be contingent along with the whole of creation itself, something that need not exist but does in virtue of God's free creative activity. But it is also of the nature of laws, as opposed to merely accidental patterns, that they impose regularities on things within the world. While leaving open the specific ways in which things and events must conform to them, laws constrain the possible courses of events, and are such *creative*. Thus the challenge for the Christian theist is to understand divine creation in such a way that provides for the world-internally constraining and so creative aspect of the laws themselves.

The challenge is to find a way in which God creates a world that not only happens to conform to the sorts of laws posited by empirical theory (or our best-confirmed empirical theories, whatever these happen to be), but a way in which God creates the world so that the laws themselves play a creative role. This is important for (at least) two reasons. First, as mentioned, only if the laws are creative in the sense that they impose constraints on the physical universe's possible courses of development do laws even

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[1] Prv 8:22-23.
[2] Job 26:7, 2 Macc 7:28, Rom 4:17.
[3] Bouyer, *Cosmos*, p.111, emphasis is mine. Bouyer credits Whitehead and Collingwood with first having this insight into the history of science, and Duhem and Jaki for developing it.

exist as such. A universe that merely happens to instantiate a pattern that conforms to a generalized description is not thereof governed by a law; and a law that does not govern is no law at all. Laws must exert the force of non-absolute or world-internal nomic necessity on wordly things and events. Second, only if there are genuine laws that are operative in this constraining way is it the case that items in the world possess dispositions and thus physical natures. The point is brought out by thinking of the physical causality possessed by physical continuants on the idealist theory of perception we developed in Ch.VI. In virtue of the sensory regularities, the physical continuants logically constructed from them (as illustrated by the syntheses of Ch.VII) could be attributed causal powers within the notional physical theory (and thus within the world-internal empirical perspective). By the PAFD, the attribution of these causal powers is relative to the empirical perspective and in particular to the notional physical theory, but nonetheless meaningful and apt for truth. The analysis we provided was in terms of the notion of 'influence', consisting in a chain of counterfactual dependence running from cause to effect. Even though there may be theories of causation that demand stronger conditions for causation, most popular theories will demand that counterfactual dependence be at least a necessary condition or a logical consequence of causation. Yet, given the epistemic limits of empirical theory, that it cannot deliver a conception of intrinsic physical content[4], without genuinely governing laws it is not clear what could sustain the truth of world-internal counterfactual claims of any sort, let alone the claims of counterfactual dependence necessary for a theory of physical causation. The explanatory challenge to account for dispositions within physical creation takes on an especially grave aspect in light of the reasoning of Ch.VII for the IPLL thesis. If there were no dispositions in nature, then there would be no dispositions to cause human experience and so, per the IPLL thesis, no physical world at all.

As noted by Foster[5], the theist does have the option, rather than seeing laws as causally powerful concrete entities in their own right[6]--which is incoherent as laws consist in facts about the non-strict necessity of certain regularities--of taking the laws to be constituted by the facts about God's intentional causal policies, policies to which God has committed in his supremely rational creativity. The problem with this suggestion is that this seems to eliminate facts about dispositions of things in the world rather than create them. We want to know in what sense can the abstract facts of natural necessity be understood to be dispositions *of things* rather than dispositions of God. On the view of physical realism, it would

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[4] As argued in VII.4.

[5] *The Divine Lawmaker* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.151-65.

[6] This is, in effect, the currently popular view that physically fundamental particles are no more than mobile spatially-located clusters of causal power—the so-called "powers thesis". See, e.g., Brian Ellis, *Scientific Essentialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Stephen Mumford, *Laws in Nature* (New York: Routledge, 2004), and Alexander Bird, *Nature's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). By treating physically fundamental properties as essentially dispositional, the thesis attempts to concretize abstract facts of causal necessitation.

seem that God either would have to create the laws as concrete entities, which is incoherent—for laws must generate nomic necessity within the world by causally constraining worldly states-of-affairs, and how else can we imagine that states-of-affairs are causally constrained?—or adopt a set of intentional causal policies that cover all of the relevant counterfactual cases, not of worldly states-of-affairs, but of his own creative decisions. What other options remain? If one gives up altogether on the existence of laws, in what meaningful sense does genuine natural necessity obtain in the world? Without such necessity in what sense is there a *rerum natura*, a course of nature? And without these, in what sense is there an objective physical world at all?

While any Christian theist must ensure that the world God creates is one genuinely governed by laws, so that certain actual and counterfactual states-of-affairs are world-internally guaranteed and objects may be attributed dispositional properties, the idealist has an especially attractive way in which to understand the creative role of laws. It is attractive because it does not require laws to be either facts about divine dispositions or concrete causally powerful entities. It can posit a prephysical nomological framework that causally constrains the world by causally constraining human sensory experience, in accord with the idealist thesis. Such a prephysical framework would involve a prephysical temporal dimension and a society of supernatural rational agents (together with the collection of human minds). This would be to accept the traditional and Biblical view that there is a hierarchical divine government in which ministering spirits are accorded "powers of nature". On the idealist view, the powers of nature would be executed in accord with laws that prescribe a plan for how human sensory consciousness is to be organized, in participation with the divine wisdom.

If God enacts these phenomenological laws alone then the order in which he decrees them would have to be regarded as a temporal one. The main reason for this is that on the idealist position, facts about physical regularities are constituted by facts about actual and possible human sensations; indeed, given our development of idealism, by facts about how qualia are to be nomologically distributed over minds at times. This means that the prephysical phenomenological laws of which the physical laws are constituted, the "laws of creation" as we labelled them, must be executed within a prephysical temporal medium and must be understood logically to create a prephysical order of time in which human minds are temporally related as a community.[7] If they really are to be laws, then they would have to satisfy the above characterization, causally constraining worldly states-of-affairs in a way that creates a genuine form of nomic necessity in the world. As stated above, if God acts in creation alone then the only way to make sense of laws is to think of them as derived from God's volitional policies—the idea the God commits to

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[7] The distinction between the prephysical temporal medium in which the laws are executed and the prephysical temporal relations among human minds that the laws create will be made clearer in the details below, as well the reason why the two must be isometrically related, or, more specifically, isomorphic with respect to their temporal order and distance relations.

certain policies of causal interaction with human minds. The laws would then be constituted by these facts about God. Dispositions of things in the world would then be understood as ultimately derived from God's own dispositions. On this view it is difficult to conceive a there being any genuine created *order,* any objectivity to the world that is not illusory. But there is an alternative view that does not collapse the created order. Instead, it takes the ultimate "laws of nature" to be the dynamic arrangement for intersubjective causation among created minds, their being brought together into a participatory society, a hierarchy, a liturgical assembly or *ecclesia*. The physical order and its internal "laws of nature" would then genuinely exist, only not as something ontologically ultimate but as derived from the lives of rational creatures in their causal interaction. This is the Christian idealist view that we have been working to develop and now aim to complete by specifying how there could be a system of ultimate, prephysical laws establishing a co-creative causal framework among created minds, what we have called the phenomenological laws of creation.

As noted, the idealist has not as yet had recourse to theological notions or to forms of supernatural agency. With some modifications, our development so far has made use of the phenomenalist constructions of the empiricist tradition of Berkeley, Hume, Mill, Russell, and Ayer. With Ayer in particular we have had entrée into the technical phenomenological resources of William James' "radical empiricism" and the American pragmatist tradition, most significantly, the recognition that certain relations (and in particular temporal relations) between sensed data are themselves sensed. By analogizing the temporal relation sensed within the duration of a sensation to a relation among sensations, in accordance with James' approach, we can understand how higher-order qualitative organization—that which is systematically world-like—may be logically constructed from phenomenological qualia. This invites us to consider the idealist metaphysical strategy of regarding the regularity characteristic of the physical world as logically created by the distribution of qualitative content over minds at times.

VIII.3   The Augustinian-Cartesian View of the Soul

Key to this metaphysical strategy is that our Berkeleyan version of idealism has from the beginning assumed a Cartesian view of the soul as an ontologically basic mental subject, which already makes it unlike all other versions of empiricism and naturally opens its ultimate ontology into the category of the mental or spiritual more comprehensively.

Unlike the physical realist, the idealist is required to adopt the Cartesian view of persons as primarily basic mental subjects and only secondarily as embodied. Since idealism accords all bodies, not just organismic ones a derivative ontological status, one logically sustained by mental facts, the explanatory strategy of his metaphysics requires him to accept that persons are primarily basic mental

subjects and enables him to say, in line with his more general thesis, that the embodied person, the organism, is a derivative subject. This is desirable for many reasons, not least of which is that it furnishes us with an ontology of basic mental subjects who, unlike organisms, may be coherently attributed with powers of agency and hence free will in the strong, libertarian sense. It also better accords with the view of the soul in the Old and New Testament, which emphasizes the prophecy of the resurrection and the more general potential for personal existence after death, though of course this will be debated.[8] The Cartesian view, which emphasizes the indivisibility and real distinctness of the soul from matter, is a Platonic view of the soul and its relation to its body, one that was crucial to the development of idealism from Platonism as we have traced it, in Plotinus, Nyssen, Augustine, and Dionysius.[9]

Taking the unity of the mind, or the mental subject, as foundational is a sound metaphysical strategy because the mind's unity, expressed as that which is accessible to a single center of introspective awareness, has such priority and transparency in the order of human knowledge. What could be better known to me or more intimately related to my essence as a human person than the fact that I am a single, unified center of mental power and activity, of thought, will, perception, and imagination? When I reflect on my own acts of conscious awareness, though I can form no objective image of my self, I aware of my mental act of image-framing, as I am of so many other mental acts, as one that belongs to *me*, that I engage in, voluntarily or not.

Consider Augustine's classic treatment of the issue in Book X of the *De Trinitate*. According to Augustine what he finds in careful reflection is that he is certain that he exists, is alive, and understands, and that he remembers and wills. By contrast, he is not certain that he is fire, air, or any material body. He reasons that if he can doubt his identity to a body but cannot doubt his power to remember, understand, and will (since even these are implicated in doubt), then his essence consists in the power that unifies these operations. Finally, he concludes, therefore, that he is not a body since a body has no such essence as this. In a similar line of reasoning he says that when he is thinking of a body a sense-image is used. But this is not so in those reflective cogitative acts whereby he is certain of his power of willing, understanding, and remembering. The latter are known in themselves.[10] They are examples of a type of thought having a special epistemic status, a point that Descartes takes up twelve hundred years later. Having deliberately, it seems, reproduced Augustine's reasoning on the nature of the soul[11] and its real distinctness from matter, Descartes expands the point concerning the special epistemic status of the soul's

[8] *Cf.* Is 14;9-11, 26:19, Ez 37:1, Dan 12:2 2 Macc 7:14, 23, Mt 10:28, Lk 20:36, 1 Cor 15:45, 2 Cor 5:1-8, 2 Tim 1:16-18, Phil 1:23, 1 Pet 3:19, Rev 5:8, 14:13.

[9] On also finds the view paired with metaphysical theories other than idealism, e.g., with those of Malebranche, Leibniz, and Kant. Though less pervasive in 20th century philosophy, the view is to be found in the thought of G.E. Moor, Husserl and the early to middle-period Sartre.

[10] I have summarized the argument that spans Book X, Chapters 10-12, Sections. 13-19.

[11] While leaving aside, it should be noted, Augustine view of the soul's operations and power of memory.

self-knowledge in occurent 'self thoughts'.[12] There are 'cogito-type' 'self thoughts' such "I think", "I exist", "I doubt", and so on, and there are 'ontological argument-type' 'God thoughts' such as "God exists" or "God necessarily exists", or "a supremely perfect being necessarily exists". They all have a special epistemic status in virtue of the way their content relates to the activity of the mind itself: it is not just that they are noninferential or that they are immediately known or warranted (not known or warranted on the basis of something else); they are in fact impossible to form falsely.[13] As for Augustine, so for Descartes the mind enjoys special powers and capacities for various operations, including cognition-relevant activities such as knowing, judging, and understanding. There is a kind of reflective unity and simplicity to these operations such that the soul's self-knowledge, and knowledge of itself as the kind of thing that is capable of these operations, is necessarily implicated in its use of these operations to know anything else.

> But nothing is at all rightly said to be known while its substance is not known. And therefore, when the mind knows itself, it knows its own substance; and when it is certain about itself, it as certain about its own substance. But it is certain about itself, as those things which are said above prove convincingly; although it is not at all certain whether itself is air, or fire, or some body, or some function of body. Therefore it is not any of these. And to that whole which is bidden to know itself, belongs this, that it is certain that it is not any of those things of which it is uncertain, and is certain that it is that only, which only it is certain that it is…..But if it were any one of them [something conceived through a sense-image], it would think this one in a different manner from the rest *viz*. not through an imaginary phantasy, as absent things are thought, which either themselves or some of like kind have been touched by the bodily sense; but by some inward, not feigned, but true presence (for nothing is more present to it than itself); just as it thinks that itself lives, and remembers, and understands, and wills. For it knows these things in itself. And if it attaches nothing to itself from the thought of these things, so as to think itself to be something of the kind, then whatsoever remains to it from itself that alone is itself.[14]

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[12] Principally in the *Meditations on First Philosophy* (see AT VII 78 for one version of the real distinctness argument). As the Letter to the Sorbonne and Synopsis published at the beginning of the work make clear, one of its main motivations is to convince contemporary "irreligious" intellectuals who are impressed with the method of geometric demonstration that the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are absolute certainties, equal at least to those of geometry.

[13] Note that this does not imply the stronger and dubious assertion that belief in these propositions is irresistible. Indeed resistance to such beliefs is a commonplace. It requires a disciplined, meditative direction of the mind to realize such insights about itself, its operations, and ideas.

[14] *De Trinitate*, X.10.16. Compare this insight with what Augustine says in the *Confessions*, VII.2, about his earlier failure to realize it: "I therefore being thus gross-hearted, nor clear even to myself, whatsoever was not stretched over certain spaces, nor diffused, nor crowded together, nor swelled out, or which did not or could not receive some of these dimensions, I judged to be altogether nothing. For over such forms as my eyes are wont to range did my

I should emphasize here that I am not making a simple or ahistorical comparison of Descartes and Augustine. Instead I am making the claim that Descartes found in Augustine's discipline of self-contemplation a mode of reasoning and doctrines that he accorded a certain value and deliberately reproduced. It is this discipline and these doctrines that I am interested in, namely those concerning the metaphysics of the human person as mentioned above: that a human person is an active spiritual substance or ontologically basic immaterial soul whose essence consists in mental activity, as discovered through meditative reflection on the unity and structure of the soul's mental operations. I am making no further claim made about their respective motivations, purposes, or points of emphasis, nor would I wish to. It is obvious enough that the Augustine and Descartes belong to very different contexts of intellectual culture historical circumstances, and that they had very different intellectual programs and wrote with very different purposes. And once again, I am not primarily engaged in an close exercise of historical exegesis but rather in establishing the value of certain ideas and insights by examining their function in actual historical cases. I am confident in making the limited interpretive claim I do on the basis of the evidence I cite and on the back of the substantial work that has already been done to establish that the reading is plausibly available.[15]

The Augustinian-Cartesian insight that sees in the singularity of subjective ownership over conscious experiences an image of the divine simplicity, freedom, reflective knowledge, and so ultimately of the personhood of the divine spiritual substance is rationally defensible on philosophical grounds and theologically corroborated by its systematic relations to other Christian doctrines as established in the tradition.[16] There is an introspectively discoverable essence or basic attribute of the mind that provides the subject with a transparent conception of her status as an ontologically basic existent, her *thisness*, and how, so characterized, she is the sort of thing for which her more specific psychological attributes, mental

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heart then range; *nor did I see that this same observation, by which I formed those same images, was not of this kind, and yet it could not have formed them had not itself been something great*." (emphasis mine)

[15] See Stephen Menn, *Descartes and Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), and Garreth B. Matthews, *Thought's Ego in Augustine and Descartes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). Matthews' study includes a comparison of the two thinkers on the Cogito and the nature of the mind, whereas Menn is more historically focused on Augustine and how and why Descartes used resources in Augustine the way he did. Menn directly challenges the conclusions of Gilson and Gouhier that Descartes' thought is radically anti-Augustinian. See Henri Gouhier, *La Pensée religieuse deDescartes*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Vrin,1972) and Etienne Gilson, "The Future of Augustinian Metaphysics," in *A Gilson Reader: Selected Writings of Etienne Gilson* (New York: Image Books, 1957). One outcome of Menn's study is the separation of otherwise confused issues: Descartes may be "anti-Augustinian" in his conception of the value of reason apart from grace or in how he conceives of the project of philosophy while at the same time reproducing Augustine's contemplative discipline and many of his doctrines.

[16] For good arguments in support of this position the reader is referred to Richard Swinburne's *The Evolution of the Soul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), John Foster's *The Immaterial Self: A Defence of the Cartesian Dualist Conception of the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), Geoffrey Madell, *The Identity of the Self* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), and Alvin Plantinga's "World and Essence" in his *Essays in the Metaphysics of Modality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). The latter in particular offers a more robust version for the argument for real distinctness found in Augustine and Descartes.

conditions, and temporally realized states and activities are just that, states owned by her as their underlying basic subject. To repeat a by now familiar point, there is no similarly transparent conception of the intrinsic essence of matter.[17] The closest such candidate would be matter's *determinacy of spatial position*, the fact of its occupying a determinate and contiguous region of space. And indeed this is the ordinary criterion or principle of individuation for physical particulars. The Berkeleyan idealist critique of spatial realism, however, has shown this conception to be either futilely opaque in virtue of the epistemic limitations of physical theories or one that reduces to facts about the constraints on and regularities among human sense experiences. It is the irreducible unity and simplicity of the mind as a spiritual substance or basic subject that allows for facts about what it experiences to logically sustain facts about the existence, identity, and persistence of physical items.

What determines the identity of experience is its intrinsic qualitative character, the time at which it occurs, and the subject to whom it occurs. Given that all of these can be fixed in ways that make no appeal to the physical, and given that the physical is either the empirically accessible or ontologically derivative of what is empirically accessible, the idealist's strategy of explaining the physical as something metaphysically reducible to the mental presents itself as a viable option. That the theoretical situation with respect to the physical is asymmetric—there is no analogous strategy for reducing the mental to the physical—makes it a first option. For this reason, a systematic theologian wishing better to understand what it means for God to create the world does well to consider the metaphysics of phenomenalistic idealism as a means for articulating the faith content of the doctrine of creation. In metaphysics we try to adopt a God's-eye perspective of the categories of existence. And if our best theory of metaphysics tells us that the existence of physical items and facts is logically sustained by the organization of human sensory experience, then this provides the systematic theologian with an opportunity for clarifying the mystery of creation[18], of what it means to believe that God creates all things visible and invisible, right now, from nothing, through word and wisdom.

VIII.4 The Logical Construction of Time

This explanatory-theoretical option is uniquely available to the idealist. The realist must suppose the world to be an ontologically fundamental, mind-independent reality whose existence and character we infer from the content of our minds. We saw that this position makes our very perceptual access to the physical world problematic in light of the phenomenological and scientific facts about perception. And we also saw that realism is incompatible with the IPLL thesis, the claim that whatever the physical world

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[17] And here of course the idealist breaks with the Cartesian philosophy quite decisively.

[18] Not to be read as dissolving the mystery, but as clarifying it *as mystery*.

is it must be *our* world, that it could not be the world it is if it were not manifest at our human empirical viewpoint in the nomologically characterized way of our actual experiences. Realism is inconsistent with this thesis because it (mis)identifies the physical world with something that, in being fundamental and mind-independent, would have different modal properties from the actual empirical world. Whereas it can only be accidental to a realist physical world that it has any connection with human experience, it is essential to the actual physical world that it does so. Idealism internalizes this lesson by offering an account of sensory regularities as explanatorily prior to physical regularities, so that the order of empirical inquiry and determination runs in the same direction as the order of ontological priority. The idealist's logical constructions are intended to show how the beliefs of physical theory are a warranted and self-endorsing response to a sensory organization that already exhibits its own phenomenologically characterizable thematic regularities and order, which prompt the initial stages in physical theory construction.

The phenomenally temporal relations that served to synthesize space and its occupants—phenomenal coexistence, succession, overlap, and continuity—are the same ones that can be used to construct mental time and the temporal framework of phenomenological laws that determine the distribution of qualia and so encode the physical world. This insight serves to motivate the project of this section, to logically construct a conception of mental time that will serve the purposes of the idealist's explanatory strategy. However, it might be useful to begin by re-examining what the idealist means to propose by such a 'construction'. The following definition will be of service.

In general, by a 'logical construction of *X* (from *Y*)' I mean a definition of a system of concepts adequate for the specification of facts *Y*, such that either, (the *prospective* case) one could establish the constitution of *X* from *Y* given knowledge of the facts *Y* alone, or (the *retrospective* case) given an independent knowledge of the obtaining of *X*, one could establish the constitution of *X* from *Y*. Here I refer to the relation of fact constitution defined in the previous chapter, namely, that *X* holds in virtue of *Y* (its obtaining is through and by means of *Y*) and is nothing over and above *Y* (*Y*'s ontological mediation is exhaustive for *X*). In the retrospective case, the clause concerning 'independent knowledge of *X* is important and relates to what has been previously stressed in regard to retrospective logical creation, as opposed to any *a priori* or analytic reduction. If one only knows the facts *Y*, there may well be facts *X* that cannot be logically constructed from *Y*, without already and independently knowing of the obtaining of *X*. Once again, take our example of retrospective logical creation from within the physical realm. It may be that facts about the possession of color properties by physical objects are constituted by facts about microstructural properties of object surfaces, facts about the way these properties cause patterns of optical reflection, and facts about the way all of these factors in turn cause certain kinds of sensations in sighted

subjects.[19] But without independently knowing what colors are and the fact that they obtain from introspection of our own experiences, there would be no way to establish the existence of colors or the obtaining of facts of color possession by physical objects, no matter how much we know about the scientific facts.[20] Color possession by physical objects would not be definable, analytically reducible, or in any way conceptually derivative of the scientific facts, while still being retrospectively logically created by them.[21]

Having defined the notion of a logical construction in this general way, we should understand that the idealist proposes to offer a logical construction of mental time accordingly, from facts about phenomenal time and (prephysical) nomological facts, with the construction involving the positing of definitional schemes and concepts adequate for the specification of these facts. The mandate to provide an account of mental time is incurred by the idealist's claim that the physical world is constituted by nomological facts about the distribution of qualia over minds at times. The relevant notion of time in this metaphysical reduction obviously cannot appeal to facts about physical change or the measurement of physical time. But this does not mean the idealist must prescind from facts about phenomenal time or from prephysical nomological facts. We want to understand the nature of the temporal medium that minds "inhabit", the continuum in which mental states and acts are temporally arranged; and while this medium will be different from the time that we experience, it may well be logically constructible from it in part.

Recall that in the syntheses of our logical construction of things in space, we appealed to the phenomenological relations of coexistence (strict phenomenal co-consciousness), phenomenal succession, and suggestion. From these sensible relations among component sensations within a total sensation, we constructed analogous relations between total sensations themselves, including those of phenomenal overlap and continuity. Crucial to this strategy was the fact that sensations are temporally patterned, having a spread of durational awareness and a gestalt structure of (phenomenal) succession and (phenomenal) simultaneity. We then took the temporal and qualitative patterns that formed the content of sensory awareness to be constitutive of the physical world's core of intrinsic content, with the notional physical theory of 3-D continuants employing concepts that exploited our imaginative projections of actually sensed relations.

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[19] This example is taken from Foster, "In Defence of Phenomenalistic Idealism," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54 (1996): 509-29.

[20] This is the fact exploited in the so-called 'Knowledge Argument' against analytically reductive physicalism in Frank Jackson (1986), "What Mary Didn't Know," *Journal of Philosophy*, 85(6):291-5, and Feigl (1968), *in loc.cit.*,

[21] It is important to recognize here that we are considering the case of one kind of physical fact—color possession by a physical object—being retrospectively logically created and so in particular being constituted by other kinds of physical and psychophysical facts—about surface microstructure, optical and physiological conditions. This should not be confused with a putative case in which a mental fact—say the existence of color as a quale or sensory type— were putatively constituted by physical facts, a possibility that the idealist will deny. Indeed the very consideration above in regard to physical color is an *a posteriori* consideration against any such possibility: physical color ascription is in part constituted by facts about actual and potential color sensations.

What we must now do is show that we can follow this same strategy, using the same phenomenological 'building blocks and mortar', to construct a conception of (prephysical) mental time. We can use the same concepts of phenomenal coexistence, succession, overlap, and continuity. The first step will be to show that we can construct a notion of mental time for a given subject using phenomenal concepts and nomological facts about how individual sensations are caused. The second step is to show how individual temporal dimensions can be harmoniously arranged to form a communal mental time by appealing to nomological facts about intersubjective mental causation. As none of the facts and concepts are physical, we will have achieved the goal of logically constructing a temporal medium in which the ultimate laws of creation may be enacted among mental subjects.

The details of my exposition closely follow those of Foster[22], whose ideas were a development of the theory of temporal consciousness such as one finds it in James, Husserl, and C.D. Broad. Husserl and Broad recognized that the 'pulse theory' of A. N. Whitehead and the early James was inadequate in relying solely on memory together with the temporal patterns within experiences to establish a subjective temporal order among experiences. Their solution—the "two-dimensional model" of temporal consciousness—eliminated the role of memory in favor of variable quality of experienced 'presentness' attending the temporally presented qualia themselves. Being variable in intensity, the differences in this quality are supposed to create the impression of temporal flow within a stream of consciousness. But this impression is an illusion because, while each experience may possess a different degree of presentness within its content and so retain a different residue of content, there is still no phenomenal bonding between the end of one sensation and the beginning of the one that is supposed to follow it on the two-dimensional model. Given this inadequacy, Foster's pivotal insight was to recognize that the conscious act of phenomenal awareness not only takes in a temporal spread of qualitative content—the 'specious present' in which, say, a C-note is heard to be followed by a D-note in the beginning of a tonic C scale— it is itself of some durational extent[23]; and this extent, however it is to be unitized, will be proportional to the extent of the temporal pattern sensed, the phenomenal time presented to the subject in the act of sensory awareness.[24]

We have defined sensory qualia as self-revealing determinate sensation types and therefore sensations as instances or realizations of qualia. We noted that these may be *S*-modal for any sense modality *S* or transmodal for any two or more sense-modalities, e.g., the qualia realized in tactuo-visual sensations. In either case, sensations may be component sensations or they may be total sensations in which case there is no larger sensation of which they are a component. A sensation *s* is a component of a

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[22] John Foster (1982, pp.254-272).

[23] We presupposed this hypothesis in our definitions of phenomenal overlap and continuity.

[24] See Barry Dainton, *Time and Space* (Chesham: Acumen, 2001), Ch. 7, for a good introduction to the development of theories of temporal consciousness that I have just summarized.

sensation *t* when *t* is the realization of a single temporally patterned quale that includes within its sensible structure the sensory type that is the quale of which *s* is a realization.

Once we acknowledge that episodes of sensory awareness are not literally momentary or temporally punctal but that they take in a temporal spread of phenomenon, then we are also acknowledging that the temporal pattern, the time-field, realized by a total sensation will have some determinate unity (of apperception), some fixed durational extent, within which every component sensation is phenomenally coexistent with every other component sensation, being strictly co-conscious, susceptible of joint attention, jointly accessible to a single introspective act. But the temporal pattern realized in the sensation is one thing and the time in which the sensation is realized is another. The temporal pattern presented to the subject as an object of awareness is an instance of *phenomenal* time, a species of sensory qualia similar in kind to other types of *S*-modal sensation, a way of 'being sensible appeared to', so that just as we are sensibly presented with visual, auditory, and somatic qualia, so too are we presented with temporal qualia. This was assumed in our syntheses when we introduced the notion of phenomenal succession, which involves the presentation of qualities over a temporal spread, that is, qualities as being temporally successive of each other within a single act of awareness.[25] What we are now interested in is not this phenomenal time as such, but the *mental* time in which sensations themselves occur, the temporal medium of the mind in which the sensations are arranged in order and distance, not the times of which we are aware but the time in which the acts of awareness are played out.

Let us return to one of our familiar examples. We supposed that when I hear a diatonic C scale, C-D-E-F-G-A, my hearing of the scale consists of the series of total auditory sensations (A_1, …, A_6), each of which consists of two notes of some temporal duration ordered by phenomenal succession, so that

$$A_1 = C > D, A_2 = D > E, …, A_6 = G > A$$

where, again, 'C > D' is to be read 'C followed by D'. The temporal patterns of the qualia that the sensations realize will have some determinate durational extent which will be a function of the extent and number of the temporal subpatterns of its component sensations, in this case the sensations of two notes.[26] Though in reality they need not be, let us suppose for simplicity of exposition that the notes have a constant temporal period, call it φ (for 'phenomenal time'). Then each auditory sensation A_1,…, A_6 would be a realization of a time pattern of 2 units of φ. Now as states of an underlying basic mental subject the

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[25] As in our examples of the visual experience of a flight of a bird, or the auditory experience of a scale or melody.
[26] Here in our example we are ignoring any contribution from silence, but silence, as well as the 'internal' (self-) awareness of our own mental activity is temporally patterned. This was something Augustine noticed in the *Confessions* (XI.20, 26-27) and was an important reason for his rejection of the Aristotelian realist view of time as a function of physical change in favor of a phenomenalistic view. Time, for Augustine, is a threefold present constituted by the *distentio* of the mind, the durational 'stretching' of the mind as consciously experienced.

series of sensations $A_1, ..., A_6$ would themselves be realized within a dimension of time—subjective mental time—in which they would have their own durational extent measured by some corresponding unit, say μ (for 'mental time').

We can use the facts of phenomenal overlap and continuity to define order and distance in mental time for any sensations so related. We say that a *stream* of experience is a maximal series of phenomenally continuous sensations, or a largest collection of sensations such that any two are phenomenally continuous. A stream of experience thus corresponds to our everyday notion of a period of waking consciousness, uninterrupted by unconsciousness or dreamless sleep. We can define mental time within a stream by saying that: For any two sensations S_1 and S_2, S_1 is *streamally earlier* than S_2 if and only if the two are phenomenally continuous, with S_1 the first and S_2 the last of some series of phenomenally overlapping sensations.

The internal, phenomenal temporal order thus determines by extrapolation the order of mental time within a stream. We can measure the temporal distance of a stream or substream, *streamal distance*, by defining it to be the sum of the mental time measures μ of each its member sensations minus the sum of the periods of overlap for each phenomenally overlapping pair of member sensations. So in our example above, the temporal distance of the series $A(1), ..., A(6)$ would be $6(μ) – 5(φ) = 6(μ) – 5/2(μ) = 7/2(μ)$.

Now that we have defined mental time for streams and substreams of experience by defining temporal ordering and temporal distance relations for them, we need to extend the definition to cover cases where sensations of the same mental subject fall within different streams, being separated by periods of unconsciousness. The fact that sensations are states of an underlying basic mental subject means that even sensations that are not co-streamal have the potential for being co-streamal relative to the system of laws that govern the organization of human sensations. We can appeal to this fact in constructing mental time within an individual subject's mental biography.

Having already defined phenomenal continuity and mental time for a stream of experience, we can define the closely related notion of one series of sensations being a continuation of another, i.e., of co-streamality: a series of total sensations *y* is a *continuation* of a series of total sensation *x* just in case every total sensation in *x* is earlier than every total sensation in *y*, and every total sensation that overlaps with any but the first sensation in *x* or the last sensation in *y* is itself included in the series *x* or the series *y*; i.e., *x* and *y* are adjacent substreams within a single stream or co-streamal. Having defined co-streamality, or what it means for one substream to be the continuation of another, we can introduce the notion of potential or nomologically possible co-streamality in a straightforward way: a series of total sensations *y* is a *nomologically possible continuation* of a series of total sensations *x* if and only if, for some distance μ

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it is nomologically necessary that, if y were to remain the same and x were to have some continuation z of length μ, then y would be a continuation of z. Finally, we can define subjective time in the following way:

Definition of Subjective Mental Time. For any two sensations S_1 and S_2, S_1 is *subjectively earlier than* S_2 if and only if it is streamally earlier than S_2, in which case the *subjective temporal distance* between them is the streamal distance of the substream between them, or S_2 belongs to a stream y that is a nomologically possible continuation of the stream x to which S_1 belongs, in which case the subjective temporal distance between them will be the streamal distance of the substream between them in the nomologically possible case in which y is a continuation of x.[27]

The definitions of this constructive apparatus are quite straightforward and intuitive. Consider the case of a basic mental subject, Archibald MacLeish. In the course of a Sunday evening, MacLeish eats dinner, repairs to the lounge for a drink of whiskey, reads a chapter of a novel, then goes to bed. After a night of dreamless sleep, he awakes on Monday morning to the sound of his alarm clock, goes downstairs to his study and begins writing. There will be a stream of experience in his mental biography that will include the gustatory sensations of his Sunday dinner followed by the postprandial whiskey, the visual sensations of the printed page, along with various other occurrent thoughts or flights of fancy, terminating in, say, the sound of the wind rapping against the bedroom window. Now there is another stream in MacLeish's mental biography that begins with an auditory sensation of the sound of an alarm clock ringing, and so on. Does this stream, call it y, come before or after the stream previously described, call it x, the one terminating in the auditory sensation of the tapping? Our intuitions tell us that y must come after x. After all, is it not obvious from the description? But here we must be careful. Even though our intuitions lead us to the correct answer, they do so by relying on the descriptive information that was specified in the terms of our notional physical theory, in particular our ordinary notional theory of physical time, measured by clocks and calendars. Our intuitions are based on the knowledge that Sunday evening comes before Monday morning. But of course, in line with the broad idealist explanatory strategy and the PAFD, our definition of one sensation being subjectively earlier than another does not rely on such physical notions. Based on our definition of subjective temporal ordering, what makes it the case that x comes before y is that, relative to some (as yet unspecified) system of prephysical causal laws, y is a possible continuation of x in virtue of the fact that, if y had remained the same then it would have been a continuation of any continuation of x having some fixed streamal distance. In other words, if (however implausibly) y had remained a fixed stream in his mental biography and if Macleish had not gone to bed

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[27] That is, more precisely, the streamal distance between S_1 and S_2 will be the sum of: the streamal distance from S_1 to the end of (the last non-overlapping component sensation of) x, the streamal distance of the hypothetically intervening stream z that is a continuation of x and that is in turn continued by y, and the streamal distance from the beginning of (the first non-overlapping component sensation of) y to S_2.

when he did, after reading his novel, but had instead lied awake in bed listening to the sounds of the phonograph, then stream *x* would have been continued by a substream consisting of auditory sensations of the recorded music, which would in turn have been continued by the first sensation of *y,* MacLeish's auditory sensation of the alarm clock. Even if his wife or anybody else had a stream of experience beginning with an auditory sensation of an alarm clock, even one realizing exactly the same quale, such a stream would not be a continuation of any of MacLeish's conscious streams. Such is the unitive power of the mind as a basic mental subject. MacLeish's conscious streams are joinable or nomologically possibly continuable in way his and his wife's are not.

We have now defined subjective mental time, or what it means for any two consubjective (that is, both belonging to the same basic subject) sensations to belong to a single temporal dimension. But what about sensations belonging to different subjects? If we can define a temporal ordering and distance relation for these which, like our definition of subjective mental time, made no appeal to physical concepts, then we will be able to construct an intersubjective mental time appropriate for understanding the temporal conditions of the idealist's prephysical nomological framework, the posited system of harmoniously coordinated causal constraints on human sensations in which the laws of creation are enacted.

The first thing to notice at this stage is that although we have defined a subjective temporal ordering only with respect to sensations, these can easily be extended to cover all phenomenally conscious episodes. We can think of subjective mental time as a temporal dimension, an ordered continuum (without endpoints) whose points (or moments) are the positions of actual and (nomologically) possible sensations. Then all we have to do is say that any conscious state *c* occurs at a moment *m* in the subjective time dimension just in case there is an actual or nomologically possible sensation *s* at *m* that is or would be phenomenally co-existent with *c*.[28]

Intersubjective Causation

Defining subjective mental time not only for sensations but for all phenomenally conscious mental episodes allows us robustly to speak, as we did informally in the last example, of the temporal ordering of states such as volitions, emotions, passions, moral and aesthetic sentiments, thoughts, musings, and generally all that we take to be part of our inner lives and personal identity. In particular, we can now speak of the temporal position in subjective mental time of volitional states, active mental episodes of desiring, willing, intending, and such.

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[28] That is, the two are or would be accessible to introspection within a single act of awareness.

From the immediate experience of our own causal power as mental subjects, to frame ideas, to direct our attention, or to move our limbs we have a basic knowledge of what it means for one of our volitional states to cause another. This experiential knowledge is immediate and as well-founded as any knowledge we have. The immediacy of the knowledge in this case is proportionate to the immediacy of what we reflect on introspectively, the causal efficacy of our minds volitional power with respect to its own activity.[29] Given the centrality of our experience of mental causation in ourselves, we have no difficulty in conceiving of intersubjective mental causation, of a volitional state in one subject causing a sensation not in the same subject but in another. I have no difficulty conceiving of what it would be like to cause a sensation in another, because this is already involved in my pre-reflective, everyday conception of how I relate to other people who possess minds like my own, that I can wave at, speak to, or embrace another person and in so many ways cause sensations in them. Normally I imagine that my causal influence over the experience of others is mediated and constrained by physical factors, including the motion of bodies and the transmissive conditions on which, from within the empirical perspective, I suppose sensory consciousness to depend. All that we must recognize here is that, in accordance with the PAFD and the distinction between the empirical perspective and metaphysical perspectives, we can conceive of intersubjective causation that requires no physical mediation but is entirely mental or spiritual, on analogy with the experience we have our own intrasubjective mental causation. Furthermore, a moment's reflection reveals that this conception is quite independent of any conception of a common intersubjective temporal medium. Whereas ordinary intersubjective causation requires that subjects be embodied organisms inhabiting a common environment and so a shared public space and time, from the metaphysical perspective intrasubjective, and hence intersubjective mental causation, requires no such assumptions.[30]

The concept of causation itself already entails an asymmetric directionality in the relation of cause to effect, so that a cause, in order to be a cause, must precede its effect ontologically. And while it

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[29] Again compare this with Augustine's insight in the *Confessions*, VII.17, where he attains to (self-)awareness of his own soul as an invisible unity and active spiritual power, not as something that comes before his mind as an object of awareness, but as the subject who is aware, who reflectively feels the power of awareness in exercising it.
[30] Without focusing so much on the epistemic primacy of mental causation, Richard Swinburne makes the point that the temporal priority of events is ontologically derived from the potentiality of causation and its logically necessary strict directionality. Swinburne makes it into a principle of his metaphysics, what he calls the "Causal Theory of Time" (see *The Christian God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.81-90). D.H. Mellor *Real Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1981), Ch.10, has a similar argument for the causal theory. When the Causal Theory is combined with Swinburne's theistic 'argument from temporal order' (*The Existence of God.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Ch.8)) there is an interesting synthetic effect. The argument from temporal order is one of Swinburne's interpretations of the teleological argument: temporal organization of events in the universe—and in particular "phenomenal regularities" (though here, as a realist, Swinburne makes no distinction between the phenomenological order of consciousness and the order of notional physical phenomena)—must be explained by mentality. When brought together with the causal theory, this pushes one in the idealist direction of explaining temporal order, and especially the temporal order of phenomenal regularities, by appeal to the prephysical nomological organization of mental causation.

may be that this conceptual fact about causation is in turn derived from introspective experience of the immanent directional flow of phenomenal time within a subject's stream of consciousness, so that the order of ontological priority or precedence of cause to effect must coincide with the order of *subjective* mental time, the point here is just that the concept of *intersubjective* mental causation does not require any supposition regarding further facts about the temporal relations between the minds causally related. Conceptually it is only required that for a state of one mind to cause a state of another the cause must exist *before* its effect in some sense of 'before' that matches subjective temporal order and so the order of phenomenal time for the agent. In recognizing that intersubjective causal priority is both independent of any notion of intersubjective time and yet constrained by facts about subjective time, we thereupon recognize the option of defining intersubjective time from the concepts of subjective time and intersubjective causal priority.

The further notion we need is that of nomologically possible intersubjective causal priority, or what we might call *PV-priority*[31] (for 'potential volitional priority). Just as we understand what it means for my volition to cause and so be prior to your sensation, so we know what, relative to some prephysical nomological framework, it means for some possible volition of mine to be causally prior to some possible sensation of yours. With respect to a collection of mental subjects, we suppose that the relation of PV-priority behaves so that the individual subjective temporal dimensions, with their various subjective 'earlier than' relations and temporal distance relations, are all mutually coincident; that is, that the relation of PV-priority always coincides with the relation of 'subjectively earlier than' for each of the subjective temporal dimensions it relates. We can think of the relation of PV-priority as establishing an ordered path across lines of potential causation from one subjective temporal dimension to another, bundling them into a unified temporal community.

Finally, we thus have;

Definition of Intersubjective Mental Time. For any mental events E_1 and E_2 (which need not be consubjective), E_1 is *intersubjectively earlier than* E_2 if and only if either: (i) E_1 is subjectively earlier than E_2 or (ii) E_1 is PV-prior to E_2 or to some E_3 that is subjectively earlier than E_2 and E_2 is not PV-prior to E_1 or to some E_4 that is subjectively earlier than E_1.

For any two mental events E_1 and E_2, belonging to subjects M_1 and M_2, if neither is intersubjectively earlier than the other and if no mental event of M_1 subjectively later than E_1 is intersubjectively earlier than E_2, and no mental event of M_2 subjectively later than E_2 is intersubjectively earlier than E_1, then E_1 and E_2 are *intersubjectively simultaneous*.

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[31] This follows Foster's (1982, p.269) terminology, though I have modified its content somewhat.

Just as we have supposed that subjective temporal ordering relations are commensurable and coincident with the relation of PV-priority, so too we must suppose that subjective distances are proportional. If the prephysical nomological framework relates subjects through the potential of intersubjective causation in some way that ensures proportionality of intersubjective temporal distance, whatever it is, to subjective temporal distance and that ensures transitivity of simultaneity within the community of minds, we can say that if E_1 is intersubjectively earlier than E_2, the *intersubjective temporal distance* between them is, relative to the subjective temporal dimension of some subject M, whatever measure of distance would be computed by taking M's unit of subjective temporal distance as the unit of measurement.

The basic idea then behind the construction of intersubjective time is that the intuitive notion of intersubjective mental causation imposes a kind of directional order among the mental states of subjects who stand in the appropriate relations of potential causal influence and receptivity to each other, as guaranteed by some system of causal laws. This order is already quasi-temporal, and, being refined according to the clauses of our definitions, so long as the order of potential intersubjective causation globally respects the subjective temporal orderings it relates, then it may inherit the temporality of those subjective dimensions.

The construction of subjective mental time from phenomenal time involved recognizing the potential for continuity among consubjective streams. Here we referred to a prephysical system of laws to anchor the potentiality in the constraining force of what the laws guarantee. Potential intersubjective causation also referred to a prephysical system of law to ground its own modality. Were we able to posit a common nomological framework that guaranteed these modal facts, it would allow us to understand human minds as bound into a prephysical temporal community. And if we could conceive of the nomological framework as the same which logically creates the sensible world by causally constraining the distribution of qualia over minds at times, then we could imagine this framework to have the global harmony it would need to have to guarantee the objectivity of the physical world as we know it in our empirical perspective.

VIII.5   The Laws of Creation

We have now defined a prephysical, intersubjective mental time which may serve as a common temporal framework or medium for the causal constraints on human experience that the idealist supposes logically creates the physical world by determining the distribution of qualia over minds at times. These causal constraints must have the force of law in order to be genuinely creative, as explained in Section 1. They will be, then, not only causal constraints but causal laws, regulating the occurrence of certain types of sensory experience (qualia) in human minds. The specification of intersubjective mental time itself

relied on definitions that presupposed a system of prephysical causal laws. We referred to these in defining potential streamal continuity within the mind of one subject, and potential intersubjective causation of conscious episodes between two subjects. Thus whatever prephysical nomological framework that the idealist supposes to be or constitute the laws of creation—that is, the laws of qualia distribution—should be the same nomological framework that yields[32] intersubjective mental time.

The goal of this section will be to specify this prephysical nomological framework of causal constraints on sensory experience in the explanatory context of Christian theism. By constraining the possible course of human experience in an intersubjectively harmonious way that conforms to the divine wisdom, these prephysical laws are to logically create the nomic regularities of the physical world, including embodiment and the wider, intersubjectively organized distribution of qualia over (mental) times. It is this nomological distribution that the idealist sees as sustaining the regular features and character of the physical world. In accord with the doctrine of creation, the Christian theist can avail himself of this theoretical discovery and use it to interpret the doctrine. The nomological distribution of qualia over minds and intersubjective mental times will consist of a rational system of commands decreed by a supernatural mind. If these decrees are to have the rationality, scope, and power sufficient to yield an objective world, one characterized by its own modal facts, then the supernatural mind that decrees them must be absolutely supreme in power, knowledge, and moral authority, and hence unique. This will of course suggest itself to the Christian theist as being exactly aligned with what he already believes about the Creator and so as furnishing him with a helpful expository device for understanding and meditation on revealed teaching.

The idealist regards the laws of creation as a regulatory framework of causal constraints on human minds. In order to conceive of these causal constraints as genuinely creative laws there would seem to be but two explanatory options available to the Christian theist, in line with the reasoning detailed in Section 1 above: either the laws are causally powerful entities in their own right, which seems absurd; or the laws must be somewhat reductively construed as God's own volitional policies in reference to how he will causally interact with human minds[33], policies to which he commits about how so to interact. This reduces the dispositions of physical items in the course of nature to dispositions about God, and his creative commands to self-directed commitments. Is there an alternative to these two options? In line with

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[32]Using the terminology of Ch. VII, the laws of creation should be such as to 'nomologically select' intersubjective time, constituting the intersubjective temporal facts together with the facts concerning intersubjective causation and facts about the subjects themselves, per the Augustinian-Cartesian view.

[33] Notice that this same dilemma arises for realism in the context of Christian theism, only instead of regarding God's causal interaction with human minds as creative, the realist will regard his causal interaction with a realistically construed space, time, and matter as creative. Unlike the idealist, however, the realist cannot plausibly appeal to angelic participation to escape this dilemma. As pure unembodied intelligences, angels are better disposed to mental causation than to realistically construed physical causation. Angelic mental causation is also a better fit with the traditional conception of the cosmic hierarchy. I will return to this point in Chapter IX.

the literal sense of Scripture, perhaps the idealist should regard the laws of creation as just that, as ordinances issued to a liturgical assembly of God-like intelligences, rational, pure spirits who receive and transmit the creative commands, executing them by causally constraining human experience through their power for mental causation. In this way the idealist's prephysical causal constraints would have the regulatory force of law on account of the divine sovereignty while still allowing them to enjoy the 'relational logic' of laws, as things that are executed by being obediently received and adhered to by rational creatures.

What should now suggest itself is that the Biblical revelation on angelology, as traditionally developed in Augustine, Dionysius, and Aquinas, may become an explanatorily potent hypothesis in the hands of the idealist. If the Christian theist is to suppose that the idealist laws of creation are transmitted commands decreed by the divine Logos, then the regulatory power and rational creativity of these commands may be dynamically transmitted among intelligent creatures through the arrangement of the cosmic hierarchy, heavenly and earthly. As finite unembodied intelligences, possessing power and knowledge proportionate to their liturgical office within the divine economy and a ministry of salvific revelation to human beings, the angels are perfectly suited to the play the explanatory role of executing the causal constraints on human consciousness within the idealist's explanatory strategy. This is to introduce the hypothesis of angelic participation into Christian idealism, or what we might simply call "the angelic hypothesis". Besides allowing the idealist to provide an account of creation in terms of laws, it will turn out to have other (surprising) considerations in its favor.[34]

The angelic hypothesis invites us to suppose that God's creative activity and purpose is something he shares with creatures instrumentally, allowing their freedom, power, and knowledge to be used in participation with his creative ends.[35] Just as we should be prepared to accept that divine activity, on account of its radical transcendence over creatures, is not contrastive or competitive with human freedom of action, so we should be prepared to accept the same non-contrastive or participatory model of divine and angelic freedom.

The idealist must provide an account of the prephysical nomological framework in which the system of causal constraints on human sensation, the "laws of creation", are enacted. Since the laws govern the distribution of qualia over minds at times, the prephysical nomological framework must be temporal. The notion of 'time' here is that of the temporal order in which sensations occur within the personal biography of individual mental subjects. To provide an adequate framework for the laws of creation, the nomological framework must be able to coordinate individual subjective dimensions of

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[34] The details of the alignment between traditional Christian angelology and the present hypothesis are to be explored in in Ch.IX.

[35] There is no incompatibility between this suggestion and the orthodox view that *nulla creatura possit creare* (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia.45.5), that God alone is *omnibus causa essendi*.

mental time with each other and with the external component whose organization and causal links with human mentality yield the laws of creation. This would involve thinking of prephysical mental time as a kind of order-continuous manifold equipped with charts that isometrically map regions within it into corresponding dimensions of subjective mental time.

Just as we have defined streamal time for human mental subjects, in terms of phenomenal time and relations of overlap and continuity, so we may define streamal time for any mental subject who has experiences of some phenomenal time or other. In particular, we can define streamal time for angelic subjects on the supposition that they possess experiences of phenomenal time. We do not need to suppose that angels have sensations in order to experience time, since after all, not only our sensations but our experience of our own mental activity in introspection is presented within a phenomenal time field. The highly plausible assumption that the angelic minds, being pure intelligences, are reflectively conscious, is enough reason to credit them with experience of phenomenal time. Beyond this bare assumption, nothing further need be supposed about the quality and condition of angelic mental life. Yet this being so, we quickly realize that because angels are unembodied and have no need of sleep, there is no reason to suppose that their mental lives are interrupted by periods of unconsciousness. This means that for each of them individually streamal time is just subjective time. With no gaps in consciousness, there is no question as to the joinability or potential continuation of streams: each individual angelic mental life would be one continuous stream. Furthermore, it follows that angelic intersubjective causation is much easier to define since there can be no circumstantial failure of one angelic mental state potentially to cause that of another.

With the angelic hypothesis in place, the Christian idealist may now propose how it might be that by creating minds and an ultimate system of causal laws of wholly spiritual nature, God both creates and governs all things visible and invisible. By creating pure spiritual intelligences who minister in his presence, and human minds who have both intellectual and sensory capacities, and arranging for the two to be nomologically linked in appropriate ways that both provide for and constrain their causal interaction to conform to his wisdom, God does everything he must do to create our world. In more detail, the proposal is as follows.

Ultimate (contingent) reality consists of:

A set of human minds *H*.

A set of angelic minds *A*.

A set of laws (alpha-laws) concerning the causation of events in *A* by other events in *A*, and (perhaps) divine influence, so as to establish a common inter-angelic (and of course prephysical) temporal

dimension T.[36] We can think of these laws as providing for the conditions in which angels speak to one another.

A set of laws (beta-laws) concerning the causation of H-sensations by A events. We can think of these laws as providing for the conditions in which angels speak to us.

A set of laws (gamma-laws) concerning the causation of A events by H-volitions. We can think of these laws as providing for the conditions in which we speak to angels.

We suppose that alpha-laws organize the angelic minds into a society of causal influence and receptivity with respect to each other so that their (alpha-relative) potential streams of experience comprise a temporal continuum T, that is, an intersubjective temporal ordering of angelic mental states according to angelic PV-priority that coincides with angelic subjective time in (directional) order and proportional in distance.

While we need not speculate as to the full range of types of angelic mental states, we may suppose that there is one type, "E-type" (for "experience") that causes sensations in a human mind, and another type, "V-type" (for "volition") that is in turn caused by human volitions. Though we label them by letters indicating the types of human mental states that they cause or are in turn caused by, in the general pairing arrangement enforced by the beta- and gamma-laws they would relate to their human causal correspondent as its active-passive counterpart. Thus E-type states, or more simply E-states, are active in relation to the passive human sensations they cause; and V-states are passive in relation to the human volitions that cause them. We are free to suppose that intersubjective causal interaction among the angels themselves, provided for by the alpha-laws, involves V-states or some other *sui generis* type of state.

We suppose that beta is such as to ensure a 1-1 correlation of human minds with a subset of the angelic minds and a general 1-1 correlation of angelic E-states with human sensation types (qualia) such that each for each angelic E-state φ there is a unique quale q that it directly causes; and such that each quale q is uniquely caused by some angelic E-state φ. We suppose that the beta-laws satisfy two further conditions: (β1) two H-streams are consubjective if and only if the E-streams that cause them (by causing the total sensations they serially contain) are consubjective, belonging to the same angelic mind; and (β2) two consubjective H-streams are of the same streamal extent if and only if the consubjective E-streams that cause them have the same extent (in T).

By satisfying these conditions, the 1-1 pairing of angelic and human minds affected by the beta-laws nomologically ensures that if two H-streams are consubjective then one will be a possible

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[36] For historical reasons we can call this temporal dimension the "aeon".

continuation of the other in the manner required by the definition of subjective mental time. For the identity of a stream is fixed by its intrinsic qualitative character (the qualia of which it is a realization), the subject to whom it belongs, and the identity of the mental states that causally generate it. Like any identity, the identity of a stream will remain fixed across possible worlds, and so the identity of human and angelic minds as ontologically basic subjects (per the Augustinian-Cartesian view), the temporal conditions of angelic minds, together with the causal pairing achieved by the beta-laws, is sufficient nomologically to guarantee (mental) temporal facts about subjects.

The causal pairing of angelic and human minds achieved by the beta-laws not only nomologically selects the temporal facts about human subjects, it allows for a more general correlation of subjective temporal dimensions between angels and humans. When Archibald Macleish is unconscious, say in dreamless sleep, what makes it the case that his post-dormitive sensations are later than his pre-dormitive sensations is that his beta-counterpart angel would be the cause of any intervening sensations in a counterfactual case in which Macleish had not been unconscious; and moreover his angel would have done so with mental states that, as streamally continuous, would have been as directionally ordered as the states they would have (counterfactually) caused, and in such a way that kept the subjective distances of the causally generative angelic states and causally receptive human states proportionate. For this reason, we can think of angelic and human mental time as equivalent for practical purposes, as the beta-laws ensure that they are both related in a common nomological framework, in which every moment of a human subjective temporal dimension is correlated with one of angelic time T, and the mapping preserves temporal order and proportionality of distance.

To see that this same framework ensures the potentiality for intersubjective causation among human minds, and so is able to nomologically select facts about intersubjective mental time, consider the consequences of the gamma-laws. These will ensure that for each human volitional state ψ in a human there is a unique angelic V-state (in the angelic mind that is paired with it under beta) that it directly causes. Together with the alpha-laws that determine the causal interaction among the angels themselves, the gamma-laws will nomologically ensure the potentiality for intersubjective causation among human minds and indeed VP-priority, in accordance with the definition of intersubjective mental time. For so long as angelic minds are receptive to the volitional states of their human counterparts (per gamma-laws), receptive to the mental states of other angels (per alpha-laws), and able to cause appropriate sensations in their human counterparts (per beta-laws), then one human subject may cause a sensation in another by the intervening causal influence of their respective angelic counterparts. When Macleish kisses his wife, his intention to do so is (or issues in) a volitional state that causes an experience in his angelic counterpart

(gamma), which causes an experience in his wife's angelic counterpart (alpha), which causes a sensation of being kissed in his wife (beta).[37]

This completes the analytic exposition of Christian idealism. At this stage we have achieved the goal of presenting the prephysical nomological framework (the alpha-, beta-, and gamma-laws) that constitutes the temporal facts about minds, arranging them into a prephysical community within which we may conceive of the laws of creation to be executed. More particularly, by introducing the angelic hypothesis and showing how laws that met certain conditions would provide for an appropriate causally interactive pairing of human and angelic minds, we showed how the laws of creation may be established through the regulation of such interaction. Simply put, the claim was that the causal constraints on human sensory consciousness that the idealist takes to logically create the physical world are executed by the angelic minds within the system of prephysical laws, in conformity to the divine wisdom. Qualia are distributed over human minds at times in a way that conforms to a world-suggestive pattern, a pattern that, at the human empirical viewpoint, is subject to the idealist's constructive syntheses and interpreted by the concepts of empirical theory. The realist regards empirical theory as committing us to a metaphysics of an ontologically basic and mind-independent space, time, and matter, that in turn causally explain the primitive sensory regularities at the empirical viewpoint. The idealist breaks out of this closed circle and regards the physical world as ontologically derivative from the sensory regularities that are in turn causally constrained by the angelic government in free conformity to the divine wisdom.

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[37] We may suppose that the angelic experience caused by his motor intention also causes a tactual-kinaesthetic sensation in him, in addition to causing an experience in his wife's angelic counterpart. This would be consistent with the general pattern of sensorimotor intentionality in which (human) motor intentions cause angelic experiences that in turn cause (human) kinaesthetic sensations.

Chapter IX: The Cosmic Liturgy

<u>IX.1 Introduction</u>

Starting from within the ordinary, world-internal perspective we can raise the metaphysical question of whether or not the existence of the physical world is something ontologically fundamental and mind-independent, and, if not, what further facts and entities could be responsible for logically sustaining its existence. Pursued philosophically, this inquiry takes us to a world-external perspective of thought and finally, as we followed it, to the phenomenalistic idealist position that the physical world is the logical creation of the regularities among and nomic constraints on human sensory experience. On this view, the physical world does indeed exist but in a derivative way, as something whose existence is not ultimate but derived from something else, the theistically-mandated system of causal-control over the course of human sensory experience, which we can now understand to consist in both a rational system of decrees about how sense qualia are to be distributed over minds at times as well as a particular system of causal governance to execute the realization of the content of these decrees.[1]

But we can also pursue the metaphysical question of the status of the physical world theologically. And in this way, too, we are taken to a world-external contemplative framework in which we recognize that the physical regularities that characterize the world as we know it empirically are sustained by the divine wisdom, by God and His word of power. We are led to believe, in the transcendental perspective of faith, that the kind of regularities which the world exhibits are necessary, yes, but necessary only relative to the intentions of the God who in His infinite majesty has given life to creatures, marked and measured the earth, sky, and seas, arranged seasons and times, to the final predestined purpose of reconciling all things in Christ, making peace by the blood his Cross.[2] This is revealed to us by God both in his scriptural word and in the participation of his sacraments. In both cases this revelation is liturgical, mediated to us through the Christocentric-hierarchical activity of the cosmic Church under the guidance and teaching of the Spirit.

With this theological perspective, we can see that the kind of physical universe that God intends is one that has its meaning and value within a creation economy originating in the Mystery of Christ. It is the world that God provides as the scene in which the drama of the Christ-event is played out, in which human beings in their essential 'God-relatedness' are provided with the conditions for their flourishing, by authorizing the works of the Spirit within them as members of the body of Christ, his Church. This means that the physical universe must be responsive and subordinate to the purposes of the predestined

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[1] As we proposed in VIII.4, collectively this consists of the aeon, the angelic and human minds, and the prephysical nomological framework represented by the alpha-, beta-, and gamma-laws.
[2] Col 1:20.

plan of election, justification, and sanctification.[3] It must be something that is subject to human consecration or desecration, something that falls in consequence to man's disobedience to the divine word[4], and something transfigured through the transfigured glory of the human Jesus, the risen Christ. In this sense the physical universe must be anthropocentric. But it must be so in accordance with all the specific instrumental intentions by which the glory of Christ was to be realized in salvation history, in all days and ages, biblical and sacramental. Just as it is created by divine command, it must be essentially contingent on his economic purposes as the 'message-system' in which these are manifested at the human empirical viewpoint, whether in the plagues of Egypt, the wanderings of Israel in Sinai, or the institution of the eucharist.

This chapter concludes our study of what God produces in creation, how it is ontologically ordered and providentially governed. We have supported our idealist answer to the leading question of Chapters I and II regarding the kind of space, time, and matter that God has to make in order to make the Eucharist. The physical realm of space, time, and matter is ontologically derivative of the liturgical activity of the celestial hierarchy. In order to make, govern, and dwell within visible creation, God makes an invisible kingdom of minds and prescribes their possible modes of interaction in accordance with the predestinate plan in Christ. The visible world is the product of the invisible kingdom. After detailing how much of traditional Christian cosmology is hereby recovered (Sec.2), I consider the further challenge to physical realism posed by angelic cosmology in particular (Sec.3), and end with a summative statement of the theological case that harmonizes the different voices to which I have sought to be responsive, from eucharistic theology to the Platonic tradition (Sec.4).

IX.2 The Celestial Scope of Natural Theology

In Chapters VI-VIII, we sought to establish the coherence of phenomenalistic idealism with the help of the theistic and angelic hypotheses. The idealist claims that the physical regularities of the natural world are logically created by the sensory regularities of human consciousness and that these in turn are logically created by the way God has arranged for the causal control of human sensations within the larger nomological framework of communication among the (prephysical) community of minds. What we now want to notice is that, in the course of elaborating his position and demonstrating its coherence, the idealist thus recovers three traditional Christian teachings concerning celestial creation: angelic government (within the arrangement of the celestial hierarchy); the existence of the aeon (a prephysical but created temporal dimension); and the role of the divine ideas in the creation economy (interpreted as

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[3] Rom 8:29
[4] Rom 8:23

God's rational ordinances communicated to the angels about how to organize human sensory consciousness).

Consider how a traditional conception of the aeon is recovered via idealism. The general form of the argument structure is this. In accordance with the specification of Christian idealism in Chs. VII-VIII,

(i) If phenomenalistic idealism is true, then there is a prephysical, intersubjective temporal order.

(ii) God is a atemporal and so time is created.

(iii) Therefore, from (i) and (ii), if phenomenalistic idealism is true, there is a non-divine, and thus *created*, but prephysical temporal order.

But, as we have also seen,

(iv) If there is a prephysical, intersubjective time, then, given the "problem of creative laws"[5], this would be best explained by a one-to-one causal-nomological pairing of human and angelic minds (beta- and gamma-laws) and a causal-nomological organization of angelic society itself (alpha-laws).

Thus given the explanatory power of the angelic hypothesis within the context of idealism[6], not only does the metaphysics of idealism tell the Christian theist something useful about physical creation, it tells him about spiritual creation as well. It tells him that there is explanatory demand for a purely spiritual dimension of time and a nomologically ordered domain of minds that causally interact within in it, which matches, or is at least compatible with, what the patristic tradition understood in the exegetical doctrines on the angelic ministry, their hierarchy, governance, guardianship and reception of the divine ideas.

The traditional patristic notion of the 'aeon', as the prephysical temporal order of the purely spiritual created domain, is something that can be recovered and further received within the natural theology of Christian idealism. The aeon may well be identified with the prephysical or mental time in which created minds are located and causally paired under the nomological constraints that encode the

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[5] VIII.2

[6] In addition to the utility already mentioned, there is another explanatory value to the angelic hypothesis. With phenomenalistic idealism and Foster's account of the prephysical nomological framework, an angelic cosmological model can explain the asymmetry of the causal relation as guaranteed by the same prephysical nomological framework that generates volitional priority—hence physical time. Dainton (p.109), commenting on the connection between the "overlap model" of temporal consciousness and theories of the metaphysics of time, says: "Dynamic presentism is in some ways the precise analogue of it [the overlap model]". The aeon and intersubjective mental time are *directional* dynamic presentist because they are logically constructed from phenomenal time. This is the only problem-free theory of time, and as McTaggart understood only the idealist may regard it as such.

physical world (the laws of creation). As our analytic exposition has just shown[7], the temporal order of the aeon may be logically constructed from phenomenal time and phenomenological laws of creation with the framework of God's alpha-, beta-, and gamma-laws that harmoniously arrange and causally link angelic and human society.

Again, as we have shown, the prephysical laws and the temporal order of the aeon logically sustain the temporal facts about personal identity (by ensuring the joinability of consubjective psychological streams in a sensibly continuous way) for each human mental subject and consequently the subject's temporal embodiment (as expressed at the human empirical viewpoint in psychophysical laws), and, through the collectively organized embodiment of subjects, a wider objective causal order, including the nomic necessity of empirical causal facts, and their temporal directionality. This allows us, as theologians, not only to recover a coherent account of the traditional role of angelic society in the divine government, but also particular details, one such being the traditional conception of an order of guardian angels who are everlastingly paired one-to-one with human beings from the moment of human conception (or whenever one believes the soul or basic mental subject is created). With the system of Christian idealism expounded here, this provision falls within the greater hierarchical arrangement of angelic society into ranks and choirs according to the scope of their share in the knowledge of the divine wisdom.

Furthermore, on an idealist theory of the ultimate contingent reality, there is a theoretical role for divine ideas, conceived of, per the tradition of Augustine and Aquinas, as God's own knowledge of creation, the exemplar existence that created items possess in the divine mind. On the idealist theory, it is the knowledge that God possesses in the divine ideas that he communicates to angels as creative commands about how causally to regulate human experience. Within the provision of the cosmic hierarchy, these creative commands can be understood as liturgical and ministerial, and their execution as part of the way God governs the world through participatory mediation. Items of divine knowledge of creation (morning knowledge) and regulatory power are obediently received and transmitted through the cosmic hierarchy as the creature's free response to the divine word. Angelic knowledge of creation (evening knowledge) and regulatory power is elevated into a participation in divine knowledge according to the manner in which they receive and transmit the same knowledge to the human creatures to which they minister, and similarly for them as they minister to each other. This represents the full indwelling of the message (*logos tou Christou*) in creation, as St. Paul describes it.[8] It unifies the ministries of creation and redemption in Christ, the revelation of the Logos, the divine noetic Wisdom through, in, and for whom God creates all things.

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[7] Ch. VIII.
[8] Col 3:16.

What the realist thinks the physical world as ultimate reality must explain, viz. the sensory order, the idealist theologian can attribute to the angelic reception of the divine ideas, interpreted as the phenomenological laws of creation, the many commands that God communicates to the angels about how to interact with human minds, within the nomological provisions of the hierarchy. In the context of Christian idealism, the divine ideas become the intentional plans, the blueprints for the kind of world that God wills to create *as* encoded by a system of causal constraints enacted within a pre-physical and temporal nomological framework. This provides the theologian with a concrete interpretation of another piece of the traditional bequest that fits together with the conceptions of the aeon and the celestial hierarchy, one that shows the divine ideas to be a source of explanatory power in theistic metaphysics, a privileged way to account for the objectivity and empirical immanence of the world that is the subject of our empirical theorizing.

The Aeon

The aeon, or '*aion*', is derived from '*aes on*', which means 'ever-being'. Just as with the Biblical 'everlastingness' or 'from age to age', there is an ambiguity in the tradition as to whether the aeon refers to God's atemporal eternity or an ever-perdurant temporality. In the latter case, the aeon would thus refer to a kind of creaturely analogue of the divine eternity, a sempiternal 'everlastingness'. Von Balthasar, writing of the received patristic notion as it was inherited by Maximus the Confessor says "the temporal being of created intellect lies in its participation in the "eternity of God"[9], that is, completeness or perfection of life without extension (*adiastasis*). According to Von Balthasar, whereas this understanding of the aeon was the view of John of Scythopolis as well as that of Maximus, Gregory of Nyssa and Scripture see the *aion* as the "totality of the world's time, including the pure intellects'. On this view there is thus a clear distinction between the *adiastasis* of God and the *diastasis* of the aeon, and as we would now elaborate it, of the prephysical nomological framework for which the aeon is the medium. Notice how this distinction between God and his creation dovetails with the distinction we have made, following Gregory of Nyssa, between the *diastasis* and *odos* of creation, or (physical) creation viewed from the transcendental perspective of how it is created versus the empirical view within what gets created.

Significantly, for Gregory, the Creator-creature distinction is tracked by the distinction between the immeasurable and the measurable, the *diastemic* (even that which is subject to '*espacement*'), or we might say 'orderable', including the temporally orderable. Alden Mosshammer, paraphrasing Gregory on the creation of the aeons states: "As the measure that contains all things, the *diastema* of time is the essential characteristic that distinguishes created activity from the unchanging and unmeasured being of

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[9] *Cosmic Liturgy*, p.141.

God".[10] Gregory, it seems, arrived at this insight through theological reflection on the created significance of time as it is revealed in the Biblical wisdom literature. In the 7th homily on Ecclesiastes, Gregory says creation *is* the *diastema* (of time); and in the 6th homily he had already said that the *diastema* of time is equivalent to some kind of measured space, and that all created things are measured by time (*chronos*). As Christian idealists, we could interpret this as a description of the aeonic mental time that we logically constructed in Ch. VIII, and say that by 'measure' he refers to the fact that the aeon is an ordered, directional continuum. The ultimate reality of the aeon, with its pairings and dynamic arrangement of minds, is an invisible reality; but it is nonetheless a temporal reality that, in being *created* is still lacking its intended final consummation; it remains a site of salvifically significant action.

As Mosshammer goes on to explain, "In meditating on the movements, and tensions of the mind as the way to moral ascent above the limitations of the physical, Gregory seized on the temporal dimension of creation as emphasized in Ecclesiastes as the resolution: time rather than place is the essential dimension of all becoming", and "Thus he accomplishes by combining the spatial and temporal usages of *diastema* to generate a new kind of space which imposes on intelligibles the same kind of limits he had once imposed on the sensible order". Mosshammer notes that this idealist move, correlating space exclusively with the physical/sensible, is corollary to his phenomenalism about the natural world. The move reinterprets by way of analogy what Gregory had said about the *diastema* in the *Apologia in Hexaemeron*.[11] There he had defined the firmament as that which separates the intelligible, to which the *diastema* do not apply, and the sensible, to which they do. In that sense the *diastema* are relative to the empirical order of human sensory consciousness, which is temporal, yes, but also spatial and sense-modally qualitative. In the Homilies on Ecclesiastes, the *diastema* comes to be regarded as that which is the result of 'nomological order', as we might put it, or of measurement. In both ways, this applies to the aeon of the angelic and human minds, which is analogously organized and temporally ordered in virtue of a system of divine laws, just as that nomic arrangement generates the empirical order in turn. Gregory's '*diastema*' is thus congruent with the prephysical nomological framework, generating mental time, and allowing for specific idealist governing ordinances to be couched within it.

Idealist natural theology shows us how the time of the aeon actually has the dynamism that we want it to have as it is logically constructed from our own phenomenal time, with its immanent directional flow, and the way in which God has nomically arranged for causal interaction—and indeed communication—among rational creatures. Perhaps in the eschaton this flow is without the single directionality into the eschaton, but in all directions out to God and reciprocally of Him back into us.

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[10] *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on Ecclesiastes, An English Version,* ed. Stuart George Hall (Walter de Gruyter, 1993), p.262.
[11] PG 44, 81C-D

Reading Heb 11:3 in the original Greek and staying close to the letter of the text, we can say that the aeons were 'formed' (*katērtisthai*) by the *rhēma* of God, the visible things were 'generated' (*gegonenai*) from that which has no appearance (that which is not itself 'phenomenal'). Note the difference in verbs and the way each verb is paired with a different subject-object pair: God *forms* the aeons by his word of power; the invisible things *generate* the visible. This might be taken to suggest the ontologically mediating role of the aeonic invisible realm in the bringing forth or generation of the visible realm, the aonic itself having priority and being the product of a correspondingly different mode of divine creation.

The relation of *aeon* and *diastasis* might well correspond to that between angelic time in the external reality of the prephysical nomological framework—the celestial hierarchy and its reception of the divine ideas—and the intersubjective mental time that is constituted by facts about potential subjective and intersubjective sensory consciousness which are thereby nomologically grounded. Recall from VIII.4 that we formally distinguished the temporal dimension *T* of angelic time organized by the alpha-laws and the intersubjective time in which human mental events occur, as organized by the beta-laws. In the theory of Christian idealism, the two temporal frameworks are order-isomorphic and commensurable. Indeed, through the causal-nomological pairing of angelic and human minds, they are correlated so as to be coincident in all temporally relevant respects, so that their subjective moments can be regarded as formally identical.

The idealist theologian can say that the temporality of the aeon is the order in which God offers participation in his eternal life to the angels. Their response is the playing out of the hierarchical transmission of knowledge to us in the form of natural and supernatural revelation. The alpha-laws can be thought to correspond to the created conditions of angelic life, including the conditions of God's offer to the angels to participate in an aeonic continuum, an abiding that is the creaturely version of eternal immutability (Augustine's "heaven of heaven", where dwell the company of saints[12]), the rest and peace that we await (and which also forms the content of the angelic eschatological hope, since, per Aquinas, their state is blessed and graced, but not fully perfected until the consummation of all creation in the eschaton). The beta- and gamma-laws also express the conditions of this offer to the angels, providing them with an opportunity hierarchically to realize their perfection in righteousness by ministering to more limited creatures, sealing their conformity to the likeness of the Son of the Most High who stooped to share the condition of men and rose as the first among them "above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age (*aeon*) but also in the one to come".[13] The concrete execution of the beta- and gamma-laws on the part of the angels is the exterior activity, the effect

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[12] *Confessions* XII.9;11;12;19
[13] Eph 1:21

of their liturgical praise, their eucharist to God, made through the cooperative sustaining of visible creation together with Him.

Given the truth of idealism, for God to make the physical world is for Him to make it in the way that idealism claims it is made—that is, by enacting a system of prephysical causal constraints on human sensory experience that encodes the structure of our physical world (i.e, the world as revealed at our empirical viewpoint and described by our topic-neutral physical theory). This means that if angelic governing activity is to fall within the scope of angelic liturgical activity, such governing activity must include the execution of the prephysical causal constraints as liturgical commands. In other words, what we would be inclined to believe about angelic governance as falling within the scope of angelic liturgical-ministerial function within the cosmic Church harmonizes with what idealism tells us about creation of the physical order, that causally constraining human sensory experience has centrally to figure in it. This is something that, as it turns out when idealism is developed, the angels are well-suited to do, as finite pure intelligences (as unembodied, free mental agents) who can be matched one-to-one with human mental subjects in direct causal laws.

The Aeon as the 'Day' of Creation

As a Christian metaphysics disposed for the theologian's purpose of Biblical exegesis, Christian idealism may be regarded as a contemporary recasting of Augustine's interpretation of Genesis, with Neoplatonism 'updated' to phenomenalistic idealism. There are remarkable parallels between the explanatory details of Christian idealism as elaborated especially in Ch.VIII and Augustine's interpretive creation metaphysics. What Augustine identifies as the 'day' of creation (Gen 2:4) would correspond to the idealist's 'ultimate created reality'; alpha-laws would correspond to morning knowledge; beta- and gamma-laws would correspond to evening knowledge. This is of interest for several reasons. Firstly, it supports the historical narrative of I.2, in which Christian idealism can be seen to be a continuous development of Christian Neoplatonist metaphysics, here emphasizing the stream through Augustine. Secondly and relatedly, it shows the intimate congruity between traditional, orthodox Biblical exegesis and the kind of project in creation metaphysics that we have here undertaken, the mutuality of their interests and the reciprocity of their endeavors

We have already noted briefly in Ch.I (and in the section above) that Augustine espoused a psychological theory of time in Book XI of the *Confessions*, according to which time is a threefold present constituted by the distention of the mind. Augustine clearly distinguishes this theory from the Aristotelian view that time is a measure of the motion of physical things, since the mental subject experiences the passage of time even when she withdraws from the senses, in the act of introspective

consciousness. The idealist theory of Ch.VIII derives temporal facts from facts about phenomenal duration, succession, continuity and potential intersubjective mental causation. While Augustine's view is not straightforwardly identical with this, his understanding of the primitiveness of phenomenal time[14] and his adherence to a strict Platonic topdownism in which causal influence is correlated with noetic power of comprehension[15] allowed him to recognize that the angelic minds inhabit a temporal medium that is ontologically prior to the physical world.

In an *Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis*, Section VIII, Augustine offers a (brief) argument for angelic time as mental time, as a solution to an interpretive puzzle of whether time is created before the angels or with the 'lights' of the heavens.[16] He would go on to expand this argument in a later, complete work on the subject. Recognizing such texts as "For the power to act is available to you whenever you will" (Wis 12:18) and "The one who abides forever created all things simultaneously" (Sir 18:1), he insists that in relation to God who does not change the act of creation is singular and atemporal. Yet Augustine also knows as well as anyone that God's creative activity must also be understood from the creaturely perspective as continuously successive. What God creates is temporal and described in Scripture as the work of a sixfold liturgical procession (Gen 1:31), indeed one that continued until the time of the historical Jesus, "For my Father is working until now" (Jn 5:17). Why does God choose to reveal the truth about his creation to us in this way? Accepting that what we hear and read in Scripture is not metaphor, an indirect way of talking about something else, but a matter of historical fact, this introduces the main interpretive puzzle that Augustine talks up in his *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*.

Part of the solution involves importing the Stoic metaphysical machinery of *spermatikoi logoi* (*rationes seminales)*. On analogy with the way seeds evidently contain the determinants of the growing plant's morphology, the suggestion is that God creates all things at once, but within what he creates are intelligent guiding-structures, like software programs, that constrain the possible successions of created states-of-affairs. Notice that this is roughly commensurate, adjusting for different historical and hence theoretical contexts, with the introduction of the theoretico-explanatory device of laws of nature. We introduced the "problem of creative laws" in VIII.2 and noted how laws can and, in a certain sense, must be understood as the instruments of God's continuing creative activity. But we also made this observation into a step in a larger chain of reasoning. For God to create the kind of empirically objective world that we are already conceptually committed to when we think of the world we inhabit, he must create a world

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[14] See XI.20, 26, 27. The resemblance to the idealist theory is that he takes the data of temporal consciousness as basic of a logical construction of objective and non-phenomenal time.

[15] Recall that for Augustine, as for the idealist, material things do not have powers of efficient causation, only spiritual beings do, since causal power requires voluntary agency. See *City of God*, V.9.

[16] This and the argument discussed below for angelic time as deriving from the liturgical organization of their governing causal activity is presented summarily in *City of God*, XII.16.

governed by laws. Only in this way can created things possess genuine dispositional properties[17], without which they would lack the integrity to merit the title as such. But then we seem to face an unsatisfying dilemma. For in order to govern—or introduce a force of necessity among worldly outcomes—it would seem that either they would have to be concrete entities in their own right, causally influencing worldly states-of-affairs, or reducible to dispositions about God. The first option seems absurd and the second compromises the goal of introducing laws in the first place. We want to understand how laws of nature, as universal facts of world-internal necessity, derive their force of necessity from something causally powerful yet other than themselves. The solution, as we have seen, is to have explanatory recourse to the supernatural. On the theistic hypothesis, the traditional Judeo-Christian God has the power, wisdom, and creative purpose to create a world that is governed by laws. Taking the idealist interpretation of creation together with the angelic hypothesis allows us to understand the existence of laws, a system of divine government (what we have called the prephysical nomological framework of alpha-, beta-, and gamma-laws) as a literal truth. Laws must be understood as issuances or directives given and received within a prior community of rational agents.

Augustine understood the interpretive problem of simultaneous versus successive creation to include the explanatory demand of distinguishing between the atemporal act of divine creation and the temporal activity of the divine government of creation that is shared with other rational agents. The key to understanding the unity of these two divine operations, creation and government, is to see creation idealistically, as working at the mental level, and, crucially, as including the transmission of the eternal divine ideas into the minds of the angel spirits who in turn transmit them to the minds of men. So while Augustine does adopt the device of *rationes seminales*, this is only a part of larger apparatus in which a celestial community of intelligent spirits who in accordance with their finite, temporal conditions receive the 'eternal ideas' of the divine Wisdom, the 'day referred to in the Biblical text "All things were created in the day" (Gen 2:4). Augustine wants to understand this as literally true as well.

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[17] Of course there are other options such as dispositional essentialism, which claims that at least some properties are essentially dispositional, in that their identity conditions are fixed entirely by their functional profile under a given theory (e.g., a complete description of their potential causes and effects). If there are any essentially dispositional properties, they would not be nomologically selected, that is, logically created by laws and other facts (e.g, facts about the instantiation of categorical properties), as we imagined might be the case for color properties, which we supposed, as an illustrative example, would be constituted by facts about (categorical) microproperties of surfaces, together with certain optical and psychophysical laws. Dispositional essentialism obviates the need for laws, then, only by claiming that certain nomic facts, facts about the relations between causes and effects or stimuli and manifestations, are metaphysically necessary. In our arguments against physical realism in Ch.VII, we have seen how any such claim is untenable. More to present purposes, because dispositions concern potentialities and thus relate nonexistent conditions, dispositional essentialism seems committed to there being a mind-like feature of intentionality, a self-governing power of intelligence, built into the structure of the world as a bare fact. This is theologically unacceptable to a traditional Christian theist.

For this reason, since the holy angels with whom we shall be equated after the resurrection, if we keep to the way (which Christ has become for us, right to the end), always see the face of God, and enjoy the Word of God, his only-begotten Son in his equality with the Father, and since in them wisdom was created as the first of all things, there can be no doubt that they have first come to know the universal creation, in which they themselves were first to be established, in the Word of God himself, in whom are the eternal ideas even of things which were made in time, as in the one *through whom all things were made* (Jn 1:3).

Notice here in this brief passage the references to many of our major themes, the angelic dimension of the human spiritual life, their role in the consummation of the trinitarian Mystery of Christ, and their share in the government of physical creation by receiving the divine ideas following the arrangement of the Christocentric cosmic hierarchy. Augustine continues to explain that the angels come to know the order of creation by first knowing the divine wisdom, and that this movement of knowledge is part of the activity of their heavenly administration.

Only after that do they know creation in itself, by glancing down below, as it were, and then referring it to the praise of the one in whose unchangeable Truth they originally see the ideas according to which it was made. So they see it as it were in daylight, which is why their wonderfully harmonious unity by sharing in that truth is the day that was originally created, while here they see it as if in the evening twilight; but then straightaway morning is made (this can be observed in all six days) because angelic knowledge does not linger in what has been created without straightaway referring it to the praise and love of the one in whom it is known…So then the angels know the creature in itself in such a way that by free and love-inspired choice (*electione ac dilectione*) they prefer to that knowledge their knowing the creature in the truth through which all things were made, in which they have been given a share….in whom they contemplate the eternal ideas according to which things were created, and in that wonderfully harmonious contemplation are themselves the one *day which the Lord has made*; to this may the Church be joined…[18]

Thus for Augustine the world that God makes is telescopically contained in a hierarchy of causal power and wisdom whose movements are ordered liturgically. The visible world is made in the invisible Church. But the passage also prompts the question: "granted that this angelic company, this unity of the one day

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[18] Augustine, *de Gen. ad Lit.* IV.24-25, quoted from *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Edmund Hill, trans. (New York: New City Press, 2002), pp.265-266. Emphasis is the author's.

which God originally fashioned, performs all these intellectual acts simultaneously now, did it also do this simultaneously then, at the time it was all being created?"[19]. His answer, following the literal interpretation of the haexemeron, is 'no'. "Instead, that 'day which God has made' is itself repeated through his works not in a bodily circular motion but in spiritual knowledge".[20]

To solve his interpretive puzzle of simultaneous versus successive creation, Augustine thus exploits the fact that succession is appropriate to the activity and perspective of a finite intelligence, with which God intended to share the work of governing through a knowledge and causal power over lower creatures in turn:

> Or were they all happening simultaneously even then, since there was no question of intervals of time such these days mark, when the sun rises and sets and goes back to its place to rise again, but was a matter of the spiritual power of the angelic mind, comprehending all that it wished in a simultaneous knowledge with the utmost facility—even so, not thereby without any orderly linking of preceding and following causes?[21]

Though posed as a question, Augustine is here employing a rhetorical device to texture the assertion. This possible answer comes last and is restated in summary at the end of Book IV.

> And so the human mind first experiences through the senses of the body the things that have been made and from there gains such knowledge of them as its human weakness allows; and next it looks for their causes, if by any manner of means it may attain them where they abide primordially and unchangingly in the Word of God, and may thus come to *an understanding of his invisible things through those that have been made* (Rom 1:20).[22]

Augustine here takes the opportunity to explain the connection between the angelic governance of visible creation through the transmission of the divine ideas and the way this structure is reflected in the pattern of human natural theology. Natural revelation of the mind of God to human beings, by which they know about the invisible God by knowing his providential visible effects, works in the opposite order of natural creation, in which the angels know providential visible effects by first knowing the divine ideas. Just as for God to know and to make are indivisible, so analogically for the angels, for a visible thing to be made

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[19] IV.31, p.269
[20] IV.26, p.267
[21] IV.32, p.270
[22] IV.32, p.270

is for it to be made known to them by God, "in its nomic potentiality" (as we might interpret it idealistically):

> The angelic mind, on the other hand, adhered in unalloyed charity to the Word of God, after being created in due order before all the rest, …, they were first made in the knowledge of that mind, when God said, "Let them be made."…When, however, this was done, there was something else to be made and known, with God saying, *Let it be made*, so that once again it would be made in the knowledge of the angelic mind, and again scripture could say, *And thus it was made*.'[23]

So "to be made", as referred to in the text of Genesis, is to be made known to the angels, because "this day which God made in the first place—if it is the spiritual and rational creation, that is, the supercelestial angels and powers—was presented with all the works of God in a sequence or order which is the order of knowledge".[24]

The subject of Book V is the literal interpretation of a key text in the second creation narrative: "When the day was made God made heaven and earth and all the greenery of the field before it was upon the earth, and the hay of the field before it sprang up" (Gen 2:4-5). Augustine has done the work to interpret the statement that heaven and earth were made in a 'day', which evidently contains in potentiality such empirical phenomena as "the hay of the field before it sprang up". When God makes the celestial order of the angels and gives them a shared knowledge of the divine ideas so they can govern, he has already provided for the unfolding phenomena of nature as human beings experience them empirically. Summarizing the whole discussion up that point, Augustine goes on to distinguish the various roles that the divine ideas, angelic knowledge and government, and seminal principles in their systemic relation within the whole metaphysical scheme: "So then, the unchangeable formulae for all creatures in the Word of God are one thing, another those works of his from which He rested on the seventh day, yet another these which carrying on from those he is working until now[25]; and of these three it is the one I put last that is known to us through the senses of the body and our familiarity with this life".[26]

God "works until now" by way of government or providence, not by way of creating.[27] What we experience is the execution of creative commands he has already given at the level of the aeon. What emerges from this discussion is thus the following picture. We have a threefold distinction between God's

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[23] IV.32, p.270
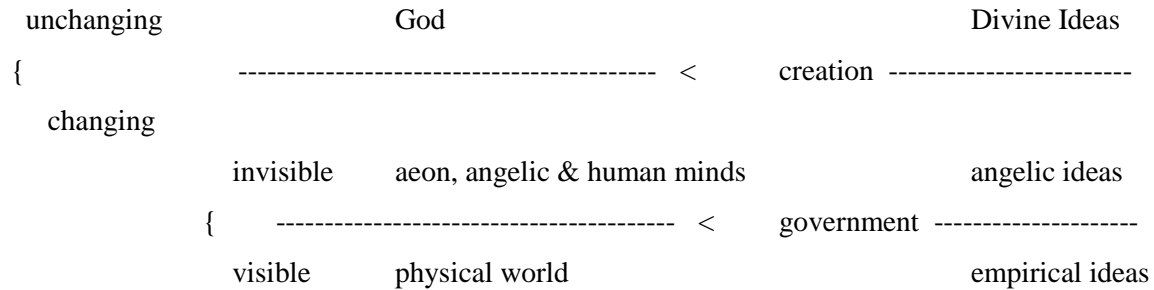[24] IV.35, p.275
[25] Jn 5:17
[26] V.12, p.290
[27] V.20-21

timeless act of creating, the celestial and temporal *diastema* of his creating minds in time, and the *odos* of creation, the empirical projection of it at the human mind. That is, we have


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  unchanging                   God                                      Divine Ideas
{               ----------------------------------   <      creation ------------------------
    changing

                 invisible      aeon, angelic & human minds                 angelic ideas
              {          ---------------------------------   <      government --------------------
                 visible        physical world                              empirical ideas
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This schema can be faithfully mapped onto the idealist schema we have outlined in VIII.4. And so we can think of the work we have done in elaborating Christian idealism as recovering through natural theology what accords with Gregory and Augustine's systematic Biblical exegesis. Altogether, idealism has the effect of recovering the explanatory value of the teaching on angels, in Scriptural revelation and the broader Church tradition. Following the specification of the phenomenological syntheses, the logical construction of things in space, and the logical construction of mental time, all from a simple stock of metaphysical, phenomenological and nomological concepts, the idealist is in a position to offer a coherent account of how the physical world is derived from a prephysical system of organizing human-angelic causal interaction. The temporal projection of actual sensible continuity to potential sensible continuity on the basis of a prephysical system of nomological control over individual streams of experiences comes in the form of explicitly causal constraints, in fact a unified system of causal links established between angelic and human minds. In order for the prephysical causal system to be such as to logically sustain a physical world with a public, objective unified space, time, and physical continuants (including organismic bodies), there must be causal pairings of human and angelic minds as well as a supra-angelic coordinating mind, the divine Wisdom, who has the requisite rational agency to enact this system as a whole.

IX.3 The Challenge to Physical Realism from Angelic Cosmology

There is at least an ambivalence in Augustine on how to think of the relation between the 'day' that God creates and the empirical world. Is the angelic reception of the divine ideas, what we can call the 'angelic ideas', a knowledge of the same forms he has implanted in physical substances (the realist option), or are

they a knowledge of how to regulate the phenomenal world by causally constraining human sensory experience (the phenomenalistic idealist option)?

Emphasizing the theoretical role of 'seminal principles' perhaps leads to a kind of Neoplatonic vitalism or at least a mental realism rather than Nyssen (phenomenalistic) idealism. The tension between these two tendencies played out in Thomas' conflicted adherence to syncretic Neoplatonism, Augustine, Dionysius, Biblical revelation, doctrinal orthodoxy, and secular science. In the narrative I have been encouraging, it is Berkeley in the modern period who takes the decisive step of re-establishing the Nyssen idealist development of Christian Neoplatonist metaphysics.[28]

Augustine's literal interpretation of Genesis is compatible with a Platonic and idealist development that amalgamates it with Dionysius' cosmic hierarchy. In Thomas' reception, his hylomorphism, a type of physical realism, prevents him from receiving traditional angelic cosmology along these same lines. This theoretical situation is repeated in other Scholastics. In basic terms, Thomas is a Platonist about angelic knowledge and an Aristotelian about human knowledge and the mechanics of angelic government, though inconsistently, as he also is faithful enough to Augustine and Dionysius to recognize angelic power over the human soul, in inducing sense-impressions, images, and even intellectual illumination. However, in these cases, angels have to work by material means and so indirectly. They can only act on matter by condensing it[29], moving the mind by moving the bodily organs and humors. Even if this already seems awkward and inelegant, there is a more generic problem: he wants to maintain the strictness of the Platonic(-Dionysian) explanatory hierarchy in saying men do not affect angels, yet allows material things causally to affect men; material causality thus occupies a pride of place in the divine government that is incompatible with adherence to the Platonic explanatory hierarchy.

Aquinas is clear that "All corporeal things are governed by the angels"[30], and adheres to the Augustinian and Dionysian tradition of understanding angelic participation in the governing work of creation through a hierarchical transmission of the divine ideas. He explicitly preserves Augustine's literal interpretation of genesis, with the 'day' of creation referring to the celestial hierarchy and its reception of the divine ideas, and the six days referring to six classes of things known.[31] Aquinas develops this, however, within his own hylomorphic ontology. His conception of angelic knowledge is that of a knowledge of intelligible species that is simple, universal, prior, hierarchical and *connatural*, that is, as

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[28] With figures like Jonathan Edwards, Bishop Butler, and Cardinal Newman confirming this line of development's theological utility.

[29] *ST* Ia.51, R3– Angels assume bodies "of air" by "condensing it by the Divine power". Here we see his physical realism and Aristotelian theory of organization. For angels to appear to humans they must use material causes to stimulate the bodily senses. It is in this sense that Aquinas believes angels can be "localized" (Q52), insofar as their power to act on a body is finitely contained "at a place". And because he will not allow overdetermination of causes, it follows that angels locally exclude one another.

[30] *ST* Ia.110.1

[31] Ia.58.7

innately complete within the angelic nature, following Augustine and Dionysius. This much is consistently Platonist and compatible with idealism. But in his description of the angelic administration of the divine government, and especially his description of the way they must compete for causal influence with material things, we can see the way his desire for fidelity to the Christian Platonist tradition is in tension with his hylomorphism. This is representative of the Scholastic tradition and contrasts with Berkeley's return to the phenomenalist line of Platonic development in Gregory of Nyssa.

In Question 110 of the *Summa*, *de praesedentia angelorum super creaturam corporalem*, Aquinas positions himself to endorse patristic angelic cosmology. Citing the words of Augustine[32] and Gregory the Great[33], he argues that the angels possess a direct control (*immediatam praesidentiam*) "not only over the higher heavenly bodies, but also over the lower material things".[34] In a roll call of patristic sources, he cites Augustine's claim that "Each visible thing in this world has an angelic power set over it".[35] But Aquinas will not allow that angels causally control material things merely by mental causation. Interestingly, he is explicitly aware that such a claim would be supported by a 'Platonist' view that "the forms in matter are caused by immaterial forms". Aristotle, he says, corrected this view with his hylomorphism, and because he, Aquinas, sides with Aristotle's hylomorphic view of material things, he cannot allow that angels move them as that would be to allow that angels endow matter with form. This, he believes is something only God *and* (lest one think his motivation here is against idolatry) other material things can do.[36] Neither will Aquinas allow any overdetermination of causes in regard to material change. "Nothing stops certain natural effects that take place through angelic power from occurring through the power of material agencies".[37] In line with physical realism and against the tenets of Platonic topdownism, Aquinas regards spiritual and material causes as on the same ontological plane in regard to causal power, so that the one must compete for influence with the other; and more often than not, material agency wins the competition.

Here we see the clear divergence between the strict Platonism maintained by idealism and the hylomorphic physical realism of the Scholastics. In the latter, material agency is accorded a causal-explanatory priority to the immaterial agency of the angelic spirits. Aquinas does believe that angels can act on material things directly in regard to local motion (not in any way but in accord with the material thing's *rationones seminales*), and in this way can be themselves 'located' at the places that they exert causal control over local motion. He will allow such control to be understood on analogy with animation,

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[32] *De Trinitate* III.4 PL 42, 873
[33] *Liber Dialogorum* IV.6 PL 77, 329
[34] Ia.110.1, Charlesworth's translation
[35] *De diversis questionibus* LXXXIII.1.79 PL 40, 90)
[36] *ST* Ia. 105.1
[37] Ia.110.2

the way a soul moves its body.[38] By moving things in space, Aquinas allows angels to have their effect on human souls, through the mediating causal agency of the bodily organs and humors. "So angels communicate intelligible truth to men by means of objects apprehensible by the senses".[39]

Because it puts angelic causal governing activity in competition with the agency of material things, physical realism is a poor match with the angelic cosmology of the Platonic tradition. Historically, the *de facto* conclusion for theologians and Christian philosophers was that traditional angelic cosmology failed to admit of a rational, coherent account and so had its place, if anywhere, only at the speculative margins of faith. But our work has shown that the Scholastic struggle to make sense of the angel-body relation should be read as a reproach of the realist conception of body, not of angelic cosmology, which is any case inseparable from biblical theism.

Lombard, Aquinas, Bernard and Alexander of Hales all inquired into the status of the angelic relation with bodies and concluded that they are not embodied by nature, but that since our natural evidence for them comes from the motion of the heavens they must be able to move bodies and so be located.[40] Furthermore, we know that there is miraculous evidence of angelic "embodiment" in the prophetic and other Biblically attested appearances of angels in bodily form. Within a physical realist metaphysics, the only way to make sense of such apparitions is the model of embodiment provided by animation. Later theologians interested in reviving patristic angelology inherit this problem.

Consider the case of Cardinal Newman. With the tradition, he sees the angelic role in the cosmos as ecclesial, governing physical phenomena as a religious duty, and as the practice of charity: "Its (nature's) works are duties".[41] And indeed as Scripture says "All ye works of the Lord…praise Him forever"[42], with the clear context that the materials of creation are moved liturgically by angels and men in blessed concord. As had the Scholastics, Newman seems to think that in the celebration of the cosmic liturgy "angels move" those portions of the natural world which seem to be animate, as "our souls move our bodies". But this is a very odd suggestion. It makes items in the physical world relate to angels on analogy with something like ensoulment, so the items really are in a sense animate; even though they do not move themselves qua physical, they do move themselves qua ensouled angels. Another problem is that, ironically, on this view our bodies would cease to be part of the natural world, unless they too are

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[38] Ia.110.3

[39] He also seems to allow as a special case the angels may enlighten the human mind directly in regard to the content of faith; the knowledge of the believer is assisted "primarily by the angels through whom the divine mysteries are revealed to us". (Ia.111.1). He also supports the doctrine of guardian angels, citing Jerome on Matthew 8:10 (Ia.113.2), and Dionysius' conception of the celestial hierarchy as a community for the distribution of divinely gifted knowledge and power.

[40] See Travis Dumsday "Alexander of Hales on Angelic Corporeality" *Heythrop Journal* LIV (2013), 360-370, for a good survey of the Scholastic treatment of the issue.

[41] Newman, *Michaelmas Sermon*, "The Powers of Nature".

[42] Song of the Three Young Men 1:35

moved by angels in the same way angels move others things (that is, through something analogous to ensoulment). But in that case how could they remain our bodies? Newman is correct to think, with Berkeley, Augustine, and the Neoplatonists, that only a volitional mind has (transcendental[43]) causal agency; but the mind-body analogy is the wrong one for thinking about the relation between angels and the phenomena of nature. We can still "refer the movements of the natural world to them (angels)"[44] on the phenomenalistic view, which has among other advantages that of showing how the angelic ministry not only moves certain things, but, by executing "according to Thine ordinance"[45], continuously governs all physical things or sustains the created character of the physical world; not through circular local motion or the condensation of matter, but through interaction with the human mind.

Another problem with Newman's Scholastic "animation model" for angelic governance is that the psychophysical connections themselves would need to be supported through causal agents, resulting in a regress or gratuitous first hypothesis. If I strike a match, I may be the one moving the match, but who or what grounds the disposition of the match to ignite when struck? The angel may have imparted to the pool of Siloam its medicinal quality, but who imparted to it its cleansing and thirst-quenching qualities? And how moreover did the angel so impart the medicinal quality?[46] Through some transmissive influence through contact action (conceived on a material model)? Newman's answer would be along the lines of the mind-body volitional model.

This way of thinking about angelic power over nature would seem to be inherited from Aquinas' discussion in the *prima pars* of the *Summa*, where angels are described as being spatially located and mobile and operative within a physical world that is in many ways on the same ontological footing. This explanatory framework abandons the PAFD and mixes the explanatory terms of metaphysics and physics. The idealist correction along the lines of Christian idealism as here presented reestablishes a Platonic ontological hierarchy such as one finds in Plotinus, Nyssen, and Augustine, in which all body-body causal interaction within the physical world is derived as a kind of projection from an explanatorily prior because noetically simpler mind-mind causal interaction. On this view, one can speak of physical, intra-mundane causation only because it is logically created by more basic idealist nomological facts about how angelic and human minds have been arranged to be in causal interaction.

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[43] That is, primary or metaphysical causal agency, as is proper to the transcendental explanatory framework or field of discourse.

[44] Newman, "Powers of Nature" in *Plain and Parochial Sermons*. Newman is also quite eloquent in calling attention to the pastoral importance of what might otherwise seem an airy point of speculative theology, given their traditional importance to the spiritual life: "Let us beware lest we make the contemplation of them [the angels] a mere feeling, and a sort of luxury of the imagination", "Nor can I conceive a use of our knowledge more practical than to make it connect the sight of this world with the thought of another".

[45] Ps 119:91

[46] Jn 5:1-9

All thoughts about causal agency "in the world" (or really any place else) depend on the notion of an "incorporeal substance"—this is what people use when they "represent to themselves" or think of self-motion in the world or the motion of causal chains. And because causation is so intimately connected with the concept of substance—since it is originative and immanent causation that makes a thing a *thing* as opposed to a *pseudo-process*, like a shadow-puppet—this is where the mistaken idea of material substance arises. As idealists we can say that the world-suggestive organization of sensory experience is in particular suggestive of a world of three-dimensional spatial occupants, *things*, a spatio-temporal collection of qualities distinguished by their separation from the other qualities and internal qualitative density but also by their apparent capacity to feature in causal chains that make up the regulatory order of the world. On account of all this, as Berkeley pointed out, it is tempting to misuse analogy with our subjectively known experience of volitional agency as incorporeal substances to think that, therefore these apparently "active" things, that feature in causal chains and are governed by the regulatory order, are substances.

Interestingly, Newman himself was a professed Berkeleyan[47], and attributes this to the early influence of reading Bishop Butler. One can find passages in Newman's writing where he makes theoretical use of the idealist thesis.[48] But Newman did not apparently uncover the way coherently to integrate Berkeley's phenomenalism, and especially the tactual-visual language model of perception, with angelic cosmology. Newman's neo-patristic angelology was taken up by Bouyer, his spiritual son and intellectual disciple. Bouyer in particular realized the potential it afforded for founding the exegesis of creation doctrine on a theology of the Eucharist. We can agree with Newman that "every breath of air and ray of light and heat, every beautiful prospect, is, as it were, the skirts of their garments, the waving of the robes of those whose faces see God"[49], and with Bouyer that "the Kingdom of God is accomplished in the adoring and loving acknowledgment on the part of creatures, and the entire world becomes a harmony by attuning itself to God".[50] Neo-patristic angelology, developed rightly, does help us to see that all created things are made to be lifted up in the Christian Eucharist. Having developed a Christian idealism that enriches Berkeley's theistic phenomenalism with the angelic hypothesis, we can make this point clear in a way they could not.

IX.4 Unity in the Angelic Administration of the Mystery: A Eucharistic Cosmos

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[47] *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, Ch.1, p.20 in the Dover edition. Newman refers in particular to Berkeley's "sacramental system", and the "unreality of material phenomena" as a legacy of the Alexandrian School that followed from Butler's concept of analogy between the separate works of God in which "the lower system is economically or sacramentally connected with the more momentous system".
[48] E.g., in *Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, I.1.i-iii.
[49] Ibid.
[50] *Eucharist*, p.67.

We have discussed the Christian tradition's reception of revelation on the nature of the celestial hierarchy, its temporality, and the teaching on angelic governance (*praesidentia*) of the physical world in accordance with the divine ideas and guardianship (*custodia*) of human beings. We have demonstrated the explanatory value, consilience, and elegance of idealist metaphysics in that its truth entails these same teachings and furnishes them with a degree of clarity and detail they might otherwise lack. The final point to make in completing our theological argument is to recognize how, in articulating the linguistic nature of sensory experience—per the Berkeleyan syntheses by which the physical world is logically constructed—idealism facilitates a systematic theological account of how divine, angelic, and human interaction is liturgically unified in the Mystery of Christ. This is the notion of the cosmic liturgy, the understanding that the various works of the divine creation economy are sacramentally holistic. It stems from the Biblical teaching that God creates through speech, through spoken words, and that the order of the world is dependent on the purpose of this speech. It is inseparable from other Biblical teachings, concerning creation as covenant, the relation between creation covenant and social life, the new song of salvation, angelic mediation in the sacramental economy, the Old Testament temple theology[51], and repetition of patterns of Divine creation through speech in the Church's liturgy, summative in the Mass. Development of the notion of a cosmic liturgy, of a world-made-in-and-for-the Eucharist is facilitated by the metaphysical and theological implications of Christian idealism.

The early Fathers developed this notion to different degrees. Modern theologians with affinities and sympathies for patristic sources have sought to emphasize it through historical scholarship, commentary, and exegesis, like Daniélou[52] and Von Balthasar[53]. Others like Newman and Bouyer[54] have tried to let the doctrine serve as an influence in their own systematic theological thinking. The way to do justice to it, to adopt it as a reasonable and coherent worldview, is to interpret it within the metaphysical framework of phenomenalistic idealism. Modern theology combined with the metaphysics of physical realism is incoherent and modern theology on its own is too vague on just the cosmological questions that matter most: How is the world something that God creates through liturgical speech *now* and at every moment? And how is it a medium of sacramental participation between all of creation and God? How is it made *for* the Eucharist?

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[51] E.g., the reference to 'watchmen' in the OT is a reference to those who acted as guardians of the temple. This is a correspondence within the earthly hierarchy to the guardian angels of the celestial hierarchy. They allegorically and anagogically refer to guardian angels, allegorically because they prefigure the guardianship of the Christ's human nature, the "temple not made by hands".

[52] Jean Daniélou, *The Angels and their Mission*: *According to the Fathers of the Church* (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1982).

[53] *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus Confessor* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004).

[54] Bulgakov (*Jacobs Ladder: On Angels*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) and Staniloae (*The Experience of God*, Vols. I and II. London: T & T Clark, 2000) also come to mind.

Combined with the idealist view, God and the angels may be understood to co-govern by cooperating in the active organization of human sensory experience. Given its requirements for mental time and the prephysical nomological framework, an idealist theory of creation requires a bare minimum of a temporally-ordered continuum and individual streams of experience that through their one-to-one systemic correlation with human minds and inherent causal power can generate subjective and intersubjective time. This bare minimum is that which is most uncontroversially revealed about the celestial order in Scripture: insofar as the angels are collected as a liturgical assembly of word-bearing ministers, an *ecclesia*, the celestial order has a collective unity founded on the economy of the Word[55]; and insofar as the angels are individual persons they also as pure intelligences have individual identities.

Still, whether conjoined with physical realism or idealism, there is something about the hypotheses of angelic cosmology that would seem to call for justification. We could call it the problem of "angelic hiddenness", with the deliberate intention of invoking the analogy with the so-called problem of divine hiddenness for Christian theism. Insofar as our elaboration of Christian idealism has made use of the angelic hypothesis, it has perhaps attracted to itself the same justificatory onus. Recall the oddness of the idealist's suggestion, e.g., in the instance of MacLeish kissing his wife, that, from the theological perspective of transcendent metaphysics, our bodily causal interaction with each other is, like all physical causation, dependent on a system of angelic governance, in which the chain of causes runs from human subjects to angelic subjects and back to human subjects. Here it is helpful to remember the oddness of such a description is explicitly recognized by idealism in the sense that it entails the proposition that our access to the kind of sensory order that the angels, following divine instruction, affect is for all everyday purposes through terms and concepts of the notional physical theory. Idealism recognizes the conceptual autonomy and descriptive indispensability of physical theory. It is in the perspective of the physical theory that we think, judge, and act on physical facts, including facts about embodiment, the objectivity of physical space and time and the possibilities for physical causation. The familiarity of this perspective is a good thing, indeed providential, and worthy of praise; but it also, by reason of its very familiarity, keeps hidden the more basic phenomenological order and the explanatory metaphysics that we have proposed in connection with it[56]. In this way, angelic hiddenness provides us with an opportunity in relation to the Christian moral and spiritual life that might be considered in a manner similar to that in which its relation to divine hiddenness has been considered.

The angels are revealed in Scripture as practicing a kind of *kenosis* or condescension of selfless love: the angels who did not fall are they "who did not love their own souls to the point of death".[57] Their

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[55] Or more immediately, as Bulgakov notes (*Jacob's Ladder*, p.117), that angels *speak*.
[56] And indeed found it necessary to do so to preserve the scope-restricted truth of physical theory (*cf*.VII.5).
[57] Rev 12:11

hidden pairing or partnership with us is an indication that they are meant to share in a common liturgical fellowship with us.[58] In all "legitimate occupation" man finds a fellow-laborer: "I am a fellow-servant with you and the prophets"[59], the angel tells the revelator. With an idealist theology, we can suppose that angelic causation of human sensations in the manner necessary for imposing constraints that produce physical space is done voluntarily in accordance with causal laws that God has decreed but not coerced the angels to execute, commands they perform "under the sweet compulsion of adoring love".[60] Albeit limited in understanding, angelic knowledge of the future, as exemplified in the oracles of Zechariah and Daniel, is explained by the distinction between the temporal order of the aeon they inhabit (mental time) and physical time that they help to create idealistically. For by this distinction, idealism can explain how angels can know the future of our world history (or universal history) without doing so in a temporal-transcendental manner akin to the way God knows the future. Following our idealist continuation of Augustine's interpretation of Genesis, transcendentally God creates in a single act all possibilities—and we might say all (immaterial) hypostases. But empirically and in the order of angelic knowledge, he presides in a hierarchically distributed way, preserving creation hexaemerally. When God draws near to physical creation, he does so through angelic mediation, "riding on their wings".[61] God's eternity is an *adiastasis*, so the end of the aeon and the final bequest of God's own life, in all and for all, is still something that the angels await together with us. Following the Orthodox theologians, we can say that this end is not simply the annihilation of time, or the aeon, but the plenitude of God's eternal life in the aeon: the union of eternity and duration, an unending perfect experience.[62]

The cosmic hierarchy of angels and men, united in the sacramental economy, is the providential arrangement for the administration of the Mystery of Christ. Paul's tells us that his mission is "to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery (*oikonomia tou mysteriou*), which from the ages (*ton aionon*) was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

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[58] Bulgakov, in reflecting on John of Damascus' sophianism, goes so far as to refer to the doubling of the image of God in the angelic-human person, that the divine idea of a rational creature is a prototype of a single angelic-human person, something the greatest saints approached while still in this life, notable John the Baptist, the "messenger", or as Eastern tradition remembers him, the "angel-man": "This Sophianic unity theme forms the basis of the correlation of a guardian angel and a human. But this pre-eternal design for creation in God is supertemporal, existing from all eternity, and is realized in the angelic world in time, but before the birth of a given human as well as the appearance of all humanity" (p.66).

[59] Rev 21

[60] J.E. Hull, *The Holy Angels* (London: SPCK, 1909), ix.

[61] Ps 17:10-11(18:9-10), Ps 79:2 (80:1)

[62] For a contemporary theological inquiry into the Last Things that seriously considers the implications for angels and their relation to God and human beings, see Paul Griffiths, *Decreation: The Last Things of All Creatures*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014. Though I disagree with Griffiths' formulations of doctrine and his theological reasoning on those formulations, his is a welcome exception to the veritable vacuum of serious, sustained reflection on questions of angelology in contemporary systematics, especially Catholic systematics.

according to the purpose of the ages (*prosthesin ton aionon*) that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence".[63]

We have already seen that the subjective mental time dimensions of Ch.VIII may be thought of as infinitely extended in both directions because subjective volitions and sensations are located within a larger temporal arrangement of points that are in a 1-1 correspondence with an infinitely extended temporal order. This makes sense of Scriptural passages, such as Psalm 139:15, Jer 1:5, and Wis 8:19-20, which refer to the human subject's pre-birth notional existence. As object of the divine mind, this is naturally interpreted by our technical concept of the joinability of conscious streams, which is nomically guaranteed by the beta-laws. At the same time, this brings out the angelological dimension of passages such as Ps 16:7: "…even in the night my mind will teach me wisdom.."; that is, even when I am unconscious you guard me and enlighten me with knowledge through my guardian angel. Ps 18 shows us the continuity-in-development between the creation law, the Mosaic law, and the New Law. We know that the latter two are subject to angelic mediation, per the hierarchic structure of the Kingdom. Therefore, we may infer that the creation law is subject to angelic mediation as well, on pain of rupturing the continuity-in-development of Old Testament theology and the Hebrew tradition, and of the intimate relation of creation and redemption, nature and grace.

The Song of the Three Young Men[64] is a liturgical hymn of praise that first invokes the angels and the heavenly creation, then natural phenomena, weather and season, then birds and beasts, and then finally men, Israel in its hierarchical aspect, and "souls and spirits of the just", then finally the three young men themselves. This progression reflects the order of creation. It may well confirm the interpretation of the creation narrative of Genesis on which the angels are created first. If they are created first, then, putting this together with other creation accounts such as Proverbs 8:22-31, John 1:1-14, Colossians 1:12-20, Rev 4-5, and Heb 11:3 it would seem to follow that the angels are free instrumental agents hierarchically mediating the work of liturgically governing the physical world. Idealism's insistence that physical regularity be explained by sensory or phenomenal regularity subordinates physical phenomena to the execution of liturgical duties, performed by free, rational mental agents. Could a personalist Christianity accept anything else? Can participation be construed in any but an ultimately personalist way and still be relevant to Christian sacramental theology or its doctrines of creation and redemption?

The angelic knowledge of creation is meant to come to us, with the Law and the Gospel, as one 'message' in the sense of James 1:18, "By his own choice he made us his children by the message of the

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[63] Eph 3:9-12
[64] Also known as the Prayer of Azariah, Dan 3:23-91(NAB)

truth so that we should be a sort of first-fruits of all that he had created"[65], and of John 6:68 – "you have the message of eternal life". In receiving it we are meant to respond by joining in the work of the same administration that brings it to us, hierarchically sharing God's theology, which takes the form, in its creative-redemptive dimension, of mercy-working, wonderworking, or presiding over sacramental rites, according to our gifts and vocations. Similarly, if visible creation is a 'message', as Scripture insists, then it would seem to follow that the 'messeng*ers*' are cooperators, participatory agents in the work of creation. The fact that they are themselves created and recipients of the message but also called, in that same creative act, to transmit the message is way of stating the same point made by Dionysius' understanding of the hierarchy, and more modern theological conceptions of the Church as God's sacrament of Christ to the world.

Idealism shows us that through our thoughts, desires, acts of longing, imagination, and conscientious reflection, we are *at all times* to pray[66] – such constant inner prayer is to become the very fabric of our psychological lives and so, idealistically, to condition the place where we are meant to dwell in the presence of the Lord, who "discerns my thoughts from afar" and is "intimately acquainted with all my ways"[67], "And indeed, what great nation is there that has its gods so near as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call to him?"[68], for "the just shall live in the presence of the Lord".[69] Our thoughts determine our lives, our dwelling (or not) in the presence of the Lord. All are meant to communicate a response to God hierarchically that is meant to translate itself into the sharing of the work of bringing God's kingdom into our midst, by manifesting transparently its power and effects at work in us, so that the visible world he made for us in Christ, the place where we dwell, is taken into the sanctuary where he dwells forever and expanded into its immeasurable horizon.

Angelic society is revealed in Scripture as a liturgical assembly, an *ecclesia*, with a hierarchy of ministerial offices. In the annunciation of the Gospel to Zechariah, the angel identifies himself in this way: "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God…"[70]; and similarly in the Book of Tobit we hear "I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand ever ready to enter the presence of the glory of the Lord…"[71]. This hierarchy is referred to repeatedly by Paul. Speaking of eucharistic worship, he says "Because of this ought the woman to have authority (*exousian*) over her head on account of the angels"[72]; that is, to uphold the dignity of the hierarchy, including the angels (among whom are the heavenly

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[65] *cf*. 2 Thess 2:13-14
[66] 1 Thess 5:17
[67] Ps 139:2-4
[68] Dt 4:7
[69] Ps 14:12
[70] Lk 1:19
[71] Tb 12:15
[72] 1 Cor 11:10

authorities' [*exousia*] of Eph 3:10), all of whom are assembled together in the liturgical sacrament, it is fitting that this divinely instituted pattern be embodied in the earthly Church. The religious duty of maintaining hierarchical order and integrity is one of the most consistently emphasized exhortations in Apostolic writings. It is the central purpose for the author of *1 Clement*, who writes to reprove and instruct the Corinthians who have taken it on themselves to depose their bishop. It is probably the major theme of Ignatius' epistles that the unifying power of the Church is concretely realized in the local bishop, whose power and authority is indissolubly linked with the credal faith of those he instructs and initiates and ultimately with the unity of Christ in the eucharistic sacrament. The *Didache* contains the same theme, as do the pastoral epistles of Paul. *The Shepherd of Hermas* makes a similar point directly in regard to the ranks of angels and martyrs as the foundational stones of the tower in the shepherd's vision of the Church.

In Ch.II we have already mentioned the texts of Scripture that reveal the angelic power over nature. On that basis alone we might well think the exercise of angelic power in nature is diverse enough to infer total control. Hence, as one turn of the century Anglican divine observed, "It is much more consistent with our knowledge of the stability and continuity of the natural forces, to suppose that the angelic dominion of nature is permanent and complete, than to regard it as special and occasional. The splendid constancy of the natural laws then becomes a visible demonstration of the unerring and unresting diligence and faithfulness with which the ministers of God execute his sovereign will".[73] This is an important part of the argument for angelic governance in Christian cosmology: to limit the role of angelic mediation in revelation risks separating natural and supernatural revelation; it risks a view of creation that is not Christocentric and fundamentally oriented to the eschaton. It is part of the still unfinished work of *nouvelle theologie* to overcome the divide between nature and grace.

In speaking creation into existence through the Word and Spirit, God reveals himself to creation by natural illumination, the law to angels, by the Mosaic Law, the law to men, which is prepared in nature and so by the angels naturally and supernaturally, and finally in his Christ, which is prepared by men[74] and angels together in nature and the law. Part of what Jesus reveals is not only the Father, but the fact that the Father has chosen to reveal himself, in Christ, through a particular historical salvation economy, in which angels have been at work from the beginning. His own prayer "let thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" makes much less sense without an angelic cosmology. How exactly could the Father's will—the same will that Jesus does and reveals to us again and again—be done on earth as it is in heaven if heaven is unpopulated by creatures or if they were not organized under a charitable covenant, a ministry

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[73] J. E. Hull, *The Holy Angels*, 56.
[74] That is, through Israel's testimony, the Davidic covenant and the victory of Marian humility.

of gift and eucharist? Jesus is revealed as the commander of nature[75] who stills the waves and the winds, the master of nature who transmutes the essences of objects[76], and the *transcender* of nature who reveals to man the status of nature as the contingently-and-mutably necessary order of visible creation, the dynamic open-endedness of nature as a perceptible language, something to change in reflection of the dynamism of the relation between man and Creator.[77] Man, like Peter in the storm-tossed boat, is called out to participate through faith in the transcendence of the order of the natural world.[78] That such transcendence is included in the inheritance of divine sonship is implicated in the Ascension of Jesus, who as man resurrected from death superseded the ranks of heaven, who are also "sons of God", to whom the rule of nature is entrusted.

The angels are themselves formed into an ecclesial body through the creation covenant in which they are called to participate in the work of creation and, through it, in the divine economy of salvation and ultimately in the secret wisdom of the mystery of Christ, though this is unknown to them until its historical revelation.

> The heavens proclaim your works, O Lord, the *assembly* (*qahal*, *ecclesia*) of your holy ones proclaims your truth. (Ps 89:5)

> A God to be feared in the *council* of his holy ones (Ps 89:7).

> In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality." (1 Timothy 5:21)

The visible world gives the angels the realm in which to have their creative input and from which, through Christ, they have their sacramental output. This is paradigmatically so in Christ through the Mass, but also through the catching of souls in baptism, human procreation and death (and to some extent in ordination, as one more "joins their ranks", yet all, including laity, are called to be like them albeit in different modes). Like Jeremiah, we must have the Lord's angel-borne words in our mouths. Only then can we effect any prophetic change or testimony, any offering or good work. For when his word is with us he is with us. The words turn us into the body of Christ. They are not abstractions; they are the names, the instructions that contain the active power of the living God. They are the expressions of the mind of

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[75] Mt 8:27, Lk 8:25 - "It is you who rule the sea in its pride; it is you who still the surging of the waves." (Ps 89:9)
[76] Jn 2:7-9
[77] Mt 14:25-33, Mk 6:45-52, Jn 6:16-21
[78] Lk 17:6

Christ[79] that create all things anew. We are to know him as we have been known by him, calling him in praise as he has called us in love.

We are made in the image of the Son[80] through baptism in the Spirit; the angels are pure spirits who are also called sons of God. Their likeness to the Father is mediated by the coeternal Son; our likeness to the Father is mediated by the risen Jesus; both are mediated through the Spirit of Sonship, one through the medium of the invisible world, one through the medium of the invisible and the visible. The absolute primacy of Christ as the original plan for the glory of a human nature, means that angels are also glorified in Christ, through their service to his human nature. The various human natures that have been or will be in the world are Christ's human nature, and by ministering to these, the angels minister to Christ.[81] They do this idealistically, sense-experience organizationally (though not exclusively this way), "by the words of their testimony"[82], which would mean not only the angelic oracles in the Old Testament theophanies, but all sense experience, which *negatively* or mystically, through the method of dissimilar similarities, is "angelic theophany", divine-angelic co-speech of the one Truth of Christ. This is what defeats the dragon "by the blood of the lamb".[83]

Using Christian idealism's Berkeleyan language model of sensation we can think of the angelic administration of the rules of human sensory experience as akin to the inscription of texts by the prophets. The physical world is written in the angel fire of mental causation. The divine ideas in reference to potential human volition sequences are the providential knowledge they receive or "take down" as divine commands, responding in turn by causally organizing human sensation as a ministry of worship, just as Moses inscribed the Torah in stone on Mount Sinai, with the voice of God directing him. In Amos 4:13 we learn that "He who forms the mountains, who creates the spirits, and *who reveals his thoughts to mankind*[84], who turns dawn to darkness and treads on the heights of the earth – the Lord God Almighty is his name". This important passage indicates that the God who creates all natural phenomena does so *by* revealing his thoughts to man, which is otherwise awkward but very naturally interpreted as a statement of the thesis of phenomenalistic idealism. Moreover, the passage goes a step further to connect the thoughts that God reveals to man, and by means of such revelation creates—those very thoughts are comprehended and personified in the Divine Wisdom that is Christ, the Anointed One who comes in the flesh to assume lordship over the earth by making himself its most humble and passionate servant. God

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[79] 1 Cor 2:16
[80] Rom 8:29
[81] Perhaps they had not always known this, as St. Paul seems to indicate in Eph 3:10, so that when it was revealed in the Incarnation they were surprised by joy. This would also explain their original test of obedience, with the upright of will humbly and charitably accepting the condescension of serving the lower creature without knowing that in so doing they would be serving the one they knew as the "king of angels" (Col 2:9-10; *cf*. Lk10:18, Is 14:12).
[82] Rev. 12:11
[83] idem.
[84] "who proclaims to men his Christ" (LXX).

reveals his wisdom to men through angelic mediation, in the New Covenant, the Old, and in nature—one salvation economy, and therefore one angelic ministry of salvation.

In Ezra 9:11 we are presented with an analogy for the cosmic liturgy in which the sons of God sung with praise and joy at the making of earth[85], just as do the Levites in laying the foundation of the temple. This helps us read the divine ordinances for the priesthood in Exodus as a mystical figure for the cosmic liturgy: the priests are dressed in apparel of "glory and beauty" and are to use trumpets, just as the angels are described as doing in Revelation.[86] In the New Testament, the Church is founded with the same hierarchical dynamism centered around the activity of preaching, praying, and the liturgical celebration of the sacraments. The apostles and ministers of the Church are "para-angels", serving God in loving obedience by bringing his transforming word to others (indeed to the whole visible creation), ministering to their salvation and so liturgically cooperating in the coming of his kingdom. This gives us a deepened understanding of the ecclesiastical mysteries and a theology of the eucharist that is more closely integrated with traditional Christian cosmology and the doctrine of creation. In a text such as 1 Pet 1:10-12, we find that the movement of the apostolic preaching follows the same hierarchic pattern as the cosmology that contains it, just as we saw[87] in studying Dionysius' conception of the hierarchy. It begins with God working mystically through angels and prophets. It continues manifestly, telically in Christ working through the apostles, then continues working through the bishops, saints, and martyrs of the early churches and so successively down through the ages. The transmission of the deposit of faith is carried and distributed through the centuries by the hierarchic structure of the church. This structure is in place first and foremost for liturgical purposes, for the hierarchic movement of the high lifting up the low. The fact that the apostolic preaching is transmitted through its actual ministerial structure is one more consequence of this.

That such an administrative role in God's economy could be served by a liturgical community of finite, pure spiritual beings in a participatory liturgical role, mediating God's creative operations in a hierarchy, is an opportunity that God would not miss given his Trinitarian essence and plan for creation in Christ, the Incarnate Word who is the Royal Priest of creation. Such a mediating cooperative role for the celestial hierarchy magnifies the finite image of divine love because it realizes a further opportunity for

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[85] Job 38:7

[86] cf. also Ez 3:10-11: "When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the LORD, as prescribed by David king of Israel. With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD: 'He is good; his love toward Israel endures forever.' And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid".

[87] In Ch.IV.

Son-Logos-*Pneuma* imitation in creation, as the angels freely condescend[88] to minister to creatures below them in knowledge and power.

Bouyer had recognized that: "The glory given to God by the Seraphim's singing of the *Qedushah* is the reflection of divine glory returning to its source. But in them it is a conscious reflection expressed in song, just as in God the igneous light is that of the Spirit expressed in the Word".[89] It is indeed expressed as the song of creation, which is for idealist theology quite literally, in its sustaining effect, the word of man's sensory experience ignited by the angelic mind and written in the fire of his. The manifest liturgy of the eucharist, with its sanctuary, altar, incense and lamps, is the manifestation of the hierarchically encompassing liturgy. Man's liturgy is joined with the angelic cosmic liturgy in the Mass because the human eucharist is hierarchically contained in the angelic, as is all human environmental activity. Though in this special form of public work the angelic and human interact in the way they were intended to, with man collaborating in praise and thanksgiving, and using the superiority of the office of the angel as a logical, continuous extension of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, to help his song and above all—in the Mass—his sacrifice be brought to God. The sacrifice of course is itself the gift of the Trinity, which again (or rather, firstly) is mediated by the angelic government. The gift first descends down the angelic hierarchy to man, as the world is created, as Isaiah's vision unfolds[90], as the Incarnation proceeds (through the annunciation of Gabriel to Mary of the descent of the Shekinah into her womb), as the Holy Spirit baptizes, and finally as the worldly event of the Mass unfolds, then ascends up the angelic hierarchy from the people who bring the antitypes of bread and wine, to the deacon, the hierarch, to the ministering spirits presiding over the Mass[91] who bring the consecrated oblation directly before the presence of God. In the Mass are the words fulfilled, "You will see the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man", as Jacob foresaw and as Jesus promised Nathanael. God creates angels and together with them creates the physical world of earth, air, water, plants, and seeds in the mind of man (in organizing the pattern of his experience by speaking to his mind in the regular way God prescribes). Man's collective and temporally extended labor then produces from these bread and wine. Man then continues this public work as eucharist, bringing the bread and wine to the celebration of the Mass as offertory gifts; they are consecrated with the collaboration of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and then ultimately through the angelic mediation brought into the immediate presence of God in his heavenly court, at the foot of his heavenly

[88] The reality of the angelic condescension in their ministry fits with the explanation of the fall of Lucifer who *would not serve*. It was not just his ambition to be God, it was his offense at "abasement" in sacrificial/'host'-form to bring forth gifts of praise and thanks through men. The idealist theory explains why the demons in thwarting us from glorifying the Creator by getting us to glorify ourselves actually make us slaves to them.
[89] *Eucharist*, p.65
[90] As Dionysius explains it, with the lower angels speaking to Isaiah (Is 6:6) on behalf of the seraphim, who in turn speak on behalf of the Logos.
[91] Recall from Ch.I that in the words of the Roman Canon the priest explicitly invoke the mediation of the angels in the Canon, after the consecration.
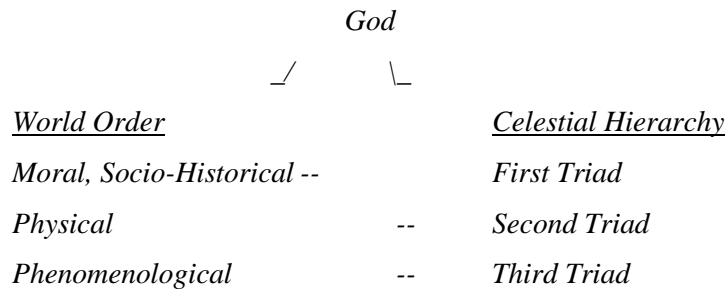
throne. This is an interpretation of the angels ascending and descending on man in the cosmic liturgy via the Dionysian theory of hierarchy and the metaphysics of Berkeleyan idealism. The recognition of the angelic intermediary role in the eucharist should flow out from the model of the Mass to all man's organized life. His communication with God at all times is effected by the angelic office of the heavenly spirits in this dynamic movement characteristic of the hierarchical pattern of creation.

On the idealist interpretation of the doctrine of creation, we can endorse the following line, which in Chs.III-IV we saw was what the trajectory of Gregory and Dionysius' work converges on. God creates matter through the celestial hierarchy. But his purpose in doing so is to prepare and bring about the historical reality of the incarnation of Christ and of his sacrifice on the Cross, accomplishing not only the communion of the Spirit to men, the lower priests, but through them and their embodiment, to communicate the Body of the Word, the Body of Sonship, the Eucharist. The angels too are perfected in joy in Christ, through the mediation of man. By regulating the experience of man, they create bodies, so that even though they are bodiless, they can offer the sacrifice of the body[92] through the human mind, to which the mind of God is united. In the Ascension, the human nature in Christ is elevated above even this rank of intimacy with God, since man is the throne and dwelling of God, the tabernacle he fills and from which His glory radiates.

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[92] In light of the cosmic significance of the cross, this may well be an essential element for the completion of their divinization, or their sharing in the eternal delight of the life of the Trinity *Cf.* Lk 15:10. To say that the angels increase in joy, is not necessarily to say that they move in the order of glory. One could say with Aquinas (*ST* Ia.62.9) that beatification or creaturely perfection is a finite vision of the infinite divine essence which cannot be increased in beatitude, but the virtue of which can give rise to increasing joy as its reward.

Appendix - Natural Theology as Dionysian Symbolic Theology: A Government of the Word

In discussing the role of the angelic hierarchy in the visible creation economy in IV.4 of the present work, I suggested that as part of their salvation ministry to men the angels facilitate the Incarnation by "participating with God in the creation of a visible world that unfolds at the human empirical perspective, by which it appears to us as progression from star dust to organisms, to human beings, to Israel, to Christ". And I suggested the following schema for thinking of the hierarchical division of governance within the visible creation economy:

God

World Order   *Celestial Hierarchy*

Moral, Socio-Historical --   *First Triad*

Physical   *--*   *Second Triad*

Phenomenological   *--*   *Third Triad*

What I want to do here is begin to address a certain aspect of the way in which the different world-governing assignments of the angelic hierarchy may be thought of as enacting a cosmic liturgy with Christ presiding.

Consider how the natural as well as the social preconditions and influences of how we take our living in the world are determined by what we call "laws of nature" and their logical consequences. Per the lingustic model of Berkeley's phenomenalistic idealism, they determine the order and sequential pattern of what we will experience given the choices we make. The interpretation we give to these patterns of experience is that of an external physical world, complete with the individual characteristics of everything from trees and rocks to water and wine. In this way, the laws of nature, or better, the "laws of experience", are regular and universal; they hold across time and space, as well as across scale. For example, the law of nature we call the "law of gravitation" is a regularity holding not only for the fall of the rock that I drop, but for the fall of the moon towards the earth and the fall of the earth towards the sun—all of which is ultimately understood as having a certain empirical significance in relation to the primary tactual experience of downward resistance. The order of the natural laws encompasses ascending scales not only individually but collectively, so that the laws of perspective apply to individual experience, holding that if I move farther away from an object it will appear smaller to me, while the laws of trade apply to collective social experience, holding that if a society exports only the goods with the lowest opportunity costs then it will increase the surplus of all goods and associated production profits.

The laws of trade and the laws of perspective are not related as logical consequences but they are consistent with each other and encompassed within the coherent order of human experience. Human experience is ordered so that both sets of laws (and many others) pertain to it at the same time. In this way, the laws are mutually implicative—they "take each other into consideration", so to speak.[1]

In the sections of Ch.V we have argued with Berkeley that the (idealist) laws of nature that govern human experience (and in particular order the synthetic connections between vision and tactition, between coordinating data and sensations, and between sensation-volition pairs) do not have the status of logical necessities despite their regularity. What we now have to consider more fully is that this gives sensory experience the status of a language in very precise and technical sense. First, like the connection between words and ideas, the connections between experiences are regular but arbitrary. They are also universal and mutually implicative or non-atomistic in implication. They relate sets of possible experiences into sequences and that might be partially expressed as subjunctive conditionals, e.g. "if this set of experiences were to obtain, then this set of experiences would obtain"; and they are regular, universal, mutually implicative, and arbitrary. The laws that govern the pattern of human experience and constitute what we interpret as the created world are regular, universal, mutually implicative and arbitrary because they are a language in which God speaks to us, making himself and his purposes known to us through the very content of experience, as well as through the connections between waking experiences that make them coherent and maximally consistent, helping us to separate them out from dream and fantasy.

On this view the order of creation down to the last law is merely the manifestation of what God intends in his wisdom with regard to human experience. That what we experience is regular and universal is a manifestation of his providence, since these features allow us to plan for the future and bring benefit into our lives by conforming our actions with our expectations. That the laws of nature are arbitrary is a clue to their utter dependence on divine sovereignty, in accordance with the traditional Christian doctrine of creation; they have no authority, no source of necessity, on their own but utterly manifest the will of God. Their arbitrariness is also a clue to their status as instrument of communication. It is perhaps one of the functions of the miracles recorded in scripture that they highlight the non-logical (but still predictively powerful or binding) regularity of experiential patterns. Just as the word 'tree', with its four letters and single syllable could easily refer to something that does not have leaves and roots[2], day does not have to

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[1] Berkeley had argued that there is context-sensitivity even in the phenomenological "laws of nature" (*Principles*, Secs. 30,32), that determine the organization of human sensory experience, or the contingent regularities of visual and other coordinating data as signs for tangible sensations. For him this was one more indicator of the linguistic character of the laws, since the meanings of words within language is similarly context-sensitive. This is a kind of mutual implicativity internal to the phenomenological domain itself.

[2] Since the word bears no resemblance to its object and its referential connection with it is grounded in custom, and thus ultimately in the will of its speakers and their common knowledge of that will.

be followed by night or Spring by Summer[3] simply in virtue of what we (can and do) experience them to be. Miracles make us aware of the amazing regularities which we normally take for granted but which, much more so than the miracles, call out for explanation. Regularities in experience point to a governing power beyond experience as their ground and sustaining cause; but the arbitrariness and mutual implicatively of the regularities points to the fact that this power must be free, providential and spiritual (that is, *mental*, possessing will and intellect), possessed of wise intentions, and indeed intentions that relate all of the physical world to human beings, in a manner very much like that in which a speaker relates words to objects by making his referential intentions known to his interlocutor.

We can think of Berkeley's divine language argument as an adaptation of Dionysius' theological "method of dissimilar similarities" to natural theology. The world is a visible language in which God speaks to us because the organization of the images of sensory consciousness has the uniquely linguistic significance of the oracles of Scripture and the sacramental rites: they have their meaning because they bear the weight of the divine despite, or rather *because of*, their inadequacy. One event of experience points to another that God wills to follow it, as a word points to the object it refers to.

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[3] Fantasy stories are a source of evidence for the coherence of these and other imagined possible alternatives to the actual created regularities.

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