

Good Leader

A dissertation submitted

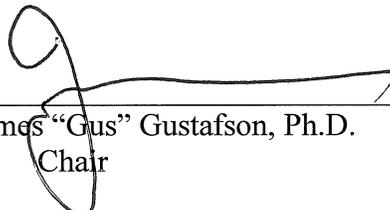
by
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to
Benedictine University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Values-Driven Leadership

This dissertation has been
accepted for the faculty of
Benedictine University.



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December 2016

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Abstract

A question is posed regarding the theory of leadership that would optimally promote human well-being and flourishing. The answer to this question is best sought in the various ontological foundations underlying moral philosophy and their implications regarding the nature of humanness, self, soul, and the universe in which we seek answers to fundamental questions. An historical survey of moral philosophy is undertaken to elucidate the key concepts associated with goodness and human nature. The notions of a transcendent standard of “the Good,” teleological human nature, human essence, and free will are followed from ancient philosophies to modern rationalism and empiricism and post-modern materialism. In this context, a study is made of values as a moral framework and how their grounding in the post-modern philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche impacts their utility in leadership models that include moral qualities in their construct. Comparison of values with virtues is made, and the latter are offered as more applicable to leadership that is aimed at human flourishing. A virtue-based leadership approach is discussed with the proposition that the overarching virtue should be that of love, defined as selfless care.

Dedication

I dedicate my vision, worldview, and love for knowledge that fueled my desire to write this dissertation to my dad, Earl T. Carter, MD, PhD, and my mom, Barbara C. Carter, RN. I dedicate the hope for a better future, as leaders lead virtuously, to my children, Melissa, Grant, and Drew, and their life partners, Andrew, Annie, and Lindsey. And last, but certainly not least, I dedicate this to my wife and true companion, Mary, whose physical, emotional, and spiritual efforts supported me and helped this life-changing project to germinate, grow, and bear fruit.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Jim Ludema as well as the faculty and staff at the Center for Values-Driven Leadership at Benedictine University for providing an academic environment rich in intellectual rigor and conducive to meaningful, thoughtful reflection. Without this fertile ground from which to germinate and grow, my thesis would not have seen the light of day, evanescent from lack of theoretical nutrition. But fortified by distinguished visiting scholars, CVDL faculty, and productive cohort dialogues, I was furnished the resources to transform an idea into a doctoral dissertation. For this, I am deeply thankful.

I thank my entire cohort for your amazing level of energy and passion for our coming together into a community unlike any I have experienced. You offered safety, acceptance, and abundant inquisitiveness that helped make the two years together among the most fruitful in my life. I forged friendships that will have lifetime impact and enjoyment. Thank you.

The nature of my dissertation required a mentor, cheerleader, thought partner, and willing listener to hours of philosophical blathering. Most of all, it required someone who had both the intellectual and philosophical agility and grounding to consider my thesis deeply and provide clear direction when I most needed help to stay the course. I could not imagine a better Committee Chair for my journey than Dr. James “Gus” Gustafson. His involvement as wise advisor has been a blessing in the true sense of the word, and the friendship we have forged will be a lifetime treasure. Blessings abounded in the persons of Dr. Sandra Gill and Sr. Marilyn Jean

Runkel, PhD, who were so generous with their thoughtful advice and precious time. I believe my dissertation committee is an example of the goodness with which my life is graced.

I must also give sincere gratitude to Walter Reilly, a man who has become a great friend in the years since December 2012, when he and I met at a holiday party that altered the path of my life. Walter was a Founding Advisory Board member for the Center for Values Driven Leadership. Though neither of us could possibly know at the time, his passionate discussion that night about the CVDL was instrumental in setting me on a course that would change my life.

Finally, I must give thanks for my wonderful wife and companion, Mary. She has been a constant confidante and encourager through the rather daunting dissertation process. She has patiently endured this season of our life together, and there is no question I could not have done this without her heartfelt love and support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

*O soul, repressless, I with thee and thou with me,
Thy circumnavigation of the world begin,
Of man, the voyage of his mind's return,
To reason's early paradise,
Back, back to wisdom's birth, to innocent intuitions,
Again with fair creation.*

—Walt Whitman¹

And we've got to get ourselves back to the Garden.

—Joni Mitchell²

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

—Proverbs 4:23³

To unleash the full potential of human beings, we must tap into the great motivating, activating endowments that reside within the human heart. When this occurs, the passionate response and actions that emerge are the stuff of legends and the substratum for the panoply of human greatness that has changed the world and played out on screen and stage or in books, poems, and song. The greatest leaders in the history of humankind share an ability to catalyze the distinctly human need to make right what they have shown as clearly morally wrong. Combating injustice has been the cause of countless human campaigns, many against all odds, which have as their object the establishment of a just social condition. The condition is contextual to the various attributes that characterize a given situation deemed unjust.

¹ Whitman, 1917

² Mitchell, 1970

³ English Standard Version

Race, gender, economic dissonance, political subjection, environmental malfeasance, and human oppression of all kinds will engender feelings and beliefs of injustice. Within a pluralistic society, there seems to be no end to the list of things that one or more people characterize as a violation of justice. For all the variety of causes, there exists a shared human notion of justice, the violation of which is wrong by all accounts. The plethora of purposes is rooted in the pluralism of individual and social values, but in contrast, all are judged by the standard of a universal virtue we call “justice.” The existence of universal virtues—of which justice is one—within the milieu of pluralistic values is the ground from which my thesis emerged.

For humans to commit their initiative, imagination, and passion, they must be motivated by a controlled motivation, which “involves behaving with the experience of pressure and demand toward specific outcomes that comes from forces perceived to be external to self” (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 14). While many today assume these forces are intrinsic and immanent from values constructed within social contexts, I believe the greatest force for human passion is the innate knowledge of an external, universal notion of “the Good.” Tap into this and you release the mainspring of human ardor.

The power of tapping into virtues can be glimpsed by the current 2016 political campaigns. I suggest the universal virtue of “justice” is what is the underlying fuel for the populist passion of both Senator Sanders’ and Mr. Trump’s followers. While the values that drive the members are as different as the leaders themselves, the great common ground for their member groups is a belief that a grave injustice is occurring, evoking a desire for restoration of rightness. For

Sanders, it is situated in the economic disparity between the “haves” and the “have-nots.” For Trump, it finds its cause in the perceived marginalization of American power and dominance by nations that have no justification for their dislike of our American ideologies and way of life. Trump claims he’ll make us “winners” again, by which his followers envision a restoration of fairness and justice regarding America. Sanders’ promise is a redistribution of wealth and the return of equity and justice in the U.S. economic system. Furthermore, while their followers attribute the virtue “courage” to both Sanders and Trump, the establishment candidates are being damaged by their perceived lack of courage (to proclaim the truth) due to their complicity with the entrenched and failed political systems of our time.

Politics is only one domain of a social world we have crafted that is unclear, unpredictable, irascible, and adrift in a sea of incoherent and incommensurable values and self-proclaimed rights. Our chameleon-like social world, made of ambiguity and ambivalence, contradiction and conflict, seems to change constantly before our eyes. Where do we turn to find moral coherence that can move our individual hearts to common ground? A social community is not sustainable without virtue. Universal virtues are the expression of the innate and distinctly human sense of the Good. These are not socially constructed, relativistic values. They are the heart chords that, when plucked, elicit powerful human responses. The day after September 11, 2001, factious antagonists in America came together in communal outrage over the unprovoked attack on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. This was injustice in horrible living color.

Why do all but the socially-deviant love stories of redemption? What is in the movies *Shawshank Redemption* or *Good Will Hunting* that moves the human heart? What if leaders could tap into this source of human belief and passion for themselves and then intentionally develop a virtues-based social and organizational environment? Going beyond theory X and Y (McGregor, 1960), beyond engagement (Kahn, 1990), beyond organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988), and beyond the many other behavioral objectives of human resource managers and executive leaders, operationalizing virtues-based leadership has the power to unleash the kinetic energy animated when humans are in an intentional pursuit of the Good.

The Good

The concept of the Good is found in the Pentateuch, most likely written during the postexilic era of the Jewish tribes (Brueggmann, 1997), circa 586 BC. The first of the five books of the Pentateuch, Genesis, provides an account of God bringing man and woman into existence, and the use of the word “good” as a description of God’s assessment of His handiwork occurs seven times in Genesis, chapter one (English Standard Version). The idea of a transcendent source of the Good is found in the pre-Socratic writings of Anaxagoras and Empedocles (Menn, 1992, p. 559). Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle all spoke of a transcendent source of the Good (Carone, 2005). Aristotelian ethics is grounded in the notion that the virtuous life is one aligned with the Good, and if one lives such a life to the end, this human *telos* would be called a “good life” (Kamtekar, 2004). Kraseman (2011) defines the Greek word for good, *agathos*, as “Inner harmonious perfection, which is its own standard and measure,” and he defines goodness—*agathosune*—as the “quality of one who is ruled by and aims at the Good and desires moral

worth for its own sake. It is the quality of the individual who seeks human excellence and sterling goodness apart from mere attractiveness” (Kraseman, 2011, p. xi).

Humankind’s desire to know what constitutes the Good is prominently displayed in the philosophical writings of the past 2,500 years. From the classical Greeks to the present, philosophers have been our surrogate seekers for the meaning of “the good life.” Aristotle’s teleological *eudaimonia* finds its analog in Nietzsche’s *amor fati*. In both cases, a person will be said to have lived the good life when he or she wholly affirms his or her past. In Aristotle’s view, the good life is one grounded in virtuous behavior as defined by external universal virtues, while from Nietzsche’s perspective, the good life is one that embraces the suffering and trouble of the past and comes to the realization that nothing could have been different. This difference between the Good being grounded in universal virtues on the one hand and in an individual valuation of the good on the other is essentially the difference between virtues and values, but more on that later.

The desire to know and live the Good is spawned by the distinctly human capacity to view oneself in the context of the surrounding world, especially in the setting of time. Our knowledge of our mortality and our yearning for meaning and purpose in our lives combine to fuel a desire to know what constitutes a life well lived. Defining such a human life is inextricably bound to our worldview. Thus, to develop an understanding of the Good we must identify our ontological convictions. Our convictions regarding the reality of human life, its essence, and its nature, will

inexorably lead us to conclusions regarding what constitutes a good and fecund life, a life that is flourishing.

It is important to lay out boundaries in which I locate my thesis. I am interested in addressing the question of whether leadership, which has its purpose in promoting human well-being and flourishing, is best driven by values or by virtues. The answer to this question is ultimately ontological, with broad implications regarding the nature of humanness, self, soul, and, indeed, the moral universe in which we all exist. Therefore, a survey of moral philosophy and concepts we associate with being human is a necessary basis for understanding the key ingredients of a coherent system of morality. My primary purpose here is not to assert a general statement regarding ontological truth. I am concerned with advancing the field of leadership by situating it in the language and reality of virtues contra values. My concern with the currency of values is the incoherence and instability of using the language of personal valuation to arrive at universal moral principles that will support universal social programs. “If we translate the language of principles into the language of values, we are implicitly encouraging a politics of value tradeoffs, not principled stands” (Andrew, 1995, p. xiii). My contention is that values discourse undermines these important objectives of leadership in our society and should be replaced with the language of virtues, which encompasses the fullness of the human experience and articulates universal principles of the Good. Thus, virtues are not only a fundamental part of human morality; they provide a useful way of thinking about leadership development (Ciulla, 2001).

As will be seen, for most of the past 2,500 years, the good life of a man or woman was characterized by an actualization of virtues in the context of friendship, family, community, and other social milieus. Virtuous living and the good life were synonymous. This begs the question: what are the virtues that defined virtuousness?

The history of virtues extends at least into the past three millennia to Plato, Aristotle, and Confucius; if one includes the Law of Tehut instituted by King Menes in Egypt, the history goes back five millennia (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2011, p.10). The view that coherent classical political thought and theorization germinated and matured in ancient Greece from circa 500 to about 250 BC is a widely held thesis, especially in Western scholarship.

According to MacIntyre (1984), Aristotle provided a coherent model of character and virtue. Aristotle's theory was teleological in nature, considering the end (*telos*) of a person's life as the ultimate basis for ascribing virtuousness to someone. He spoke of human virtue imitating the divine virtue of Good, embodied in character traits, which are instrumental for ensuring a fulfillment of human essence. This essential nature, distinct from animals, is fully actualized in a life well lived that is characterized by happiness or *eudaimonia*, which is the outcome of virtuous actions springing from the right character. In the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas (Drefcinski, 1998) and Moses Maimonides (Maimonides & Weiss, 1975, p.7) added to Aristotle's thinking by including divine and eternal elements grounded in the Christian *logos*. The underlying assumption among them is that the apotheosis of human existence is realized when a person achieves his or her essential purpose and this can only occur through a virtuous character

(MacIntyre, 1984, p. 58). Immanuel Kant endeavored to remove both a divine accountability and eudemonic foundation for virtuous behavior, proffering a rational basis for morality lies in obedience to categorical imperatives—the “ought” which resides beyond nature. “Far better that people be taught to develop a ground-level realization that their self and its happiness are not the true center of the moral universe...to show dedication and even love to some other or greater reality...reflects its own rationality...”(Mendham, 2007, p. 590). Kant’s deontological approach invokes a transcendent or categorical imperative that later philosophers found offensive to the effort to eliminate a transcendent God as the ground for the Good. Removing God or some other transcendent source of goodness, whether it be Plato’s forms, Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover, the God of Aquinas, or the Tao of Confucius, leaves man as the final authority and source of the Good. Although Protagoras declared “man is the measure of all things” (Poster, 2016) centuries before Christ, the modern existential view of morality derives much of its genesis from Nietzsche’s bold declaration that “God is dead.”

Tracing the history of the philosophical journey from a transcendent source of mankind’s standard of goodness to that of atheistic existentialism illumines the path from virtue to values-based ethics. It enjoins a comparison of virtues vs. values as a basis for knowing and living the “good life.”

Virtues vs. Values

The distinctly human question of how one should live has, throughout most of human history, been answered “virtuously.” Though virtue is an elusive term, definitions agree that virtues represent extraordinary strengths in intrapersonal and interpersonal domains. They serve as

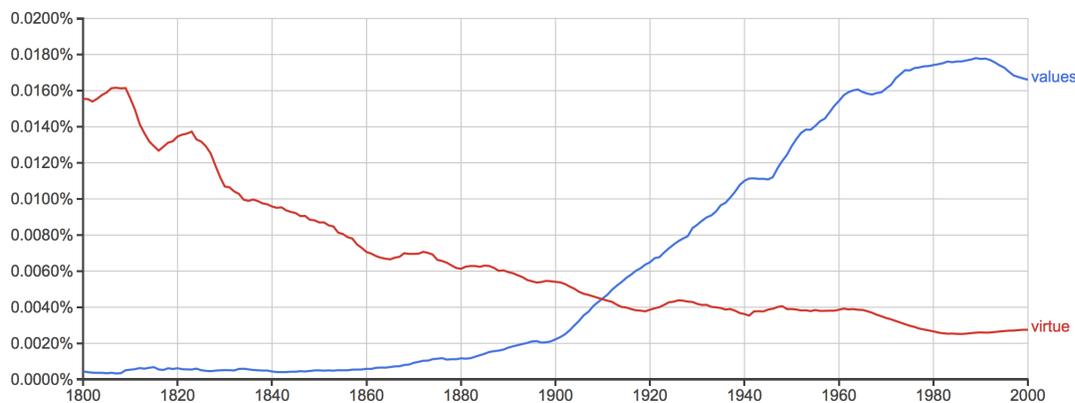
powerful resources in addressing the challenges inherent to individual and social moral living (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Sandage & Hill, 2001). As such, virtues are considered to advance the well-being of both individuals and the society:

Philosophical accounts of virtue ethics suggest several areas of congruence between virtue and positive psychology. These include the promotion of positive health and human flourishing (or “the good life”), a connection to good character and community well-being, the cultivation of human strength and resilience, a link to meaning in life, and a grounding in wisdom. (Sandage & Hill, 2001, p. 241)

Empirical research supports the hypothesized relationship between the possession of virtues and well-being. Virtues associate with global life satisfaction (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004; Sandstrom & Dunn, 2011), as well as physical and psychological resilience (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2006). Studies conducted with youth also link character strengths and virtues to desirable outcomes such as increased academic success and decreased substance abuse, violence, depression, and suicidal ideation (Park, 2004).

Despite this proven connection between well-being and virtue, social commentators from both sides of the political spectrum have observed the new millennium continues a moral decline in America that has been decades in duration (Bennett, 2001). Individuals shape their cultural worlds, and the surrounding sociocultural milieu inculcates into individual selves in an ongoing cycle of mutual constitution (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Cultural products play a critical role in this mutual constitution process because dominant cultural messages embed in artifacts such as news, books, fairy tales, and urban legends (Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008). By reminding people of what is culturally relevant, beneficial, and appropriate, such products act as agents of

socialization (Kesebir, Uttal, & Gardner, 2010). If there has been a change in the relevance of morality and virtue concepts to the American culture, this phenomenon should also be reflected in cultural products. Salient cultural ideas are those that people talk and write about, so if virtue diminished in cultural salience, words pertinent to this concept should appear with decreasing frequency in books. Using Google’s N-gram Viewer, which tracks word use in books digitized by Google, the frequency of the words “virtue” and “values” in millions of English books written during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Michel et al., 2011) is shown in Figure 1. As the language of virtue during this period diminished, the language of values replaced it.



Source: Adapted from Michel et al. (2011)

Figure 1. Frequency of the Words “Virtue” and “Values” between 1800-2000

Various recent philosophers have commented on the rise of “values language” and its significance for society. The late Canadian philosopher George Grant (1918–1988) noted how “values language” was used by all sorts of people whether they were “religious” or “non-religious.” They took the term to be meaningful without realizing that it is a language that is rooted in power and subjectivity rather than in objective categories such as truth or virtue

(Christian & Grant, 1998, p. 392). C. S. Lewis noted that moral philosophy was moving in the direction of the “inflation of the subject and deflation of the object” (as cited in Harding, 1952, p. vii). By inflating the subject, the locus of morality resides in the individual. As such, moral values become derivatives of personal choice and make ambiguous the use of values language. Nonetheless, people ennoble a category by appending the word “values” to it. Thus, we hear of “American values,” “family values,” “liberal or conservative values,” “Christian values,” “ethnic values,” “traditional values,” “judicial values,” and numerous other value domains. Such categorical values only have a meaning if there’s a collective, objective understanding of what “values” mean. But there is not because one cannot erect shared meanings on what is implicitly subjective and inherently personal. “The language of ‘values’ is employed as if it is a moral language but conveying nothing due to the primary axiom that values are necessarily merely personal” (Benson, 2008, p.10). Furthermore, subjective values when shared with others do not make them objectively good (consider National Socialism in Germany in the twentieth century).

The ascendancy of the language of values has led to it dominating many dialogues about existential matters. When discussing ethics and morality, there is an implicit appeal to a standard for what constitutes the Good in a given context. We seek objective principles that would allow open conversation about good and evil, right and wrong, justice and injustice. Advocates of a cause offer truth claims fortified by the use of “value.” But values language relativizes and makes ambiguous objective validity. We should consider why a term from economics and the marketplace has come to dominate our moral discourse. While we may use “value” to properly

describe a choice made or taste in cars or food, it lacks meaning when describing what is objectively good.

C. S. Lewis (1952) made the following striking statement: “Moral relativity is the enemy we have to overcome before we tackle Atheism. I would almost dare to say ‘First let us make the younger generation good pagans and afterwards let us make them Christians.’” (pp. 90-91).

When one attempts to ground an objective construct on a relativistic base, the desire for objective truth is thwarted and the power of truth defused. Even from a Christian point of view, Lewis saw that pagan virtues would overcome moral relativity and are, therefore, preferable to subjective values.

To understand the ascent of values language in moral discourse is to understand the western philosophical journey from Plato to Post-modernism. Along the way, there are those whose voices among the many philosophers considering humankind’s search for the Good rose above the din of the crowd and changed the framework within which one constructs human morality. Among the most stentorian voices was—and continues to be—that of Friedrich Nietzsche: “Nietzsche used the language of values because he thought, contrary to Plato, that nothing is inherently good or intrinsically beautiful” (Andrew, 1995, p. xvi). The resolute subjectivism of Nietzsche required an exchange of virtues language, which derives its rationality from universal, common goods, to values language, wherein rationality starves and liberal pluralism thrives. It is a matter of modern Western moral concern “that ideals not be imposed, that behavior not be coerced, and that the search for truth not be stifled” (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p.186). This

statement expresses a belief that no objective truth anchors our ideals; they are personally derived and held. Therefore, they do not have the authority of an imposed law that is designed to coerce behavior. Bass and Steidlmeier's comment about stifling the search for truth connotes truth is not an existing destination at which one could arrive. However, that for which the search is endless would not be accurately described as "truth" and would find relativistic values familiar and universal principles alien. Principles of truth are discoverable, coherent, and universal.

To develop a leadership model congruent with the aspirations of values-based leadership, it is necessary to situate a model within a framework held together by universal principles of the Good that can inform both the character and behavior of one who would lead others into the "good life."

Defining Virtue

In a post-Enron, post-modern world of relativistic and incommensurate values, the need for ethical leaders is manifest. Brown and Treviño (2006) rely on social learning theory to illuminate why leaders are perceived to be ethical. Social learning theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977) is based on the concept that individuals learn by observing and emulating credible models and adopt their attitudes, behaviors, and values. The evident problem with this is the observer is subject to the relativism of ethics modeled by human progenitors. Furthermore, extrinsic behavior does not necessarily attest to intrinsic motivation and character. If moving from economic to ethical components of values shifts attention from "having" to "doing," virtues change the paradigm from "doing" to "being." "Ethical leadership is best represented by the

makeup of the individual, the virtues he or she possesses, and the self-knowledge and self-discipline that guide the leader's moral actions" (Riggio, Zhu, Reina, & Maroosis, 2010, p.237).

Situating ethical leadership in virtues necessitates defining the term and determining the virtue set used as a framework. About definition, there is little consensus regarding what constitutes a virtue (Lanctot & Irving, 2010). Ciulla (2001) has defined virtues as only those moral qualities habitually practiced within a society or organization. Garrett (2005) has defined moral virtues as the following:

1) admirable character traits; generally desirable dispositions, which contribute, among other things, to social harmony; 2) enable us to act in accordance with reason; 3) enable us to feel appropriately and have the right intention; 4) are orientations towards the mean, rather than the extremes (vices relate to extremes).
(p. 1)

Peterson and Seligman (2004) have defined moral virtues as core character strengths and situate virtues within positive psychology. Whetstone (2005) has referred to virtues as "dispositions of character" (p. 368). This definition aligns with Clark and Rakestraw (1994) who have defined them as "specific dispositions, skills, or qualities of excellence that together make up a person's character, and that influence his or her way of life" (p. 276).

Defining moral virtues as products of the human psyche, strengths, dispositions, skills, practices, or qualities of character obscures the universality and transcendence of the Good as noted by philosophers from Plato to Lewis. While virtues are exhibited within human behavior and, therefore, reflect underlying character, motives, and beliefs, they are not the product of human

cognition or effect. Indeed, that virtues are not human inventions is what gives them such strength within the human heart. They are universal concepts that give meaning to human excellence, goodness, and flourishing. They are “heart chords,” which are common to mankind and resonate to produce the “good life.” More than mere behavioral attributes or dispositions, they are the universal and innate conceptions of the Good within each of us. As universal, they are not contextual or overlapping consensus as claimed by Mastronardi (Sitter-Liver & Hiltbrunner, 2009, p. 91). As innate, they are not attained through practice as proffered by Lanctot and Irving (2010) but are nonetheless practicable and can become habits of the heart. As Aristotle (1999a) said, “we are naturally receptive of them, but we are completed through their habit” (1102 23-6). The practice of virtuous behavior requires community with which to interact insofar as moral conduct, which has its genesis in virtues, has implications that extend beyond the individual (Ciulla, 2001). Individualism etiolates virtuous living.

Thomas Aquinas combined Aristotelian teleology with Judeo-Christian precepts and bequeathed a prodigious wealth of philosophical and theological writing to posterity. Much of his writing concerned virtues, including 1,004 articles, or approximately one-third of his monumental *Summa Theologiae* (Besser & Slote, 2015, p. 141). The dominance of Christian notions of virtue held sway until the period of the Enlightenment, a period between the end of the Thirty Years War (1648) and the French Revolution (1789). During this epoch, deist and atheistic philosophies gained currency as man’s reason ascended to the highest realms and was credited with the ability to discern right and wrong based on various doctrines of rationalism or empiricism (Hill, 2004, p. 10).

That explicit and thoroughgoing rejection of Aristotelianism...made it impossible by the end of the seventeenth century to supply anything like a traditional account or justification of the virtues. Yet the praise and practice of the virtues still pervaded social life, often in highly traditional ways, even though there were quite new problems for anyone wishing to give a systematic account or justification of their place in that life. There was indeed one distinctively new way open to understand the virtues once they had been severed from their traditional context in thought and practice, and that is as dispositions related in either of two alternative ways to the psychology of that newly invented social institution, the individual. Either the virtues—or some of them—could be understood as expressions of the natural passions of the individual or they—or some of them—could be understood as dispositions necessary to curb and to limit the destructive effect of some of those same natural passions.

(MacIntyre, 1984, p. 228)

Removed from its moorings in Aristotelian and Aquinas conceptions of divine empowerment, virtue theory was easy prey for existentialists, nihilists and especially the aesthetic economy of Nietzsche. Starved of its transcendent life force and stripped of its claim of universality, the classical virtues tradition of Aristotle and Aquinas evanesced, and in the void, the genealogy of values occurred, primarily under the powerful influence of Friedrich Nietzsche (Andrew, 1995).

The inadequacy of values as either a theory of morals or an answer to normative questions has prompted a return to virtue ethics, the revival of which many mark with the 1958 publication of G.E.M. Anscombe's "Modern Moral Philosophy."

Anscombe believed that it was a mistake to seek a foundation for a morality grounded in legalistic notions such as "obligation" or "duty" in the context of a general disbelief in the existence of a divine lawgiver as the source of such obligation. She recommended that philosophy of psychology should take the place of moral philosophy and its virtues to remove the "theologically derived notions of obligation, which many people no longer found

compelling...”(Ivanhoe, 2007, p.1). Returning to the classical concept of a transcendent genesis of virtue explicates universality and provides a rational foundation for the applicability of virtues to a model of leadership.

Which Virtues?

The profound interest in virtues over the previous 2,500 years is reflected in the frequency with which people have proffered lists of virtues. Goodman (2010) has offered 546 virtues, including such notables as “dis-creation of what is no longer needed” and “ease of shifting identities.” In addition to Aristotelian and Confucian virtues, Wang (2011) has offered 108 professional virtues and 62 individual virtues situated in seven leadership paradigms. Ben Franklin reduced the number of virtues to 13 (Franklin, 1909, pp. 55-56) and C.S. Lewis (1952) listed 10 virtues. Kinnear, Kernes, Dautheribes, and Therese (2000) have provided empirical evidence for 13 universal “values,” which are aptly called *virtues* in the context of this paper. Ian Maitland’s market virtues included seven (Maitland, 1997), and Edwin Locke offered six virtues necessary for ethical conduct in business (Locke, 2006, p. 326). Empirical evidence offered by Dahlsgaard, Peterson, and Seligman (2005) supports the universality of six virtues.

A worldview is a set of fundamental beliefs through which we view the world and, if one is sufficiently and effectively reflective, form a philosophical framework (Sire, 2009). My worldview includes the belief in a transcendent source for mankind’s innate understanding of the Good. I believe virtues are constructs that, taken together, describe the Good from which we derive descriptive language regarding human goodness and flourishing. This informs the list of

virtues I choose, and, therefore, I include the virtues of faith, hope, and love. Of the six universal virtues provided by Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) I remove humanity and transcendence as the former includes love and the latter hope. Rather significantly, the four remaining virtues are the “cardinal virtues,” which have been cited by philosophers and ethicists since Plato’s Republic (Wuellner, 1956).

According to Pinsent (2013), Aquinas reconceived Aristotle’s account of God in relation to human beings, from an impersonal final cause of good operating through the efficient cause of *nous* (Menn, 1992) to a personal God who bestows good on mankind and gives him the ability to live it.

The standpoint of moral agency therefore becomes essentially second-personal for Aquinas, and on his account a moral agent who exercises a virtue by acting well thereby receives a gift from God, and this gift is a sharing in the divine life. This claim is both ontological and epistemological: gifts from God are the sources (*principia*) of virtuous action, and for someone’s actions to be exercises of a complete virtue, he must also perform them with the knowledge that in so doing he is receiving God’s gift. Without this gift of God’s grace and without the agent’s self-conscious cooperation with it, he would be incapable of fully moral action. (O’Brien, 2012, p. 2)

If virtues are expressions of the Good, and if Aquinas was correct in sourcing them to the nature of God, his inclusion of faith, hope, and love is axiomatic. These three “abiding virtues,” are described in biblical scripture (I Corinthians 13:13, New American Standard Version) with love singularly described as “the greatest.” Mo Tzu described love as a desire to benefit others motivated by universality (as opposed to partiality) and aligned with the desire of heaven (Kraseman, 2011, p. 284). Erich Fromm (1956) spoke of the gift of reason, which separates man

from the animal world. Reason equips a man for being a life aware of itself. Man is not only self-aware, but also aware of the past, the possibilities of the future, and fellow human beings; but he is cognizant also of his separateness, of his aloneness in living his individual life. Fromm posited, “The awareness of human separation, without reunion by love—is the source of shame. It is at the same time the source of guilt and anxiety...” (p. 9). This problem of human existence is only fully answered in the “achievement of interpersonal union, of fusion with another person, in love” (p.12). Fromm (1956) has characterized love as giving, care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge (p. 15). “In the act of loving, of giving of myself, in the act of penetrating the other person, I find myself, I discover us both, I discover man” (p.17).

Leading from Love

A Google search on “love leadership” renders over 2 million results, including a book of that title by John Hope Bryant (2009). Bryant has posited five laws of love leadership:

- (1) Loss creates leaders (there can be no strength without legitimate suffering); (2) Fear fails (only respect and love lead to success); (3) Love makes money (love is at the core of true wealth); (4) Vulnerability is power (when you open up to people, they open up to you); and (5) Giving is getting (the more you offer to others, the more they will give back to you. (p. 3).

Sanders (2002) suggested the definition of a “love business” is “the act of intelligently and sensibly sharing your intangibles with your bizpartners. What are our intangibles? They are our **knowledge**, our **network**, and our **compassion**” [emphasis in original] (p. 12). Sanders went on to focus on the six benefits which accrue to what he called the *lovecat*.

Accompanying these examples are numerous other books and articles which extol love as a mainstay of effective leadership. It is not my intention to add to the prodigious leadership literature regarding how to behave and interact in a loving manner with others in a social or organizational context. Rather, in discussing the specific virtue set by which to conceptualize and understand the Good, an assertion will be made that love, which I am defining as selfless care for others, is the one virtue that transcends and encompasses all others. Leaders who seek to develop and operate organizations that are teleological in nature will organize around human flourishing, Aristotle's *eudaimonia*. Such leadership will be most facilitated through an organizational framework that operationalizes love. Selfless care is what animates a mother's care for her child, or compels a soldier to cover a live grenade to save his or her fellow soldiers. Love will define our lives at the end of our days: love shared, love lost, love failed or fulfilled. It is the ultimate virtue and final statement of our life's success.

The primary purpose of my dissertation is to offer an alternative to *values* as a basis for leadership one could describe as objectively morally good. I intend to demonstrate the ontological roots of values and how their genealogy renders them inadequate as a system of describing, understanding, and operationalizing an objective "Good;" a concept that is implicit in the values-based leadership program, for which this dissertation is a requirement.

This is a theoretical dissertation. As such, my data is not obtained through quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methodologies. Rather, the data is literature germane to my thesis. Included in this data set will be a review of the classical moral philosophies that informed scholarly and

popular thought regarding the essence of human *being* through the thirteenth century. In Chapter Two, my survey of ancient and classical moral philosophy will begin with the ancient Greek philosophers and will conclude with Thomas Aquinas' synthesis of Aristotelian and Christian morality, with some emphasis on the Law of Nature, which gives humans an intuition of the Good through the moral capacity of a metaphysical soul. Chapter Three explicates the descent of this metaphysical self, corresponding with the ascent of materialistic views regarding human nature associated with the Enlightenment. Chapter Four provides a brief genealogy of values and contrasts their ontological foundations with that of virtues. Chapter Five offers a virtues framework for leadership that is teleological in its aim, and chapter Six will offer conclusions, personal observations, limitations of this dissertation, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

*But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course;
A longing to inquire
Into the mystery of this heart which beats
So wild, so deep in us—to know
Whence our lives come and where they go.*
—Matthew Arnold⁴

All philosophy labors under the difficulty of having to express non-sensuous thought in language which has been evolved for the purpose of expressing sensuous ideas.
—W.T. Stace⁵

Human history has a flow to it. A chronological account of events will not discover it; rather it courses in the river formed by the wellspring of individuals' inner minds, where human sentience provides the substrate for belief, creativity, and, collectively, human culture. Our thoughts determine our actions, what we hold true, what we hold dear. From here flows the river of humanity: its deepest thoughts, speech, and actions, whether it be Mother Theresa's leper ministry or Hitler's extermination camps.

The aphorism, "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he," not only embraces the whole of a man's being, but is so comprehensive as to reach out to every condition and circumstance of his life. A man is literally *what he thinks*, his character being the complete sum of all his thoughts. (Allen, 1903)

⁴ Arnold, 1852

⁵ Stace, 1920

Allen's emulation of the biblical proverb "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7, New American Standard Version), describes the springing forth of a human life from the seeds of human thought in the inner man. The inner life is the source of human presuppositions, which combine to provide a lens through which each of us looks at life, at self, at our community. People tend to look at the external theater of action and see their identity in the role they play externally (Goffman, 1959), forgetting the actor who inhabits the heart; who is the real actor in the external world.

We weave internal words and concepts into a more or less coherent framework for belief, thought, and action—a worldview. But this must be grounded in first principles, which are descriptions of the way things really are. When we understand the first principles of geometry or physics, we can test the validity of all future derivatives in these systems by their adherence to first principles, giving the system coherence. One of the questions of the ages: From whence comes the standard by which human character, "the complete sum of his thoughts," is assessed as "good?" Identifying the source of the Good, the first principles of goodness, the standard for what is put forward as moral human thought and behavior, is essential to determining the force of authority underlying a claim of goodness.

The sociobiologist E.O. Wilson (1975) has contended that centuries of debate regarding the rudiment of human morals have left us with two essential assumptions regarding morality: transcendentalism and empiricism. Wilson (1998) went on to say, "The two assumptions in competition are like islands in a sea of chaos, as different as life and death, matter and the void"

(p. 53). Essentially, the choice is as follows: “I believe in the independence of what constitutes the Good, whether from God or some other transcendent source,” or, “I believe the Good comes from human reasoning alone.”

These two fundamental choices are the “two contradictory impulses” referenced by Arthur Leff (1979):

I want to believe—and so do you—in a complete, transcendent, and immanent set of propositions about right and wrong, *findable* rules that authoritatively and unambiguously direct us how to live righteously. I also want to believe—and so do you—in no such thing, but rather that we are wholly free, not only to choose for ourselves what we ought to do, but to decide for ourselves, individually and as a species, what we ought to be. What we want, Heaven help us, is simultaneously to be perfectly ruled and perfectly free, that is, at the same time to discover the right and the good and to create it.

I mention the matter here only because I think that the two contradictory impulses, which together form that paradox, do not exist only on some high abstract level of arcane angst. In fact, it is my central thesis that much that is mysterious about much that is written about law today is understandable only in the context of this tension between the ideas of found law and made law: a tension particularly evident in the growing, though desperately resisted, awareness that there may be, in fact, nothing to be found - that whenever we set out to find “the law,” we are able to locate nothing more attractive, or more final, than ourselves. (p. 1229)

Wilson’s “two basic assumptions,” expressed in Leff’s “two contradictory impulses,” illuminate the tension that has contributed to contemporary “culture wars” which engage our pluralistic society. Leaders within social, political, and economic organizations must decide whether they choose the transcendentalist worldview or the empiricist worldview. The former will hold that first principles of the Good arise from a source outside the human mind and are true independently of our experience. The latter will assert the Good is an invention of the human

mind explicable by biological, psychological, and cultural evolution. According to the empiricist Wilson (1998), this is the debate that will be at the forefront of cultural controversies for years to come:

The choice between transcendentalism and empiricism will be the coming century's version of the struggle for men's souls. Moral reasoning will either remain centered in idioms of theology and philosophy, where it is now, or shift toward science-based material analysis. Where it settles will depend on which world view is proved correct, or at least which is more widely *perceived* to be correct. (p.54)

I posit the transcendentalist position is made intelligible through the language of virtues, while the empiricist will use the language of values for explicating the Good. But first, it is helpful to understand how we arrived at the time of tension in which we find ourselves.

The “Why” of Goodness

There is a quality of life which lies always beyond the mere fact of life; and when we include the quality in the fact, there is still omitted the quality of the quality... there remains the function of what is actual and passing, that it contributes its quality as an immortal fact to the order which informs the world. (Whitehead, 1926)

Whitehead’s remark regarding an awareness of a metaphysical source of order in life expresses the distinctly human desire to understand the “why” behind human existence. “Why” is about ultimate causes, which, if ascertained, would give answers to existential questions.

Karl Jaspers (1951) referred to the remarkable era between 600–300 BCE, during which an explosion of intellectual and philosophical projects took place simultaneously in many advanced civilizations of the world as an “Axial Period”:

It was the period of Confucius and Lao-Tzu in China, of the writing of the principle Hindu Upanishads, and of the rise of the Buddha and Buddhism in India. Further to the west, the Axial Period produced the Persian prophet Zoroaster or Zarathustra and the great transformative prophets Jeremiah and second Isaiah in Israel. Finally, in Greece, it was the period in which Western philosophy and science simultaneously arose. Thales, who is said to be the first philosopher of the West, lived at the beginning of this period, while Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and many of the great scientists of antiquity lived at the end of it. (Kane, 1994, pp. 6-7)

The headwater of the river of Western moral, philosophical thought is found in the classical Greek philosophers. But it would be incorrect to assume agreement among the ancient foundational philosophies. As is mirrored today between ontologies that claim the universe consists only of matter and space with no underlying purpose and those who believe in a

transcendent reason behind existence, so these two opposing worldviews were the fount of classical philosophies. The earliest Western philosophers of this period were indigenous to Ionia, what is now the area of the Dardanelles in modern Turkey. A common thread of the philosophy of that time was the belief that, given the material world is unceasingly changing, there must be some ultimate substance from which everything owes its existence (Blumenau, 2002).

When the Greeks spoke of the universe, they described it as *cosmos*, and the original meaning of that word was Order. The first philosopher who applied the word Order to the Universe was Pythagoras, who, like the Ionian cosmologists lived in the sixth century B.C. The belief that there is such an Order, that where there is one Order there must be one Law governing it, and that the more carefully man observed this world, the more he would find that more and more of the pieces would fit together and that the still missing pieces must somehow fit in with the overall plan and with the pieces of the jigsaw which we already have—all that was a stupendous and immensely fruitful leap of faith that made them unique in their time. Over the succeeding centuries that intuition, that faith, would be abundantly justified, so much so that it has governed the outlook of western man ever since. (Blumenau, 2002)

The early classical philosophers faced two fundamental realities of the universe: that things exist—in other words, they have substance—and that they are perpetually undergoing a process of change. To address the first, according to Hill (2016), philosophers postulated essential substances underlying all real things. Thales (ca. 624–546 BCE) posited water as the fundamental substance of the universe. Thales' student, Anaximenes (ca. 585–528 BC), argued air is the primary constituent. Slightly later, Heraclitus (ca. 535–475 BC), suggested fire is that which best explains the nature of reality. Empedocles (490–430 BC) added air while graciously retaining those of his predecessors and offered four essential elements—water, air, fire, and earth. Thales' contemporary, Anaximander (ca. 610–546 BC), described the universe as having its origins from something more basic than an element that exists or is described in material

terms. He posited an apeiron, a Greek word that means “boundless,” “unlimited,” and “infinite” (Audi, 1999), as the entity and substance from which everything has its genesis. In this, he presaged Aristotle’s notion of essence as the immaterial form inherent in a material thing.

The pre-Socratic philosophers saw the ineluctable tension between, on the one hand, a changeless, infinite substance that is the origin of Being and, on the other hand, an endlessly changing, observable material world. How can that which is unchanging give rise to that which is ever-changing? Parmenides (late sixth/early fifth century BCE) is considered the most influential of the pre-Socratics and the first who could be regarded as metaphysical and ontological in his system of philosophy (Audi, 1999). He emulated Anaximander’s idea of an infinite fundamental substance but added the dimension of reality vs. illusion. He argued that real things, things having Being, cannot arise from things that are not-Being. The nature of the material realm is one of constant change. For something to change, there must exist a cause for that effect. But the cause itself arose from some other effect, and this from still another, more primary cause. If there be no ultimate, unchanging, immutable, fundamental First Cause, there would be an infinite regress. Thus there is at every moment “a basic ground of Being that is unchangeable and eternal. All change is an illusion of the senses, and all we can say of reality, Parmenides concluded, is that “it is”—complete, indivisible, unchangeable, and eternal” (Copleston, 1950, p. 53).

Heraclitus could not agree that the evident and ceaseless movement of the visible world was illusory. He is well known for his description of the “flow” of all things (Copleston, 1950; Curd,

2016). And while he disagreed with Parmenides that reality only exists in “the One” Being, he concluded that the continuous changing of material things unavoidably leads to an eternal, unchanging divine law which gives a universal reason, not chance or lawlessness, to the ceaselessly changing world. Heraclitus called this the *Logos*. The nature of humans, as well as ethical behavior, consists in aligning personal and social life with this universal law that governs the *cosmos*. Such alignment is the primordial principle and standard of morality.

Wisdom is the foremost virtue, and wisdom consists in speaking the truth, and in lending an ear to nature and acting according to her. Wisdom is common to all... They who would speak with intelligence must hold fast to the (wisdom that is) common to all, as a city holds fast to its law, and even more strongly. For all human laws are fed by one divine law. (Bakewell, 2012, p. 34)

Heraclitus saw in the plethora of human laws a rational universal law, which allows human reason to share in the *Logos*.

For through the contingency and diversity of human laws rational thought perceives the truth of the eternal law, whereas sense perception—the eye and the ear—notices only what is different and unlike. With Heraclitus, the “Obscure Philosopher,” the thinker who speaks in obscure symbols, the idea of the natural law for the first time emerged as a natural, unchangeable law from which all human laws draw their force. (Rommen, 1998, Chapter 1, Para. 10)

Heraclitus is averring that a divine law comprehends both the universal laws of the *cosmos* and the prescriptive laws of humans. Those who, “with intelligence,” ascertain this unchangeable law will be able to apprehend the Natural Law that informs human regulatory and ethical laws.

The cosmos itself is an intelligent, eternal (and hence divine) system that orders and regulates itself in an intelligent way: the *logos* is the account of this self-regulation. We can come to grasp and understand at least part of this divine system. This is not merely because we ourselves are part of (contained in) the

system, but because we have, through our capacity for intelligent thinking, the power to grasp the system as a whole, through knowing the *logos*. (Curd, 2016)

It is worth noting that during this “Axial Period” (Jaspers, 1951), the Parmenides and Heraclitus doctrines find their philosophical mates in Hinduism and Buddhism respectively. The former espouses a belief in Maya, a grand illusion, which describes what we experience and consider real as only temporary projections of a substantive, supreme consciousness. Buddhism subscribes to the Heraclitean belief that there is no enduring substance or truth.

Anaxagoras (ca. 500–428 BCE), added the notion of “Mind” or *nous* to the pre-Socratic cosmogonies. This Greek word does not easily translate into English. The Encyclopedia Britannica (Nous, 2013) defines it as the following:

The faculty of intellectual apprehension and of intuitive thought. Used in a narrower sense, it is distinguished from discursive thought and applies to the apprehension of eternal intelligible substances and first principles. It is sometimes identified with the highest or divine intellect.

It is Mind or *nous* that was the initial cause of motion, which separated matter from Mind and gave inception to the ceaseless momentum that causes all things to occur. Anaxagoras stops short, however, of attributing to Mind a theistic or deistic nature. For this reason, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle believed his philosophy fell short.

What Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were hoping to discover in Anaxagoras was not simply an account of how the cosmos originated (an efficient cause), but an explanation for why and for what purpose the cosmos was initiated (a final cause). Their initial excitement about his theory is replaced by disillusionment in the fact that Anaxagoras does not venture beyond mechanistic explanatory principles and offer an account for how Mind has ordered everything for the best. (Anaxagoras, 2016)

By failing to attribute to Mind a rational and purposeful reason for the formation of the universe, Anaxagoras left open for Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle to provide a teleological basis for reality. But his lack of conjecture into this non-mechanistic force of creation also gave rise to materialistic cosmological systems. Then as now the debate ensued between those who believe in a universal order behind the world and those who believe the universe is a probabilistic, visionless result that accidentally spun DNA from the random elements and gave rise to human consciousness through mechanistic serendipity (Hill, 2016). The former were seeking a teleological account of being and the latter were ancient materialists, who find numerous adherents in our time.

Classical materialism

In response to Parmenides' hypothesis that change is illusory, Democritus (c.460–370 BCE) posited an atomist theory of reality. The Greek word *atomos* means “undividable.” It is a solution to the infinite regress problem, as Epicurus later said, of matter being indefinitely divided into nothingness.

Besides, you must not suppose that there are parts unlimited in number, be they ever so small, in any finite body. Hence not only must we reject as impossible subdivision ad infinitum into smaller and smaller parts, lest we make all things too weak and, in our conceptions of the aggregates, be driven to pulverize the things that exist, in other words the atoms, and annihilate them; but in dealing with finite things we must also reject as impossible the progression ad infinitum by less and less increments. (Epicurus, 2014, Letter to Heroditus, para. 30)

Although Democritus did not deny that the soul exists, he nonetheless considered it a physical entity composed of the finest atoms (Hill, 2016), which upon death would disperse leaving no substance of the person left.

Epicurus' materialism led to political withdrawal and a "soft" hedonism that was not given to sensual permissiveness, rather found pleasure in an amiable life with others, while attending to one's needs (Epicurus, 2015). Meeting these needs is best achieved by showing concern for those around you. He believed it was nobler to perform a kind act than to receive one, and that natural justice is a commitment to not harm others and to keep from being injured (Epicurus, 2014, p. 74). As is often the case in relativistic post-modern morality, Epicurus' practical advice for living surpassed the implications of his materialistic philosophy. His moral and political views presaged those of Enlightenment social and political philosophers. Hume's idea that justice has its origin in public utility and Bentham's notion that what ensures beneficial dealings among people is the guarantor of justice (Hill, 2016) align with Epicurus' statement from *Principal*

Doctrines:

Among the things accounted just by conventional law, whatever in the needs of mutual association is attested to be useful, is thereby stamped as just, whether or not it be the same for all; and in case any law is made and does not prove suitable to the usefulness of mutual association, then this is no longer just. And should the usefulness which is expressed by the law vary and only for a time correspond with the prior conception, nevertheless for the time being it was just, so long as we do not trouble ourselves about empty words, but look simply at the facts. (Epicurus, 2014, Principle Doctrines, item 37)

The materialistic ethic of utility, socially constructed justice, and self-interest, then, as now, has difficulty existing within a system of morality that appeals to a standard of good outside of

cultural and social norms. The belief that there is a transcendent Good that draws us to conduct our lives so as to become the best version of ourselves; in other words, that self that is a reflection of Good is not coherent within the materialistic framework. Such a teleological worldview was awaiting expression from voices that would shape the history of moral philosophy for three millennia.

The classical teleological worldview

Whitehead (1978) stated, “The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.” (p. 39). In *Timaeus*, Plato avers an account of the formation of the universe in response to the question, “What is that which always is and has no becoming, and what is that which becomes but never is” (28a)? Plato’s answer is that existence is the result of a magnanimous, purposive Craftsman. “The universe exists and manifests goodness because it is the handiwork of a supremely good, ungrudging Craftsman, who brought order to an initially disorderly state of affairs” (Zeyl, 2013). As Plato put it almost four hundred years before the birth of Christ, “the world is the product of a Mind which sets everything in order and produces each individual thing in the way that is best for it” (Plato, 2012). This “supremely good, ungrudging Craftsman” invests in each person or thing a reason for being and that each thing will inherently strive toward its particular form of perfection. The classical worldview first took root in the teleological idea that the world is an ordered, purposeful, and, ultimately, intelligible place.

In *Phaedo*, Plato asserts particular patterns of perfection exist in abstractions called “Forms.” Plato references two spheres of existence: the material realm and the transcendent realm of

Forms. The human mind, through reason, provides access to the realm of Forms, which is an unchanging sphere impervious to the pains and changes of the material domain. The transcendent realm provides the basis for human ethics insofar as we develop our ability to contemplate Forms and detach ourselves from the material world, including our bodies. Contemplation allows for virtuous living not open to the change or degradation of the world of sensibilities. By perceiving the realm of Forms via our reasoning minds, we see a different set of objects than that perceived merely by our senses. The former ushers us into a realm of the Good, one of permanence and stability, which is more real than the latter domain, which is an imperfect image of the divine and subject to change.

This is an epistemological theory that posits the ability of a human to know Good is due to the existence of an eternal Form of Good that is accessible through human reasoning and reflection. It is ontological because “Good,” as described in *The Republic* (508E), is the source of the universe.

Plato describes phenomenal existence as materially expressing the truth of intelligible existence; and insofar as this expression is perfectly accomplished, the phenomena are fair and good. So then Plato, from the teleological side seeks to show that the material universe is ordered as to all its details in the best possible way, and demonstrates, from the ontological side, that this is so because all the phenomena of the universe are symbols of the eternal idea of good. (Archer-Hind, 1888, p. 47)

The teleology of Plato infuses purpose into being. Everything is naturally trying to become the best possible version of itself, with the pinnacle of the hierarchy of Being achieved in the Form of the Good. Plato tells us that “the greatest thing to learn is the idea of the Good and that even

if...we should know all other things...it would avail us nothing without knowing the Good” (*Republic*, 6.505a).

In *Phaedo*, the revived Socrates recounts when he heard Anaxagoras had asserted, “that the orderer and cause of all things is *nous*” that “this explanation pleased me, and I thought it somehow good that *nous* should be the cause of all things” (*Phaedo* 97c14).

The *Timaeus* disclaims as impossible the task of naming (*legein*) to all men the “maker and father of the universe” (28c35); this god is accordingly not named in the text, but is merely referred to in general and relational terms as maker, father, craftsman (*dēmiourgos*), composer (*sunistas*), and the like. But as we will see, both parallels to the *Philebus* and assertions in the *Timaeus* itself make it clear that Plato intends “the wise” to recognize this god as the *nous* they know. (Menn, 1995, p. 6)

Menn (1992) writes, “In a fragment of *On Prayer* Plato offers ‘God is either *nous* or something even beyond *nous*,’ and Plato seems to have asserted that the highest God, the Form of the Good, is something beyond *nous*” (p. 571).

The divinely created and directed universe conceived by Plato has held the imagination of philosophers for thousands of years. It attracted the attention of his most prestigious student, Aristotle, who modified Plato’s account that *nous* is subordinate to Good. He proffered that both Good and *nous* are the cause of other things:

In *Physics* II 3 and *Metaphysics* V 2, Aristotle offers his general account of the four causes. This account is general in the sense that it applies to everything that requires an explanation, including artistic production and human action. Here Aristotle recognizes four types of things that can be given in answer to a why-question:

- The material cause: “that out of which,” e.g., the bronze of a statue.

- The formal cause: “the form,” “the account of what-it-is-to-be,” e.g., the shape of a statue.
- The efficient cause: “the primary source of the change or rest,” e.g., the artisan, the art of bronze-casting the statue, the man who gives advice, the father of the child.
- The final cause: “the end, that for the sake of which a thing is done,” e.g., health is the end of walking, losing weight, purging, drugs, and surgical tools. (Zeyl, 2013)

Plato’s view indicates *nous* is the efficient cause and Good the final cause of all things. Aristotle disagreed and reduced the causality of *nous* to that of final cause.

By reducing the causality of *nous* to final causality, Aristotle reduces Good-itself to *nous*, dispensing with the mysterious Good, which Plato had posited, beyond *nous* and *ousia*, as the formal cause of goodness to *nous* and to other things. By reducing the Good to *nous*, Aristotle shows how Good is the cause. (Menn, 1995, p. 573)

Aristotle did more than synthesize Plato’s conception of the Good; he deconstructed his Forms, so rather than being separate entities from their imperfect reflections, they are actually within the material object, and the composites of form and matter are the real substance of things. Plato was correct in postulating that we must understand each thing in terms of its Form, but was incorrect in thinking a thing can exist independently of its Form:

Form and matter are inseparable. It is the form of a thing—its having the form of a hyacinth, for example—that “organizes” the matter in the plant. The form of a thing is its core essence, which gives each thing its intrinsic nature and ensures that it unfolds at it should to realize its nature. And since knowing a thing’s nature is to understand what it should be at its best, each thing’s form is key to understanding its *telos*, the end, or form of excellence, at which it aims. (Hill, 2016, Chapter 2, section Naturalizing Teleology: Aristotle, para. 5)

While substance is the ontological basis for a thing, properties of matter may change. A particular tree loses its leaves and grows them anew but is nonetheless that tree. A human grows, matures, ages, and changes morphologically, but his or her substance is unchanged. Thus, the locus of reality for each person is their substance, which has a nature and *telos* all its own. The concept of self, so essential to moral philosophy, is given structure in Aristotle's teleological account of human substance.

For Plato, *nous* is virtue in its essence and only souls, divine or human, could contemplate *nous* (Banach, 2006) and thereby activate it. By making form intrinsic, Aristotle asserted that human good is activity by the inherent form of *nous* and such activity, therefore, emanates from the individual soul. Such activity is manifested through virtuous behavior (Lear, 2009). "Human good is the activity of the soul in conformity with excellence or virtue, and if there are several virtues, in conformity with the best and most complete" (Aristotle, 1999a, 1098a16). For Aristotle, morality and virtue were not for mere apprehension through contemplation; they were for action.

Aristotle's ethical teleology

A teleological view of life implies that each animal or person has a "distinct form of flourishing, which entails the unfolding of our essence" (Hill, 2016, Chapter 2, section Aristotle's Ethical Philosophy: Teleology and Virtue Ethics, para. 1). Assessing ethical behavior is on the basis of the achievement of this distinctly human *telos*. "Good" is an objective reality that inheres in the universe from the Divine Good, the Unmoved Mover in Aristotle's cosmogony (Lear, 2009). It is toward this Good as obtained within each person that we must seek:

Suppose, then, that the things achievable by action have some end that we wish for because of itself.... Clearly, this end will be the good, that is to say, the best good. Then does knowledge of this good carry great weight for [our] way of life, and would it make us better able, like archers who have a target to aim at, to hit the right mark? If so, we should try to grasp, in outline at any rate, what the good is, and which is its proper science or capacity. (Aristotle, 1999a, p. 30)

Aristotle realized human achievement of Good is not attainable with the same degree of precision as possible in the natural sciences (Aristotle, 1999a, p. 32). Theoretical wisdom, *sophia*, was the understanding of fixed truths regarding natural sciences, whereas practical wisdom, *phronesis*, was used for perspicacity regarding contingent matters. Morality and ethical living are in the sphere *phronesis* (Hill, 2016). Ethical virtue is not an intellectual pursuit; it is a practical activity of one who is pursuing the teleological good; that is, aiming for a flourishing life. One cannot simply be persuaded to do good as if virtue's genesis is in philosophical knowledge. One must act by experience, judgment, and good character. The latter is defined by virtues while a bad character is the result of perversion through vices. Furthermore, obtaining good character requires action, not mere thought.

But for actions in accord with the virtues to be done temperately or justly it does not suffice that they themselves have the right qualities. Rather, the agent must also be in the right state when he does them. First, he must know that he is doing virtuous actions; second, he must decide on them, and decide on them for themselves; and, third, he must also do them from a firm and unchanging state...As a condition for having a virtue, however, the knowing counts for nothing, or rather for only a little, whereas the other two conditions are very important, indeed all-important. And we achieve these other two conditions by the frequent doing of just and temperate actions. Hence actions are called just or temperate when they are the sort that a just or temperate person temperate from doing temperate actions; for no one has the least prospect of becoming good from failing to do them. The many, however, do not do these actions. They take refuge in arguments, thinking that they are doing philosophy, and that this is the way to become excellent people. They are like a sick person who listens attentively to the doctor, but acts on none of his instructions. Such a course of treatment will not

improve the state of the sick person's body; nor will the many improve the state of their souls by this attitude to philosophy. (Aristotle, 1999a, p. 50)

So how does one acquire good character if not by studying ethics? Aristotle taught that good character can be achieved only through action. One can judge the Good only by being good, and one can become good only by habitually acting in a virtuous way. We literally integrate goodness into our very souls by doing good deeds. Good doing precedes good judgment, though good judgment subsequently guides our actions. (Hill, 2016, Chapter 2, section Aristotle's Ethical Philosophy: Teleology and Virtue Ethics, para. 3)

Aristotle's term for a good life was "happiness" (Aristotle, 1999a, p. 32) but defined not as hedonism, rather as a side effect of living virtuously. Neither was an ascetic life viewed as constituting happiness. Aristotle recognized that while virtue is good in itself and a life of virtue was required for happiness, other things are necessary as well.

If this is so, actions in accord with the virtues are pleasant in their own right. Moreover, these actions are good and fine as well as pleasant; indeed, they are good, fine, and pleasant more than anything else is, since on this question the excellent person judges rightly, and his judgment agrees with what we have said. Happiness, then, is best, finest, and most pleasant... Nonetheless, happiness evidently also needs external goods to be added, as we said, since we cannot, or cannot easily, do fine actions if we lack the resources. (Aristotle, 1999a, p. 40)

Aristotle's *telos* for a human being he called *eudaimonia*, which literally means "having a good spirit" but in the vernacular of English commonly carries the idea of human flourishing. It is not an attitude or temporal state but is a holistic condition of a fulfilled and stable life in which is experienced a virtuous state of being.

Virtue, moreover, is not simply a means to *eudaimonia*; it is itself constitutive of *eudaimonia*. In other words, acting virtuously brings us closer to our fulfillment, but our fulfillment then naturally emanates in virtue. As we come closer to the goal, we naturally act more in accordance with our end and find enjoyment in

doing so. Happiness is a natural emanation of the life well lived. (Hill, 2016, Chapter 2, section Aristotle's Ethical Philosophy: Teleology and Virtue Ethics, para. 6)

Plato ascribed the cause of Good and the rest of the intelligible Forms to *nous*.

Aristotle addressed the concept of *nous* in *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, *Metaphysics*, *Republic*, and other writings:

From these texts and others it is clear that *nous* was a standard way of naming one divine principle, which Aristotle...held to be the highest principle. When two names are given together, each serves to confirm the sense of the other: *ho theos kai ho nous* means "God, I mean [not gods of the state but] *nous*"; and *ho nous kai ho theos* means "*nous*, I mean [not the human mind but] God." (Menn, 1995, p. 553)

Aristotle was not given to mysticism but it is important to acknowledge his belief in the divine principle of Good is the being of God who is the final cause of all things. The form of Good is metaphysically prior to a person's character development. Actively participating in this virtue when, via our souls, we perceive this transcendent, divine Good, is the genesis of human good, "the activity of the soul" as Aristotle states; it is the essence of humanity.

It is noteworthy that hundreds of years before Plato and Aristotle, Hebrew sacred literature set forth an account of the Good accessible to human souls. In the biblical book Genesis, goodness is prominently displayed in the narrative regarding the creation of mankind and the original world in which Adam and Eve became living souls. "Good" (Hebrew טוב, *tôv*) is used seven times in Genesis 1 (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31, New International Version). In the context of light, land and sea, vegetation, the stars, creatures of the sea and air, and land animals, God is described as

seeing all of His handiwork and calling it “good.” In the final use of the word, the superlative “very” (Hebrew רַב־טוֹב , meod) modifies the word “good.”

27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

29 Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was **very good**. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. (New International Version, emphasis added)

Plato and Aristotle later echoed the Hebrew belief in the divine source of goodness. Although there is some evidence that both Plato and Aristotle had contact with the Pentateuch and interaction with Jewish philosophers (Lewy, 1938), I am not suggesting that Hebrew religious doctrine was formative of their philosophical views. Rather it is to point out the common belief within these two systems of a transcendent source of Good. Furthermore, this source of Good is the originator of the universe and is beyond the sensibilities of the material world. These are the first principles of a system into which humans are invited to participate in goodness, which is to live a virtuous life.

There is a substantive difference of emphasis between the metaphysics of Plato and the empiricism of Aristotle. Plato believed epistemic truth came through contemplation of universal, immutable constructs (Forms) and was not accessible through observation of material objects

alone. He believed universals were, by definition, separate from particulars. Aristotle disagreed. He found the substance of things, their final cause, is located in universals, but because they cause particulars, cannot be separate from them. His belief in the unity of soul (*nous*) and body is fundamental to Aristotle's understanding of man's connection to the divine *nous*.

According to Plato, a virtuous life was contingent on a satisfactory contemplation of the divine Good and its activation through rational intention, which overcomes the change and degradation of the material realm. For Aristotle, because universals from the Unmoved Mover inhere in the realm of material things, everything is in the process of actualizing its full potential. For humankind, the goal of life, *telos*, is to achieve *eudaimonia*, or human flourishing, the outcome of a fully actualized life.

For Plato, knowledge of Reality is achieved through contemplation of transcendental Forms. For Aristotle, knowledge of Reality is gained through observation and testing of particulars by which one can understand the universal substance, "the things that are without qualification" (Aristotle, 1995, p. 160).

Aristotle argued in Book 8 of the *Physics* and Book 12 of the *Metaphysics* "that there must be an immortal, unchanging being, ultimately responsible for all wholeness and orderliness in the sensible world" (Sachs, 2016).

The empiricism of Aristotle has been altered by neo-Aristotelians such as MacIntyre (1984) and Nussbaum (1998) to be quite disconnected from this ontology grounded in “an immortal, unchanging being,” the “Unmoved Mover,” situated in a single Heaven (Aristotle, 1995, p. 347). Eliminating this helps avoid what Anscombe described as “theologically derived notions of obligation, which many people no longer found compelling...” (Ivanhoe, 2007, p. 1). Aristotle’s empiricism, compelling or not, was grounded in an ontology of divine, objective Reality, the “Unmoved Mover” that is also *nous* and the Good, from which virtue obtains its cause and, he believed, compelling moral logic.

Aristotle arrived at the logic of an unseen Unmoved Mover through reason, but that which is beyond sensibility is by nature transcendent. Plato would proffer to Aristotle that the existence of an ultimate cause that is beyond the material realm is metaphysical by definition. Regardless, Aristotle would admit the truth of the existence of this reality functions as the premise of the argument for Good and any conclusion regarding virtues derives its force from it. Aristotle’s empiricism takes place in the ambience of his philosophical theology.

Both the metaphysics of Plato and the divine unity of Aristotle have given force to philosophical arguments throughout the history of philosophy. The diaspora of their ideas has its genesis in the conquests and later subjugation of Greece.

The Dispersion of Greek Virtue Theory

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle all inhabited an era in the history of Greece situated between 480–399 BCE, which Will Durant (1939) described as the “Golden Age.” Athens was primarily

responsible for the defeat of the Persians, and after that victory, Pericles ruled and helped lead Athens into her halcyon years. Her economic and military hegemony dominated the Delian League of Greek city-states, and “Pericles realized his ambition to make Athens ‘the queen of the Hellas’” (Giusepi, 2001). The power of Athens during this period can be glimpsed via the oration attributed to Pericles at an official funeral for those soldiers who died during an early battle in the Peloponnesian War as recorded in Thucydides eponymous book:

To sum up: I say that Athens is the school of Hellas, and that the individual Athenian in his own person seems to have the power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace. This is no passing and idle word, but truth and fact; and the assertion is verified by the position to which these qualities have raised the state. For in the hour of trial Athens alone among her contemporaries is superior to the report of her. No enemy who comes against her is indignant at the reverses which he sustains at the hands of such a city; no subject complains that his masters are unworthy of him. And we shall assuredly not be without witnesses; there are mighty monuments of our power which will make us the wonder of this and of succeeding ages. (as cited in Giusepi, 2001)

The power and influence of Athens invested the virtues of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle with puissant currency, as P.B. Shelley wrote in 1818:

The period, which intervened between the birth of Pericles and the death of Aristotle, is undoubtedly, whether considered in itself or with reference to the effect it has produced upon the subsequent destinies of civilized man, the most memorable history in the world (as cited in Durant, 1939, p. 245)

The dominance of Athenian society throughout the Aegean and western Mediterranean facilitated the circulation of the contemporary moral philosophy emanating from the schools of Plato and Aristotle. Through commerce and conquest, especially that of Alexander, the influence

of Greek moral philosophy and virtue ethics spread throughout a region that included Egypt, the modern day Middle East, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, western India, and Tibet.

Moral philosophy in the time of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle was applied and assessed within the concept and culture of the *polis*, the Greek city-state. It is important to note that an understanding and evaluation of ethical behavior based on virtues requires a community context. The individual's achievement of *eudaimonia* was contingent on interaction within the *polis*. Socrates chose death over escape because he believed the harm he would inflict on others by escape would be greater than that as a result of his death (*Crito*, 53b-54d). Just as removing a transcendent standard for Good abolishes the cause of virtues, removing the context of human relationships from virtues alters their meaning and facility for living a felicitous life.

This notion of virtue as subject to interrelationships with others is prominent also in the *Analects* of Confucius. The highest Confucian virtue is *jen*, translated variously as "human-heartedness," "benevolence," "goodness," or "humaneness," which enhances the essentially human relationships within the family, the community, and the nation (Ames, 1998; Kraseman, 2011). Its analog can be found in the Indian Hindu concept of *dharma*, which has the root meaning "to nourish," and connects to the order of the universe in Rig Veda. This order is not only in the physical realm, but also the moral, an order that necessitates the priority of virtue (Kraseman, 2011, p. 106).

The common connection of virtue to a community and a transcendent imperative for goodness indicates the Greek theory of virtue and morality is not isolated to Athenian society and political life, but included life in China and India as well during 700 BCE to 400 BCE. This suggests a universal notion of Good and a theory of virtues situated in humans as beings whose identity is only intelligible through relations with others. Our recognition of ourselves as free, rational, self-conscious persons will involve our having certain attitudes and actions toward others and ourselves (Casey, 1990).

The Impoverishment of Certainty

Victory in the Greco-Persian wars engendered Athens' ascent, but her hegemony as the dominant city-state through economic and military means catalyzed the conditions for fragmentation within the Hellenes. With the destruction of the former city-state structures after the Peloponnesian Wars, there was a disconnection of the philosophy of morals and its practice in virtue ethics from political life and society in the polis. The metaphysical and physical ontologies and epistemologies grounded in the Forms of Plato and the Good *nous* of Aristotle were given life through citizenship in Athens. With the departure of the ethical playing field of the *polis*, moral philosophy faced the divorce of ethics and politics (Durant, 1939). Before, the problem was one of living virtuously in the context of the *community* to build a just state. Now the locus of the problem of discovering a theory of virtue is that of building a just *individual*, content within his or her life experience. This tension of individualism with collectivism has been a feature of human culture for centuries.

The demise of Athenian democracy during the Hellenistic dispersion and the commingling of the philosophy of virtues with numerous other influences from the Hellenistic empire changed the epistemology regarding a good life. From one grounded in transcendent truths apprehended by the reflection of the distinctly human soul, attaining human goodness via connection to the transcendent good was replaced by humanistic epicureanism, skepticism, and subjectivism (Durant, 1939).

Continued political turmoil in Athens and the attendant politicization of philosophy made classic Aristotelians and Platonists unfashionable, which allowed Epicurus (341–270 BCE) to move his prominent school from Hellespont (modern day Dardanelles) to Athens. He purchased a property that became known as “The Garden,” later used as the name of the school itself (Konstan, 2014). By rejecting the religious traditions of his time, although a professed follower, he rejected the metaphysics of Plato. In place of a quest for participation in a transcendent Good, he asserted that the good life is one, which avoids pain and secures pleasure:

For the end of all our actions is to be free from pain and fear, and, when once we have attained all this, the tempest of the soul is laid; seeing that the living creature has no need to go in search of something that is lacking, nor to look for anything else by which the good of the soul and of the body will be fulfilled. When we are pained because of the absence of pleasure, then, and then only, do we feel the need of pleasure. Wherefore we call pleasure the alpha and omega of a blessed life. (Epicurus, 2015, p. 2)

Lest this quest of pleasure be adduced as sensual indulgence alone, Epicurus considered a life of virtue as essential to a pleasurable existence:

When we say, then, that pleasure is the end and aim, we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal or the pleasures of sensuality, as we are understood to do

by some through ignorance, prejudice, or willful misrepresentation. By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul. It is not an unbroken succession of drinking-bouts and of merrymaking, not sexual love, not the enjoyment of the fish and other delicacies of a luxurious table, which produce a pleasant life; it is sober reasoning, searching out the grounds of every choice and avoidance, and banishing those beliefs through which the greatest disturbances take possession of the soul. Of all this, the greatest good is prudence. For this reason prudence is a more precious thing even than the other virtues, for as a life of pleasure which is not also a life of prudence, honor, and justice; nor lead a life of prudence, honor, and justice, which is not also a life of pleasure. For the virtues have grown into one with a pleasant life, and a pleasant life is inseparable from them. (Epicurus, 2015, p. 3)

Epicurus was an empiricist on the fashion of Aristotle. Rather than connect these virtues to a transcendent Reality, Epicurus' virtue theory was existential in nature and situated within a social life. "Justice, for Epicurus, depends on the capacity to make compacts neither to harm others nor be harmed by them, and consists precisely in these compacts; justice is nothing in itself..." (Konstan, 2014). For Plato and Aristotle, virtues were good in themselves and, as reflections of the transcendent Good, were inherently essential for the good life. Their ethical theories received force from transcendent first principles. In contrast, Epicurus' concern for virtue was its utility as an indispensable means to personal happiness. Above the entrance to The Garden was the alluring proverb, "Guest, thou shalt be happy here, for here happiness is esteemed the highest good" (Durant, 1939, p. 647). Virtue was no longer an end in itself—not Aristotle's *eudaimonia*, but unvarnished hedonism. Epicurean ethics were at once egoistic and social: Egoistic because personal pain avoidance and pleasure seeking were paradigmatic for the good life, social because pleasure required being generous and benevolent to others.

Thus it appears that the Epicureans tried to build social values on an egoistic basis. They held that political society is based on the kind of agreement the wise person makes with his comrades in order to enhance pleasure. "Justice was not a

thing in its own right, but [exists] in mutual dealings in whatever places there [is] a pact about neither harming one another nor being harmed” (*The Principle Doctrines*, XXXIII). It is “something useful in mutual associations.” But the means in which justice is carried out can vary from place to place. A law is unjust only if it works against the usefulness in mutual associations. There is no justice among those who do not make the social contract, just as there is none among animals. (Mattey, 1999, p. 3)

Here it is evident Epicurus situated the virtue “justice” in the context of social relations and assessed it through the lens of “social associations.” This presaged Hobbes’ social contract by 2,000 years and still finds an abundance of contemporary support in our values-based pluralistic society.

The deterioration of virtues from a transcendent genesis continued with various philosophical offshoots including Cynicism, Stoicism, and Skepticism. Cynics held that the wise person would avoid pain by a life of asceticism since the pursuit of material pleasure is itself all too often disappointing and painful. Diogenes (c.404–323) considered the virtues society ascribed to conventional ways of living to be opposed to a good life and suggested the person of wisdom will flout such conventions and be a law unto himself (Blumenau, 2002, p. 59). Accordingly, he is said to have engaged in public urination, masturbation, and copulation. In his defense, he said that human beings should be no more ashamed of natural acts than a dog. He took this moniker, the Dog, which in Greek is the word *kunos* from whence came the word “cynic.” The Epicurean use of the social milieu for defining virtues was evidently not important to Diogenes. Whatever the aversion was to the dog-like conduct of Diogenes has been preserved through the ages. Cynic remains a pejorative word.

The Cynics were less a philosophical system and more a bohemian lifestyle of asceticism. Skepticism, on the other hand, was a philosophical schema dedicated to explicating the doubt about a universal moral order. Whereas Epicureans' principle solicitude was hedonism and their dubiety regarding a universal moral order was a lesser concern, the Skeptics' reversed this order and were primarily interested in exploring the intellectual ground for this doubt. Pyrrho (346–275 BCE) is generally considered the founder of this philosophy (Blumenau, 2002; Durant, 1939; Graham, 2016). His pupil, Timon (circa 320–230 BCE), in a series of books, disseminated Pyrrho's ideas into the world:

These opinions were basically three: that certainty is unattainable, that the wise man will suspend judgment and will seek tranquility rather than truth, and that, since all theories are probably false, one might as well accept the myths and conventions of his time and place. Neither the senses nor reason can give us sure knowledge: the senses distort the object in perceiving it, and reason is merely the sophist servant of desire. Every reason has a corresponding reason opposed to it; the same experience may be delightful or unpleasant according to circumstance and mood; the same object may seem small or large, ugly or beautiful; the same practice may be moral or immoral according to where and when we live; the same gods are or are not, according to the different nations of mankind; everything is opinion, nothing is quite true. (Durant, 1939, p. 642)

Pyrrho's influence reached to the Academy established by Plato and ironically it was Plato's followers who transmogrified his claim that contemplation can bring a person into a grasp of Truth into a belief that such contemplation will only confirm we cannot have absolute knowledge about anything. In 269 BCE, Arcesilaus became the head of the school. "Nothing is certain," said Arcesilaus, "not even that" (Blumenau, 2002, p. 64). Plato, who had died nearly eighty years earlier, would have likely been flummoxed to see his school embrace the intellectual descendants

of the Sophists, such as Protagoras, who, 150 years earlier, had claimed that no absolute truths existed and “man is the measure of all things.” Arcelilaus’ extension of Pyrrhonism revived the moral subjectivism of the pre-Socratic sophists and presaged the similar, modern philosophy of Hume in the eighteenth century (Baggett, 2011, p. 240) and Sartre in the twentieth (Adams, 2006).

Plato’s former school changed hands once again with the ascent of Carneades (213–129 BCE) to the position of Director. While carrying on the skeptic traditions of Pyrrho and Arcesilaus, he became known for his indulgence in intellectual panache. In the decade after Rome destroyed Corinth and added Greece as a province of the Roman Empire (Durant, 1939), Carneades was invited to Rome in 155 BCE, to give a series of lectures to the Roman senate. His intellectual prowess was such that he expounded on the virtue of Justice, proving the views of Plato and Aristotle one day and, on the next, made a mockery of this ideal. He suggested its impracticality is evident by Rome’s certain refusal to restore the territories she had conquered by force (Blumenau, 2002, p. 65). Cato the Elder expelled Carneades and his entourage. He and others were concerned the decadent influence of skepticism, individualism, and moral subjectivism would be subversive (Blumenau, 2002, p. 66). Rome was in its ascent with the vigor of civic confidence once enjoyed by Athenians in their polis, which encouraged a moral philosophy with broader obligations to the community and State, where participation in political affairs was noble and meaningful.

However, the system embraced was not that of Plato's metaphysical knowledge of Reality or Aristotle's empirical analysis of final causes. It was one which, like that of the Cynics, Epicureans, and Skeptics, eschewed a belief that one could know universal truth. But rather than respond by withdrawing from society or indulging personal pleasure, the system fostered courage in the face of adversity and an acceptance that uncontrollable but venerable universal laws are part of a divine cosmic order. The philosophy was Stoicism.

A Restoration of Transcendence: Divine Logos and Natural Law

Aristotle's death in 322 BCE resulted in his Academy splitting into numerous factions. This, coupled with the erosion of the *Polis* so essential to the moral philosophy of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, gave rise to the various philosophical and ethical systems previously discussed. Zeno (335–264 BCE), a native of Citium in Cyprus, founded the final philosophical tradition of the classical era (Durant, 1939). Nearly 150 years prior to Cato's expulsion of the Skeptics from Rome, Zeno instituted a school of philosophy in Athens in a colonnade portico described by the Greek word *stoa*. The "Stoics" claimed their philosophy was grounded in Socrates, particularly his qualities of living austere and meeting his death sentence by the Athenian counsel with courage and dignity (Blumenau, 2002, p. 68). As a young man, Zeno amassed a fortune but lost his treasure in a ship wreck on the Attic coast, and when he arrived in Athens in 314 he was destitute (Durant, 1939). Legend has it that he was sitting in a book stall on an Athens street, paging through Xenophan's *Memorabilia*, and, reading of Socrates, asked the question, "Where are such men to be found today?" The story goes on that at that moment Crates, a Cynic philosopher, passed by, at which point the bookseller advised Zeno to go follow Crates (Zeller, 1870). Crates, though a Cynic, denounced the sexual looseness of his time, although it is

reported that his marriage to a young pupil, Hipparchia, was consummated in public, something for which Diogenes would have no doubt given his approval.

Zeno was dissatisfied with the sensual indulgences of the Cynics and the lack of belief in a comprehensible knowledge of divine order in the cosmos (Durant, 1939). He admired Socrates' strength of character, especially his courage and independence from external circumstances. To Socrates Zeno added and blended aspects of the materialism of his contemporary Epicurus with pre-Socratic Sophists and post-Socratic Cynics to develop a moral philosophy in which a virtuous life was situated in a self-sufficiency consequent to a dispassionate ordering of intention aligned with the rational and causally determined universe (Blumenau, 2002; Copleston, 1946; Durant, 1939; Zeller, 1892).

The system of the Stoics was divided into three main avenues of inquiry: logic, natural science, and ethics (Zeller, 1892, p. 66). While most Stoics accepted that logic was the least important, there was debate as to whether the highest achievement of thought was in the category of natural science or ethics:

On the one hand, ethics appears to be the higher science, the crowning point of the system, the subject towards which the whole philosophical activity of the school was directed; for philosophy is practical knowledge, and its object is to lead to virtue and happiness. On the other hand, virtue and the destiny of man consist in conformity to the laws of nature, which is the province of science to investigate. Therefore, natural science has the higher object. It lays down the universal laws which in ethics are applied to man. To it, therefore, in the graduated scale of sciences, belongs the higher rank. (Zeller, 1892, p. 67)

The Stoics shared the belief with Plato that the ultimate knowledge was that of conceptions of divine Good (Zeller, 1892, p. 84). However, they were influenced by Cynic nominalism, a doctrine that asserts universals are without corresponding reality and only particular objects exist (Veatch, 1954). Thus the realism of Plato and Aristotle that compelled the quest to understand the transcendent Good was replaced in practice by a belief that the absolute Reason behind the cosmos was not fully comprehensible. Consequently, on the one hand Stoics believed in a divine cosmic order executed through the Law of God, but on the other they limited knowledge of reality to those ideas discernable through logic and natural science. The later Stoics, such as Poseidonius, a pedagogue of Cicero, moved away from skepticism and toward a Platonic system in which one could gain understanding of divine Providence (Copleston, 1946, pp.422-424), but the focus remained on the application of virtue within human relations in the quest for actualizing the best possible life.

Stoicism was a reaction against the excesses of Cynicism and Epicureanism (Blumenau, 2002; Durant, 1939; Veatch, 1954; Zeller, 1892). The highest good was not personal pleasure.

Least of all, can pleasure be considered a good or be regarded, as it was by Epicures, as the ultimate and highest object in life. He who places pleasure on the throne makes a slave of virtue; he who considers pleasure a good *ignores the real conception of the good and the peculiar value of virtue* [emphasis added]; he appeals to feelings, rather than action; he requires reasonable creatures to pursue what is unreasonable, and souls nearly allied to God to go after the enjoyments of the lower animals. Pleasure must never be the object of pursuit, not even in the sense that true pleasure is invariably involved in virtue. That it no doubt is...But even the pleasure afforded by moral excellence ought never to be an object, but only a natural consequence, of virtuous conduct; otherwise the independent value of virtue is impaired...Pleasure and virtue are different in essence and kind. Pleasure may be immoral, and moral conduct may go hand in hand with difficulties and pains...Those who look upon pleasure as a good are its slaves...In

no sense can pleasure be allowed to weigh in a question of morals; seeing it is not an end-in-itself, but only the result of action; not a good, but something absolutely indifferent. (Zeller, 1892, pp. 235-237)

Both Epicurus and Zeno endeavored to address the *telos* of a human life, and both sought a solution situated more in ethics and less than the formal philosophical system of Plato (Lightfoot, 1894). The one took happiness as the measure of a good life, the other virtuousness. Both contrasted with the Greek masters in replacing the state with the individual as the focal point of necessity. But where the one saw satisfaction of natural cravings for individual and close knit social needs as the pathway to flourishing, the other saw duty to the divine ordering Principle of the cosmos expanded to include all mankind. Epicurus removed theology from a concern for the affairs of men while Zeno identified a divine source of order with the nature and activity of the world (Bakewell, 2012). Both considered conformity to the law of nature as the axiom of the good life, but for one nature was human impulses and capacities while for the other “the absolute supremacy of the reason, as the ruling principle of his being” (Lightfoot, 1894, p. 271). Stoics believed to achieve the primacy of reason, the virtuous life should be free from the “slavery” of the passions of emotional and physical desires. This is accomplished by ordering one’s life in accordance with the divine providence of the cosmos. Even the pleasure resulting from virtue was discounted as a motive for a life of goodness. Like Aristotle, Stoics believed living virtuously was good in itself, regardless of the results.

Stoicism incorporated Heraclitus’ *Logos*, identifying it as the rational principle that permeates the physical universe.

The *Logos* is providence, God's will, as it is expressed in the physical laws of Nature and in a universal and unchanging moral law. The Stoics called this overarching set of laws—both the physical laws of science and the moral law that guides men—the natural law. (Hill, 2016, Chapter 2, section The Stoics: The Origins of the Natural Law, para. 5)

Mankind partakes of this principle that orders the universe and we participate in the *Logos* through rational consciousness. Both moral and physical laws, being the Will of God, will unfold exactly according to his volition; hence, the Stoic idea to remain dispassionate about surrounding circumstances—be they pleasant or painful. Practical wisdom would dictate one accepts this order as being the expression of God's Will. This renders despair or anger irrational and only serves to heighten the pain of vexing situations, which are only the result of the necessary conditions about which we have no say. Rather than withdraw from painful social situations like the Cynics or assuage them by pleasure seeking like the Epicureans, the Stoics “sought a calm and dignified acceptance of the laws of the universe in all their apparent harshness and arbitrariness” (Blumenau, 2002, p. 69). The Stoic aimed for *apatheia*, which, unlike apathy as used in our vernacular, is a state of freedom from earthly passions and harmony with Nature. Virtuousness is an undisturbed mental order that embraces a belief in God who arranges events in accordance with the necessities of the divine cosmological plan. The sage is one whose contentment is within an inner self-sufficiency and a deportment of imperturbable equanimity:

Virtue consists in the positive determination of conduct through will power in accordance with rational insight into man's essential nature. Virtue is right reason. Nature and reason are one. Right reason and the universal law of nature, which holds undisputed sway throughout the universe, are also one. Obedience to the eternal world law in a life lived according to reason: such, embraced with religious fervor, is the ethical principle of Stoicism. (Rommen, 1998, Chapter 1, para. 33)

The notion of a divine, universal law extends to a principle of duty that is incumbent on all people. It is understandable the praxis of the vast Roman Empire would embrace a philosophical system that is inclusive of diverse cultures while demanding duty to law. The Stoic movement attracted adherents for two centuries prior to and after Christ. The great Roman orator and statesman, Cicero (106–43 BCE) was profoundly influenced by Stoicism as were three other of Rome’s most influential and powerful thought leaders: Seneca (4BCE–65 CE), Epictetus (55–135 CE), and Marcus Aurelius (121–180 CE). Cicero described the law of nature as follows:

This, therefore, is a law, O judges, not written, but born with us, which we have not learnt, or received by tradition, or read, but which we have taken and sucked in and imbibed from nature herself; a law which we were not taught, but to which we were made, which we were not trained in, but which is ingrained in us... (as cited in Rommen, 1998, Chapter 1, footnote 10)

But in fact we can perceive the difference between good laws and bad by referring them to no other standard than Nature: indeed, it is not merely Justice and Injustice which are distinguished by Nature, but also and without exception things which are honourable and dishonourable. For since an intelligence common to us all makes things known to us and formulates them in our minds, honourable actions are ascribed by us to virtue, and dishonourable actions to vice; and only a madman would conclude that these judgments are matters of opinion, and not fixed by Nature. (as cited in Rommen, 1998, Chapter 1, para. 36)

For Cicero, the positive laws of men must be a reflection of the law of nature in order to invite dutiful obedience. This is a significant step away from Platonic and Aristotelian reverence for the laws of the *Polis*, which were considered *ipso facto* aligned with the order of the cosmos. Cicero acknowledged that positive laws are many times in contrast to the law of nature:

True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrongdoing by its prohibitions. And it does not lay its commands or

prohibitions upon good men in vain, though neither have any effect on the wicked. It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to attempt to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by senate or people, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times, and there will be one master and ruler, that is, God, over us all, for he is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst penalties, even if he escapes what is commonly considered punishment.” (as cited in Rommen, 1998, Chapter 1, footnote 12)

Elements of the Natural Law are evident within Cicero’s statement. The human consciousness permits us to participate in the *Logos* through reason and a deliberate and dutiful obedience. Because the universal law does not “lay its commandments on good men in vain,” when one lives outside its precepts it is not only sin, it is “denying his human nature.” The syllogistic extension is that within human nature is a divine element, allowing us to share in the order and rational law that governs the world.

The Stoic Natural Law germinated an ethical system that is perhaps their greatest legacy to modern moral thought (Hill, 2016; Wood, 1991). The emphasis on the willful obedience to a universal law that takes precedence over the positive laws of men, even those of the State, is an advance over the ethical system of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who held the laws of Athens as infallible reflections of the divine Good (Blumenau, 2002; Copleston, 1946; Zeller, 1892). Internal intention is paramount over the results of an act. Epictetus wrote in his *Discourses*, “The essence of good and evil lies in an attitude of the will” (Hill, 2016, Chapter 2, section The Stoics: The Origins of the Natural Law, para. 5). Thus, to adhere to the law of nature through duty,

animated by individual will, and thereby to align with the *Logos*, is the rational and moral conduct of a human being. Moreover, this is incumbent on all men and women. Unlike Aristotle's contention that some men are natural slaves and, therefore, not expected to live virtuously (Copleston, 1946), the Stoics condemned slavery as the "law of the dead" (Epictetus, Discourse 1.13) and proffered the noble idea that every person has dignity by virtue of participating in the divine *Logos* through reason. Even slaves can live virtuously insofar as their mind and reason are not enslaved and capable of ascertaining and practicing the law of nature. This commonality of mankind went beyond borders, even those of the expansive Roman Empire. Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor in circa 161–180 CE, wrote in his book *Meditations* that "My city and country, insofar as I am Antonius, is Rome, but insofar as I am a man, it is the world" (Aurelius, 1964, section 4.44). Stoic egalitarianism is seen in Aurelius exhortation from his *Meditations*, that finds its analog in Jesus' appeal to love your enemies and "turn the other cheek."

When any shall either impeach thee with false accusations, or hatefully reproach thee, or shall use any such carriage towards thee, get thee presently to their minds and understandings, and look in them, and behold what manner of men they be. Thou shalt see, that there is no such occasion why it should trouble thee, what such as they are think of thee. Yet must thou love them still, for by nature they are thy friends. And the Gods themselves, in those things that they seek from them as matters of great moment, are well content, all manner of ways, as by dreams and oracles, to help them as well as others. (Antonius & Farguharson, 1989, 9.25 p. 81)

The humanitarianism of the Stoics, their commitment to equal human dignity for all people, was grounded in the belief that each person bears the imprint of the divine *Logos*. Two hundred years before Christ, Zeno's student, Cleanthes, wrote the following:

Most glorious of Immortals, mighty God, invoked by many a name, sovereign
 King of universal Nature, piloting this world in harmony with Law,—all hail!
 Thee it is meet that mortals should invoke, for we Thine offspring are, sole of all
 created things that live and move on earth receive from Thee thy image.
 (Cleanthes, 1921, p. 8)

The great Stoic, Seneca, courtier to the Roman emperors, Caligula and Claudius, tutor to the young future emperor, Nero, emphasized the Stoic doctrine of the relationship that exists among all human beings. He called on people to help their fellow man and forgive those that had injured them (Copleston, 1946, p. 431), stressing the need for altruism. “Nature bids me to be of use to men whether they are slave or free, freedmen or born. Wherever there is a human being there is room for benevolence” (Seneca, 2015, Chapter 24, para. 2). We see in Seneca’s words the confluence of morality with theology, which is a feature of Stoicism that surpasses its predecessors. Plato’s divine Good provided a form for morality. Aristotle’s substance of Good offered the possibility of an essentially good, flourishing life directed toward the political and social needs of the *Polis*. The Stoicism of Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, and Seneca viewed the divine *Logos* as a call to a humanitarian altruism that crosses State and cultural borders into a brotherhood of mankind. The human *telos* of the contemplative Greek has been broadened to include the masses, who can obtain a good life through duty to the law of nature and benevolence to fellow human beings. The Roman Empire in the first century CE is a historically distinct philosophical, social, and political milieu dominated by Greek and Roman syncretism that enveloped a plethora of conquered civilizations. Most prominent among these in the first century was the theocratic culture of the Hebrews. Into this stepped a contemporary of Seneca who added a Christian voice to the confluence of Greek and Latin. His name was Saul, of the city of Tarsus

in Cilicia, an area in modern day south central Turkey twelve miles from the Mediterranean Sea. He is far better known by his Christian epithet, the Apostle Paul.

The Christian Baptism of the Law of Nature

Paul's significance begins with his Jewish ethnicity and heritage. The Jewish dispersions in the sixth century BCE populated the Hellenistic and Roman world, bringing Greek and Roman elements into union with the religious, social, political, and economic systems of Judaism (Bruce, 1971; Conybeare & Howson, 1980; Durant, 1939; Hill, 2016). Into the intellectual and artistic proclivities of the heirs of the famous Attic schools and the strength of law and organization of Rome stepped the religious piety of a people who lived and breathed the revealed precepts of the one true God. Viewed from a Christian perspective, this confluence of Greek, Roman, and Hebrew civilizations is nothing less than a providential plan (Conybeare & Howson, 1980). The stoicism of Hellenized Rome spread with her hegemony, establishing from Spain to India and Germany to Ethiopia a pervasive and fertile ground for the gospel concerning a God who is not only the First Cause and *Logos*, but is also personal and salvific through a savior for all mankind, whose imprimatur of truth is his resurrection from the dead. What was required is one who could give voice to this gospel in the language and ideals of Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem. Such a man was the Apostle Paul.

Born into the family of a Jewish Pharisee, Paul was also the recipient of his father's status of citizenship in the Roman Empire (Acts 22:28, New American Standard Version). He grew up in Tarsus of Cilicia, a city the contemporary geographer and historian, Strabo, said "in all that relates to philosophy and general education, it was even more illustrious than Athens or

Alexandria” (Conybeare & Howson, 1980, p. 18). Paul was educated under the tutelage of Gamaliel, considered one of the greatest Judean rabbis in the history of Israel. Only Gamaliel and six others have been given the title *Rabban*, which means the “Glory of the Law” (Harvey, 2005, Chapter 1, para 2). It is said in the *Talmud* “since Rabban Gamaliel died, there has been no more reverence for the Law (Harvey, 2005, Chapter 1, para 2).” As was the custom, Paul would have stayed with Gamaliel during his education (Conybeare & Howson, 1980). Thus it is that Paul was raised in a city reputed for the philosophy and education of the Hellenes, a citizen of the most powerful empire in the world, and a student of one of the greatest Judean theologians and teachers. Not only does this equip him with the necessary intellectual and historical tools to give voice to his apostolic message, it makes Paul a human microcosm of the world and civilization to which he evangelized the Christian gospel. His effectiveness in supporting the growth of the Christian community was partly due to his ability to speak Latin to those of Caesar’s court (Acts 25:10, New American Standard Version), Aramaic to his fellow Judeans, and Greek to those of the Hellenes.

On his second itinerary (Conybeare & Howson, 1980), Paul traveled to Athens, and, as he made his way from the harbor to the lower city, he would have passed the hundreds of colonnades containing statuary and inscriptions to numerous Greek and Roman gods and goddesses. He would have been able to look up to the Acropolis and see the colossal bronze statue of Athena standing nearly forty feet above the temple columns. As he walked to the synagogue (Acts 17:17, New American Standard Version) he would have passed temples, statues, and altars honoring numerous deities of Greek and Roman polytheism. After leaving the synagogue he wandered to

the Agora, the place of Zeno's *stoa* founded three and a half centuries earlier, yet still a locus of Stoics and Epicureans who, as their manner was, began to debate with Paul regarding his professed beliefs. Consequently, they led him to the Areopagus (Acts 17:18, New American Standard Version), which had been the seat of judgment for centuries, an appropriate location for the Athenian intellectuals to hear his announcement of a new theology (Conybeare & Howson, 1980, p. 290). The biblical record of Paul's remarks can be found in Acts 17:18-31 (New American Standard Version):

And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" Others, "He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. **19**And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? **20**"For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean." **21**(Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.) **22**So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. **23**"For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. **24**"The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; **25**nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; **26**and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, **27**that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; **28**for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' **29**"Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. **30**"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, **31**because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (New American Standard Version)

Paul quotes Epimenides' phrase "for in Him we live and move and exist," and then quotes the phrase from Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*, "For we also are His children." (Cleanthes, 1921, p. 8). His sermon would have resonated with the stoic idea that it is God who gives life to all people and things and appoints the boundaries of human times and habitations. Although accepting of national religion, stoic and epicurean ideologies did not embrace the polytheistic beliefs of the masses (Durant, 1939; Wood, 1991; Zeller, 1892), and would not necessary taken issue with Paul's stricture regarding God inhabiting temples or being represented in bronze or stone. But when he asserted God's desire for mankind to seek Him, he decimated the Epicureans' belief in a materialistic pantheism with a purposeless origin while introducing to the Stoics a personal God that belies their impersonal Providence. And certainly when he made reference to a future day when all mankind will be judged in accordance with a Man both personally appointed by God and resurrected from the dead, this no doubt gave reason for the derision by some. Others were politely deferential. Some number were converted, including one who was likely seated in a place of honor, Dionysius the Areopagite (Conybeare & Howson, 1980), and a woman name Damarius (Acts 17:34, New American Standard Version).

In his speech, Paul declares to his audience the "unknown" God. This is the separation point between Christian and Stoic theology and the essential invitation offered by the expanding Christian presence within the Roman Empire. It is an entreaty to a personal relationship with God, who is not only the *Logos* (cf. John 1:1ff, New American Standard Version), but also a loving Father who seeks to be found of all people.

The rise and expansion of the Christian religion is well documented and need not be chronicled for the purposes of this account of its influence on the contemporary moral and ethical systems in the first century CE. It is worth noting that expansion of Christianity was of such force that it became the State religion of Rome with Emperor Theodosius' Edict of Thessalonica in 380 CE. The doctrinal permutations that occurred from the time of Paul's address in Athens to the late fourth century are numerous and perhaps even troubling when viewed from a purely scriptural basis in terms of its integration into the political hegemony of the Roman Empire. Nonetheless, the Law of Nature was incorporated into Christian thought early in its history. Paul declares non-Judean individuals, though not having the Law of Sinai, possess an equally valid revelation regarding human goodness because they have the "law inscribed in their hearts" and made known by their consciences (Romans 2:9-16, New American Standard Version).

Augustine

Christian doctrine was introduced in the first century as a revealed body of knowledge regarding a gospel of redemption, salvation, and love. It was not presented as one more moral philosophical system. Its early inroads into Judean populations made the conflict doctrinal and theological, not ethical. Early "Fathers" of the Christian Church were mostly concerned with evangelizing the gospel, internal standardization of doctrinal beliefs and Church administration for a growing ecclesial organization (Rommen, 1998). However, as the Church gained roots and experienced rhizomatic growth, it induced suspicion and hostility not only from Jewish and political authorities, but also from pagan intellectuals (Copleston, 1950, p. 13). Consequently, Church thought leaders were forced to debate with more than scriptural and doctrinal tools. For instance, St. John Chrysostom (347–407) wrote the following:

We use not only Scripture but also reason in arguing against the pagans. What is their argument? They say they have no law of conscience, and that there is no law implanted by God in nature. My answer is to question them about their laws concerning marriage, homicide, wills, injuries to others, enacted by their legislators. Perhaps the living have learned from their fathers, and their fathers from their fathers and so on. But go back to the first legislator! From whom did he learn? Was it not by his own conscience and conviction? Nor can it be said that they heard Moses and the prophets, for Gentiles could not hear them. It is evident that they derived their laws from the law which God ingrafted in man from the beginning. (as cited in Bertke, 1941, p. 8)

The early Church Fathers were less concerned with developing a Christian system of ethics or moral philosophy and more consumed with defending the Church from persecutions by pagan government and intellectual leaders (Rommel, 2012). Contretemps from external philosophical antagonists spurred the growth of apologetics, but concomitant with the expansion of the Church was the increasing number of intellectuals and scholars converting to the faith and seeking to understand the data of revelation to form a coherent system of Christian philosophy regarding the world and human life. In the fifth century, Augustine (354–430) applied his fecund intellect to integrating ancient philosophy with Christian theology.

Augustine was a Platonist before he converted to Christianity and was a devotee of Cicero before he was a Platonist (Rist, 1994). Augustine cites Cicero more than 120 times in *City of God* (Foley, 1999, p. 52). In his book, *Confessions*, Augustine credits Cicero with his being drawn back to God:

Among such as these, at that unstable period of my life, I studied books of eloquence, wherein I was eager to be eminent from a damnable and inflated purpose, even a delight in human vanity. In the ordinary course of study, I lighted upon a certain book of Cicero, whose language, though not his heart, almost all admire. This book of his contains an exhortation to philosophy, and is called

Hortensius. This book, in truth, changed my affections, and turned my prayers to Thyself, O Lord, and made me have other hopes and desires. Worthless suddenly became every vain hope to me; and, with an incredible warmth of heart, I yearned for an immortality of wisdom, and began now to arise that I might return to Thee. (3.3.7)

As we have seen, the early Greek philosophers had spoken of an unwritten highest law of divine origin which precedes all human laws and which is coextensive with the eternal order of all things. Heraclitus said “all human laws are fed by that one law of God” (as cited in Chroust, 1944, p. 196, n.4). Like Heraclitus, Plato and Aristotle posited the necessity of an existing eternal cosmic law, and the Stoics equated this with the eternal Reason permeating the universe that determines everything that exists or moves and forms the norm of human action. Augustine transformed this impersonal pantheistic eternal *Logos* into the Will and wisdom of a divine and personal Creator (Chroust, 1944).

For Augustine the substantial ideas, which Plato had conceived of as dwelling in a heavenly abode, became thoughts of God. The impersonal world reason of the Stoics became the personal, all-wise and all-powerful God. The purely deistic *Nous* of Aristotle became the Creator-God who transcends the world, but who continually sustains it through His omnipotence, directs it through His providence, and governs it according to His eternal law. This eternal law was for Augustine identical with the supreme reason and eternal truth, with the reason of God Himself, according to whose laws the inner life and external activity of God proceed and are governed. God’s reason is order, and His law rules this ontological order, the order of being, of essences and values. But since this norm is identical with the immutable, immanent nature of God, it does not stand above Him; it is connatural to Him, and it is as unchangeable as He. (Rommen, 1998, Chp.2)

For Augustine, every human participates in the Natural Law by virtue of human reason and rational nature, and it is nothing less than the divine law of the God, which provides a norm for moral activity among humans, who have freedom of choice. Because it operates through reason,

there is no soul, regardless of how corrupt, to which this law does not speak. It follows that there are human actions which in themselves are good or bad. The ground for judging an act intrinsically immoral is its variance with natural reason and disturbance of the natural order of the conscience being governed by divine moral law. Thus “Augustine laid the foundation for the whole natural (moral) law of the following centuries by introducing the concept of a theistic ‘*lex aeterna*’” (Chroust, 1944, p. 196).

Augustine lived to see the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire. Twenty years before his death, the Visigoths sacked Rome and, within 25 years after his death, the Vandals invaded his former province of Numidia, located in modern Algeria. The fall of the empire, according to Edward Gibbon (1788), was ineludible:

But the decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness. Prosperity ripened the principle of decay; the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight. The story of its ruin is simple and obvious; and instead of inquiring why the Roman empire was destroyed, we should rather be surprised that it had subsisted so long. The victorious legions, who, in distant wars, acquired the vices of strangers and mercenaries, first oppressed the freedom of the republic, and afterwards violated the majesty of the purple. The emperors, anxious for their personal safety and the public peace, were reduced to the base expedient of corrupting the discipline which rendered them alike formidable to their sovereign and to the enemy; the vigour of the military government was relaxed and finally dissolved by the partial institutions of Constantine; and the Roman world was overwhelmed by a deluge of Barbarians. (Chapter XXXVIII, Part VI)

The barbarian invasions of southern and western Europe during the time of St. Augustine initiated what Petrarch labeled the “Dark Age” (Thompson, 1996, p. 13).

“Graeco-Roman culture disappeared in the West, and so did the spirit of philosophical enquiry which had been such an essential part of that culture. There was no serious philosophical debate in western Europe for about 600 years” (Blumenau, 2002, p. 115).

What is observable in Christian philosophy in the tenth century is a return to the Plato vs. Aristotle debate regarding universals and particulars (Carone, 2005). Plato believed the real world consisted of heavenly forms, whereas Aristotle believed that visible particulars contained the essence of universals and, by observing the particulars, we can name the universal form that gives the particular substance. Neo-Platonists held that universals were real, Aristotelians believed universals were names given to groups of particulars but had no real existence in themselves. The former belief was called Realism; the latter was labeled Nominalism. Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) was an exponent of Realism and most famous for his Ontological Argument for the existence of God (Copleston, 1950, pp.158–161). Jean Roscelin (1050–1120) expounded the Nominalist view to his pupil Peter Abelard (1097–1142) who offered a middle ground called Conceptualism, which describes both universals and particulars as equally real (Blumenau, 2002). Abelard was interested in the rational foundation for ethics, outside the theological constraints of Christian revelation and concluded that moral truths are discoverable by reason and are based on a Natural Law, which is subsumed in Christian doctrine.

Subsequent to the fall of the Roman Empire and the ascendancy of the barbarian nations, Islam was born under the leadership and revelation of Mohammed. After his death in 632, the religion, under the rule of Caliphs, expanded into Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt—areas

formerly dominated by Hellenes philosophies and culture. As was the case among Christian theologians and intellectuals, Muslim and Arabic scholars became interested in Greek texts still circulating in the Middle East (Blumenau, 2002). Not surprisingly, given their common Abrahamic ancestry, Muslim scholars, like their Christian counterparts, found much in Plato that they could assimilate with their monotheistic theology and worldview. Aristotle was not neglected, and in the Muslim capital of Baghdad, Caliph Haroun al-Rashid (766–809) organized a systematic translation of his and Plato’s works into Arabic (Blumenau, 2002, p. 123). An influential proponent for synthesizing philosophical reasoning with Muslim revelation was Ibn Sina (980–1037), known as Avicenna in the West. Just as Christian scholars came under attack when proposing such as synthesis, so Avicenna was vehemently opposed. The opposition is often associated with Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (1058–1111) who largely won the battle against rationalism and was considered among the greatest Muslim leaders after Mohammed (Klima, 2013; Matthey, 1999). His influence extended to Caliph Mustanjid’s edict in 1150 to burn all the works of Avicenna. But in a faraway part of the Muslim empire, a new Islamic champion for Aristotle arose in Cordoba, Spain. Ibn Rushd (1126–1198), known as Averroes in the West, took issue with the Caliph’s edict and wrote prolific reaffirmations of rationalism as a worthy scholarly endeavor. One of his contemporaries in Cordoba, a Jewish teacher Maimonides (1135–1204) integrated Aristotelianism into Jewish theology. Although both Averroes and Maimonides experienced similar backlash and opposition, their writings were translated into Latin and intersected the paths of Christian scholars in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. St. John of Bonaventura condemned the synthesis of reason with revelation and persuaded the Bishop of Paris to condemn such heresies, which he did in 1269 (Blumenau, 2002, p. 130). This did not

terminate the struggle as seen in the writings of Albert Magnus (1201–1280). He produced a compilation of knowledge from ancient Greeks, Neo-Platonists, Muslim Averroists, and Maimonideans.

[Magnus] gave Aristotle to the Latins...he accumulated the storehouse of pagan, Arabic, Jewish, and Christian thought and argument from which his famous pupil drew for a more lucid and orderly synthesis. Perhaps without Albert, Thomas [Aquinas] would have been impossible. (Durant, 1950, p. 961)

Natural Law vivified

Despite Blumenau's (2002) claim regarding the 600 years after the death of Augustine, there were significant inputs of scholarship on the pathway of moral philosophy within the guardrails of Natural Law. Boethius (480–524) wrote *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (The Consolation of Philosophy), which, despite leading to his indictment for treachery by Theodoric the Great, became one of the most translated, most printed books in history (Pieper, 2015). Boethius' statement "as far as you are able, join faith to reason," was later formalized as the foundational statement for the Medieval movement known as Scholasticism (Pieper, 2015). While Anselm is often considered the first Scholastic, Alexander of Hales (1185–1245) certainly represented the movement's ardor in compiling and synthesizing prodigious volumes of ancient and medieval texts in an effort to provide scholastic benefit. His *Summa Universae Theologiae*, published multiple times in the three hundred years following his death, was an attempt to synthesize Catholic theology in an Aristotelian metaphysical framework (Turner, 1907). His perspective of the Natural Law included a helpful metaphor:

Alexander of Hales, falling back upon St. Augustine's teaching, hit upon a beautiful figure: the eternal law is the seal, and the natural moral law is its impression in the rational nature of man, which in turn is an image of God. Now,

the laws of thought, as unchangeable norms of thinking, must govern speculative reason, the understanding, if the latter is to serve the purpose of its nature, the perception of truth; and such laws are immediately evident and certain. In the same way there exist for willing and acting in the domain of the practical reason supreme moral principles which are equally evident and sure. Thus every deed and action is moral only when it is performed in accordance with these principles. Moreover, this immanent natural moral law can never be destroyed. (Rommen, 1998, Chapter 11, para. 19)

Albert Magnus' brilliant student, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), extends Alexander of Hales' argument and starts with the Aristotelian notion that man's free will and intellect not only constitute the image of God in the material world, but they are also the participation in the divine Cause and necessary to being in accordance with the ends of divine wisdom or *Logos*.

Here teleology, the doctrine of ends or final causes, enters the scene. The essences of things, which are exemplifications of the ideas conceived by the divine intellect, constitute at the same time the end or goal of the things themselves. The perfection or fulfillment of the things is their essence: formal cause and end are one...Accordingly in the essential nature of the created world, as it came forth in conformity with the will of the Creator, are imbedded also the norms of its being. In the essential nature is likewise founded essential *oughtness*, the eternal law, which is God's wisdom so far as it directs and governs the world as first cause of all acts of rational creatures and of all movements of irrational beings. The eternal law, then, is the governance of the world through God's will in accordance with His wisdom. This law is thus the order of this world. (Rommen, 1998, Chapter 11, para. 22)

“Oughtness,” not blind compulsion or instinct, is the rational imperative for man's obedience to the eternal law. For man, as a free and rational being, the eternal law produces the natural moral law that directs us to goodness. The great contribution Thomas makes to the theory of Natural Law is his synthesizing of goodness with the essential nature of man (Rommen, 1998). Drawing deeply on Aristotle's teleology, he explains that every free and rational agent acts for an end or

purpose, which is perceived as good. Goodness is the inducement and justification for acting and, therefore, the will is directed to goodness:

Good is to be done: such is the supreme commandment of the natural moral law... Good is to be done; this action is good, it strives after good; it is therefore to be performed. Good is that which corresponds to the essential nature. The being of a thing also reveals its purpose in the order of creation, and its perfect fulfillment is likewise the goal of its growth and development... That is, "Good is to be done" means the same as "Realize your essential nature." (Rommen, 1998, Chapter 11, para. 26)

If realizing our essential nature is tantamount to realizing human flourishing, then human flourishing is doing that which is good, which reveals our purpose and is the "perfect fulfillment" of our goal of growth and development as a rational, free being.

What is interesting to consider is the syllogistic outcome of Aquinas' proposition regarding fulfillment of essential nature and goodness. This would mean that various things of the universe have levels of *being* in accordance with their level of goodness. This is Platonic in its essence. Plato taught that all things have being insofar as they participate in their own Form. The highest reality for Plato was the Form of Good; thus, the more a thing participates in the Good, the more real it becomes.

Aquinas concluded that Plato was largely correct in looking at the world this way. Some things are more real than others. But what is it about the various things of the world that makes some more real than others? Aquinas answered as Aristotle did: it is a thing's active nature, its capacity to transmit forms and to move other things, that makes it real. Crucially, there is a connection between the reality of a thing and its goodness. Being and Goodness are convertible concepts for Aquinas: Being and Goodness are one in reference and distinct only in sense. A "thing is perfect", he declared, "to the extent that it is in actuality." For a thing to be actualized is for it to be closer to achieving its fully realized form, its essence, its telos. The convertibility of Being and Goodness is what provides the necessary

link, so central to classical natural law theory, between the world of facts and the world of moral “oughts.” (Hill, 2016, Chapter 3, section: Thomas Aquinas: Christianity Meets Aristotle, para. 7)

To achieve our fully realized form, our *telos*, is to subjectively realize the divine Good.

According to Plato, knowledge of this Good was knowledge of the Form, which is to participate in the *Logos* (Curd, 2016). A remarkable consequence of this theory of knowledge and forms is that in knowing something, the mind participates in the object. In *de Anima*, Aristotle puts it this way: “Actual knowledge is identical with its object” (3.5). Thus, the divine order of the cosmos, the *Logos*, infuses both mind and objects with reality. The greatest reality is that of Plato’s First Cause and Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover, which is to say the Good and the divine *nous* from which emanates the *Logos*. The more a human being participates in the Good, the more they fully realize their essence and actualize that for which they were intended by the law of nature.

Aquinas’ Natural Law

In his *Summa Theologiae* (I-II. Q91), Aquinas identifies four laws: eternal, natural, divine, and human. A law is “a rule and measure of human acts, whereby a person is induced to act or is restrained from acting for ‘*lex*’ is derived from ‘*ligare*’ [to bind], because it binds one to act” (*Summa Theologiae* [hereafter, parenthetically referred to as ST] I-II. Q90.1). Elsewhere, he describes a law as a “dictate of practical reason emanating from a ruler” (ST I-II Q91.1).

Generally, then, a law is a precept that guides and also measures human acts. Conformance or non-conformance to the relevant law determines the goodness of an action.

Eternal law is the highest order law, which governs the origin, ordering, and essence of all things in the universe (ST I-II.Q93.3; Hill, 2016). We participate in that divine order by the fact that God creates in us both a desire for and ability to discern what is good.

Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others. Wherefore it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end: and *this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law* [emphasis added]. (ST I-II. Q91.2)

The Natural Law is our rational and appetitive participation in the eternal law. By the light of the *Logos* we can reason our way to the Good, but we also have the inherent capacity to know good from evil because it is indelibly etched in our hearts (Romans 2:15, New American Standard Version).

This is not some crude ethical innatism. Aquinas did not think that we are born with full knowledge of ethical truth, but neither did he think we were “*tabulae rasae*” (blank slates), as Locke and the empiricists later claimed. Rather, we possess an inborn propensity to grasp basic ethical principles, a propensity Aquinas called “*synderesis*.” Through education, reflection, and habituation to right behavior, we actualize *synderesis*, in other words, we develop a fully formed conscience. This process of moral development can be frustrated by unchecked vicious dispositions, bad habits, or a corrupt culture, leaving our conscience deformed and our ethical understanding blunted or distorted. (Hill, 2016, Chapter 3, section: The Natural Law, para. 4)

Divine law is revelation and human law is truly only law if it conforms to the moral order of the Natural Law (Aquinas, I-II. Question 93, 3).

Human beings use their active and intelligent cooperation to participate in the eternal law.

William May (2003) explains, “The eternal law is ‘in’ them both because they are ruled and

measured by it and because they actively rule and measure their own acts in accordance with it” (p. 73). This intrinsic inclination to participate in the extrinsic eternal law is imprinted in the nature of mankind; it is human quiddity. To the extent a person acts in accordance with their essential nature (i.e., the law of nature), their actions will accord with reason and be directed toward a full realization of their true happiness.

For Aquinas as well as for the Stoics and other proponents of Natural Law in the previous thousand years, the use of Nature to describe Law was predicated on the teleological impulse to naturally act in pursuit of our most fully actualized self. Thus, “natural” was in alignment with the law of the cosmos as ordered by the *Logos*. However, since the moral order of the world was disconnected from a divine law in the eighteenth century (Kamtekar, 2004), law and Nature have been in opposition to each other. The modern view is that mankind socially constructs laws in order to compel social duties and obligations over what would be the inclinations of Nature. Thus, Nature and moral law are contrastive concepts. Kant also gave Nature and reason diametrically opposed meanings (Hill, 2016). However, for Aquinas, as well as his predecessors, to act naturally was to act reasonably and in alignment with our essential nature, which is to pursue the fulfillment of the *telos* of our true being. Underlying this is the belief that the law of Nature, written in human hearts and mediated by conscience, is itself unalterable. This is only possible if the essence of this law, its quiddity and existence is predicated on the unalterable essence of its divine source.

That God of necessity enacts and cannot alter that law which we call the natural law comes merely from the fact that His will cannot do away with His most

perfect essence, that God cannot be at variance with Himself and cannot, as the Apostle says, deny Himself.” (Rommen, 1998, Chapter 11, para. 28)

That reason, and not will, is the guide for human morality is a key Thomist syncretism of Aristotelian and Christian thought (Rommen, 1998; Lear, 2009; Blumenau, 2002; Durant, 1950). For Aquinas, reason guides the human nature to God’s *lex naturalis* and brings us into contact with the divine idea of man. “Nature in this sense is eminently reasonable. And it is lawlike in binding us through the power of conscience” (Hill, 2016, Chapter 3, section: The Natural Law, para. 9).

Janet Smith observed, “One truth that our reason discovers is that things have essences or natures and purposes and that it is good to act in accord with those essences or natures and purposes” (Smith, 2012). The etymology of the word “rational” is rooted in the word “ratio,” which means “in proportion” (“Does rational come from ratio,” 2016). A person is being rational when they act in proportion to and correspondence with reality. The thought that leads to such an accordant act would be termed a “rational thought.” Thus, rationality operates within a formulation and set of assumptions regarding reality. The law of nature is an inherent formulation and set of assumptions informing the reason and will of mankind as to what is good and not good. Acting in accordance with this is to accord with our essence, nature, and purpose as humans. As such, the Natural Law is an extension of the eternal law given God’s goodness ordering the universe, including the ordering of human happiness by “writing in our hearts” (Romans 2:15, New American Standard Version) the knowledge of and inclination toward goodness. The Natural Law is not a deontic set of precepts (McInerny, 1993, p. 211), it is a fundamental human essence

that illuminates the path to goodness and, thus, facilitates human flourishing (ST I-II. Q94).

According to Aquinas, virtue is required to walk this pathway.

Summa Theologiae on virtues

Virtue is defined as “a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, or which no one can make bad use” (ST I-II. Q55). Pertaining to human morality Aquinas retained the four cardinal virtues from Aristotle of prudence, courage, justice, and temperance (ST, I-II. Q61), and adds to them three “speculative” intellectual virtues: wisdom, science, and understanding. He then added two additional virtues: art and practical wisdom (ST, I-II.Q57), which are virtuous intellectual productions. To these he added the three “theological virtues” of faith, hope, and love (ST, I-II.Q62). The virtues provide the capacity to produce actions that accord with the law of nature and the human *telos*. For although by nature we seek the Good that will facilitate our flourishing, excessive passion, corrupt habits, and blindness from self-interest can thwart our efforts toward the best version of ourselves.

As to those general principles, the natural law, in the abstract, can nowise be blotted out from men’s hearts. But it is blotted out in the case of a particular action, in so far as reason is hindered from applying the general principle to a particular point of practice, on account of concupiscence or some other passion, as stated above (Q[77], A[2]). But as to the other, i.e. the secondary precepts, the natural law can be blotted out from the human heart, either by evil persuasions, just as in speculative matters errors occur in respect of necessary conclusions; or by vicious customs and corrupt habits, as among some men, theft, and even unnatural vices, as the Apostle states (Rom. i), were not esteemed sinful. (ST I-II. Q94)

Our ability to make wise judgments as to what principles and actions will accrue to our teleological perfection is contingent on having the prerequisite virtues. Without them, our deficiencies will preempt the attainment of our *telos*. Aquinas provided an analysis of the four

cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and courage in ST I-II. Q61. Wattles (2015)

summarized this analysis as follows:

- (1) In the first sense, these virtues are “political” [social] in the sense that we properly conduct ourselves in society by means of these virtues.
- (2) In the second sense, for wayfarers on the journey to divine virtue, these are *purifying* virtues.
- (3) In the [third] sense, for those who attain true excellence of character in this life, they are perfect virtues in that they are exercised with no contrary emotion or appetite or inclination.
- (4) In the highest sense, these virtues are patterns (“exemplars”) that pre-exist in God. (p. 2)

Aquinas’ moral philosophy aligned with Aristotle’s but went on to distinguish itself from the Aristotelian framework by positing a personal oneness with God as the eudemonic goal of a human.

Man is perfected by virtue, for those actions whereby he is directed to happiness, as was explained above (Q[5], A[7]). Now man’s happiness is twofold, as was also stated above (Q[5], A[5]). One is proportionate to human nature, a happiness, to wit, which man can obtain by means of his natural principles. The other is a happiness surpassing man’s nature, and which man can obtain by the power of God alone, by a kind of participation of the Godhead, about which it is written (2 Pet. 1:4) that by Christ we are made “partakers of the Divine nature.” And because such happiness surpasses the capacity of human nature, man’s natural principles which enable him to act well according to his capacity, do not suffice to direct man to this same happiness. Hence it is necessary for man to receive from God some additional principles, whereby he may be directed to supernatural happiness, even as he is directed to his connatural end, by means of his natural principles, albeit not without Divine assistance. Such like principles are called “theological virtues”: first, because their object is God, inasmuch as they direct us aright to God: secondly, because they are infused in us by God alone: thirdly, because these virtues are not made known to us, save by Divine revelation, contained in Holy Writ. (ST. I-II. Q62)

Aquinas agreed that achieving moral perfection is the *telos* for a human, and he confederates that with a union with God.

Consequently just as moral virtue is defined as being “in accord with right reason,” as stated in [Aristotle’s] *Ethic. ii, 6*, so too, the nature of virtue consists in attaining God, as also stated above with regard to faith, (Q[4], A[5]) and hope (Q[17], A[1]). Wherefore, it follows that charity is a virtue, for, since charity attains God, it unites us to God, as evidenced by the authority of Augustine quoted above. (ST II-II. Q23)

We can arrive at partial happiness through our own facilities via moral and intellectual virtues, but to achieve ultimate happiness requires virtues that lie beyond our own habitual abilities. These are the “infused virtues” of faith, hope, and love mentioned in ST I-II Q62 and listed by Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthian church (I Corinthians 13:13, English Standard Version). These infused virtues allow us to align and order our reason and will to God and share in His form of divinity.

A certain nature may be ascribed to a certain thing in two ways. First, essentially: and thus these theological virtues surpass the nature of man. Secondly, by participation, as kindled wood partakes of the nature of fire: and thus, after a fashion, man becomes a partaker of the Divine Nature, as stated above: so that these virtues are proportionate to man in respect of the Nature of which he is made a partaker. (ST I-II. Q62)

Faith is the virtue whereby we, using both our intellect and will, assent to supernaturally revealed truthful principles. Due to the teleological nature of the will, it is naturally drawn to God’s goodness and therefore will command the intellect to reach for these transcendent truths (Stump, 1991, p. 188): “...the act of believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the Divine truth at the command of the will moved by the grace of God, so that it is subject to the free-will in relation to

God” (ST II-II.Q2). Hope is the virtue through which a person willfully seeks the attainment of divine perfection.

Wherefore, in so far as we hope for anything as being possible to us by means of the Divine assistance, our hope attains God Himself, on Whose help it leans. It is therefore evident that hope is a virtue, since it causes a human act to be good and to attain its due rule. (ST II-II. Q17)

Love, translated “charity” in the *Summa Theologiae* from the Latin word *caritas*,...

...is the mother and root of the virtues as their source, though as their culmination it is the last to come to fruition. Love comes to permeate lower virtues [*ST*, 1a 2ae 65.3]. As character reaches completion, love progressively motivates and illumines the practice of every act of courage, self-mastery, justice, diverse social virtues, and every exercise of intellectual and technical excellence. Love is fulfilled in a participation in the social life of God, whose love communicates itself to every being who may possibly share in that intelligent and intelligence-transcending love. Love in its fullness enables us to love our neighbors, near and far. (Wattles, 2015, p. 3)

Furthermore, the infused virtue of love affords a divine benefit, which is the *gift* of wisdom. This is not to be confused with the cardinal virtue of prudence or the intellectual virtue of wisdom, as these are accessible to all men by way of reason. The gift of wisdom allows the recipient to understand and judge divine things because they are connected by a shared divine nature.

Accordingly it belongs to the wisdom that is an intellectual virtue to pronounce right judgment about Divine things after reason has made its inquiry, but it belongs to wisdom as a gift of the Holy Ghost to judge aright about them on account of connaturality with them...Now this sympathy or connaturality for Divine things is the result of charity, which unites us to God, according to 1 Cor. 6:17: “He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.” Consequently wisdom which is a gift, has its cause in the will, which cause is charity, but it has its essence in the intellect, whose act is to judge aright, as stated above. (ST II-II. Q45)

Love is the root of character and the rationale underlying the Stoic belief in bestowing universal human dignity, for all humans are in the image of God and are the recipients of His transcendent love. For Aquinas, love subsumes all virtues while at the same time animating each virtue in their production of human goods; thus, the moral virtues are complete when conjoined with love. But it is also possible for those who endeavor to love God to transgress love through inordinate desires or fears (ST II-II. Q24). Thus, the other virtues are necessary to ensure the will remains oriented toward the ultimate human condition of divine love. The capacity to engage in the virtues is captured in the notion of *habitus*, to which we now turn.

Habitus

In *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas defined the existence of *habitus* as having a quality, which is inseparable from the person. Rather than being a quality in relation to a person, it inheres to the very being of that person.

This word “habitus” [habit] is derived from “habere” [to have]. Now habit is taken from this word in two ways; in one way, inasmuch as man, or any other thing, is said to “have” something. . . Now among things which are had, there seems to be this distinction, that there are some in which there is no medium between the “haver” and that which is had: as, for instance, there is no medium between the subject and the quality. (ST I-II. Q49)

In the Aristotelian ethical system engaging in a lifestyle of moral virtuosity was understood to be the epitome of *habitus* (Lizardo, 2004). Aquinas’ elevation and specification of the nature and content of the virtues coupled with his grand synthesis of Christian theology with classical moral philosophy elevated *habitus* as well. More than a habit of effort and training to develop a proficiency to act in a moral manner through the cardinal virtues, it is that which inheres in the character of the one who has *habitus*; that is, a person for whom moral behavior becomes second

nature. Can we explain the masterly and moving performance of a musician by saying he/she has a habit of practicing his/her instrument? This would situate virtuosity in the art form of music in the psychic mechanism of practice. “*Habitus* is the capacity of acting to perfection, of creating a new and excellent work” (Capreolus, 2001, p. xiv).

In the arena of moral virtues, *habitus* is like a force that connects the human essence with the law of nature (and, if accompanied by the gifts, the divine nature), and by this connatural capacity, brings a person into alignment with the Good, which is the source of the law of nature. Virtuous *habitus* is the essential power residing in us that produces good works and moves us to the production of our ideal moral selves. *Habitus* grounds morality in the virtues and divine gifts that facilitate the essentially human movement toward the *telos* of human flourishing. The reduction of the concept of *habitus* to mere habits of practice useful for performing acts moves the ground of morality to individual actions. Rather than a morality predicated upon a free will that, through the law of nature, is ordered to the Good, we have a morality resting on the primacy of individual acts and the freedom to be indifferent to a transcendent natural order of goodness.

[T]he cleavage, initiated at the beginning of the fourteenth century and widening thereafter, between a morality based on virtue, which was that of the Fathers and which received from St. Thomas its classic form, and a morality based on individual acts, which was to take over in the modern era, particularly in the form of casuistry. On the one hand, a morality concerned with the interior qualities and awareness of the perdurance and continuity of actions in an overall personal development; on the other hand, a morality concerned with individual actions in their particularity. (Capreolus, 2001, p. xiii)

The loss of the concept of *habitus* a few decades after the death of Aquinas ushered the genus of Natural Law and its virtuous phenotypes into a harsh environment of individualism and materialism in which it remains today.

Moral Universals

To fully explicate the evolution of Greek and Western moral philosophy from Platonism to skepticism, Epicureanism, and stoicism is beyond the scope of this dissertation. I have endeavored to delineate the philosophy of virtues in ancient Greece during the “Axial Period” (Jaspers, 1951). Sandwiched between the moral subjectivism of the sophists and the skeptics are the traditions of Plato and Aristotle, who proffered a moral philosophy having its roots in a transcendent cause and source of goodness. The concern for a divine Reality that gives substance to the universe, including human lives and minds, drove the desire to apprehend the nature of this Reality. This actuality was considered the ultimate cause and source of Good.

Plato identified the Good, which he characterized as permanently existing by itself in the incorporeal world, as the ultimate principle. The good, for Plato, was the absolute. Its goodness was, he argued, established by itself without recourse to any other thing whatsoever. The good is rather that presupposed by any human thought, action, and all social, natural phenomena. With Plato, the concept of absolute came to be conceived as the ethical principle as well as ontological principle. (Absolute, 2016).

Aristotle placed a study of theology as the first philosophy for the reason that it deals with the “Unmoved Mover” of all phenomena. His empiricism demanded an ultimate cause and principle. For Aristotle, the ultimate principle had to be that which is unconditional, independent, and non-contingent. This places it outside experience.

The Stoics' pantheism included the belief in a purposeful ordering of the cosmos. Cicero refined this to include a universal law of nature that should inform all human positive law and morality. Augustine and Aquinas Christianized the Natural Law by situating it in the mind of a personal, loving God who, by writing it on the hearts of all humans, provided the divine light of goodness to all those who use their rational eyes of reason.

Cicero, Augustine, and Aquinas are all actors in the Western philosophical panoply. As referenced earlier, the Axial Period includes the moral philosophies of Confucius and Hinduism. In the Chinese tradition, appeal to a higher authority can be that of a sage historical figure or relative, the sacred *Analects* or other writings of Confucius, or to the Tao, the Way of Heaven, which is the Law of Nature (Shih, 1953, p. 123).

Regardless of whether the transcendent source of the Natural Law is the impersonal divinity of Aristotle or Cicero, the Tao, Dharma, or the personal God of love of Aquinas, if it is true that what animates our souls and gives rise to flourishing lives is an ultimate principle outside of human experience, it would follow that human morality would have common attributes traceable back to this transcendent principle. To give credence and strength to a theory of virtue-based leadership, there should be evidence of universal notions of the Good that are manifested in common virtues across ages and cultures. It is to this subject we now turn our attention.

The golden rule of the law of nature

These, then, are the two points I wanted to make. First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in. (Lewis, 1952, p. 8)

Endeavoring to identify universal moral goods has been the subject of numerous studies (Dahlsgaard et al., 2005; Kinnear et al., 2000). The methodology usually involves the surveying of religious texts, philosophical writings, and other sources of moral and ethical statements. Virtues such as justice, truthfulness, courage, compassion, and various versions of the Golden Rule are typical moral goods. (Bennett, 1993; Christians & Traber, 1997; Hick, 1992; Kane, 1994).

For those who do not perceive the reality of the Natural Law, a proof by universal consent will not likely be persuasive. In any case, common consent regarding such a law nonetheless offers evidence of its existence. C.S. Lewis provided evidence of the universality of the law of nature in the appendix of his book *The Abolition of Man* (1943). Table 1 contains a small sampling from Lewis' many examples.

Table 1. Selection of Statements Reflecting Universal Moral Law

Statement	Source
Speak kindness... show good will.	Babylonian. Hymn to Samas.
Men were brought into existence for the sake of men that they might do one another good.	Roman. Cicero.
Man is man's delight.	Old Norse. Hávamál.
He who is cruel and calumnious has the character of a cat.	Hindu. Laws of Manu.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.	Ancient Jewish. Exodus.
Utter not a word by which anyone could be wounded.	Hindu.
Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you.	Ancient Chinese. Analects of Confucius.
Love thy wife studiously. Gladden her heart all thy life long.	Ancient Egyptian.
Nothing can ever change the claims of kinship for a right thinking man.	Anglo-Saxon. Beowulf.
Natural affection is a thing right and according to Nature.	Ancient Greek. Epictetus.
This first I rede thee: be blameless to thy kindred. Take no vengeance even though they do thee wrong.	Old Norse. Sigdrifumál.

Source: Adapted from Lewis (1943)

There is perhaps no better manifestation of a universal law of goodness than “the golden rule”

(Wattles, 1996):

The rule is widely regarded as obvious and self-evident. Nearly everyone is familiar with it in some formulation or other. An angry parent uses it as a weapon: “Is that how you want others to treat you?” A defense attorney invites the members of the jury to put themselves in the shoes of his or her client. Noting that particular rules and interpretations do not cover every situation, a manual of professional ethics exhorts members to treat other professionals with the same consideration and respect that they would wish for themselves. Formulated in one way or another, the rule finds its way into countless speeches, sermons, documents, and books on the assumption that it has a single, clear sense that the listener or reader grasps and approves of. In an age where differences so often occasion violence, here, it seems, is something everyone can agree on. (p. 2)

Table 2 below illustrates the ubiquity of this moral maxim:

Table 2. The Golden Rule Across Religions

<p>Bahá’í Faith: Ascribe not to any soul that which thou wouldst not have ascribed to thee, and say not that which thou doest not. Baha’u’llah</p>
<p>Brahmanism: This is the sum of Dharma [duty]: Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you.</p>

Mahabharata, 5:1517
<p>Buddhism: ...a state that is not pleasing or delightful to me, how could I inflict that upon another? Samyutta Nikaya v. 353 Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. Udana-Varga 5:18</p>
<p>Christianity: Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Matthew 7:12, King James Version.</p>
<p>Confucianism: Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you. Doctrine of the Mean What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men. Analects 15:23 Try your best to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself, and you will find that this is the shortest way to benevolence. Mencius VII.A.4</p>
<p>Ancient Egyptian: Do for one who may do for you, that you may cause him thus to do. The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant. (circa 1800 BCE and may be the earliest recorded version of the Golden Rule)</p>
<p>Hinduism: This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you. Mahabharata 5:1517</p>
<p>The religion of the Incas: Do not to another what you would not yourself experience. Manco Capoc.</p>
<p>Islam: None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself. Number 13 of Imam Al-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths.</p>
<p>Jainism: A man should wander about treating all creatures as he himself would be treated. Suttrakritanga 1.11.33</p>
<p>Judaism: What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. This is the law: all the rest is commentary. Talmud, Shabbat 31a.</p>
<p>Native American Spirituality: Do not wrong or hate your neighbor. For it is not he who you wrong, but yourself. Pima proverb</p>
<p>Roman Pagan Religion: The law imprinted on the hearts of all men is to love the members of society as themselves.</p>

Source: Adapted from The "Golden Rule" (2016)

Universal virtues

When standards of human goodness are chosen to assess morality in different situations, cultures, and traditions, it must be asked which views regarding the criteria of goodness should

be decisive. Is there evidence of objective, universal, findable criteria that all humankind could use to direct lives toward the teleological achievement of a “good life?”

[T]here are indeed universal human rights, rooted in the nature of the person, rights which reflect the objective and inviolable demands of a universal moral law.

These are not abstract points; rather, these rights tell us something important about the actual life of every individual and of every social group. They also remind us that we do not live in an irrational or meaningless world. On the contrary, there is a moral logic which is built into human life and which makes possible dialogue between individuals and peoples... The universal moral law written on the human heart is precisely that kind of “grammar” which is needed if the world is to engage this discussion of its future. (Saint John Paul II [hereafter referred to as John Paul II], 1995)

Are there discernable universal virtues that provide the language, “the grammar” referred to by John Paul II? Plato identified four virtues necessary for goodness in *The Republic* (Bloom, 1968, p. 114): wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. Aristotle’s inquiry into how humans could live flourishing (*eudaimonia*) lives included the same virtues (Stedman, 2010, pp. 58-59).

In Book V:12 of his work *Meditations*, Marcus Aurelius viewed these four virtues as “goods” a person should possess (Cardinal Virtues, n.d.). The deuterocanonical Wisdom of Solomon from the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Old Testament cites these same four virtues:

“Wisdom teaches temperance, and prudence, and justice, and courage, which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in life” (Wisdom 8:7, King James Version).

Cicero discussed virtue and its four divisions in *De Inventione*:

In that kind, then, virtue has embraced all things under one meaning and one name; for virtue is a habit of the mind, consistent with nature, and moderation,

and reason. Wherefore, when we have become acquainted with all its divisions, it will be proper to consider the whole force of simple honesty. It has then four divisions—wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance. (Yonge, 1879, Book II, Section LIII)

Riggio et al. (2010) cited the four cardinal virtues as the basis for a virtue-based measure of ethical leadership. Lanctot and Irving (2010) surveyed virtues from a variety of virtue models and developed a taxonomy of virtue categories. Table 3 provides comparisons of their eight categories with the lists of virtues from a cross section of historical and contextual sources. An analysis of their taxonomy reveals the four cardinal virtues are included, albeit with altered terms. For instance, “discernment” includes the cardinal virtue of wisdom as well as the virtue of justice. Their model also includes the category “love,” one of Aquinas’ theological virtues. They curiously place faith as a trait of “respect,” and eliminate hope, despite their explicit Judeo-Christian worldview (Lanctot & Irving, 2010, p. 37) and Aquinas’ emphasis on hope as required to give certainty as we aspire for oneness with God and seek divine assistance in attaining our teleological goal (ST II-II. Q17).

Table 3. Lanctot and Irving Virtue Categories and Comparisons

Virtue Category	Plato/ Aquinas (Drefcinski, 1998)	Franklin (1909)	Lewis (1952)	Maitland (1997)	Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman (2004)	Locke (2006)
Integrity		Sincerity		Trustworthiness		Honesty Integrity

Discernment	<i>Justice</i> <i>Wisdom</i>	<i>Justice</i>	<i>Justice</i> <i>Wisdom</i>	<i>Justice</i> Fairness	<i>Justice</i> <i>Wisdom</i>	<i>Justice</i> Rationality
Love			Charity Forgiveness	Sympathy	Humanity	
Respect		Silence	Faith Hope		Transcendence	
Humility		Humility	Humility			Earned Pride
Diligence		Industry		Industry Inventiveness		Productivity
Temperance	<i>Temperance</i>	<i>Temperance</i> Chastity Frugality Moderation Order Resolution Tranquility	<i>Temperance</i> Chastity	<i>Temperance</i>	<i>Temperance</i>	
Courage	<i>Courage</i>		<i>Courage</i>		<i>Courage</i>	

Source: Adapted from Lanctot & Irving (2010), p. 39

I have used bold and italic font to highlight the frequency of the cardinal virtues across the various virtue frameworks. Their predominance is what one would expect if these classical virtues are apt descriptions of universal components of moral character. It is worth noting that the three virtue frameworks that contain the cardinal virtues comprise a span of over 2,400 years and differing worldviews. Plato and Aristotle were the products of classical theistic Greek metaphysics. C.S. Lewis was a Christian philosopher and apologist who saw the cardinal virtues as grounded in the ancient law of nature (Lewis, 1943) and “as that which could make [people] happy with the deep, strong, unshakable kind of happiness God intends for us” (Lewis, 1952, p.

81). Dahlsgaard et al. (2004) sought “ubiquitous” virtues (p. 204) in an attempt to empirically show the convergence of certain virtues across time, culture, and traditions. But in contrast to Plato, Aristotle, and Lewis, the Dahlsgaard et al. (2004) theory regarding universal virtues is that they are “evolutionarily predisposed” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 51).

Whether one believes in the Natural Law, the divine infusion of virtues, or an evolutionary genesis of virtuous human character, there is no other explanation for universal or ubiquitous virtues than a transcendent origin and grounding that belies social construction and other post-modern notions of shared moral values. To lose the transcendence underlying the Law of Nature and its enactment through virtues would untether Natural Law from divine authority, leaving only human will and/or reason as the ultimate genesis of an overarching standard for the Good. It is precisely this that occurred, but prior to seeing how this happened, it is necessary to consider another essential ingredient in a teleological framework for the flourishing of a human being. Indeed, it is the eponymous concept of “being.”

Classical Concept of Self

The underlying assumption among Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Augustine, Aquinas, and, for that matter, any other scholar who advocates a teleological framework facilitated by virtuous living, is that man possesses an essential nature and essential purpose (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 58). For each of us, this essential nature and purpose inheres in a concept of self. The classical concept of self was not that we merely conceive of self through the lens of self-regard, interactional, cognitive, and developmental viewpoints (Wylie, 1974). Rather, for Socratic, Stoic, and Christian

philosophers, the self and soul were *existing* entities. Self remains real even in the absence of self-conception.

The common human experience of conflict between the ideal self and realized self (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006) points to a “moral, psychological, and ontological center of gravity (Hill, 2016, Chapter 4, Introduction, para. 3)” in a person, which provides us with an independent identity and moral responsibility. Furthermore, this unity of self must exist over time and is the thread that connects who I am today with the person I was twenty years ago, twenty years from now, or five minutes previous or later from this moment. Personal responsibility for thought and action is woven into teleology and accompanying virtue theory (Montmarquet, 1992) and connotes that in some significant sense, we are ontologically the same person over time. The classical view regarding humans is that there is a line between us and all other lower animals. This ontological divide is the basis for assigning unique value and dignity to human beings and assigning to every person a sanctity regarding their life. This is anchored in the Platonic notion of the *nous* in humans and Aristotle’s view of human *essence*. These are substantial concepts, as opposed to the frequently invoked functional concepts of self in modern theories (Blanke & Metzinger, 2009).

The importance of this for the purposes of my thesis is that the concept of self as a real entity as well as reality of the metaphysical soul that is its foundation is essential to a non-materialist position regarding human existence. Without such realities, the idea of the Law of Nature ceases to have currency or value.

The substantial soul

As we have noted, Anaxagoras (ca. 500–428 BCE) was the first ancient Greek philosopher to develop the concept of *nous*. In distinguishing *nous* (mind/soul) from the body and associating the former with a transcendent divine realm and the latter with the material world, Anaxagoras fomented the debate between materialists and dualists, which has been waged for two and a half millennia (Hill, 2016). But important to note is the ancient materialists such as Democritus or Epicurus did not, like the current modern materialists, deny the existence of the soul or the reality of the mind (Haidt, 2007). They considered the soul the object of all ethical inquiry and believed it to be “the seat of reason, the source of true happiness, and the fount of virtue” (Hill, 2016, Chapter 4, Section: The Materialist and Platonic Theories of the Soul, para. 6).

Plato believed the soul was not only real, it was destined to arrive with other souls to a state of immortal and divine wisdom.

But when it investigates by itself, it passes into the realm of the pure and everlasting and immortal and changeless, and being of a kindred nature, when it is once independent and free from interference, consorts with it always and strays no longer, but remains, in that realm of the absolute, constant and invariable, through contact with beings of a similar nature. And this condition of the soul we call wisdom. (Plato, 2012, 79d)

Plato proffered that the nature of the soul is to govern the body and the body was to be its subject. “The soul is most like that which is divine, immortal, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, and ever self-consistent and invariable, whereas body is most like that which is human, mortal, multiform, unintelligible, dissoluble, and never self-consistent” (Plato, 2012, 80b). Plato used the metaphor of a chariot driver, which is reason, controlling the horses, which represented passions

and appetites (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246b) thus imagining the soul being in harmony when reason reigns and disharmonious when either “horse” exerts its own will over the driver (Plato, *Republic*, 4.443e). In this way, Plato situates the essence of a person in soul and renders the body as a mere material object, precluding an integration of soul, mind, and body.

Aristotle took issue with the strong dualism of Plato, which has its root in the hard division between matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*). He brought Plato’s forms down from heaven, making them the essence of the entity, which is its reflection. Form adumbrates matter and acts as the “organizing principle” (Hill, 2016) of the holistic entity, which includes the material matter. In a person, this is the synthesis of soul and body, with the immaterial soul being the substance of a human being.

The soul is to the body as form is to matter in all other things. The soul prefigures, informs, and animates the body. It is considerably more than the mind and its faculties, as it was for Plato (and as it would become, again, for Descartes). To use a contemporary metaphor, the soul is the patterned information—the software, the active blueprint, the spiritual DNA—that governs the physical growth and mental development of the whole person. It is both a principle of life (the Greek term for soul, *anima*, is the root of our term animate) and the bearer of our physical and intellectual capacities. (Hill, 2016, Chapter 4, section: The Hylomorphic Theory of the Person, para. 2)

In biblical scripture, the term soul (Hebrew word נֶפֶשׁ, *nephesh*) is applied to sea creatures.

Genesis 1:20 states, “And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living souls, and let fowl fly above the earth in the expanse of the heavens” (Darby Translation). The word “soul” is that which gives life to the body (Acts 20:10, Douay-Rheims Version), it used synonymously with “persons” (Acts 27:37, Douay-Rheims Version). When God breathes “the breath of life”

into the body he formed from the ground in Genesis 2:7, it becomes a “living soul” (King James Version). The soul subsumes the metaphysical “heart” from which all issues of life flow (Proverbs 4:23, King James Version), and the conscience by which a person makes moral decisions (I Peter 3:16, King James Version; Hebrews 13:18, King James Version).

Herein lies the importance of the soul in the context of a teleological framework for human flourishing. In order to achieve the best version of ourselves, we are striving for our moral perfection. It is the soul that is intellective and substantial, according to Aquinas, and as a substantial form, an intellective soul is responsible for the following:

(1) a human being’s existence (*esse*), (2) the actualization of the matter that constitutes a human being, and (3) the unity of existence and activity in a human being. Aquinas, again following Aristotle, holds that intellective activity surpasses the limits of matter in its understanding the universal, intelligible forms of things; such universal forms are the natures of things understood as abstracted from any particular material conditions—e.g., understanding the concept “humanity” instead of just *this* human being. (Eberl, 2005, pp. 65-66)

In short, it is “our capacity for self-consciousness and all the powers related to cognition—thinking, feeling, desiring, hoping, imagining, intending, etc.” (Hill, 2016, Chp.4, n.16).

As the ontological center of human essence and substance, as that in which the heart and conscience are situated, the soul is recipient and activator of the law of nature “written in the hearts” of men. It is the domicile of *habitus* and the location of human decision-making regarding the development of virtuous action. If the teleological nature of the world is true, as believed by philosophers of all kinds during the “Axial” and Medieval periods, people act from a purpose, a goal of flourishing that motivates the act. Human beings act from final causes

animated by their essential nature, guided from their souls by a Natural Law that illuminates the Good and beckons each of us toward the perfection of ourselves. Moral virtues are the language of behavior described by the heliotropic nature of the human being and conscience expands and refines this lexicon.

For conscience, according to the very nature of the word, implies the relation of knowledge to something: for conscience may be resolved into “cum alio scientia,” i.e. knowledge applied to an individual case. But the application of knowledge to something is done by some act. (ST I. Q79.13)

The act of relating knowledge of a specific situation to the general principles of goodness ascertained from the Law of Nature is facilitated by the virtue of prudence.

From a classical view, the conscience is linked to prudence insofar as it requires the latter to carry out the dictates of the former as it pertains to specific acts (Langston, 2001, p. 28). The Law of Nature provides general knowledge of Good, which is perceived in the conscience through synderesis.

Wherefore the first practical principles, bestowed on us by nature, do not belong to a special power, but to a special natural habit, which we call “synderesis.” Whence “synderesis” is said to incite to good, and to murmur at evil, inasmuch as through first principles we proceed to discover, and judge of what we have discovered. It is therefore clear that “synderesis” is not a power, but a natural habit. (ST I. Q79.12)

Prudence is defined as “right reason applied to human conduct” (ST II-II.Q48, 49). Moreover, it is considered indispensable in terms of a human being living a morally virtuous life.

All other intellectual virtues can exist without moral virtue, but there cannot be prudence without moral virtue. The reason for this is that prudence is right reasoning about what is to be done—and this not only in general, but also in particular, in respect to which man acts. Now right reasoning requires principles

from which the reasoning proceeds. And reasoning about particulars must proceed not only from universal principles but from particular principles as well. As to universal principles about things to be done, man is rightly disposed by the natural understanding of principles, whereby he recognizes that no evil is to be done; or again by some practical science. But this is not enough for right reasoning about particular cases. For it sometimes happens that such a universal principle known by understanding or through some science, is perverted in a particular case by some passion; for example, to a person very desirous of something when the desire overcomes him, the object of it seems good to him, although it is contrary to the universal judgment of his reason. Consequently, just as man is disposed rightly with regard to universal principles by natural understanding or by the habit of science, so in order to be rightly disposed with regard to the particular principles concerning things to be done, which are ends or goals, he must be perfected by certain habits, so that it becomes connatural, as it were, to him to judge rightly about an end. *This comes about through moral virtue, for the virtuous person judges about the end of virtue rightly, since “such as a man is, so does the end seem to him.” Hence in order to reason rightly about what is to be done, which is prudence, man must have moral virtue [emphasis added].* (ST I-II.Q58)

What Aquinas called “universal principles” are those of Natural Law, whereas the particular principles are those that must be attained through the habits of moral virtues (courage, justice, temperance) directed by the fourth cardinal virtue of prudence (Langston, 2001). The universal principles of good are known through synderesis, which, according to Aquinas, is inerrant in its knowledge of the Good (ST I.79). But it relies on the act of conscience for particular instances, and conscience is not inerrant in understanding or application. Thus, it is prudence and its governance of the moral virtues that allow a person to apply the Good, known by synderesis, to particular situations with inerrancy, thereby striving for the flourishing *telos* for their life. All of this—synderesis, conscience, Law of Nature, prudence and moral virtues, and the decision and freedom to willfully act accordingly—require that human beings have a self that exists and has substance. As one recent philosopher summarized it below:

The idea of a substance has four characteristics: (1) it has the capacity to exist in itself and not as part of another thing; (2) it is the unifying ontological center of gravity that ties the various properties and capacities of a thing together at any given point in time; (3) it is what unifies a thing through time, the ontological foundation that remains the same as a thing's properties and attributes change; and (4) it has "an intrinsic dynamic orientation" toward self-development and self-expression, in other words, substances unfold themselves progressively through time. (Clarke, 1994, p. 105)

The concept of self, which consists of a soul in which inheres synderesis, mind, conscience, free will, and decision-making, is one that is grounded in "self" being substantive. Our human essence, our soul, provides us the capacity to know the Good. Through willful virtuous acts, emanating from *habitus*, we develop our character and become more fully integrated and flourishing people, simultaneously aligning with the Law of Nature and moral order of the cosmos. The virtuous life actuates the teleological self. "In this we can see that our noblest modern personal and political values—freedom, responsibility, merit, liberty of conscience, authenticity, self-expression, and self-actualization, among others—have no foundation in the absence of a real, metaphysical self" (Hill, 2016, Chapter 4, Section: The Care of the Self: Moral Virtue and the Psychological Integration of the Person, para. 20). Furthermore, metaphysical self has no foundation in the absence of a teleological world—the world of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Aquinas. We turn now to the modern age when this two thousand year old megalith began to crumble.

Chapter 3: The Descent of Man

Firm in my principles because those I formed are sound, I always act in accordance with them; they have made me understand the emptiness and nullity of virtue...these instincts were given to me by Nature, and it would irritate her were I to resist them.

—Marquis de Sade⁶

The “new philosophy” renders a world from which all coherence is gone and in which the skies no longer announce the glory of God.

—Alexandre Koyré⁷

The soul that is within me no man can degrade.

—Frederick Douglass⁸

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

—Mark 8:36,37⁹

The framework for moral philosophy and ethics from the Ancients to Aquinas is constructed with claims regarding the *telos* of human beings and the place virtue has in achieving our ends. The ancient and medieval appeal to metaphysical realities is an appeal to the fact of human nature. A system of moral philosophy must include an intelligible relationship between the nature of humankind and that of the world. For Plato, cultivating virtues aligned with the form of Good; for Aristotle, virtues were the pathway to *eudaimonia*; for Cicero, virtues conformed with human nature as

⁶ (de Sade, 1966, p. 8)

⁷ (Koyré, 1957)

⁸ (as cited in Washington, 1901)

⁹ (King James Version)

connected to the order of the cosmos; for Aquinas, they were the fruit of the habitus of human beings, which has its source in the God-given human soul.

In the previously referenced biblical account of the origin of man (Genesis 2:7, King James Version), the body is first formed from the elements of earth and then the soul is given to this body when God breathes into the body the “breath of life.” This order is consistent with Aquinas’ Aristotelian depiction of the complete integration of the substance (soul) with the material body:

If the soul is united to the body as its form and is naturally part of the human nature, then it is completely impossible [for the soul to be created before the body]. . . Since the soul is a part of human nature, it does not have its natural perfection unless it is united to the body. And so it would not have been fitting to create the soul without the body. (ST. I. Q90)

Aquinas’ general methodology was to proceed from observable experience to non-material actualities and causes, based on a set of first principles. In the 1,800 years that included the Axial period, Roman Stoics, and Christian philosophers, the prevailing belief was that a real, substantial soul exists in human beings and is predisposed toward a universal Law of Nature rooted in the dual principles of intelligibility and goodness (Clarke & Rakestraw, 1994):

The human spirit. . . is intrinsically oriented by its very nature toward being, i.e. has a natural aptitude and drive to know all being (being as intelligible) and to be fulfilled by it (being as good). It means also that the reciprocal is true: being itself has a natural intrinsic aptitude to unveil itself to mind, to be brought into light of consciousness, and to fulfill the drive of the spirit towards its self-actualization or self-perfection. (p. 3)

For us to pursue the practice of virtues on our journey to our most fulfilled selves, we must have the power to be the creator and sustainer of our ends or purposes, which is to say we must have freedom of will (Kane, 1998). Thus, the mind and soul of humankind are essential non-material realities for explaining moral development and the critical free will aspect of humanity.

Removing the metaphysical soul from humanity leaves only the material body, which is subject to external biological and environmental causes in the background. That such a background exists is neither debatable nor a concern regarding the existence of free will. Biological and environmental causes are part of our constitution, but for the metaphysical self to be real, such material objects are external compared to our internal cause of action we call Will. For the materialist, there is no metaphysical self, and all human actions are determined by material causes, and both the metaphysical self and its free will are impossibilities.

But what now about the concept of ‘the soul’? On this topic, so central in religious thought, current philosophy has unquestionably something very relevant to say...And the essence of what it has to say is, to put it bluntly, that the ‘soul’ is sheer myth. For current philosophy... finds no room for a ‘self’...and whatever may be the precise relationship between ‘self’ and ‘soul,’ it is at least certain that, where there are no ‘selves’ in this sense, there can be no ‘souls’ in any sense that interests the theologian. ...One does not exaggerate, I think, in saying that, explicit or implicit in the writings of the vast majority of philosophers today who concern themselves at all about the human mind, is the conviction that the term ‘self’ stands, at most, only for particular mental states and events inter-related in a specific way, and perhaps stands only for some unique pattern of bodily behaviour. ...*Philosophy* without a soul is, as we have just noticed, a commonplace in contemporary thought. But *Theology* without a soul would seem to amount to something very like a contradiction in terms. If talk about the soul be forbidden to the theologian, he might as well retire from business altogether. (Campbell, 2013, pp. 6-7)

Campbell is referring to philosophers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but he could just as well be referencing Democritus or Leucippus, the pre-Socratic materialists from the

fifth century BCE. The Maginot Line between determinist materialism and metaphysical free will has been in place for three millennia.

Campbell's reference to the soul being a theological necessity but a philosophical option reflects the philosophical development that followed Aquinas' death in 1274 CE. Before that time, the synthesis of philosophy and theology, which found its most systematic treatment in Thomas Aquinas, was a prevailing feature of the philosophical streams through the first 1,300 years CE. Within a single generation after his death, the inexorable process of severing human nature from a metaphysical soul began.

Triumph of Materialism

While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to trace the philosophical history of morality from the fourteenth century CE to the present, it is possible “to trace a progressive emancipation of philosophy from theology from the beginnings of philosophical reflection in the early Middle Ages up to the modern era” (Copleston, 1960, p. 6).

Ockham: The wedge between faith and reason

William of Ockham (1287–347), one generation removed from Aquinas, challenged Aristotle's belief in a human essence shared by all people (Blumenau, 2002; Copleston, 1960; Hill, 2016).

Ockham also challenged Aquinas' synthesis of theology and philosophy, agreeing with St. John of Bonaventura that rational thought will not achieve an understanding of the nature of God (Blumenau, 2002). Further, Ockham denied one could prove a teleological nature of man that finds its origin in God and His ordering of the universe (Copleston, 1960). Ockham accepted many things on the basis of faith, such as the existence of God, and was convinced God was not

bound by rational restrictions. But he was a rabid rationalist regarding human experience. God's "absolute freedom from humanly conceived rational restrictions...challenged Aquinas' concept that human law and moral law were part of the structure of one immutable and rational natural law" (Blumenau, 2002, p. 155).

In addition to the denial of the Natural Law, Ockham eschewed any belief in universals. There is no universal form of trees or universal essence of humanness. There are only instances of a particular tree or particular human. This doctrine that only individual things exist associated with Ockham renders him the founder of modern nominalism (Hill, 2016). With no shared human nature, people do not share a common teleological quest. "An increasingly mechanistic understanding of reality crept into his thought...in the realm of human action, he sometimes seems to have conceived of final causes as reason-driven efficient causation—a very modern idea in philosophy" (Hill, 2016, Chapter 5, Section: William Ockham and the Rise of Nominalism, para. 8). Rather than being motivated forward by an inherent quest for our most flourishing self, arising from final causes, we are pushed from behind by efficient causes (Adams, 1999, p. 249).

Ockham's parsimonious ontology, the so-called "Ockham's Razor," posits that, given the choice between two explanations for a particular phenomenon or event, the fewer the number of principles, the better. Or, in his words, "plurality is not to be posited without necessity" (as cited in Spade, 1999, p. 101). Hence, he reduced categories of being to two: individual things (such as this car or that dog) and qualities (such as blueness, smallness, intelligence), and these qualities

were not universals. There is no abstract concept of smallness, which gives essence to all small things. There are only individual instances of things that are small and the idea of smallness is simply connotative (Hill, 2016). His denial of universals leaves only individual things; thus, there can be no human nature shared by people, only individual human beings. Lack of a universal nature makes a Law of Nature impossible. Thus, the metaphysical realism of Plato and Aristotle, which places a greater reality on the formal essences of substantial forms than on material things (Bitbol, Kerszberg, & Petitot, 2009) is replaced by a nominalism in which existence is “a binary concept: a thing exists or it does not, and anything that exists is as real as anything else that exists. Thus, God Himself is no more real than the things of the created world...” (Hill, 2016, Chapter 5, Section: William Ockham and the Rise of Nominalism, para. 10). This reduction of the metaphysical landscape sets up the interesting notion that God must be considered a *thing* among all things, albeit the only infinite and necessary thing (Spade, 1999). Extending nominalism inexorably leads to a separation of soul from the body, as there cannot be a real and essential human nature. This dualistic conception of a person is a harbinger of the Cartesian system of Descartes and Locke, a conception that could not withstand the rigors of empiricism brought to bear by Hobbes and the materialists of the eighteenth century. Thus, Ockham’s Razor began the paving of the pathway to modern materialism.

In an empiricist framework, the standard of reality is diametrically opposed to that of a realism of formal essences. What is real, according to an empiricist thinker, is the *fact*; the experimental fact as it is directly witnessed in a laboratory, as it is expressed in short descriptive propositions, and as it is sketchily interpreted by means of models borrowed from empirically valid theories. Instead of granting ontological value to abstract invariants and universal law-like formalisms, the empiricist puts ontological weight on concrete variations and particular events. In that respect, the empiricist philosophers of science are heirs to [Ockham’s] nominalism. (Bitbol et al., 2009, p. 342)

Ockham also had a conflict with Aquinas' synthesis of Aristotle and Christian theology insofar as the existence of formal essences restricts God's sovereign right to change the nature of reality at will (Spade, 1999). Thus, we can only know God's Will through His commandments.

Morality, of necessity, must be organized around God's Will, not a teleological essence of a fixed human nature. "Thus, all moral standards are based on God's Will, not on God's reason—a doctrine known as moral voluntarism" (Hill, 2016, Chapter 5, Section: William Ockham and the Rise of Nominalism, para. 16). This shifts the emphasis from the virtuous nature of an act to its being in accordance with God's commandment. This is devastating to the doctrine of the Law of Nature, "written in the hearts of men who do not have God's commandments" (Romans 2:15, English Standard Version). Rather than reason and *synderesis*, enacted via *habitus*, moral behavior is contingent on faith and revelation. Ockham declared, "The ways of God are not open to reason since God has freely chosen to create the world and establish a way of salvation within it apart from any necessary laws that human logic or rationality can uncover" (as cited in Irvin & Sunquist, 2001, p. 434). It is not difficult to see how destructive this is to the tradition of a Law of Nature. If God is free to transmogrify moral truths, human reason cannot provide a foundation for morality, and there can be no principles of the Good accessible to both the believer and the atheist. Human morality moves away from a motive of virtue and sense of goodness that inheres in humanness, toward an ethic of rule-following and legalism.

Occam, who sees only individual phenomena, not universals, the concepts of essences, can likewise admit no teleological orientation toward God is inherent in all creation and especially in man; or at least he cannot grant that it can be known. The unity of being, truth, and goodness does not exist for him. (Rommen, 1998, Chapter 11, para. 45)

Elimination of man's *telos* and replacing it with an adherence to God's commands as the epitome of human actualization debases human aspiration. "Richard Taylor in *Virtue Ethics* (Prometheus, 2002) argued that a system of morality which is based on divine commands can discourage people from achieving their potential" (Reid, 2013, p. 6).

An ennobling of the will and depreciation of the intellect accompany Ockham's separation of faith and reason. Moral goodness is situated in the will through an agreement with God's external commands. With God as the sovereign Lawgiver, all laws are positive laws, as opposed to Natural Laws. Although Ockham did not draw such radical conclusions from his rejection of universals (Hill, 2016), he provided the intellectual fodder for Kant's deontology. The secularization of this yields Machiavelli's political doctrine and Hobbes' social contract governed by an absolute sovereign (Chroust, 1943).

The Renaissance

Between Ockham and Hobbes lies 250 years of history commonly referred to as the period of the Renaissance. It was a time of revivification of ancient literature. Arab Averroists "learnt to admire the writers of Antiquity for their knowledge of logic, the sciences, medicine, and metaphysics: the Ancients were revered as paragons of learning (Rommen, 1998, p. 168)." Their export of translated manuscripts to Spain and Italy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries kindled an intense immersion in the classical Greek and, especially, Latin, scholarship. The Italian locus of the Renaissance was first in Florence and found its instigator in Petrarch, who was not only "setting himself against the cult of Aristotelian dialectic and promoting the revival

of the classical, especially Ciceronian style, but also favoring through his vernacular sonnets the growth of the spirit of humanistic individualism” (Copleston, 1953, p. 207). Petrarch’s interest in Greek and Latin classical literature helped foster general interest among scholars and resulted in a Greek Chair being established at the University of Florence in 1397 (Rommen, 1998, p. 150).

Numerous scholars scoured the Byzantine Empire libraries looking for copies of ancient literature.

In 1423, just one such scholar, Giovanni Aurispa, returned from his journeys with 238 important manuscripts. The western world now rediscovered the original texts of Plato and of Aristotle. These included some that had never been translated into either Arabic or Latin, for example, Plato’s Symposium, that great hymn to love and friendship, and Aristotle’s Poetics, whose theories about the dramatic unities would, from time to time, have such a strong influence on theories of literature until the early nineteenth century. Other works that now reached the West in the original included the epics of Homer, the dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and the historical writings of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon and Plutarch. (Blumenau, 2002, p. 171)

Francisco Filelfo (1398–1481) exemplified the passion amongst scholars for Ancient literature. He gave a series of lectures at the *Studio* in Florence between 1429 and 1434. According to contemporaries, “these lectures were heard by all the sons of the well-to-do in Florence...From this point onwards successive generations of young high status Florentines were educated in the *studia humanitatis* by teachers at the *Studio*” (Davies, 1998, p. 64).

As the Ottoman Empire continued to press on that of the Byzantines, Christians from the East endeavored to reunify with those from the West to strengthen their defenses against the encroachment of Islam. The reunification conference was held in Florence in 1439 and included the Archbishop of Nicaea, John Bessarion (Blumenau, 2002, p. 171). The effort failed, but

Bessarion remained in Italy. His importance is due to his distinguished scholarship in Plato and his adding to the fervor for neo-Platonism that characterized the Western Renaissance (Davies, 1998), and his influence on Marsilio Ficino, who established a Platonic Academy in 1445 in Florence (Blumenau, 2002). Ficino translated twenty-seven dialogues of Plato into Latin and, due to his Christian convictions, endeavored to synthesize Plato with Christianity (Davies, 1998). Attempting to integrate pagan and Christian thought are characteristic of the Renaissance period (Copleston, 1953) and is termed *philosophia perennis*. Charles Schmitt (1966) commented, “*Philosophia perennis* is a philosophy which endures; its truth is considered to persist from generation to generation, long after ephemeral philosophical fads and fashions come and go” (p. 505). Aldous Huxley (1944) helped revivify the concept of a “perennial philosophy” in the mid-twentieth century through his eponymous book. Although he attributes the term to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who used it in correspondence in the early 18th century, Agostino Steuco used the term much earlier in a treatise of that title published in 1540. Steuco was a Platonist who built his view on the foundation bequeathed by others. Schmitt (1966) suggested that “[p]robably the most direct intellectual predecessors of Steuco were Marsilio Ficini (1433–99) and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94)” (p. 507). The syncretism of the Renaissance is indicative of a widespread belief in the value of human scholarship and reason, even if it is from outside of venerated Christian doctrine and history. Within the *Studio* in Florence, this belief invigorated the Ciceronian *studia humanitatis* curriculum of grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy (Rundle, 2014). The humanism of the Renaissance remained attached to Christian theology, but it nonetheless ennobled the intellect and reason of humankind. Ficini and others went too far, and the humanistic movement became less prevalent in the classroom while

attracting keen interest in the princely courts, such as the Chancellor of Florence, Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) and the Medici rulers (Blumenau, 2002, p. 173). This interest extended to the Papacy as glimpsed by the support for Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel, which includes the biblical prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel on the south wall and pagan Sibyls on the west wall. This is a metaphor for the syncretism of the Renaissance, the willingness to embrace human excellence as depicted in Ancient literature, and a comfort with human reason and intellect as having nobility and value, even outside Christian theology (Schaeffer, 1976). This belief in human capability gave currency to Renaissance humanism outside of the walls of the university, providing a substrate for the growing belief in human potential and capacity:

The university, in short, was not humanism’s home territory. For a scholar such as Leonardo Bruni, what the *studia humanitatis* taught was more practical than any established academic course—not, at root, practical in the sense of wealth creation (though that was rarely far from their minds) but rather in its ability to help men and women realise the potential of themselves and their community by honing their ability to reason, communicate and persuade. It was an education too important to be confined to the classroom. (Rundle, 2014)

Although Ficini and the humanists did not oppose Christianity, “they looked upon traditional Christian teaching with what R.G. Collingwood has called ‘the discreet smile of the Renaissance’”(as cited in Blumenau, 2002, p. 176). William Durant (1953) wrote that, for many Renaissance thinkers...

...[t]he revelation of a Greek culture lasting a thousand years and reaching the heights of literature, philosophy and art in complete independence of Judaism and Christianity, was a mortal blow to their belief in Pauline theology, or in the doctrine of *nulla salus extra ecclesiam*—‘no salvation outside the Church’. Socrates and Plato became for them uncanonized saints; the dynasty of the Greek philosophers seemed to them superior to the Greek and Latin Fathers; the prose of Plato and Cicero made even a cardinal ashamed of the Greek of the New Testament and the Latin of Jerome’s translation; the grandeur of imperial Rome

seemed nobler than the timid retreat of convinced Christians into monastic cells; the free thought and conduct of Periclean Greeks or Augustan Romans filled many humanists with an envy that shattered in their hearts the Christian code of humility, otherworldliness, continence; and they wondered why they should subject body, mind and soul to the rule of ecclesiastics who themselves were now joyously converted to the world. (p. 84)

The neo-Platonism of the Renaissance brought back Plato's dualism of human intellect and the metaphysical soul and depreciated the Aristotelian and Aquinas doctrine of substantial unification of form and matter in a single human essence (Copleston, 1953; Hill, 2016; Rommen, 1998). In the ancient Platonic system this separation of metaphysical from epistemic concerns included a hierarchy, in which the former governed the latter. The soul, which obtains its nature from the ultimate form of Good, provided the light of the *Logos* to the human intellect. Human morality was grounded in divine goodness and given coherence on the basis of alignment with the Good through virtuous habits. But what occurs if this hierarchical order is reversed and epistemology informs metaphysics? Ockham's separation of faith and reason is such a system: enthroning the reason of man while marginalizing the teleological soul. Such was the next step in the march toward modern moral philosophy.

Descartes' rational epistemological inversion: Gateway to modernity

The rebirth, which is the Renaissance, combined a rejection of Medieval ecclesiastical, political, and philosophical foundations for a rekindling of the worldviews of Antiquity (Hill, 2004).

Artists celebrated the human body in a flourishing art form of realism (Schaeffer, 1976), and Francis Bacon (1561–1626) promulgated methodological, empirical experimentation over the synthesis of reason and revelation (Durant, 1953). While he was not known as a brilliant experimenter himself (Hill, 2004), his Baconian method presaged the scientific method of

modern science and influenced the rejection of medieval Aristotelianism (Copleston, 1953).

Others applied his method with superlative effect. Bacon's medical attendant, William Harvey, discovered the circulation of the blood; Kepler (1571–1630) attacked Aristotle's theory of planetary motion, proving Copernicus' (1473–1543) heliocentric hypothesis; Galileo (1564–1642) gave empirical astronomical confirmation of the Copernican hypothesis; and Newton (1642–1727) provided the mathematical formula for the sun's gravitational hold on Earth.

Galileo and Newton were men of piety and conceived that God's omnipresence and omnipotence were the guarantors of the systems of Nature that are mathematically and astronomically explicable (Copleston, 1953).

But the rejection of the geocentric theory had deeply philosophical and theological, as well as scientific, consequences. That the earth was not at the center of Creation seemed to challenge the very notion that man had a central place in the created order and that mankind was the defining achievement of God's plan. The more direct effect of Galileo's observations, however, was to throw into question Aristotle's entire theory of the world. If his physics was incorrect, why should we retain his metaphysical system, which was based, after all, on the same teleological assumptions? Of course, the teleological view of the world did not depend on Aristotle's physics or the geocentric picture of the universe... Nevertheless, nominalism and the discovery that the earth was not at the center of God's order contributed to a widening skepticism about the teleological picture of the world. The best thinkers of the time—Kepler, Galileo, and the father of the scientific method, Francis Bacon—continued to cling to the spiritual core of the teleological model but treated its assumptions as a postulate of metaphysics rather than science. (Hill, 2016, Chapter 5, Section: Descartes: Between Two Worlds, para. 8)

It was in this disruptive, paradigm-shifting world Descartes (1596–1650) set about his search for truth. The upheaval of deeply held ontological beliefs in the late Renaissance world makes unsurprising Descartes' conspicuous skepticism.

Not the attainment of truth, but the avoidance of error, he wrote in the *Meditations*, ‘comprises the greatest and principle perfection of man’... The search for knowledge, he said was like going through a barrel of apples one by one, discarding rotten ones lest they contaminate others (Hill, 2016, Chapter 5, Section: Descartes: Between Two Worlds, para. 12)

Unlike Arcesilaus or Pyrrho, Descartes did not oppose the idea of truth; rather he intentionally started with the premise that nothing is true unless provable from a rational scheme in which the mind begins with a self-evident truth and passes to other evident truths caused by the former. His system is highly mathematical as he admitted in his books *Rules* and *Discourse* (Copleston, 1960, p. 69). Rather than beginning, like Plato, Aristotle, or Aquinas, with a metaphysical axiom, Descartes’ famous statement, “*Cogito ergo sum*,” (I think, therefore I am) was his first self-evident truth and the solid ground on which to build a philosophy.

But immediately upon this I observed that, whilst I thus wished to think that all was false, it was absolutely necessary that I, who thus thought, should be somewhat; and as I observed that this truth, I think, therefore I am (COGITO ERGO SUM), was so certain and of such evidence that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the sceptics capable of shaking it, I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the philosophy of which I was in search. (Descartes, 2012, IV)

In this historical step, Descartes inverted the hierarchy of metaphysics and epistemology and ushered philosophy into the modern era (Hill, 2016). Whereas Aquinas and Aristotle believed we must grasp the final cause and ultimate reality before coming to an understanding of particular events, Descartes proclaimed that truth begins in human knowledge, which starts with the certainty of personal existence as the basis of all knowledge. Eschewing Aristotle’s substance, which is the synthesis of form and matter, Descartes elevated Plato’s dualistic conception but

substituted reason for divinely given realities. In one radical move, he situated the fount of reality and truth in human thought, from which would flow all of its streams of enlightenment.

Descartes is considered the father of modern rationalism (Hill, 2016), the essence of which is that truth consists of apprehensible elements that can be ascertained by reason, independently of elusive or deceptive sensuous knowledge. Descartes was fundamentally a mathematician and, thus, used mathematical axioms as paradigmatic of truth that is inherent in the systems of the universe. He sought an epistemic system that mirrored the connection of mathematical axioms to every other mathematical truth through an operation of logic (Copleston, 1960). His rationalistic system led Descartes to prodigious achievements.

In his essay on Optics, which he appended to the Discourse on Method, he was the first to advance the wave theory of light, a theoretical account of farsightedness and nearsightedness, a theory of lenses, and a theory of the light-gathering powers of the telescope. He was also the first empirically accurate account of space perception. In another appendix, the Meteorology, he provided the first scientific outline of meteorological science and advanced the kinetic theory of heat. In the Geometry, he single-handedly invented analytic geometry, the most important mathematical discovery since the ancient Greeks. (Hill, 2016, Chapter 5, Section: Descartes: Between Two Worlds, para. 14)

Descartes' mathematical method, which claims certain self-evident principles logically lead one to deduce other propositions, must regress, however, to some ontological conclusion. For his predecessors, the end was in a divine order of the cosmos and thus the divine ontological principle is prior to the intellectual grasp of first principles or any material effect. "Descartes did not begin in metaphysics with the ontological principle which is prior in the order of being. He did not begin, as Spinoza did, with God, but with the finite self" (Copleston, 1960, p. 72).

Beginning with limited self to arrive at truth is a chasmal fracture in the edifice of the Law of Nature that, for over 2,000 years, had provided coherence between a divine Good and human morality. From Aristotle to Aquinas and the late Medieval Scholastics, the belief was that understanding is the result of both intellect and senses holistically experiencing the essential order of the world. This order starts with an eternal divine law, with which we participate through the Natural Law that has been given to us and resides in our souls. Practical reason is the outcome of observing the whole person interacting with the world of things and individuals, while carrying on the inherent quest for our perfection. By inserting self as the starting point for reason, and reason as the only thing necessary for understanding, Descartes eliminates the causal chain of eternal law to Natural Law to understanding and unleashes a radical individualism into the philosophy of life.

The philosophy of René Descartes underlay another shift in the meaning of human nature. From this shift sprang, as from its source, the individualist and starkly rationalist strains of the newer natural law. According to St. Thomas, it is, properly speaking, neither the intellect nor the senses that understand, but man through both; the natural law is a participation in the eternal law; and the moral law is objectively “given” in human nature and in the essential order of things. For Descartes, on the other hand, man is a *res cogitans*, a being that thinks...Descartes holds that man, from his innate ideas, from the ideas present in his consciousness, can construct the world along the lines of mathematical reasoning, the ideal of science...The individual intellect or reason thus becomes self-sufficient. It does not need the educative cooperation of other minds. Thus the very spiritual root of sociability is denied...Descartes became the father of the individualist conception of human nature...Rationalism soon made human reason and its innate ideas the measure of what is. Human reason could now indulge in the uncontrolled construction of systems that has ever characterized the natural law of rationalism. (Rommen, 1998, Chapter 4, para. 6)

Descartes' (2012) view of man consisted of a thinking mind that did not extend into space and an unthinking body that did, and, thus, the mind is independent of the body and logically could exist without it. This dualism was hard to defend in the face of clear evidence that the mind and body interact and have an influence on each other. Thus, on the one hand, he claims mind and body are each complete substances, and, on the other hand, they are incomplete without each other.

If soul and body are said to be incomplete substances because they cannot exist by themselves...I confess that it seems to me to be a contradiction for them to be substances...Taken alone, they are complete substances. And I know that thinking substance [mind] is a complete thing no less than that which is extended [body]...At the same time it is true that in another sense they can be called incomplete substances...Mind and body are incomplete substances viewed in relation to the man who is the unity which they form together. (Copleston, 1960, p. 122)

In addition to the difficulties of this Cartesian dualism, Descartes' ontological system of mechanistic cause and effect principles fueled a philosophy of material causes for things. His own scientific discoveries gave strength to this view, as did those of many others in the post-medieval age. The more one can explain through material cause and effect, the less one needs to invoke the "God of the gaps" as a reason for observable events. Although Descartes' belief in God is unarguable, his philosophy of dualism and scientific empiricism helped launch the deism that characterizes the next century (Copleston, 1960).

Descartes was the first major philosopher to substitute mind for soul, severing its vital connection with the divine *nous* that gave Plato's conception of soul its nature. He combined this with an understanding of the physical world, including human bodies, as governed by mechanistic laws that have not changed since the origin of the universe (Copleston, 1960; Hill,

2016; Martin & Barresi, 2006; Rommen, 1998). Animals, plants, and other matter do not have nonmaterial minds and are substantially complex mechanisms, contrasting the classical belief that all living things have a soul, which is what gives them essence and kind (Martin & Barresi, 2006). Neural mechanical processes account for sensation, perception, emotion, and imagination.

Descartes still associated the mind with the soul, of course, but it was significant that he began to associate the soul with the contents of our consciousness, rather than with the substantial form of the body, as Aquinas and the Scholastics had understood the soul. The move was fateful, for it led later thinkers, beginning with Locke and the empiricists, to associate the mind itself with its contents—the thoughts, feelings, etc. As these thinkers tried to understand the soul in purely empirical or phenomenal terms, there was a progressive narrowing of the modern conception of soul and mind. (Martin & Baressi, 2006, p. 126)

Although Descartes did not promote the view that human consciousness was only the product of natural processes, his naturalistic framework for mental capacities and functions provided the basis for developing the empirical science of psychology (Martin & Barresi, 2006).

Descartes' dualism came under critique, and understandably so, given his failure to explain how the immaterial mind is both separate and in unity with the material body. Others shared his rationalism, however, notably Spinoza (1632–1677) and Leibniz (1646–1716). The former reduced Descartes' dual substances to one, which he called God, although it was more of a pantheistic divinity, similar to the Stoics (Copleston, 1960). Spinoza denied human free will, insofar as people are part of the natural order and the product of cause and event “movements,” as are all other things.

I say that that thing is free which exists and acts solely from the necessity of its own nature, and I say that that thing is constrained which is determined by something else to exist and to act in a fixed and determined way. For example,

although God exists necessarily, he nevertheless exists freely because he exists solely from the necessity of his own nature...However, let us move down to created things, which are all determined by external causes to exist and to act in a fixed and determinate way. To understand this clearly, let us take a very simple example. A stone receives from the impulsion of an external cause a fixed quantity of motion whereby it will necessarily continue to move when the impulsion of the external cause has ceased. The stone's continuance in motion is constrained, not because it is necessary, but because it must be defined by the impulsion received from the external cause. What here applies to the stone must be understood of every individual thing, however complex its structure and various its functions. For every single thing is necessarily determined by an external cause to exist and to act in a fixed and determinate way.

Furthermore, conceive, if you please, that while continuing in motion the stone thinks, and knows that is endeavoring, as far as in it lies, to continue motion. Now this stone, since it is conscious only of its endeavor and is not at all indifferent, will surely think it is completely free, and that it continues in motion for no other reason than that it so wishes. This, then, is that human freedom which all men boast of possessing, and which consists solely in this, that men are conscious of their desire and unaware of the causes by which they are determined. (Spinoza, 2002, pp. 908-909)

Thus, the rationalist view of our existence reduced free will to an awareness of activity. It can be summarized by the aphorism "all things happen for a reason," as is oft quoted, even in our postmodern age.

While Spinoza's reintroduced Zeno's pantheistic determinism, Gottfried Leibniz took this to another level. Similar to Democritus or Epicurus, he concluded that the universe consists of irreducible substances. But unlike the pre-Socratic materialists, he believed these substances had no size, shape, or physical extension. Leibniz called these elemental substances "monads," and conceived of them as being qualitatively distinguishable from one another (Copleston, 1960, p. 297), and differing in their degree of perception.

Each monad develops according to its own inner constitution and law; it is insusceptible of increase or diminution through the activity of other monads, since the simple cannot have parts added to it or subtracted from it. But each one, being gifted with some degree of perception, mirrors the universe, that is, the total system, in its own way. (Copleston, 1960, p. 297)

Monads follow the order and course of the cosmos as established by God at creation. The universe as a whole is *horologium Dei*, the “clock of God,” and every monad self develops according to the divine plan (Hill, 2016). Leibniz trumped Spinoza’s pantheism with panpsychism.

Both Spinoza and Leibniz attempted to explain the interrelation of Descartes’ dualistic mind and body. This is necessary if one is to advance mathematical and logical systems to explain human *being*, rather than the classic teleological explanation by which people are moved from an innate desire for perfection through alignment with the light of the *Logos* written in their hearts by the Natural Law.

Empiricism and the loss of human essence

The unity of the self, achieved by Aristotle, and particularly Aquinas, required finding an alternative to Plato’s realism that claimed only divine forms are real and the materialist’s assertion, such as Democritus and Epicurus, that only particular things exist and they are simply the sums of their elements. As we have seen, the central construct in the metaphysical answer to a middle way between dualism and materialism is the idea of substance. Plato’s immaterial form is merged with the material body to render a particular type of living entity, be it animal or man.

Importantly, the specific essence of the substance is what distinguishes one kind from another.

Humankind, is a unique quiddity from all else.

Descartes split the hylomorphic human being into mind and body, giving governance to the rational, immaterial mind over the merely material body. Spinoza and Leibniz endeavored to overcome this harsh dualism, while retaining the idea that humans have innate, substantive ideas or perceptions that supply knowledge independently of our sense experience. John Locke (1632–1704) took issue with this, claiming the mind only perceives ideas of things from sensations and cannot know them directly or have knowledge from another source than these sensations.

It is evident the mind knows not things immediately, but only by the intervention of the ideas it has of them. Our knowledge, therefore, is real only so far as there is a conformity between our ideas and the reality of things. But what shall be here the criterion? How shall the mind, when it perceives nothing but its own ideas, know that they agree with things themselves? (Locke, 1690, p. 554)

Locke posits that the reality of things is filtered through our perception and that knowledge, which he calls “real,” occurs when there is “conformity” between our perception of a thing and its actual qualities. It is here that the Christian Locke enters into the argument and invokes God as the guarantor of our mind’s ability to obtain real knowledge.

As all simple ideas are really conformed to things. First, the first are simple ideas, which since the mind, as has been shown, can by no means make to itself, must necessarily be the product of things operating on the mind, in a natural way, and producing therein those perceptions which by the Wisdom and Will of our Maker they are ordained and adapted to. From whence it follows, that simple ideas are not fictions of our fancies, but the natural and regular productions of things without us, really operating upon us; and so carry with them all the conformity which is intended; or which our state requires: for they represent to us things under those appearances which they are fitted to produce in us: whereby we are enabled to distinguish the sorts of particular substances, to discern the states they

are in, and so to take them for our necessities, and apply them to our uses. (Locke, 1690, p. 255)

Under Locke's (1690) system, the Natural Law is reduced to a set of innate "simple ideas...operating on the mind, in a natural way" (p. 255) to provide conformity between perception and the reality of the material objects that compel the ideas. In this way, humans build knowledge, perception by perception, on the foundation these first simple (fundamental) ideas, which are the provision of God. Locke infers the mind is a data processor that starts life with no data—a *tabula rasa*, as he put it—but the processor has innate firmware that allows for fundamental data to properly begin the development of all future programs. Aristotle, Zeno, Aquinas, and others referenced the blank slate of the mind, but believed this slate would be filled in virtue of the soul's being connected to the divine *Logos* and informing the mind of the essences that give substance to particulars. Locke rejects the immaterial nature and identifies people as streams of consciousness, thus, making us the author of our souls (Feser, 2008).

Given human minds are merely the sum of their perceptions, each individual has a distinct aggregation. Locke was a conceptualist; universals are not objectively real, they exist as mental concepts. Forms and essences are manmade, including the form and essence of human beings.

The mind being, as I have declared, furnished with a great number of the simple ideas, conveyed in by the senses as they are found in exterior things, or by reflection on its own operations, takes notice also that a certain number of these simple ideas go constantly together; which being presumed to belong to one thing, and words being suited to common apprehensions, and made use of for quick dispatch, are called, so united in one subject, by one name; which, by inadvertency, we are apt afterward to talk of and consider as one simple idea, which indeed is a complication of many ideas together: because, as I have said, not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom

ourselves to suppose some substratum wherein they do subsist, and from which they do result, which therefore we call substance. (Locke, 1690, pp. 277-278)

Locke took a eudemonic view of human development and, in the absence of an immaterial human form and essence, defined the concept of “person” as an extended consciousness over time.

Person, as I take it, is the name for this self. Wherever a man finds what he calls himself, there, I think, another may say is the same person. It is a forensic term, appropriating actions and their merit; and so belongs only to intelligent agents, capable of a law, and happiness, and misery. This personality extends itself beyond present existence to what is past, only by consciousness,—whereby it becomes concerned and accountable; owns and imputes to itself past actions, just upon the same ground and for the same reason as it does the present. All which is founded in a concern for happiness, the unavoidable concomitant of consciousness; that which is conscious of pleasure and pain, desiring that that self that is conscious should be happy. (Locke, 1690, p. 331)

Descartes’ rationalism and Locke’s empiricism each took half of the Scholastic epistemology. For Aristotle and Aquinas, the potential of the whole person, via the concerted action of sense and reason, rendered human understanding. Locke, as did Aristotle and Aquinas, insisted that knowledge passes through the senses to the intellect. But Locke’s doctrine of innate ideas situated “truth” in the perceiving mind, rather than in the reality of the *Logos* of the cosmos. Rationalism and empiricism split the process of human understanding the Scholastics conceived. Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and the rationalists chose reason as the fount of knowledge. Empiricists such as Locke, Berkeley, and Hume took the other half of the older unity, insisting that it is a feature of sense experience. (Hill, 2016).

The empiricist Locke inevitably collided with the Christian Locke (Feser, 2008; Hill, 2016) and compelled him to give an explanation for the Christian belief in an immortal soul, despite his rejection of the Aristotelian or Scholastic soul and his belief that a person is defined by consciousness that registers pain or pleasure, animated by the innate idea of the latter. A person is...

...a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking... Thus it is always as to our present sensations and perceptions: and by this every one is to himself that which he calls self:—it not being considered, in this case, whether the same self be continued in the same or divers substances. For, since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes every one to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity, i.e. the sameness of a rational being: and as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that that action was done. (Locke, 1690, pp. 317-318)

How can self and personhood be defined as consciousness that extends backwards in time, yet after the death of consciousness be nonetheless alive, thereby fulfilling Christian theology regarding eternal life? Locke (1690) claimed that upon death, based on “appropriating actions and their merit” (p. 331), God would reconstitute the consciousness, the extension of which is the person, and thus the person would live again (Feser, 2007).

Thomas Hobbes: Return to materialism

Like all people, Hobbes (1588–1679) was partially a product of his times. He was the son of a vicar who early on displayed a recognizable genius (Copleston, 1959) and was sent to Oxford, graduating at age nineteen. He tutored the son of William Cavendish, Earl of Devonshire and a noted scientist, and found himself in influential circles, visiting Galileo in Italy and befriending

his fellow Englishman, Francis Bacon. His intersection with British nobility informed his political allegiance to the royalists, who were to lose their civil war with the parliamentarians in 1651 (Copleston, 1959). While he did not believe in the divine right of kings (Hill, 2016) he was nonetheless a monarchist, believing that only a strong, centralized authority would mitigate the innate tendencies of human nature, which he describes in *Leviathan* as warlike.

(13.6) So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory.

(13.7) The first maketh men invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation. The first use violence, to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name.

(13.8) Hereby it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, *they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man*[emphasis added]. (Hobbes, 1651)

(5.5) And therefore if a man should talk to me of a round quadrangle; or accidents of bread in cheese; or immaterial substances; or of a free subject; a free will; or any free but free from being hindered by opposition; I should not say he were in an error, but that his words were without meaning; that is to say, absurd. (Hobbes, 1651)

It was probably after his time with Galileo that Hobbes' universal materialism was fully extended.

The Universe, that is the whole mass of things there are, is corporeal, that is to say body.... Also every part of body is likewise body, and that which is not body is not part of the Universe. And because the Universe is all, that which is no part of it is nothing, and consequently nowhere. (as cited in Blumenau, 2002, p. 225)

This view eliminates the dualism of Plato and Descartes and leaves only the atomistic view of Democritus. Like Epicurus 2,000 years before him, Hobbes' materialism left only self-interest as the prominent feature of human nature. He completely discards the teleological view of human nature, uproots theology from philosophy and limits it to the study of the material realm.

[T]he definition of philosophy, whose profession it is to search out the properties of bodies from their generation, or their generation from their properties ; and, therefore, where there is no generation or property, there is no philosophy. Therefore it excludes Theology, I mean the doctrine of God, eternal, ingenerable, incomprehensible, and in whom there is nothing neither to divide nor compound, nor any generation to be conceived. (Hobbes, 1844, p. 10)

Hobbes was a progenitor of the linguistic turn in analytic philosophy (Ball, 1985) and decried any attribution of truth to words. "True and False are attributes of Speech, and not of Things," he wrote in *Leviathan* (Hobbes, 1904, p. 343). His materialistic lens precluded not only a metaphysical realm, but also the use of words that denoted or connoted metaphysical concepts.

From the same fountain spring those insignificant words, abstract substance, separated essence, and the like ... it is evident that philosophy has no need of those words essence, entity, and other the like barbarous terms. (Hobbes, 1844, p. 34)

Without the concept of form and essence, there can be no connection between subjective assessment and objective reality.

Hobbes was, in sum, the first important materialist since Epicurus. All that exists, he argued, are bodies—corporeal things that have physical extension in space. The concept of a "spiritual substance," as with the Cartesian or Platonic soul, is an oxymoron; it was not so much false as downright meaningless. (Hill, 2016, Chapter 5, section: Thomas Hobbes: The Rebirth of Materialism., para. 5)

Hobbes brings us full circle back to the Sophists, for whom there were no moral truths, to the atomists, for whom only the material was real, and to Epicurus' notion that human nature was governed entirely by self-interest. Within this system, the Natural Law has neither room nor basis and the teleological nature of man enlightened by the *Logos* and animated through virtue is annihilated. Hobbes transmogrified the Natural Law into a law of nature in which humankind will be in a constant state of conquest and defense, driven by native self-interest. This necessitates a law of the State, enforced by absolute authority and a system of positive laws. Like the dialectical materialism of Marx, Hobbes' materialism justifies absolutism by the State (Rommen, 1998).

Hume: Socially constructed morality

John Locke, the English Protestant, René Descartes, the French Catholic, and even the pessimist Hobbes, the son of a vicar, were constrained by their theological beliefs to fit God within their respective empirical and rationalist systems. David Hume (1711–1776), the Scottish agnostic who refused absolution on his deathbed (Copleston, 1959), had no reason to temper his philosophy with theology and brought materialism to its dénouement. Hume eschewed rationality and claimed that appetitive desires were the motives of human will, subordinating reason. “Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them” (Hume, 1739, p.154).

Nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason, to give the preference to reason, and to assert that men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its dictates. Every rational creature, 'tis said, is obliged to regulate his actions by reason; and if any other motive or principle challenge the direction of his conduct, he ought to oppose it, 'till it be entirely subdued, or at least brought to a conformity with that superior principle. On this method of thinking the greatest part of moral

philosophy, ancient and modern, seems to be founded; nor is there an ampler field, as well for metaphysical arguments, as popular declamations, than this supposed pre-eminence of reason above passion. The eternity, invariableness, and divine origin of the former have been displayed to the best advantage: The blindness, unconstancy and deceitfulness of the latter have been as strongly insisted on. In order to shew the fallacy of all this philosophy, I shall endeavour to prove first, that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and secondly, that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will. (Hume, 1739, pp. 154-155)

Hume believed his theory disproved the previous 2,300 years of moral philosophy. In the process, he dissolves any substrate on which could rest a system of objective morality. He removes reason as the basis for will and discards any notion of a Law of Nature, which provides an objective basis for the Good. In the process, Hume redefines virtue as those acts that protect us from societal attack, thereby promoting our more sustained pleasure. Having eliminated conformity with objective principles of good from our cognitive tool kit, what remains is seeking direct or indirect approbation in order to further self-interests (Rommen, 1998).

For granting that morality had no foundation in nature, it must still be allowed, that vice and virtue, either from self-interest or the prejudices of education, produce in us a real pain and pleasure; and this we may observe to be strenuously asserted by the defenders of that hypothesis. Every passion, habit, or turn of character (say they) which has a tendency to our advantage or prejudice, gives a delight or uneasiness; and 'tis from thence the approbation or disapprobation arises. We easily gain from the liberality of others, but are always in danger of losing by their avarice: Courage defends us, but cowardice lays us open to every attack: Justice is the support of society, but injustice, unless checked, would quickly prove its ruin: Humility exalts; but pride mortifies us. For these reasons the former qualities are esteemed virtues, and the latter regarded as vices. Now since 'tis granted there is a delight or uneasiness still attending merit or demerit of every kind, this is all that is requisite for my purpose. (Hume, 1739, pp. 154-155)

There is no objective standard for morality, let alone an intrinsic knowledge of such. Moral virtues are the consequence of social conventions, which, having no intrinsic validity, are

inherently subjective and given to alteration in the face of changing socio-political circumstances as human needs are arbitrarily estimated. Evidence of this abounds in modern Western culture, where hitherto impregnable moral edifices such as family, marriage, and gender identity have seen tectonic shifts in what those in power deem estimable human needs. Virtue in our time appears to be defined by what earns the approbation of society, or at least avoids attacks therefrom.

All that remained after this analysis was empiricist positivism. The good and the just are what is here and now deemed useful to the self-interest of individuals and to their life in common. The latter, of itself and through educational enforcement, develops a social habit of considering a common interest, which, however, is not such in reality: it is but a nominalist symbol for the sum of tangible individual interests. (Rommen, 1998, Chapter 5, para. 8)

Hume leaves nothing mental or physical that has intrinsic reality; all that remains is *experience itself* (Hill, 2016).

Immanuel Kant

It is neither possible nor necessary to give a thorough account of the philosophy of Kant (1724–1804) and its historical and contemporary reverberations. For the purposes of my thesis, it is important to selectively treat Kantian concepts that inform the inexorable progression toward the loss of the substantial human self.

Kant said Hume “had awakened him from his dogmatic slumber” and stated that, in writing his book *Critique of Pure Reason*, “it was necessary to deny knowledge to make room for faith” (as cited in Hill, 2016, Chapter 6, Section: From the Spiritual Soul to the Secular Self, para. 2).

There could not be a more clear statement of how the period between the late Medieval Age and

the waning stages of the Enlightenment had witnessed the separation of theology and philosophy—between God and a system of human morality.

Kant insisted there was a core human identity, contrary to Hume's claim, and called it the "noumenal self," differentiating it from the phenomenal conscience of feelings, perceptions, and thoughts, considered by Hume to be the only human composition (Copleston, 1959, p. 333). But Hume's influence is seen in Kant's claim that only the phenomenal self can be known, but the noumenal self can be inferred by a "transcendental deduction" from our empirical experience (Hill, 2016). "Kant states, famously, in the *Analytic*, that '...the proud name of ontology, which presumes to offer synthetic a priori cognitions of things in general... must give way to the more modest title of a transcendental analytic'" (Grier, 2012). He does not believe we can know general metaphysical, ontological truths. He refers to this as unmediated intellectual access or non-sensible knowledge. However, our reason will, by nature, conflate sensible knowledge ("appearances") with "*noumena*" (things in themselves). "The failure to draw the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is the hallmark of all those pernicious systems of thought that stand under the title 'transcendental realism'" (Grier, 2012). Kant offers "transcendental idealism" as an alternative, thus, moving from a real ontology to one idealized, which he nonetheless believes is necessary for reason to obtain knowledge. Kant rejects metaphysics on the one hand, but on the other hand admits that our natural interests pull us into drawing erroneous metaphysical conclusions. The cause of this "pull" is that our reason is designed for syllogistic deduction. We seek to "find for the conditioned knowledge, given through the understanding, the unconditioned whereby its unity is brought to completion" (Kant,

1922, p. 308). As Grier (2012) states, “The search for systematic unity and completeness of knowledge is inherent in the very nature of our reason,” and this search ineluctably leads us to try to acquire knowledge of metaphysical realities, but such use of our understanding is “illicit.”

We thus find one general complaint about efforts to acquire metaphysical knowledge: the use of formal concepts and principles, in abstraction from the sensible conditions under which objects can be given, cannot yield knowledge. Hence, the “transcendental” use of the understanding (its use independently of the conditions of sensibility) is considered by Kant to be dialectical, to involve erroneous applications of concepts in order to acquire knowledge of things independently of sensibility/experience. Throughout the *Analytic* Kant elaborates on this general view, noting that the transcendental employment of the understanding, which aims towards knowledge of things independently of experience (and thus knowledge of “noumena”), is illicit. (Grier, 2012)

Kant locates this unavoidable, but nonetheless erroneous, pursuit of metaphysical knowledge in human reason and ascribes herein the locus of error he called “transcendental illusion.” His claim is that reason has the peculiar feature of declaring “objective” its own subjective interests in metaphysical concepts and mistakenly ascribes to such concepts a findable quality. Thus, Kant’s agenda is to not only demonstrate the metaphysical arguments as spurious, but to illuminate the source of the illusion, which is none other than human reason.

Although we think the soul, the world, and God (necessarily) *as* objects, these ideas actually lack objective reality (there is no object that corresponds to each of these ideas that is or could be given to us in any intuition). It is thus not uncommon to find Kant referring to these alleged metaphysical entities as “mere thought entities,” “fictions of the brain,” or “pseudo objects.” Although the *Dialectic* does not presume to prove that such objects do not or could not exist, Kant is committed by the strictures of his own transcendental epistemology to the claim that the ideas of reason do not provide us with concepts of “knowable” objects. For this reason alone, the efforts of the metaphysicians are presumptuous, and at the very least, an epistemological modesty precludes the knowledge that is sought. (Grier, 2012)

Kant's skepticism regarding the epistemic ability of human beings regarding God, soul, and the world, would inexorably lead to moral relativism. However, notwithstanding this propensity of reason toward "transcendental illusion," Kant claims human morality must be based on an *unconditioned*, binding categorical imperative "that states all rational beings ought to act in a certain way. They ought to act only on the maxims which they can at the same time will, without contradiction, to be universal laws" (Copleston, 1960, VI, p. 332).

Although Kant's Christian beliefs committed him to accepting God, freedom, and immortality as necessary propositions, he nonetheless denied the existence of a human essence, *telos*, or innate objective ends toward which we strive (Baggett, 2011; Blumenau, 2002; Copleston, 1960, VI). Indeed, he denied that we are able to know transcendent *a priori* truth.

Death of the Natural Law

The Law of Nature is related to the God who orders the universe; it is related to divine essence and reason (*nous*), from which emanates the eternal law that is the substrate for the Natural Law. It is in the very essence of human beings, our nature, to participate in the Natural Law, which could be expressed as having it "written in our hearts." The ancient belief that our soul, our substance, combined reason and will in order to ascertain the Good, to align our moral actions and character accordingly, and to pursue our *telos*, includes the Stoic conviction that there is a Lawgiver behind the cosmos. Thus, the eternal law, which is an active essence of God, flows into the Natural Law, which is in the essence of human *being*, and requires human reason and will to activate our individual capacity for becoming the best version of ourselves. But reason alone is insufficient. There must be an accompanying intuition that there is a transcendent source of the

Good, with which we are in conformance and by which we certify what is good and what is right. Thus, reason cannot be severed from the soul, wherein the *nous*, connected to the light of the *Logos*, gives rational guidance, translated through the Natural Law in our hearts, into the lexicon of virtues.

But we have seen a process of descent regarding the reason of humankind and our understanding of self and the world in which we have our being. We have relocated reason from the soul to the mind. The concept of soul, in the hands of Descartes, regressed from that which is connected to the divine *Nous* and *Logos*, to a description for the contents of the mind, from which man, armed with innate ideas, can construct understanding of the world using mathematical logic. The individual intellect becomes self-sufficient. While not yet fully developed into the existentialism of Nietzsche, the individual is now the measure of itself. In a great irony, the Enlightenment, that sought to free people from the burden of theological and philosophical traditions of the past, spawned a “modern” philosophy, which has concluded that “man is the measure of all things,” an assertion made by Protagoras 2,300 years earlier.

This process reached its climax in Kant. Human reason now becomes the sovereign architect of the order of knowledge; it becomes the measure of things. The objective basis of natural law, the *ordo rerum* and the eternal law, has vanished. What was termed natural law is a series of conclusions drawn from the categorical imperative and from the regulative ideas of practical reason, not from the objective and constitutive *ordo rerum*. These regulative ideas received their somewhat dubious validity from the feeling that without their validity human moral life would be impossible. The ensuing materialism, however, proved only too quickly that this argument lacks force, and that man can live, at least when human nature becomes a purely biological entity, without such regulative ideas. (Rommen, 1998. Chapter 4, para. 28)

Our capacity to live with autonomy requires we give ourselves a rational rule by which to guide our self-creation, undeterred by disruptive passions and vices. Reason and autonomy bestows on each human equal value and dignity and, thus, a “categorical imperative,” binding on rational beings, is “that we must always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end” (Kant, 2012, p. 45). Thus, the common capacity for self-creation is what binds all human beings together and grants each of us equal dignity; it defines “personhood.”

But the tenuous basis for the categorical imperative is the reasoned belief by Kant that without such “oughts,” humans would be incapable of moral living (Rommen, 1998). It is, therefore, the nature of reason to devise a moral system, based on categorical imperatives, which will provide a basis for a good life. Thus, a standard for goodness is engendered from a perceived need for a standard of goodness. It is as if we have consulted our intuitions and, thus, validated the need for a moral principle. But according to Kant, previous philosophers committed the transcendental fallacy of reifying subjective reasoning. Thus, it appears Kant is asking us to accept a universal categorical imperative, while rejecting *a priori* truths as the artifacts of fallacious reasoning. The inconsistency of this denial of *a priori* realities, while at the same time attempting to situate the Good in an external source, was one of the main complaints of the philosopher in whom the ubiquitous use of values finds its genealogy: Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche.

The Genealogy of Values

The road traveled in this dissertation has included a few salient aspects deliberately featured as we have traveled through 2,500 years of moral philosophy. Specifically, I have drawn out the concepts of a substantial self, the law of nature, free will, and an epistemology associated with an ontology of metaphysical realism.

The twin theses of metaphysical realism [include]: i) that there is a mind-independent world constructed (at least in part) thus and so independently of our conception of it; and ii) that in thought and in perception we may have knowledge of this world; in conjunction with the recognition that ‘meaning,’ ‘truth,’ ‘reference’ and ‘reality’ are not univocal, let alone reducible to some scientifically identified physic-causal mechanism. (Haldane, 1996, pp. 295-296)

The concepts of self and free will are necessary to support the classical morality of Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas. To work towards the end (*telos*), which is a eudaimonic (flourishing) life, we must be able to contemplate and grasp (have an epistemic understanding of) transcendent truths regarding the Good. This is to say, the closer we get to the ontological source of the Good, the more real will be our knowledge of it. Armed with this, we must have a will that is free to assert itself and choose goodness or evilness, in order to actualize and strive for our ideal selves. In order to enact goodness, we must practice the virtues.

The motive that compels virtuous living is to participate in the eternal Good for Platonists, eudaimonistic for Aristotelians, reason for Stoics, and righteous requirements for Augustinians and Thomists. Each case is grounded in a belief in a God whose Will in a person’s life is accomplished through virtuous living.

In Platonic and Platonically inspired ethics the Greek word *kalon*... means 'inspiring' and hence 'compelling.'... In Augustine's time no moralist would have supposed that his choices were limited to something like utilitarianism (or, more broadly, consequentialism), Kantian obligations or a form of contract-theory. Even the original ancient versions of what is now called virtue-ethics were far from an ethic of good training inducing good habits. Aristotelians (and even Stoics), as well as Platonists, dealt in the ethics of inspiration. (Rist, 1994, p. 153)

An "ethics of inspiration" connotes an outside influence inspiring moral acts. A prominent doctrine in Hellenistic philosophy is the fundamental happiness achieved by those who, through virtuous living, are following God's Will for their life (Waligore, 2011). Such a doctrine appears quite foreign to our modern, secular ideas of happiness and human well-being.

As is apparent from the previous survey of moral philosophy from the Scholastics to Kant, the severing of theology and philosophy, the removal of mind from soul, and the move toward scientific materialism combined to situate morality within a psychological framework. With notable exceptions such as Hume's atheism and Hobbes' dubious theism, many of the cited philosophers retained Christian beliefs, albeit with difficulty in terms of aligning traditional doctrine with their rationalism or empiricism. One philosopher who was unambiguous regarding Christianity was the author of *Antichrist*, Friedrich Nietzsche.

Nietzsche: The death of God and birth of values

Nietzsche (1844–1900) was the son of a Lutheran pastor who died when Friedrich was twelve years old, leaving him in a feminine and pious society consisting of his mother, sister, grandmother, and two aunts (Copleston, 1963, p. 390). He abandoned his Christian upbringing during his time at the universities in Bonn and Leipzig, where he studied philology. While at

Leipzig, he was attracted to Schopenhauer's works, particularly because of the latter's atheism (Copleston, 1963). For the purposes of this dissertation, this intersection with Schopenhauer is germane to Nietzsche's importance in our survey of modern morality and, in particular, the place human will plays in a moral system.

Schopenhauer agreed with Kant's separation of the noumenal and phenomenal worlds and related this to his immersive study of the Hindu *Upanishads* and the concept of *Maya* (Magee, 1997). He disagreed with Kant's dependence on the tools of reason for ascertaining truth in the phenomenal world, while disclaiming such tools could access the noumenal. Schopenhauer, influenced by his Eastern religious studies, believed human intuition allowed perceptions of the noumenal, which provide understanding, albeit not infallible, of the realm "beyond the veil," and are equally valuable tools for understanding.

So we can respond to experiences without the rational tools of understanding that had been so important to Kant. The criticism that Schopenhauer had of Kant was that the latter had been too exclusively concerned with the way we apply concepts to our experience, but had paid insufficient attention to the percepts, to the actual experiences themselves, before the tools of understanding had got to work on them. As Schopenhauer put it: "Concepts should be the material in which philosophy deposits and stores up its knowledge, but not the source from which it draws such knowledge." (Blumenau, 2002, p. 402)

Schopenhauer's belief that understanding lies beyond the mere perception of the phenomenal and must include intuitional insights led him to place special significance on art (Magee, 1997).

Great artists break through the phenomenal world into the noumenal world of intuition and bring the artist and those who will follow their art to transcendent insights (Blumenau, 2002, p. 403).

His admirer and disciple, Friedrich Nietzsche, inherited this infatuation with the aesthetic world (Andrew, 1995). He also absorbed and developed Schopenhauer's principle of Will.

As have philosophers for millennia, Schopenhauer searched for a unifying principle that would explain human nature. For Plato, this was the Good, for Aristotle, the teleological essence of mankind; for Cicero it was the *Logos* enlightening human concurrence with the order of the *cosmos*; for Augustine and Aquinas it was the quest for the beatific with God; for Schopenhauer, the unifying principle was Will (Blumenau, 2002). Will is that which provides access to the noumenal realm, but it is more than that. It is the activating force behind human nature (Magee, 1997). It is not personal volition, but is the impersonal "law of nature" (Blumenau, 2002). Far from the Law of Nature, or Natural Law of Aquinas, this is a law like unto the law of gravity. It is simply the one reality of "the inside of the world" (Copleston, 1963, p. 272). Similar to Aristotle's substance, but lacking connection to a divine essence, Will is seen by Schopenhauer as the "thing in itself" that objectively exists (Copleston, 1963):

How does Schopenhauer arrive at the conviction that the thing-in-itself is Will? To find the key to reality I must look within myself. For in inner consciousness or inwardly directed perception lies 'the single narrow door to truth.' Through this inner consciousness I am aware that the bodily action which is said to follow or result from volition is not something different from volition but one and the same. That is to say, the bodily action is simply the objectified will: it is the will become idea or presentation. Indeed, the whole body is nothing but objectified will; will as a presentation to consciousness. According to Schopenhauer, anyone can understand this in himself. And once he has this fundamental intuition, he has the key to reality. (Copleston, 1963, p. 272)

Will is the instinctual drive to do whatever is required to survive and thrive. Humans only differ from animals in their ability to consider abstractions, such as projecting into the past or future. But impersonal will, nonetheless, drives us.

Nietzsche's exposure to Schopenhauer not only facilitated his atheism, it gave him the tools with which to contemplate human nature and develop his own philosophy of living. He applied Schopenhauer's belief that art can free you from the mundane and lift you to the extraordinary, dividing ancient Greek art between the Dionysian and Apollonian. Under the influence of Dionysus, the god of wine, worshippers would become literally and figuratively intoxicated. Losing their inhibitions, they would become their natural selves, unfettered with their daily identities.

[They] become one with the stream of life. In their ecstasy, they embrace not only the joys, but also the terror of life—they 'triumphantly affirm existence in all its darkness and horror.' They feel god-like: everything is possible, and they break through all limits and frontiers set by everyday life... throughout his life Nietzsche felt a deep emotional identification with the Dionysian element. (Blumenau, 2002, p. 466)

Nietzsche believed the ancient Apollonian was not meant to destroy vitality of the Dionysian element, rather to channel it and make it more powerful (Andrew, 1995). But he viewed Socrates and Plato as the founders of an Apollonian-based worldview, in which the wild, energetic Dionysian element is curbed and controlled. This was the beginning of a "life-denying" moral pathway that took its most destructive turn with Christianity (Nietzsche, 1920).

In *Human All Too Human*, Nietzsche (1986) took a nihilistic approach and declared that, “human nature is just a euphemism for inertia, cultural conditioning, and what we are before we make something of ourselves...” (p. 67). He believed everything essential in the development of mankind occurred prior to the recorded history of humankind and, therefore, thought philosophy to have a failed foundation.

But the philosopher here sees ‘instincts’ in man as he now is and assumes that these belong to the unalterable facts of mankind and to that extent could provide a key to the understanding of the world in general: the whole of teleology is constructed by speaking of the man of the last four millennia as of an *eternal* man towards whom all things in the world have had a natural relationship from the time he began. But everything has become: there are no *eternal facts*, just as there are no absolute truths. (Nietzsche, 1986, p. 13)

Nietzsche denigrated “morality [as] a hindrance to the development of new and better customs: it makes stupid [people]” (Nietzsche, 1986, p. 18).

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche (2002) identifies two types of morality: the slave-morality and the master-morality. The latter ennobles behavior that promotes aristocratic dominance and calls people “bad” who fail to live powerfully. The slave-morality calls virtuous those things beneficial to being weak and living under another’s authority. Humility, kindness, and sympathy are extolled as needs for the enslaved masses, thus, slave-morality is that of a herd. (Kranak, 2009, p. 35). What the herd would consider “bad,” is the individual who rules over them being fueled by the will, which propels them to greater aggrandizement (Copleston, 1964). Nietzsche (2010) extends his master-morality in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, introducing the Overman:

Behold, I teach you the overman!

The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The over- man shall be the meaning of the earth!

I appeal to you, my brothers, remain true to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! Poisoners are they, whether they know it or not.

Despisers of life are they, decaying and poisoned themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so let them pass away!

Once sin against God was the greatest sin; but God died, and with him these sinners. To sin against the earth is now the most terrible sin, and to revere the entrails of the unknowable higher than the meaning of the earth!

Once the soul looked contemptuously on the body, and that contempt was supreme: the soul wished the body thin, hideous, and starved. Thus it thought to escape from the body and the earth.

Oh, that soul was itself thin, hideous, and starved; and cruelty was the desire of that soul!

But you, also, my brothers, tell me: What does your body say about your soul? Is your soul not poverty and dirt and wretched contentment?

Truly, a dirty stream is man. One must be a sea, to receive a dirty stream without becoming unclean.

Behold, I teach you the overman: he is this sea; in him your great con- tempt can pass under and away.

What is your greatest experience? It is the hour of the great contempt. The hour in which even your happiness becomes repulsive to you, and even your reason and virtue. (pp. 13-14)

The Overman is a goal worthy of our aim, but it also eliminates value equality in human beings/

With these preachers of equality will I not be mixed up and confounded. For thus speaks justice to me: "Men are not equal."

And neither shall they become so! What would be my love to the over- man, if I spoke otherwise?

On a thousand bridges and piers shall they throng to the future, and al- ways shall there be more war and inequality among them: thus does my great love make me speak! (Nietzsche, 2010, p. 81)

The slave-morality, so antithetical to humankind's development toward the Overman, finds its most fertile ground in Christianity, which earned Nietzsche's most virulent and contemptuous prose:

With this I come to a conclusion and pronounce my judgment. I *condemn* Christianity; I bring against the Christian church the most terrible of all the accusations that an accuser has ever had in his mouth. It is, to me, the greatest of all imaginable corruptions; it seeks to work the ultimate corruption, the worst possible corruption. The Christian church has left nothing untouched by its depravity; it has turned every value into worthlessness, and every truth into a lie, and every integrity into baseness of soul. Let any one dare to speak to me of its "humanitarian" blessings! Its deepest necessities range it against any effort to abolish distress; it lives by distress; it *creates* distress to make *itself* immortal.... For example, the worm of sin: it was the church that first enriched mankind with this misery!—The "equality of souls before God"—this fraud, this *pretext* for the *rancunes* of all the base-minded—this explosive concept, ending in revolution, the modern idea, and the notion of overthrowing the whole social order— this is *Christian* dynamite.... The "humanitarian" blessings of Christianity forsooth! To breed out of *humanitas* a self-contradiction, an art of self-pollution, a will to lie at any price, an aversion and contempt for all good and honest instincts! All this, to me, is the "humanitarianism" of Christianity!—Parasitism as the *only* practice of the church; with its anaemic and "holy" ideals, sucking all the blood, all the love, all the hope out of life; the beyond as the will to deny all reality; the cross as the distinguishing mark of the most subterranean conspiracy ever heard of,—against health, beauty, well-being, intellect, *kindness* of soul—against *life itself*....

This eternal accusation against Christianity I shall write upon all walls, wherever walls are to be found—I have letters that even the blind will be able to see.... I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great intrinsic depravity, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means are venomous enough, or secret, subterranean and *small* enough,—I call it the one immortal blemish upon the human race....

And mankind reckons *time* from the *dies nefastus* when this fatality befell— from the *first* day of Christianity!— *Why not rather from its last?—From today?*—The transvaluation of all values!... (Nietzsche, 1920, p. 43).

Nietzsche believed "Christianity has taken the side of everything weak, base, ill-constituted, it has made an ideal out of opposition to the preservative instincts of a strong life; it has depraved

the reason even of the intellectually strongest natures...” (Nietzsche, 1920, p. 33). Christianity had been the first revaluation of values in which those noble Homeric values of ancient Greece, which presaged the Overman:

In “Homer’s Contest,” he had identified the competitive spirit in Greece as a major factor in its thriving, since it pushed men to excellence. And in an 1875 note, he identifies the basis for great intelligence as “violent energy.” In short, we’re talking about a culture that is active and vibrant, willing to take risks, willing to conquer. (Kranak, 2009, p.33)

In *Human All Too Human*, Nietzsche (1986) defines morality as adherence to a set of rules, equally applicable to all people, ordained by custom or a lawgiver (p. 25). Those who do not adhere to the rules are considered morally bad; those who develop habitual concurrence are virtuous (p. 96) and follow the rules out of a sense of obeisance to a higher authority (p. 99). Accordance with higher authority provides a feeling of elevation to the herd. This is the essence of the slave-morality Nietzsche believes was the outcome of the revaluation of Christianity. He believes that a revaluation is necessarily his major purpose and will simultaneously advance society and end Christianity (Nietzsche, 1920, p. 62).

Nietzsche “dynamite” and the birth of modern values

Nietzsche predicted he would help cause a tremendous change in what the world believes and his impact on society in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Fekete, 1987) indicates his foreshadowing in *Ecce Homo* has come into fruition.

I am, in Greek, but not only in Greek, the *Antichrist*...I know my fate. One day, my name will be associated with the memory of something tremendous—a crisis the like of which the world has never seen, the most profound collision of conscience, of a decision brought about *against* everything that has ever been believed, demanded, or held holy so far. I am not a man. I am dynamite. (Horstmann, 2002, p. xiii)

Nietzsche believed his stories to be the ultimate stories, the stories that are destined to become the standard versions of our assessment of these phenomena (Horstmann, 2002, p. xiv). As regarding values, this has largely come true (Benson, 2008).

Nietzsche owes much of his perspective regarding aesthetics, Homeric Greek excellence, and will to Schopenhauer (Copleston, 1964). But he denied the pessimism of Schopenhauer and, though noting the suffering of life, structured much of his intellectual pursuits around the question “How should we endure?” (Horstmann, 2002, p. xvi). Three interconnected convictions, which he treated as facts, compel this question: (1) life is best viewed as a chaotic, forceful process with no stability or direction; (2) there is no objective or natural purpose of life; and (3) human life is inherently oriented toward valuation, a process that provides a set of values to which we adhere, as this is a psychological necessity (Horstmann, 2002, p. xvii). Accordingly, Nietzsche believed the purpose of philosophers was the creation of values to help humankind meet this psychological need and endure life.

But all these are only preconditions for his task: the task itself has another will,—it calls for him to *create values*. The project for philosophical laborers on the noble model of Kant and Hegel is to establish some large class of given values ... It is up to these researchers to make everything that has happened or been valued so far look clear, obvious, comprehensible, and manageable, to abbreviate everything long, even “time” itself, and to *overwhelm* the entire past... *But true philosophers are commanders and legislators*: they say “That is how it *should* be!” they are the ones who first determine the “where to?” and “what for?” of people, which puts at their disposal the preliminary labor of all philosophical laborers, all those who overwhelm the past. True philosophers reach for the future with a creative hand and everything that is and was becomes a means, a tool, a hammer for them. Their “knowing” is *creating*, their creating is a legislating, their will to truth is – *will to power*.—Are there philosophers like this today? Have

there ever been philosophers like this? Won't there *have to be* philosophers like this? . . . (Nietzsche, 2002, pp. 105-106.)

Nietzsche saw the philosopher as a cultural physician and believed a genuine philosopher can mend the ills of a sick culture (Kranak, 2009, p. 33). According to Horstmann (2002), the majority of Nietzsche's works regarding morality and culture address three essential questions: (1) why is it impossible to live without values? Or more aptly, what is the value of values?; (2) why are the values the overwhelming majority of people subscribe to either been bad or become so?; and (3) what is the right perspective on values? (p. xviii).

Nietzsche boldly asserted that all values arise from evaluation: "nothing is valuable 'in itself'." He poked fun at those who thought that "values were inherent in things and all one had to do was grasp them" (Will to Power, 422). For Nietzsche, nothing is naturally good or intrinsically worthy: "Whatever has *value* in our world now does not have value in itself, according to its nature —nature is always valueless, but has been *given* value at some time, as a present —and it was *we* who gave and bestowed it." (Andrew, 1999, p. 63)

In *Daybreak* (1997), Nietzsche avers "to know nothing about trade is noble" (p. 308). Despite both an ignorance and disdain for economics (Copleston, 1964; Andrew, 1995), Nietzsche's perspective on and language of values was exported from economics (Andrew, 1999, p. 66). It follows that Nietzsche believed we should assign an order to values as part of a revaluation. Indeed, he suggested a numerical scale of values, correlative to a price list (Kranak, 2009; Nietzsche, 1968, p. 372).

The attempt should be made to see whether a scientific order of values could be constructed simply on a numerical and mensural scale of force—All other "values" are prejudices, naiveties, misunderstandings. —They are everywhere *reducible* to this numerical and mensural scale of force. The ascent on this scale represents every rise in value; the descent on this scale represents diminution in value. (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 372)

Assigning order to values is based on their facility of expressing the Will to power, not on any metaphysical or utilitarian basis.

This will to power is not only essential to life, but it also is the source of all values. Values don't come from God...or from pleasure (Nietzsche has infinite contempt for John Stuart Mill) or from another "true" world beyond this one or from any of the other places philosophers have argued it comes from. Rather, values are just the expression of will to power. Thus, if we are to have values, we must have and express our will to power. (Delancey, 2016)

Since Will is the nature of life, values find utility based on their level of contribution to expressing our will to power. "Values...are estimates of power...estimation is also directed toward the future" (Andrew, 1995, p. 140). Like Hobbes' philosophic psychology of power and value in a world where "everyone is at war with everyone," Nietzsche's estimation of value is predicated on a contribution to future power for the will (Andrew, 1995). As noted by Heidegger, "values, utterly transformed into calculable items, are the only ideals that still function for machination" (as cited in Andrew, 1995, p. 141). Heidegger believed Nietzschean values are appropriate to scientifically planned, technologically dynamic societies, where values as calculable projections become manageable goals of those in power. Thus, the State can ascribe to values signification based on their usefulness in achieving the goals of power and governance.

Nietzsche did not believe in a dichotomy of good and evil. This is an artifact of the fallacious systems of the past (Kranak, 2009). There is only a relative ranking of values based on their utility to supporting our will to power. Furthermore, as in the marketplace, the more universal a value, the less its worth.

Verily, you know the art of alchemy in reverse, the devaluation of what is most valuable! Sometime you should try a different prescription to avoid reaching the opposite of what you seek, as you have so far: *deny* these good things; withdraw from them the mob's acclaim and their easy currency; make them once again the bidden modesty of solitary souls; say that morality is something *forbidden!* That way you might win over for these things the kind of people who alone matter; I mean the *heroic*. (Nietzsche, 2001, pp. 165-166)

Values are not intrinsically valuable, nor are they unalterable. They are derived from personal estimation and bestowal.

It is we, the thinking-sensing ones, who really and continually make something that is not yet there: the whole perpetually growing world of valuations, colours, weights, perspectives, scales, affirmations, and negations... Whatever has *value* in the present world has it not in itself, according to its nature—nature is always value-less—but has rather been given, granted value, and *we* were the givers and granters! Only we have created the world *that concerns human beings!* (Nietzsche, 2001, p. 171)

Values are inherently and appropriately the product of individuals. But Nietzsche's individualism was not egalitarian or for the masses. His praise of individualism was with exceptional individuals in mind. Dombowsky (2004) criticizes Nietzsche's individualism as "aristocratic liberalism" (p. 120). This is in keeping with his vision of the Overman and his belief that values are to facilitate the will to power, which is, by definition, the domain of the dominant. Our own declaration of values is a necessary ingredient of our self-actualization, and, if we are among the "uncommon," our personal revaluation is antecedent to our transforming those around us.

Let us therefore limit ourselves to the purification of our opinions and value judgments and to the creation of tables of what is good *that are new and all our own*: let us stop brooding over the 'moral value of our actions'! Yes, my friends, it is time to feel nauseous about some people's moral chatter about others. Sitting in moral judgment should offend our taste. Let us leave such chatter and such bad taste to those who have nothing to do but drag the past a few steps further through time and who never live in the present—that is, to the many, the great majority!

We, however, want to become who we are—human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who *create themselves!* (Nietzsche, 2001, p. 189)

“Nietzsche evaluates persons on the basis of a single standard: the degree to which they have obtained what he calls power” (Hunt, 1991, p. 130). Nietzsche (1986) wrote, “every belief in the value and dignity of life rests on false thinking; it is possible only through the fact that empathy with the universal life and suffering of mankind is very feebly developed in the individual” (p. 162).

Thus, we see that values, as developed by Nietzsche, have the following characteristics: they are (1) relativistic, (2) malleable and changeable, (3) individually created, (4) influential to the proportion they are the product of the “uncommon” in society, and (5) ranked on their utility for will to power.

Dissolution of self

As Ockham severed faith from reason, Descartes separated mind from soul and began the inexorable march toward the dissolution of the substantive self. Locke removed human understanding from Descartes’ rational mind and “innate ideas,” and situated it in the empiricism of sense knowledge and experience. In either case, the hylomorphic person has been split in two. With Hobbes and Hume, the empiricism of Locke derived from “first ideas” was deconstructed to the materialistic worldview of the Sophists, where there are no objective truths, including moral ones—nothing real except the material—and where self consists of a series of cause and effect processes driven by self-interest.

Kant endeavored to retain the soul, but marginalized it by rejecting human essence, *telos*, and admitted no law “written in our hearts,” which provides built-in ends to guide our lives. Our autonomy is living in accordance with the categorical imperatives, and our freedom lies in being the creators of our own selves (Hill, 2016). This implies that personhood retains the metaphysical trait of free will and mind controls the body (as proffered by Aristotle and Descartes). But the materialists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were continuing to reconstruct Democritus’ atomist edifice and self was being once again limited to physical states of the brain. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) described the cause and effect aspect of human mind in his *System of Logic*:

The doctrine of Physical Necessity is simply this: that given the motives which are present in an individual mind, and given likewise the character and disposition of the individual, the manner in which he will act may be unerringly inferred; that if we knew the person thoroughly, and knew all the inducements which are acting upon him, we could foretell his conduct with as much certainty as we can predict any physical event. (as cited in Hill, 2016, Chapter 6, note 41)

Mill found the self inexplicable and it remained a “void at the center of his philosophical system” (Gray & Smith, 1991, p. 255).

In the hands of Fichte (1762–1814) and existentialists such as Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), self was the product of existence, and freedom is found in self-creation (Hill, 2016). Another approach was that of Hegel (1770–1831) who posited self was a relational construct, which exists only within webs of social-relational dialogues (Taylor, 1989, p. 34). Nietzsche took a

third approach, which was to obliterate self altogether. In *Will to Power*, Nietzsche (1968) states “the assumption of self is unnecessary” (p. 263).

With the dissolution of self, there is nothing left but Democritus’ atoms. Mill and Huxley, who admit the existence of mental entities such as feelings, desires, and thoughts, place them as occurrences floating above physical brain states. These “epiphenomena... exist in some sense but, crucially, *they play no causal role whatsoever in our behavior* [emphasis in original]... they are the flotsam and jetsam of the non-eliminative materialist’s ontology” (Hill, 2016, Chapter 6, Section: The Triumph of Materialism? para. 6).

But this strikes some materialists as half-hearted. Thus, “eliminative” materialists argue that emotional feelings, thoughts, beliefs, even physical feelings of pain, are not real. For example, Paul and Patricia Churchland, defenders of eliminative materialism, have suggested science and philosophy should be aim to eliminate the language of these non-existent entities.

Paul Churchland confidently informs us that it is always false to say that people sitting around a fire “warm themselves next to [it] and gaze at the flickering flames.” This is mere unscientific mumbo jumbo. The truth is rather that “they absorb some EM energy in the m range emitted by the highly exothermic oxidation reaction, and observe the turbulences in the thermally incandescent river of molecules forced upwards by the denser atmosphere surrounding.” (Feser, 2008, Chapter 6, Section “How to lose your mind,” para. 2)

The dissolved self neither feels pain or passion. There are only “sundry modes of stimulation in our A-delta fibres and/or C-fibres (peripherally), or in our thalamus and/or reticular formation

(centrally)...and ‘exchanges of a lot of oxytocin’” (Feser, 2008, Section “How to lose your mind”).

So we have finally reached the end of our descent. The triumph of materialism is complete. The teleological self has been entirely dismantled and in its place is Democritus’ collection of atoms, free of freedom, devoid of substance, and left to create self through a psychological process of valuing those things that facilitate survival of the animal known as *homo sapiens*.

Chapter 4: Virtues vs. Values

Even those who deplore our current moral condition do so in the very language that exemplifies that condition. The new language is that of value relativism, and it constitutes a change in our view of things moral and political as great as the one that took place when Christianity replaced Greek and Roman paganism.

—Allan Bloom¹⁰

Joining the ranks of religion and politics, morality has quietly become a minefield to be publicly avoided at all costs. Discussion on the matter, let alone debate, is just not politically correct; someone is sure to be offended.

—John Hope Bryant¹¹

Burns (1978) suggested that transformational leadership is, in fact, moral leadership: “Searching always for the moral foundations of leadership, we will consider as truly legitimate only those acts of leaders that serve ultimately in some way to help release human potentials now locked in ungratified needs and crushed expectations” (p. 4). Burns’ statement is teleological. To release human potential is to promote eudemonic outcomes in people. Aristotle believed the teleological reality of human existence was the logical effect of human nature having a substantial form of good, which animates a natural desire to be the best version of ourselves. As we have seen, the philosophy of morals was, for most of its history, grounded in an objective, transcendent Good that obtained authority from universality and a reality above human invention and experience. This Natural Law of goodness informed human psychology, moral philosophy, and the positive laws of society. Consequent to the ascendancy of materialism in twentieth century America, there has been an associated hegemony of values language for moral

¹⁰ (Bloom, 1987)

¹¹ (Bryant, 2010)

discourse, which precludes the idea of a universal moral law. It is a testimony to the continuing power of an innate human notion of goodness and rightness that resistance against the prevailing moral materialism remains within our society. E. O. Wilson (1998) recognized this conflict and wrote his thoughts at the end of the twentieth century:

Centuries of debate on the origin of ethics come down to this: Either ethical principles, such as justice and human rights, are independent of human experience, or they are human inventions. The distinction is more than an exercise for academic philosophers. The choice between these two understandings makes all the difference in the way we view ourselves as a species. It measures the authority of religion, and it determines the conduct of moral reasoning. (p. 53)

Wilson decidedly came down on the side of human invention. Closely associated with the materialistic belief in self-creation of moral principles is the current authority conferred on neuroscience as the fount of understanding of how human beings combine affective and cognitive understandings to arrive at social interpretations. McDermott (2004) writes, “the speed and depth of discovery in the neurosciences promise the unfolding of the first major theoretical innovation in the social sciences in the twenty-first century; the new neurological revolution is upon us” (p. 331). Recapitulating Mill’s and Huxley’s non-eliminative materialism, there is great hope that cognitive neuroscience will deepen our understanding of the epiphenomenal affective thoughts and feelings that determine individual and collective moral behavior and potentialities (Glover, 2011). This attraction to neuro-causation for intuition fuels the materialistic view that we are products of our atoms and our environment. Our moral values will, of necessity, be as uniquely nuanced as our personalities and genetic characteristics.

The Oxymoron of “Universal Values”

Inherent in value pluralism is the internal self-enmity that leads to incommensurate values conflicts in our open society (Kolakowski, 1997; Popper, 2012), settled only through the power of the courts: legal, academic, political or a combination thereof. Thus, we see numerous laws passed by our elected representatives that include implicit moral decisions contrary to the prevailing beliefs of our citizens. Forty years after *Roe v. Wade*, Americans remain very conflicted regarding the constitutional right to end the life of an unborn baby (Leonhardt, 2013). Yet, there have been over 55 million unborn human beings terminated, and there is little room for legislative debate regarding this constitutional law. When openness leads to a paralysis thereof, it is self-destroying. A debate regarding the conflict between the life of a fetus and the choice of the mother is only possible in a society influenced by the post-Enlightenment materialistic view that humans are a distinct animal species in virtue of their ability to reason, reflect, and exercise other cognitive abilities unique to *homo sapiens*. Therefore, killing a fetus does not rise to murder insofar as the fetus is incapable of performing these cognitive abilities. Such a stance is a clear declaration that there is no human soul or spirit, which gives the fetus an identity of human *being*. Once born and developed into a conscious person, the human being, in virtue of a values system, is invested with the immense authority to create his/her own system of the Good through a personal evaluative process.

Writing about Popper (2012) and his advocacy of open societies, Kolakowski (1997) comments, “The open society, Popper notes, needs a system of ethics which encompasses the early Christian

virtues, which in effect challenges the values of success and reward, and which encourages the capacity for self-sacrifice and selflessness” (Chapter 14, para. 4).

Popper invests virtues with a governing authority over values and considers this essential to society. However, in our values-laden discourse, virtues are rarely invoked as governing principles of the Good. Furthermore, there is frequent reference to “shared values,” and “universal values” (Kluckhorn, 1951; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 2012). In addressing universal values, Kluckhorn states the following:

Human life is—and has to be—a moral life precisely because it is a social life, and in the case of the human species cooperation and other necessities of social life are not taken care of automatically by instincts as with the social insects. In common-sense terms, morals are socially agreed upon values relating to conduct. To this degree morals—and all group values—are the products of social interaction as embodied in culture... It is felt that in a very broad and general way the same principles apply to aesthetic and expressive values as to moral and cognitive values. (Kluckhorn, 1951, p. 388)

It seems that our species has been deprived of the benefit afforded social insects, which undoubtedly have a greater probability of finding universal values by instinct than human societies who attempt to universalize the products of social interaction using the same principles that apply to aesthetic and expressive values. The problem of universal values is reflected in this observation by Shalom H. Schwartz (2012), given somewhat ironically in a paper summarizing his work to universalize human values:

When we think of our values, we think of what is important to us in our lives (e.g., security, independence, wisdom, success, kindness, pleasure). Each of us holds numerous values with varying degrees of importance. A particular value may be very important to one person, but unimportant to another. (p. 3)

Schwartz (2012) developed a theory of “Basic Values,” in which he identifies ten distinct shared human value constructs, which “explain the motivational bases of attitude and behavior” (p. 3). Situating values in a psychological framework subjects them to the complexity of human motivation. In essence, this approach begins with observable human behavior and evaluative judgments and arrives at a list of what seem to be universal human motivational preferences. Again, the post-Enlightenment belief in the primacy of human reason (including affect and cognitive aspects) as the ontological source of a standard of the Good is underlying Schwartz’ theory. Inevitably, the only “universality” is in ten domains of preference shared by humankind. The use of the word “value” to describe preference is appropriate in the marketplace of available choices. Within this marketplace of pluralistic values, even these ten domains are admitted by Schwartz (2012) to be rather capricious.

Although the theory discriminates ten values, it postulates that, at a more basic level, values form a continuum of related motivations ... The idea that values form a motivational continuum has a critical implication: Dividing the domain of value items into ten distinct values is an arbitrary convenience. (p. 6)

In a world of contingency, one cannot prove that a particular attitude is the correct one to take. If this suggests relativism, it should be remembered that it too is just one more attitude or point of view, and one without the rich tradition and accumulated wisdom, philosophical reasoning and personal experience of, say, orthodox Christianity or Judaism. Indeed crude relativism, the universal judgement that one cannot make universal judgements, is self-contradictory.

Social pluralism of values results in inevitable collisions of incommensurate estimations of what is good or right. Thus, the moral leader is left to ascertain the Good in an incoherent sea of

personal preferences and estimations of human goods. What is needed is a standard for the Good by which to ascertain ethical rightness. Although Leff (1979) was speaking from the context of his legal profession and field of study, his comment regarding an authoritative norm for the Good is germane to moral leadership as well.

I want to believe—and so do you—in a complete, transcendent, and immanent set of propositions about right and wrong, *findable* rules that authoritatively and unambiguously direct us how to live righteously. I also want to believe—and so do you—in no such thing, but rather that we are wholly free, not only to choose for ourselves what we ought to do, but to decide for ourselves, individually and as a species, what we ought to be. What we want, Heaven help us, is simultaneously to be perfectly ruled and perfectly free, that is, at the same time to discover the right and the good and to create it. (p. 1229)

It is interesting that Leff posited a universal human desire to create the Good and then defines this as individual freedom. His assumptions are relatively recent, spawned by modern and postmodern moral philosophies that reject out of hand any principles of good or right beyond human experience and invention (Wilson, 1998).

Nietzsche ennobled this self-creation of values and individual freedom:

Enough that his life is justified before itself and remains justified—this life which shouts at every one of us: “Be a man and do not follow me—but yourself! Yourself!” *Our* life, too, shall be justified before ourselves! We too shall freely and fearlessly, in innocent selfishness, grow and blossom from ourselves! And as I contemplate such a person, the following sentences still come to mind today as they did before: “That passion is better than Stoicism and hypocrisy; that being honest even in evil is better than losing oneself to the morality of tradition; that the free man can be good as well as evil, but the unfree man is a disgrace to nature and has no share in heavenly or earthly comfort; finally that *everyone who wants to be free must become so through himself*, and that freedom does not fall into anyone’s lap as a wondrous gift.” (Nietzsche & Williams, 2001, p. 98)

Self-creation of goodness or rightness is an axiom of our liberal pluralistic society, which offers the bromide of moral pluralism. The Enlightenment ideals of free rational inquiry and tolerance shape this modern desire and a belief that freedom lies in the artistic production of a moral self-portrait. Values provide a limitless pallet from which to draw the lines of self-ordained goodness.

The concept of value occurs within some economy or system of economies. It is not an inherent property of an object or a subjective projection; it is the product of economic dynamism. For exchange value, or “price,” it is a function of a market economy and value fluctuates with the shifting state of the market. For use value—which is the proper application to moral values (Andrew, 1995; Anscombe, 1958; MacIntyre, 1984)—Barbara H. Smith (1987) suggested the following:

It is a function and effect of that subject’s personal economy: that is, the system—which is also an economic system—constituted by his/her needs, interests, and resources (biological, psychological, material, experiential, and so forth), all of which are continuously shifting both in relation to each other and as they are transformed by the subject’s interactions with his/her environment (physical, social, cultural, and so forth), which, of course, is itself continuously changing. (pp. 1-2)

Robert Solomon (1973) averred that “a value is the property of a person” (p. 165), and Philippa Foot (2002) concurrently asserted a value is “a personal rather than a universal principle” (p. 209). Smith’s reference to a continuously changing and shifting personal economy amplifies the instability of personal values as a basis for identifying a consistent standard for good. Andrew (2010) expressed this problem with values:

“Values,” I shall argue, are the products of relativistic estimation but are wrongly presented as something universal, absolute or objective. Whereas one may stand

or even die for principle, “values” are the stuff of trade-offs, bargaining and negotiation. “Values” adequately express the options of a moral marketplace and the compromises and accommodations necessary to live together, despite “the fact of plurality” or irreconcilable moral and cultural differences. However, values-discourse militates against the search for a common good or goods, against universal principles and against the universal provision of public services. (p. 69)

Notwithstanding this instability of values-based moral systems, it is the lay of the land today.

The axiom of this system is “you have your values, and I have mine.” Thus, when it is necessary for the effectiveness of a social organization to establish and share a set of rules for validating what is good, right, or ethical, there is no one who can claim *a priori* to have the authority to institute the rule set. Furthermore, one’s conception of human well-being—the Good—determines the shape of his/her just society. In a values-based assessment of goodness, “just” societies are chameleons, which reflect whatever environment spawns their shape based on their creators’ personal values. Thus, “justice” is claimed by both the Ku Klux Klan and Black Lives Matter, and who says either of them is wrong, based on a personal-values estimation of the Good? Truth, goodness, and holiness have converses; values do not. One can say a material hedonist lacks social empathy, but one cannot say he/she lacks values.

Nietzsche (1968) said “nothing is valuable in itself” (Book Two, Section II., item 260 para. 4), and mocked those who believed “values were inherent in things and all one had to do was grasp them!” (Book Two, Section III., item 422 para. 1).

Who creates the goal that stands above mankind and above the individual? Formerly one employed morality for preservation: but nobody wants to preserve any longer, there is nothing to preserve. Therefore there is an experimental morality: to give oneself a goal. (Nietzsche, 1968, Book Two, Section II., item 260 para. 7)

Nietzsche's advocacy for individual creation of morality condemns the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment attempts to discredit Aristotelian teleology and replace it with a moral system situated in rationalism or empiricism. It also is a condemnation of Aristotelian and Thomist systems that are based on an objective Good that supplies the resources for human flourishing within the context of community, whether it be the family, tribe, *polis*, Church, or the Stoic's brotherhood of humankind. In the place of all moral systems contingent on external standards of goodness, Nietzsche offers the modern individualistic morality exemplified by his *Übermensch*, the Great Man, "the man who transcends, finds his good nowhere in the social world to date, but only in that in himself which dictates his own new law and his own new table of the virtues (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 257)." Nietzsche (1968) wrote the following in *The Will to Power*:

A great man—a man whom nature has constructed and invented in the grand style—what is he? First: there is a long logic in all of his activity, hard to survey because of its length, and consequently misleading; he has the ability to extend his will across great stretches of his life and to despise and reject everything petty about him, including even the fairest, "divinest" things in the world. Secondly: he is colder, harder, less hesitating, and without fear of "opinion"; he lacks the virtues that accompany respect and "respectability," and altogether everything that is part of the "virtue of the herd." If he cannot lead, he goes alone; then it can happen that he may snarl at some things he meets on his way. Third: he wants no "sympathetic" heart, but servants, tools; in his intercourse with men he is always intent on making something out of them. He knows he is incommunicable: he finds it tasteless to be familiar; and when one thinks he is, he usually is not. When not speaking to himself, he wears a mask. He rather lies than tells the truth: it requires more spirit and will. There is a solitude within him that is inaccessible to praise or blame, his own justice that is beyond appeal. (Book 4, section 5, item 962)

The modern individualist is unable to enter into relationships mediated by shared virtues or standards of good. Each one must go in his or her own authority, and relationships are merely a

context in which that authority is exercised. Values are the lexicon of individualism and moral solipsism.

Creating our own morality, claiming the right to our own values, celebrating the diversity of cultural norms for morality, and elevating tolerance as the one communal virtue—these are all facets of our moral pluralistic society. In a world of contingency, one cannot prove that a particular attitude is the correct one to take. If this suggests crude relativism, it should be remembered that the universal judgement that one cannot make universal judgements, is self-contradictory. As MacIntyre (1984) points out, moral pluralism is impossible without “an ordered dialogue of intersecting viewpoints” (p. 10). He explains that on the one hand, we use moral language that originally had its home within larger truth systems, but we have deprived this language of its context, rendering individual and collective coherence regarding moral goodness impossible. I propose a return to the “larger truth system” animated by the Natural Law written in our hearts and activated through the virtues. As it turns out, the modern moral Maginot Line lies between liberal individualism and the Aristotelian/Thomist teleological tradition of human flourishing, occurring within a human community, characterized by a common intuition of universal goodness.

A universal goodness that obtains authority from a divine source is binding because the pronouncements of an infinitely good God with the power to order the universe are always true and effectual. What God declares good is good, and God’s will is binding by definition. Under what conditions can the will of a mortal moral lawgiver be dispositive? *There are none.*

No person, no combination of people, no document however hallowed by time, no process, no premise, nothing is equivalent to an actual God in this central function as the unexamined examiner of good and evil. The so-called death of God turns out not to have been just *His* funeral; it also seems to have effected the total elimination of any coherent, or even more-than-momentarily convincing, ethical or legal system dependent upon finally authoritative extrasystemic premises. (Leff, 1979, p. 1232)

Can one ground a moral system on the basis that each individual is his/her own final authority?

In essence, everything that is true of God's evaluation must be bestowed on self-evaluations.

“Each individual's normative statements are, for him, performative utterances: what is said to be bad or good, wrong or right, is just that for each person, solely by reason of its having been uttered” (Leff, 1979, p. 1235). In a values-based system, with each individual having equal authority, the attribute formerly ascribed to God that becomes most important is *power*. Incommensurate values that carry equal moral authority can only be adjudicated via an evaluation as to which carries greater power. And this power does not derive from Mill's utilitarianism, because how does one assess the greater good in a system of arbitrary, personal valuations of goodness? Leff's comment in view of this arbitrary evaluation of the Good is apropos of the futility of finding a replacement for a transcendent, “unexamined examiner.”

All I can say is this: it looks as if we are all we have. Given what we know about ourselves and each other, this is an extraordinarily unappetizing prospect; looking around the world, it appears that if all men are brothers, the ruling model is Cain and Abel. Neither reason, nor love, nor even terror, seems to have worked to make us “good,” and worse than that, there is no reason why anything should. Only if ethics were something unspeakable by us, could law be unnatural, and therefore unchallengeable. As things now stand, everything is up for grabs.

Nevertheless: Napping babies is bad.

Starving the poor is wicked.

Buying and selling each other is depraved.

Those who stood up to and died resisting Hitler, Stalin, Amin, and Pol Pot—and General Custer too—have earned salvation.

Those who acquiesced deserve to be damned.

There is in the world such a thing as evil.

[All together now:] Sez who?

God help us. (Leff, 1979, p. 1249)

Ultimately, unless there is an assertion of final, uncontradictable goodness or rightness, there is no unchallengeable evaluative system of morals. If each individual is equally authoritative as an evaluator, based on equal dignity, there will be conflict, which is unsolvable within an individual evaluator system. This fatal weakness in the Nietzschean individualist's will to power and self-creation of moral values would be solved "if, in some mysterious way, equal dignity could be joined to identical evaluation; if everyone believed the same thing were right, there would be no conflict" (Leff, 1979, p. 1241).

I have a suggestion: embrace the universal human intuition of good, as demonstrated in the ubiquitous "golden rule." Invest this human intuition with an authority derived from its source being a transcendent Good, which inheres within the human soul and is a component of what distinguishes human *kind* from every other species. There is no lack of empirical evidence for universal human intuitions of the Good (Dahlsgaard et al., 2005; Lanctot & Irving, 2010; Riggio et al., 2010). We now turn not only to substantiate the existence of a single evaluative system, but also to consider how it solves the conundrum of post-Enlightenment, postmodern values-based moral systems.

Universal Human Spheres of Experience and the Virtues

As we have seen, the ancient philosophers, such as Aristotle, shared agreement regarding the “pagan” virtues of justice, courage, prudence, and temperance. Aristotle is particularly appealing in the context of leadership since he offers concreteness in the form of an ethical theory, and “theoretical power with sensitivity to the actual circumstances of human life and choice in all their multiplicity, variety, and mutability” (Nussbaum, 1988, pp. 384-385). But even those who invoke an Aristotelian approach to moral standards via virtues cite local, cultural criteria for ethical goodness and reject the notion of a single norm for human flourishing (Foot, 2002; Frankena, 1973; MacIntyre, 1984; Nussbaum, 1988). While not necessarily endorsing a relativist view of virtue ethics, they deny transcultural norms that could be used to evaluate local beliefs regarding the constituents of a good life. This is consistent with the social construction of values suggested by Berger and Luckmann (2011): “An awareness of the social foundations of values and world views can be found in antiquity. At least as far back as the Enlightenment this awareness crystallized into a major theme of modern Western thought” (p. 5).

This post-Enlightenment position is peculiar where Aristotle is concerned. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, his exposition of an ethical system is clearly based on virtues and offers a single, objective account of *eudaimonia*, which is to say human flourishing. In other works, such as *Politics* (1999b), he applies virtues as normative principles for assessing behavior.

On such principles children and persons of every age which require education should be trained. Whereas even the Hellenes of the present day who are reputed to be best governed, and the legislators who gave them their constitutions, do not appear to have framed their governments with a regard to the best end, or to have given them laws and education with a view to all the virtues, but in a vulgar spirit

have fallen back on those which promised to be more useful and profitable. (pp. 173-174)

The lack of governmental application of principles in the framework of the virtues was notable in the fifth century BCE as it is in the twenty-first century CE. Nonetheless, Aristotle believed that a single, objective human Good and an ethical theory based on the virtues are mutually supportive (Nussbaum, 1988).

Aristotle situated virtues in the context of universal human experience. Table 4 provides a list (not necessary exhaustive) from *Nichomachean Ethics* (1999a) of the spheres of universal human experience that require a certain virtue to choose appropriate attitudes, behaviors and actions from the plurality of possible choices.

Aristotle's contention was that wherever one lives, whatever may be the individual, political, and cultural contexts, the spheres of experience for human beings are universal and shared. In situations requiring behavioral and attitudinal decisions within these spheres, that which promotes human flourishing is the application of virtues. A virtue is not a feeling or a capacity, rather it is a disposition (*hexis*) to particular acts and feelings in the circumstances of human spheres of experience (Aristotle, 1999a, pp. 225-228).

But for actions in accord with the virtues to be done temperately or justly it does not suffice that they themselves have the right qualities. Rather, the agent must also be in the right state when he does them. First, he must know that he is doing virtuous actions; second, he must decide on them, and decide on them for themselves; and, third, he must also do them from a firm and unchanging state. (Aristotle, 1999a, p. 51)

Table 4: Universal Human Spheres of Experience

Sphere	Virtue
Fear of important damages, especially death	Courage
Bodily appetites and their pleasures	Temperance
Distribution of limited resources	Justice
Management of one's personal property	Generosity
Management of personal property, where hospitality is concerned	Expansive hospitality
Attitudes and actions with respect to one's own worth	Greatness of soul
Attitude to slights and damages	Mildness of temper
Truthfulness of speech	Truthfulness
Social association during playful situations	Graciousness (contrasted with coarseness and insensitivity)
General social association	Friendliness (contrasted with irritability and grumpiness)
Attitude to the Good or ill fortune of others	Proper judgment (contrasted with enviousness or spitefulness)
Intellectual life	Perceptiveness, knowledge
Planning of one's own life and conduct	Practical wisdom

Source: Adapted from Nussbaum (1988)

Thus, virtues have their source in an unchanging state of character that vivify dispositions toward virtuous decisions and actions. But the choice to decide and act is based on an understanding of the particular sphere of human experience that solicits the choice and, consequently, the choice of virtue most contributory to the teleological good—in other words, the best ends.

In the Aristotelian approach, it is obviously of the first importance to distinguish two stages of inquiry: the initial demarcation of the sphere of choice, of the “grounding experiences” that fix the reference of the virtue term; and the ensuing more concrete inquiry into what appropriate choice, in that sphere, *is*. (Nussbaum, 1988, p. 689)

By acknowledging universal human spheres of experience that demand moral decisions and actions, and by situating choice in the context of a limited set of virtues, the Aristotelian

approach offers a coherent, systematic praxis of ascertaining and operationalizing moral goodness. The guiding principle of this moral system is *eudaimonia*, the ultimate state of human good:

“[F]or it’s for the sake of [*eudaimonia*] that we all do everything else, and we suppose that the principle and cause of goods is something honorable and divine” (NE I. 12 1102a2– 4). Here *eudaimonia* is both the goal of all other activity and the source of the goodness of all human goods. (Lear, 2009, Chp.2, note 15)

Aristotle thinks that to understand the natural end, the *telos*, of something, you must understand its form (Aristotle, 2009, Book II, Pt. 2). Indeed, there are numerous occasions where Aristotle draws equivalency between form and *telos* (2009, Book II, Pt. 2; Pt. 7; Pt. 8; Pt. 9). The *telos* is a normative standard for the activities undertaken for its sake.

An end is the source of value for the process leading to it. From this it follows that since there is such a thing as the good, it too will be an end of a special variety. It will be the end at which all actions...aim. From this point of view, such a good would most of all be an end. (Lear, 2009, Chapter. 2, Pt. 3, para. 1)

In an Aristotelian, teleological system, the chosen activities, attitudes, and behaviors are good in themselves if they facilitate the ultimate object of pursuit, the *telos*, which is *eudaimonia*. The end lends its value to the process leading to it; if the end is good, a transitive dependency axiomatically invests good in the things that achieve it. Virtues are “goods in themselves” because they facilitate human flourishing.

Virtues are not merely physical or cognitive choices. They are activities of the soul.

It is clear that the virtue we must examine is human virtue, since we are also seeking the human good and human happiness. By human virtue we mean virtue

of the soul, not of the body, since we also say that happiness is an activity of the soul. (Aristotle, 1999a, p. 45)

Aristotelian ethics is grounded in the notion that the virtuous life is one in which the soul is aligned with the Good and if one lives such a life to the end, this human *telos* would be called a “good life” (Kamtekar, 2004). The form of Good is metaphysically prior to a person’s character development. Actively participating in this virtue when, via our souls, we perceive this transcendent, divine Good, is the genesis of human good, “the activity of the soul”; it is the essence of humanity (Menn, 1992).

Summarizing an Aristotelian, teleological moral and ethical system: The form of Good is extended to a human soul with a Natural Law that provides an intuition of goodness in various human spheres. Virtues are the practices that enact righteousness and are limited—as opposed to values—by their contribution to innate human ends. They are good in themselves because they are the antecedent choices and habits that comprise the processes culminating in *eudaimonia*, which is the inherent aim and *telos* of human beings. In contrast, a Nietzschean-based, post-Enlightenment moral system begins with an individual’s evaluative declarations regarding what is good. Enacting these values in the context of moral pluralism requires making choices of attitude, actions, and behaviors that will facilitate the assertion of personal preference in various human spheres of experience. The aim of this system is actualizing those values one has self-created, thereby affirming their validity.

Can a business or other organization be organized around a teleological moral system? Can a group of people brought together for the purpose of providing goods or services be defined and characterized by a eudemonic culture consisting of norms and narratives that advance human flourishing, while supporting and optimizing organizational objectives, routines, and outputs? I suggest the answer to these questions is “yes,” with the proviso that organizational leadership is characterized by a virtues-based approach. It is to this subject we now turn.

Chapter 5: Virtue-based Leadership

The Good once defined, the rest of ethics follows: we ought to act in the way we believe most likely to create as much good as possible.

—Bertrand Russell¹²

Kanungo (2001), Mendonca (2001), and Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) have suggested that in an organizational context, teleological ethics are grounded in a theory of utilitarianism and are strongly associated with transactional leadership. This connotation of “teleological” is an explanation of morality viewed from the perspective of organizational purposes served. However, the Aristotelian use of *telos* is not about organizational utility, it is about the pattern of human success:

According to Aristotle’s technical understanding of a *telos* as presented in the *Physics*, an end is a normative standard for the activity undertaken for its sake. The end determines what counts as success in the activity. For this reason, it is closely associated with the nature of that thing whose end it is. As Aristotle says, “What a thing is, and what it is for, are one and the same” (*Phys. II. 7198a25–26*). Furthermore, the end lends its value to the process leading to it; insofar as the end is good, the things leading to it are good. (Lear, 2009, Chap. 2, Sec. 3)

I propose the more appropriate (and rich) definition of “teleological” aligns with Aristotle’s concept of *eudaimonia*, and that a teleological approach to leadership is viewed from the perspective of serving the purposes of human flourishing.

Furthermore, operating within a teleological schema means a leader’s motives, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors should be situated in a virtues framework that informs the processes

¹² (Russell, 1905)

leading to *eudaimonia*. In this chapter, a framework of virtues supportive of teleological leadership will be proffered and discussed.

Metaphysics and Common Sense

As we have seen, the ontological basis for any theory regarding human morality must be explicated in order to understand the full implications of the proposition. It is evident that many in the field of leadership who espouse deontological, utilitarian, or post-modern theories in which values are offered as objective moral entities do not understand their ontological roots (Benson, 2008). As discussed, the Maginot Line between determinist materialism and metaphysical free will has been in place for three millennia. And yet, E.O. Wilson (1998) asserted it remains the point of struggle within human societies:

The choice between transcendentalism and empiricism will be the coming century's version of the struggle for men's souls. Moral reasoning will either remain centered in idioms of theology and philosophy, where it is now, or shift toward science-based material analysis. Where it settles will depend on which world view is proved correct, or at least which is more widely *perceived* to be correct. (p. 54)

Perhaps the reason a 3,000-year debate continues to be contemporary is that it lies at the crux of ontological truth intuitive in sentient human beings. From the time of ancient philosophers, laws of nature have been derived by observing and measuring consistent cause and effect relationships that explain what we see in the realm of nature. The laws of gravity are derived from observing falling bodies. The more repetition of a given event, the more certain will be the assignment of cause and effect. But what of non-repeating events? The advances of the physical and biological sciences have crystallized the fundamental questions regarding existence into two one-time events: the big-bang creation of the universe and the origin of life from non-living matter.

Interestingly, scientists seem quite willing to apply the logic of repetitive observation in order to speculate on the causes of the two fundamental one-time events characterized in the past seven decades (Geisler, 2004). At the SetiCon conference in 2012, astrophysicist Alex Filippenko of the University of California, Berkeley, gave the following explanation of the one-time event of the origin of our universe:

The Big Bang could've occurred as a result of just the laws of physics being there. In other words, if in this room you could twist time and space the right way, you would create a new universe. With the laws of physics, you can get universes. ...The 'divine spark' was whatever produced the laws of physics and I don't know what produced that divine spark. So let's just leave it at the laws of physics. (as cited in Wall, 2012)

In order to remove the ancient problem of infinite regression and, at the same time, avoid overtly professing an Uncaused Cause or Unmoved Mover, Filippenko suggested we begin with what he infers as ontologically real: the laws of physics (Wall, 2012). It is rather stunning that this is offered as a serious rebuttal of invoking God as a necessary cause of the Big Bang. Similarly, the recipients of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Physics, John Mather of NASA and George Smoot of the University of California, Berkeley, suggested that prior to the Big Bang, quantum fluctuations in non-existing space were possible, based on some set of laws predating the universe (Schroeder, 2009, p. 17). Thus, the scientific explanation for the origin of the universe invokes a *timeless, present antecedent* prior to the quantum fluctuations that caused the Big Bang. All of this sounds vaguely familiar, albeit with a different lexicon.

Albert Einstein, when met with the view of the physical universe he had so brilliantly developed, was led to contemplate the ultimate cause of all that he understood regarding the laws of nature:

Try and penetrate with our limited means the secrets of nature and you will find that, behind all the discernible concatenations, there remains something subtle, intangible and inexplicable. Veneration for this force beyond anything that we can comprehend is my religion. To that extent I am, in point of fact, religious...I want to know how God created this world. I am not interested in this or that phenomenon, in the spectrum of this or that element. *I want to know his thoughts.* The rest are details [emphasis added]. (Einstein, 2009)

Einstein's famous equation $E=mc^2$ expresses his finding that all matter is energy condensed into a solid form, and every particle of matter is, therefore, an artifact of the moment and light of creation. This and other scientific discoveries in the twentieth century led Sir James Jeans (1930) to posit that Descartes' belief in a mechanical universe of cause and effect, that marked the modern era, is being questioned:

There is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading toward a non-mechanical reality. *The universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine* [emphasis added]. (as cited in Schroeder, 2009, p. 21)

Again, there is a familiar ring to this description of the scientific view of reality. Einstein's and Jean's references to *thought* evokes the *nous* of Plato and the *logos* of Cicero. What I am suggesting here is that the scientific findings on which materialists base their ontology are suggestive to Einstein, Jeans, and others of a metaphysical dimension of the universe that compels a description of "thought," which is an allusion to a purposeful Mind.

The basic question of whether science and religion are mutually exclusive realms reduces to whether there is a place for the metaphysical to be brought within the structure of what until recently was a purely materialist science. The discovery of the big-bang creation of time-space and energy, the metamorphosis of that energy of the creation into particles, and the transformation of those particles into sentient beings, alive with feelings of joy, the transcendental ecstasy of love, and self-awareness, all cry out for an explanation that seems to find its root in something other than the material. The physical particles from which living

bodies are constructed, the atoms and molecules, show not a hint of sentience. How can we explain that a bundle of “inert” energy—simplistically stated, superpowerful rays of light—became alive, other than to assume some nonphysical, that is, some metaphysical, input was involved? (Schroeder, 2009, p. 20)

That there is a metaphysical dimension to reality is fundamental to Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas. Their moral theories were grounded in the existence of a transcendent source of the universe, who is not only the Unmoved Mover, but also the form and originator of the Good. The human capacity for moral behavior—the Law of Nature written in our hearts—as well as the human *habitus* that equips us to develop habits of virtuous thoughts, attitudes, predispositions, and behaviors are all reliant upon the antecedent form of the Good. As much as a materialist might protest the need for a transcendent standard of goodness to support a coherent system of morality, this is the finding of 2,000 years of pre-Enlightenment philosophers as well as post-modern geneticists.

History repeatedly brings an unwelcome message that we often strive to ignore: the unfettered use of human logic does not lead to a just and moral society, the claims of philosophers Baruch Spinoza and E. O. Wilson notwithstanding. The biological basis of our moral judgments teaches us that the human genome is programmed for pleasure and survival, not for morality. (Schroeder, 2009, p. 9)

As shown in the above references, the metaphysical realism of Plato, and especially of Aristotle and Aquinas, receives supporting evidence from current cosmological, physical, and biological sciences. But perhaps as important and a likely more persuasive assertion regarding our reality including a metaphysical soul, self, and mind, is the evidence of ordinary life. As we have seen, materialism inevitably results in behavioral determinism, which is to deny that thoughts and desires have any causal impact on our behavior. This is referred to in modern philosophy as “the

causal closure of the physical domain” (Hill, 2016, Chapter 7, Section: Broken Machines para. 7). In post-modern materialism, free will is an illusion. “Our wills are simply not of our own making. Thoughts and intentions emerge from background causes of which we are unaware and over which we exert no conscious control. We do not have the freedom we think we have” (Harris, 2012, p. 5). Harris’ example of “the causal closure of the physical domain” means consciousness or human awareness are illusory or, at best, epiphenomenon that have no causal role in what we do. If mind exists at all as some sort of aggregation of brain processes that provide memories of the past and relational cognitive impulses from social inputs, it is superfluous in terms of causation. According to Harris and other materialists, human works, such as composing music, building roads, or educating youth, would occur regardless of human consciousness. Even simple events, such as feeling hungry or wanting a hug from a loved one, are mere side effects of physical brain processes. I am going to warrant that it is highly probable that anyone who aspires to be a good leader, good parent, or good friend, lives life as if they are not merely an outcome of physical processes and environmental inputs. On the contrary, they believe they have consciousness and free will to choose to be good, or not. My proposal to situate leadership in a teleological framework is ontologically grounded in metaphysical realism characteristic of pre-Enlightenment philosophies. But it is also compelled by common sense:

The fact that Thomism is the philosophy of common sense is itself a matter of common sense. Yet it wants a word of explanation... Since the modern world began in the sixteenth century, nobody’s system of philosophy has really corresponded to everybody’s sense of reality; to what if left to themselves, common men would call common sense. (Chesterton, 1933, pp. 171-172)

Thomism is, as we have seen, Aristotelian moral philosophy synthesized with a Roman Catholic Christian worldview. As such, it predicates a virtue-based leadership theory with a teleological paradigm. The Aristotelian component of a leadership model aimed at organizations, including those that are for profit, would include his ethical system regarding economics:

For Aristotle, the individual human action of using wealth is what constitutes the economic dimension. The purpose of economic action is to use things that are necessary for life (i.e., survival) and for the Good Life (i.e., flourishing). The Good Life is the moral life of virtue through which human beings attain happiness. (Younkins, 2005)

Aristotelian virtue theory posits that from an ontological view, the operation of the economic dimension of reality is inextricably related to the moral sphere. The activities that occur in an economic context are integrated in real action with other realms relating to the human person. These domains mutually influence one another in a dynamic manner within the social context of an organization (Younkins, 2005). The individual leader, therefore, influences the ethical and moral culture of an organization through his/her personal moral role and habits, which are integrated into real action and leadership. I believe virtues within a teleological ontology provide a solid and common sense framework for the role and habits of leaders who aim to promote human flourishing in an organizational context. Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, and May (2004) defined authentic leaders as the following:

Those individuals who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspective, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and high on moral character. (pp. 802-804)

Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) have defined authentic transformational and charismatic leaders on the basis of their ethical character and their adherence to deontological and utilitarian ethical “agendas.” They have suggested the following as the three pillars of ethical leadership:

(1) the moral character of the leader; (2) the ethical legitimacy of the values embedded in the leader’s vision, articulation, and program...; and (3) the morality of the processes of social ethical choice and action that leaders and followers engage in and actively pursue. (p. 182)

Others have emphasized character as well as integrity, ethical awareness, an orientation in favor of collective as opposed to self-serving interests, civility, and accountability (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Gini, 1997; Gottlieb & Sanzgiri, 1996). Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) have cited comparable characteristics of ethical leadership in Chinese societies and have noted that these ethical systems are rooted in the Confucian philosophy (p. 2). However, they have noted that few studies have been attempted to develop an ethical leadership system that would cross cultures, and they have attributed this to cultural differences regarding such concepts as integrity (Audi & Murphy, 2006). As developed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, the virtues identified during the Axial period in Greece were similarly noted in the philosophy of Confucius, Buddha, and the Hindu religions of India. Virtues are, by their nature, cross-cultural. They are the character dimensions that align with the universal Law of Nature.

A belief in cultural based ethics is a post-Enlightenment notion grounded in the belief that virtue is situated in a character that is primarily psychological and subject to social and biological environmental factors (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). I suggest virtues are the product of the human soul and mind, which, through conscience, are naturally tuned to the Good via the Law of

Nature. In applying and practicing the virtues, there is certainly psychological and character impact, as suggested by both Aristotle and Aquinas. The ground on which they stand is, however, not merely psychological. They are universally recognized qualities of goodness in human action, attitude, and habit, which is to say, *character*, and find their home in the heart (Bellah, 1985). The power to influence people through virtue is formidable. As Seligman (2002) states in his eponymous book on Authentic Happiness theory, this is true not only of people who are living happy lives, but perhaps especially true for those in need.

People who are impoverished, depressed, or suicidal care about much more than just the relief of their suffering. These persons care—sometimes desperately—about virtue, about purpose, about integrity, and about meaning. Experiences that induce positive emotion cause negative emotion to dissipate rapidly. The strengths and virtues, as we will see, function to buffer against misfortune and against the psychological disorders, and they may be the key to building resilience. The best therapists do not merely heal damage; they help people identify and build their strengths and their virtues. (Seligman, 2002, Preface, para. 10)

In 2011, Seligman altered his theory from Authentic Happiness to Well-being Theory, as explicated in his book *Flourish*. In Authentic Happiness theory, life satisfaction is the single, gold standard that operationalizes happiness (Seligman, 2002, p. 13). Well-being Theory has five measurable elements: positive emotion, engagement, meaning, accomplishment, and positive relationships (Seligman, 2011, pp. 15-20). What is evident is the subjective nature of these elements. As Seligman (2011) stated, “the task of positive psychology is to describe, rather than prescribe, what people actually do to get well-being” (p. 19), and the five elements are descriptive of human flourishing. I suggest that a *prescriptive* theory of leadership that promotes flourishing is teleological and virtues-based, using the formerly described virtues of justice,

courage, wisdom, temperance, faith, hope, and love. As opposed to subjective elements, these are objectively good in themselves, as proffered by moral scholars from all major cultures, religions, and philosophies for 2,000 years.

To claim “objective goodness” is to dive headfirst against the rushing current of post-modern thought:

Whether we focus on such cherished subjects in philosophy as rationality, truth, knowledge, reality, or norms, we seem to be confronted with incommensurable paradigms, theories, conceptual schemes, or forms of life. We have been told that it is an illusion and a deep self-deception to think that there is some overarching framework, some neutral descriptive language, some permanent standards of rationality to which we can appeal in order to understand and critically evaluate the competing claims that are made, and that we are limited to our historical context and to our own social practices. (Bernstein, 1983, p. 3)

I believe two realities allow us to contemporarily apply principles from moral philosophy that are thousands of years old and access the “overarching framework” and “permanent standards of rationality” that inhere to Thomist teleological systems grounded in Natural Law. These two realities are hermeneutics and the transcendent nature of the Good. Regarding the former, Bernstein (1983) offered this encouragement:

Temporal distance is not something that must be overcome...In fact the important thing is to recognise the distance in time as a positive and productive possibility of understanding. It is not a yawning abyss, but is filled with the continuity of custom and tradition, in the light of which all that is handed down presents itself to us. (p. 140)

Our hermeneutical task is to find the language and experience that enable us to understand and apply ancient moral theories that have been handed down to us. I believe the virtues provide this

lexicon and human nature the experience, and together they represent the continuity referenced by Bernstein.

This brings us to the second reality: transcendence. The Law of Nature has its source in the divine *Thought*, as referenced by Jeans (1930). This is the *Nous* of Plato and Aristotle (Menn, 1992). Our hermeneutical capacity is facilitated by a shared human nature, a shared essence in the soul of each person that may not be able to articulate a description of goodness, let alone a philosophy thereof, but we know it when we see it. And thereby we are drawn to the nobility of human moral excellence and innately aspire to make it our own.

The Virtues: Heart Chords Tuned to the Divine Law of Nature

My thesis posits a *prescriptive* theory of leadership that promotes flourishing. It must be teleological, which is to say the “why” behind its application is the promotion of human flourishing in the leader and those he/she influences. It must be virtues-based, using the formerly described virtues of justice, courage, wisdom, temperance, faith, hope, and love. The first four in this list are the cardinal virtues, also known as the “pagan virtues,” owing to their being independent of a religious relationship with God. They are common to humankind, regardless of religious affiliation or belief. As previously shown, empirical evidence of their existence across time and culture has been presented by a number of scholars (Bennett, 1993; Christians & Traber, 1997; Dahlsgaard et al. 2005; Hick, 1992; Kane, 1994; Kinnear et al., 2000; Lewis, 1952;).

It is fundamental to my thesis that virtues are not merely psychological and behavioral traits. Rather, they are constructs with names given to fundamental precepts in the Law of Nature, which provides in the heart of human beings an innate intuition of the Good. As we have seen, the Law of Nature has a deep and persistent history within moral philosophy from the Axial period through the Renaissance. The force of this Law is explicit in the following biblical passage:

For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified. When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. They show that what the law requires is written in their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness. (Romans 2:13-15, New Revised Standard Version)

It is striking that the Gentiles (i. e., anyone who is not of the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) have a law "written in their hearts" that is given equivalence to the law of Moses regarding righteous works. For the Jew, the Law was given force in virtue of its coming from God, the Lawgiver. In this biblical reference, this Lawgiver is stating that the non-Jew, who is not the beneficiary of His Law given to Israel, is nonetheless the recipient of a Law written in his/her heart having equal force regarding good and righteousness.

This equivalence between the Decalogue and the Law of Nature is further explicated by Philo as he synthesizes Moses' writings with those of Plato. Philo (25 BCE–50 CE) was raised in a wealthy and politically powerful family in Alexandria, Egypt. His upbringing included the gymnasium and schools of Hellenic pedagogy as well as education and grounding in the traditions of Judaism. He is described by the Jewish historian Josephus as "a man eminent on all

accounts...and one not unskillful in philosophy” (Josephus, 1987, p. 494). Philo was convinced Moses “had attained the very summit of philosophy” (Philo, 1981, p. 9), and as a devoted student of Plato, Philo offered an isomorphic analysis of Jewish ideals and classical Greek philosophy. His three points of connection, according to Terence Donaldson (2007), are (1) attainment of virtue in which Philo argued the special and general laws of Israel can be subsumed under “the virtues of universal value” (Philo, 1981, p. 132); (2) the laws of Moses are in keeping with the Greek constitution (*politeia*), which governed the *polis*, in that they are a “blueprint for a social order that is the best expression of the universal *politeia* that philosophers had long sought to identify and describe” (Donaldson, 2007, p. 292); and (3) a vision of the First Cause and Creator. “For what the disciples of the most excellent [Greek] philosophy gain from its teaching, the Jews gain from their laws, that is to know the highest, the most ancient Cause of all things” (Donaldson, 2007, p. 293).

These points of connection—universal virtues, governing principles for a social order, and acknowledgement of a First Cause—are consistent with the attributes of the Law of Nature espoused for 2,000 years prior to the Enlightenment. The virtues are obtained from the Lawgiver. Not only does this make them transcendent in origin, this situates them within the essential form of the human self. More than psychological traits, the virtues are the language of the soul, or, as I would describe them, they are universal human heart chords tuned to fundamental frequencies of the Good. To live in such a manner that your attitudes, actions, and motives resonate with your heart chords tuned to the virtues, is to live the good life.

My framework adds to the cardinal virtues the three “theological” virtues of Aquinas.

We can arrive at partial happiness through our own facilities via the cardinal virtues, but to achieve *eudaimonia*, I agree we need to assimilate faith, hope, and love. Goodness in life requires virtues that lie beyond our own habitual abilities. These are the “infused virtues” of faith, hope, and love mentioned in ST I-II Q62 and listed by Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthian church (I Corinthians 13:13, English Standard Version). These infused virtues allow us to align and order our reason and will to God and to share in His form of divinity.

A certain nature may be ascribed to a certain thing in two ways. First, essentially: and thus these theological virtues surpass the nature of man. Secondly, by participation, as kindled wood partakes of the nature of fire: and thus, after a fashion, man becomes a partaker of the Divine Nature, as stated above: so that these virtues are proportionate to man in respect of the Nature of which he is made a partaker. (ST I-II. Q62)

However, I suggest these be defined in in such a way they retain their “divine nature,” but not exclusively within a Christian framework. I believe faith, hope, and love are homologous with the cardinal virtues. This is supported by Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) and Peterson and Seligman (2004), all of whom have suggested that “Aquinas enumerated what we believe are the six core virtues: He presents the four cardinal virtues by name, invokes transcendence with the virtues of faith and hope, and humanity with the virtue of charity” (p. 47).

In their schema, the virtue of transcendence contains the strengths of appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, humor, and spirituality, with hope and spirituality being “allied, given the strong historical link between them” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 518). The strength of spirituality includes faith, which is “having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the

universe and one's place within it...that shapes their conduct and... are linked to an interest in moral values and the pursuit of goodness" (p. 533). Faith is the virtue whereby we, using both our intellect and will, assent to supernaturally revealed truthful principles. Because the teleological nature of the will, it is naturally drawn to God's goodness and, therefore, will command the intellect to reach for these transcendent truths (Stump, 1991, p. 188). A leader who assimilates such truths will develop "coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning" of a human being and will enact this virtue of faith (Stump, 1991, p. 188). Leaders with faith do not personally assign purpose and meaning; rather, they acknowledge an ultimate Cause behind the cosmos and the existence of a divine Thought, the *nous*, which through the *Logos*, has infused discoverable purpose in the universe. Such a leader then extends this purpose to include themselves and those they serve in leadership.

Luthans and Avolio observed "the force multiplier throughout history has often been attributed to the leader's ability to generate hope" (as cited in Helland & Winston, 2005, p. 42). Snyder, Irving, and Anderson (1991) described hope as "an iterative process between an efficacy expectancy... and an outcome expectancy" (p. 289). The former is based on a belief in personal agency and the latter is associated with a cognitive conviction in the existence of one or more pathways to the object of hope. Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva (1997) have posited four qualities of hope: "It is, (a) born in relationship, (b) inspired by the conviction the future is open and can be influenced, (c) sustained by dialogue about high human ideals, and (d) generative of positive action" (p.9). The virtue of hope would extend agency and pathway to others on the basis of ontological meaning and purpose, which supports a teleological view of human beings

as disposed toward a eudemonic future, influenced by the Good and open to high human ideals and positive action.

A leader vitalized by the virtues of faith and hope will influence others to aspire for goodness, based on a coherent belief that we live within a cosmos that bears a higher meaning and purpose. But the virtue that energizes this faith is love as expressed in the biblical passage, “by faith we wait in hope...but our faith is energized by love” (Galatians 5:5-6; English Standard Version).

Aquinas placed charity (love) as the source of all virtue:

Having faith and hope in something beyond our human power exceeds all human virtue. As activities faith precedes hope and hope charity; though as dispositions they are all instilled together. ... but charity is more perfect than faith and hope which, without charity, are not perfect. So charity is the mother and root of all virtue. (ST I-II. Q62)

Love is translated “charity” in the *Summa Theologiae* from the Latin word *caritas*, from which we obtain our word “care.” Regarding *caritas*, Aquinas stated that...

...[I]t is the mother and root of the virtues as their source, though as their culmination it is the last to come to fruition. Love comes to permeate lower virtues [*ST*, 1a 2ae 65.3]. As character reaches completion, love progressively motivates and illumines the practice of every act of courage, self-mastery, justice, diverse social virtues, and every exercise of intellectual and technical excellence...Love in its fullness enables us to love our neighbors, near and far. (Wattles, 2015, p. 3)

For Aquinas, love subsumes all virtues while at the same time animating each virtue in their production of human goods; thus, the moral virtues are complete when conjoined with love. But it is also possible to transgress love through inordinate desires or fears (ST II-II. Q24). Thus, the

other virtues are necessary to ensure the will remains oriented toward the ultimate human condition of love.

Leading from Selfless Care

The Aquinas and Aristotelian moral systems are eudemonic; they are directed toward an individual being the best version of himself/herself. However, both philosophers acknowledged an essential aspect of *eudaimonia* is social interaction. For Aristotle, it was within the *polis*; for Thomas, there was Stoic view of interaction with the world at large as representatives of Christ. The practice of an individual virtue-based leader is conducted in a social sphere, as described by Peterson and Seligman (2004):

However, the practice of leadership can be distinguished from leadership as a personal quality. Leadership as practice includes (a) defining, establishing, identifying, or translating a direction for collective action by one's followers; and (b) facilitating or enabling the collective processes that lead to achieving this purpose (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). Leadership as a personal quality reflects the motivation and capacity to seek out, attain, and successfully carry out leader roles in social systems. (p. 414)

“Human good is the activity of the soul in conformity with excellence or virtue, and if there are several virtues, in conformity with the best and most complete” (Aristotle, 1999a, 1098a16). I believe the ultimate motivation (“the best and most complete”) to seek out, attain, and successfully carry out a virtue based leader role is the virtue of love, or *caritas*. I suggest the use of “selfless care” as a synonym for “love.” Care, love, selflessness: these terms connote a social context. Gustafson (2004) described socially responsible leaders as those who...

...possess truly caring servant's hearts, display a positive and unconditional regard for other people, and frame everything that they do with love. They experience a feeling of interconnectedness with others on the planet that provides

the catalyst for needing to make a difference in the world and in the lives of those around them. (p. 200)

Post-enlightenment views of morality within social systems tend to fall within either a deontological or utilitarian framework in which duty to socially constructed mores or beneficial outcomes are the moral determinants (Baggett & Walls, 2011; Baumeister & Exline, 1999; Frankfurt, 2004). As we have seen, in the second half of the twentieth century and continuing to the present, there are many scholars who have advocated a virtue ethics approach to morality in order to focus on the character and motive of morality—that is on *being* rather than *doing* (Andrew, 2010; Anscombe, 1958; Bennett, 1993; Bennett, 2001; Benson, 2008; Bok, 1995; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Ciulla, 2001; Dahlsgaard et al., 2005; Feser, 2008; McIntyre, 1984). However, as McIntyre (1984) pointed out, application of moral terms whose meanings were rooted in a classical moral framework without recovering their epistemic context results in what Bertrand Russell (1905) called “vacuous references” (p. 479). It is not sufficient to invoke virtues as the answer to the question, “How should I live?” Post-modern, Nietzschean thinking regarding self-valuation makes this question self-referential and endlessly cyclical in an effort to arrive at an objective conclusion. Virtues are, by definition, based within a non-self-referential system in which there exists an objective standard of goodness. The criterion for how one should live is not the product of rational exploration which yields a set of personal judgments for assessing right living. Rather, the criterion, though discoverable, is nonetheless transcendent. This is the necessary epistemic context for the application of virtues to a leadership model in which *caritas* is the active ingredient. Evanesence of the ancient belief in a transcendent Good leaves virtues without their ontological foundation.

The common good

The context in which application of the virtue of selfless care is intelligible must exist within a teleological framework grounded in an ontology of metaphysical realism. The latter, unlike Kant's "transcendental idealism" or Mill's anti-essentialism, acknowledges the metaphysical soul and eudemonic human essence. If one desires to effectively apprehend the essential human compulsion for *eudaimonia* and lead from that position, selfless care is the necessary virtue. Victor Frankl (1984) wrote, "Love is the only way to grasp another human being in the innermost core of his personality. No one can become fully aware of the essence of another human being unless he loves him" (p. 116). Philosopher and theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin viewed "love and energy as being interconnected, suggesting that love contains within it an energy that can unite human beings because it alone joins all of us by what is deepest within ourselves" (as cited in Dyer, 1998, p. 227). Leading with *caritas* includes realizing there is an essentially human need to seek interconnectedness with others, and having meaningful community is a necessary ingredient in a flourishing life. This principle is illuminated in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, (CSDC) which states, "The principle of the common good, to which every aspect of social life must be related if it is to attain its fullest meaning, stems from the dignity, unity and equality of all people" (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, CSDC 164, p. 61). Human flourishing is not an individualistic condition. It occurs in community where there is a shared belief in common human dignity, which makes self-evident the moral compulsion to help community members achieve their *telos*. Max DePree (1989), who built Hermann Miller into a *Fortune* 500 company, believed that "love and awareness of the human spirit are more important than structure or policy. Without

understanding the cares, yearnings...of the human spirit, how could anyone presume to lead a group of people across the street?" (p. 221).

The term "common good" is in contrast to a private good of individuals or small sections of society. As a political concept, it dates back to the Axial period of the Greek *polis* or Confucius' ritual system of the State (Ames & Rosemont, 1998). According to Aristotle, the virtues are good in themselves, as opposed to goods such as money, which are instrumental goods. He avers pursuing goods that are complete in themselves is better than seeking instrumental goods (Aristotle, 1999a, p. 42) and contends "this self-sufficiency, however, does not consist in living an isolated life, but in sharing a good life in common..." (as cited in Sison & Fontrodona, 2012, p. 212).

Machiavelli asserted a virtuous citizenry was prerequisite to securing the common good and suggested the notion of *virtù* describes this attribute of aspiring for and facilitating the common good of a political, social entity (Simon, 2013). As used in this dissertation, the concept of "common good" emphasizes the universality of the Good, which informs what inheres in humankind through the Law of Nature written in each human heart. A selflessly caring leader seeks to align his/her actions, decisions, judgments, and vision with the universally Good. However, the word "common" does not emphasize the historical concept of a social or political group, it emphasizes the universality of the Good. The former has the sense of a "shared" good that is socially constructed within the society. The latter emphasizes the transcendent source of

the standard applied for goodness and its being inherent in human nature. A virtuous leader strives to identify and inculcate the common good and does so from a motive of selfless care.

As cited earlier, influential leadership models such as transformational leadership or authentic leadership include the practicing of a strong personal moral commitment when interacting with followers. A useful concept for describing the actions of a virtue-based leader is the Aristotelian idea of praxis:

He defined praxis as “action,” referring in a general sense to all intentional activities, by which people can reach a particular “goal” through their own efforts. More specifically, the term referred to rational action based on a conscious choice and “action” was defined as the product of observation, desires, and intellect or reason. (Kemmis et al., 2008, p. 1)

Kemmis et al. further defined praxis as a particular, morally committed action that integrates embodied experiences, reflection, and actions (Küpers, 2013). Leading from the position of selfless care is to take action through a moral commitment and conscious choice in order to facilitate eudemonic outcomes for followers. A virtues-based leader will own and operationalize the moral and character qualities identified in prevalent, positive leadership models. For instance, the Collins (2005) Level Five leadership is characterized by humility. Humility of a good leader is in virtue of his/her awareness that he/she is merely enacting a transcendent goodness and Natural Law for which they cannot possibly take credit. In the Christian context, this is the underlying basis for Christ’s remarkable statement, “Why do you call me good? There is none good but God” (Mark 10:18, English Standard Version; Luke 18:19, English Standard Version). His underlying belief that all He knew, taught, and did was an enactment of divine knowledge,

revelation, and action made logical this claim. As He said in the quintessential statement of Level Five leadership: “Of my own self, I can do nothing” (John 5:20, English Standard Version). Ancient virtues-based leadership will similarly subsume other moral qualities cited within the literature regarding leadership models empirically proven to positively influence human achievement within a social context.

A word about love

There are three words translated as love and frequently used in ancient Greek. They are (phonetically) *érōs*, *philia*, and *agápē*. The first references erotic love. *Philia* is a dispassionate, virtuous love between friends and equals, a concept developed by Aristotle (Moseley, 2013). *Agape* is, according to Aquinas, “to selflessly will the good of another” (ST I-II. Q26.3). It is this type of love, often referred to as unconditional love, that defines the virtue-based leadership model in which love or selfless care is the overarching virtue. *Agape* love emphasizes commitment and will, not emotion. It is neither without affect nor non-rational (Hoyle & Slater, 2001); rather, it is the virtue that engenders the synergy between cognitive and affective learning and understanding (McCombs, 1988). Thus, selfless care gives rise to optimal thinking while adding to and developing the reflective experiences and observations that improve the praxis of love. This productive cycle induces ongoing development of the virtue-based leader.

Agape is a concern with others that impacts volition and eclipses feelings:

The meaning and worth of love...is that it really forces us, with all our being, to acknowledge for another the same absolute central significance which, because of the power of our egoism, we are conscious of only in our own selves. Love is important not as one of our feelings, but as the transfer of all our interest in life

from ourselves to another, as the shifting of the very center of our personal lives. (Solovyov & Meyer, 1985, p. 51)

A virtues-based leader, compelled by selfless care, will develop meaningful interactions with followers in which the *wise* aspirations of one person are shared and facilitated in their realization of others (Sorokin, 2015, p. 13).

As a universal virtue, love transcends time and human history and finds its source in an infinite, divine love. Paul Tillich (1957) well expressed this infinity of love when he stated the following:

I have given no definition of love. This is impossible, because there is no higher principle by which it could be defined. It is life itself in its actual unity. The forms and structures in which love embodies itself are the forms and structures in which life overcomes its self-destructive forces...Love is basically not an emotional but an ontological power, it is the essence of life itself, namely, the dynamic reunion of that which is separated such is the recent reiteration of this ontological power of love. (p. 160)

The unity of life achieved in love is viewed by some as more than within an individual or group.

Pitirim Sorokin (2015) asserted that the unifying nature of love occurs at all levels of existence:

Everywhere in the inorganic, organic and psychosocial worlds the integrating and uniting role of love functions incessantly. Untiringly, it counteracts the dividing and separating forces of chaos and strife. Without the operation of love energy the physical, the biological, and the sociocultural cosmos would have fallen apart; no harmony, unity, or order would have been possible; universal disorder and enmity would have reigned supreme. As a creative energy of goodness, love unites what is separated, elevates what is base, purifies what is impure, ennobles what is ignoble, creates harmony in the world of enmity, peace in war. Love raises man as a biological organism to the level of divinity, infinitely enriches the human self, and empowers humanity with a mastery over the inorganic, organic, and sociocultural forces. (p. 6)

The power of love to change people and to motivate human action is unparalleled. A leader who makes decisions based on love unleashes this force of goodness:

Seeing the sins of men, one sometimes wonders whether one should react to them by force or by humble love. Always decide to fight them by humble love. If it is carried through, the whole world can be conquered. Loving humbleness is the most effective force, in the world. (Dostoyevsky, 1922, p. 340)

A leader who operationalizes selfless care presides over the immolation of his/her egoist individualism while affirming the unconditional significance of the individuality in another:

Egoism in its pure form, on the contrary, affirms an unconditional oppositeness, an unbridgeable chasm between one's own ego and the others. The egoist says: I am everything . . . while the others are just nothing for me and become something only as a mere means for me; my life and well-being is an absolute goal, while the life and well-being of others are admitted only insofar as they are instruments for a realization of my goal. (Sorokin, 2015, p. 10)

Our modern, democratic society has been called “the cynical society” in which is bred isolation, anomie, and discontent (Hoyle & Slater, 2001, p. 790). Alexis de Toqueville (2003), in his book *Democracy in America*, observed that for all its virtues, American democracy has the potential vice of individualism with the concomitant decline in social capital due to the imbalance between individual and community interests. He suggested the task of leadership is to recognize this *imbalance* and mobilize a corrective effort before democracy is undermined (pp. 587-613).

Through the loving affirmation of others, a virtues-based leader annuls the isolation and imbalance brought on through hyper-individualism. “A sense of disconnectedness and a desire to overcome it, a wish to be in contact with others, the feeling that others are necessary if things are to be whole or complete, and a longing for the community of others” (Hoyle & Slater, 2001, p.

791) are essential aspects of the virtues-based leadership view and are powerfully addressed through love.

If we are to redress the imbalances of our post-modern world in which the human self has descended to an atomistic individual with self-referential values, we must create the conditions for the affirmation of the dignity, value, and transcendent nature of human beings. We must overcome the isolation of hyper-individualism through leadership that facilitates the innate desire to flourish within community interaction. We can do this on the bedrock of virtues-based leadership. Love is the cornerstone of this foundation.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Beloved, you entered life from a place divine, the salvific, sacred swell and spread of longing, of bliss beatific, where the freedom of will is always gift.

Have you forgotten this truth?

Beloved, wake up.

—Joanna Beth Tweedy¹³

Prior to offering concluding thoughts, it is appropriate to point out the limitations of this study and, in the process, identify opportunities for future research. First, and certainly foremost, this research is limited by my own deficiencies in identifying and understanding something as expansive as the history of moral philosophy. As the reader no doubt quickly concluded, I am not a philosopher in training, background, or in any manner one would require to qualify for that title. Although I am hopeful my objective to illuminate the pathway from pre-Socratic to post-modern moral thought has been at least marginally accomplished, I have no doubt that others could provide far more insightful and comprehensive accounts of this philosophical history.

I limited my study of human soul and self to their relevance in the context of moral philosophy, their utility being a window into the impact of modern and post-modern beliefs on ideas most of us take as true.

Suggestions for future research include a more comprehensive discussion of these fundamental concepts as they relate to current theories in the fields of psychology and neuropsychology. I

¹³(Tweedy, 2014)

believe there could be real value to synthesizing theories such as Boyatzis' intentional self with the classical view of human nature.

I intentionally endeavored to limit my study and application of the Law of Nature to its importance as a longitudinal structure in moral philosophy. Much more could have been said regarding its implications within the fields of law and education. The moral ambivalence of our society is most poignant in these areas as it affects children and the most marginalized members of our society. The Law of Nature applied within legal and moral education programs would have an ameliorative effect on the seemingly endless and intractable conflicts that arise from incommensurate values competing for power.

The limitation of time which I can devote to this dissertation precluded the development and depiction of a testable virtues-based leadership model. This affords a significant opportunity for future research. Others have offered such models (Adams, 2006; Dahlsgaard, et al, 2005; Lanctot & Irving, 2010; Winston & Ryan, 2008); however, I believe using a teleological basis for a testable virtues-based leadership model would provide a significant contribution.

A final limitation is associated with the treatment of virtues vs. values. I limited my discussion of values to the history thereof and how the Nietzschean roots of this concept as applied to morality renders the notion of an "objective value" meaningless. However, a fruitful area of study would be how this ubiquitous concept of moral values could retain usefulness by having its origin in Aristotelian/Thomist roots. Virtues will absolutely inform values and, given the complexities of

life, the application of the language of seven virtues will be greatly enhanced by deriving from them a larger vocabulary of values. This would give a more loquacious voice to the Good in the innumerable situations of life that require a decision regarding what is right.

Final Thoughts

In one sense, this dissertation is a manifesto for the restoration of the human soul. While most of us do not spend our time, whether in friendly conversations, intellectual dialogue, or strident debate, discussing the metaphysical reality of the soul—or *nous*—if you will, it is nonetheless a fundamental question, the answer to which informs “the givenness of things” (Robinson, 2015). The “death” of the Creator of the universe in the nineteenth century, and the ascendancy of science to that throne in the twentieth century, ineluctably led to the collateral destruction of metaphysical realism. In that rubble lies the soul, which is what, for 2,000 years, gave coherence and substance to “self.” It is one of the great ironies of our human history that the ascent of the human self in the lofty, rising current of Renaissance and Enlightenment thought culminated in its elimination. The humanistic belief in our capacity to ultimately arrive at an explanation of all things was universally grasped with all the elation and conviction of a species finally set free from the tyranny of mystery attached to the fundamental question: “Why?” (As in “Why does anything exist?” and “Why am I here?”). The conquest of materialism over metaphysical answers to fundamental human questions left us breathless as we realized our triumphal greatness would eventually conquer all territories formerly held by superstition, myths, and magic. As the celebratory march moved from modern theories of rationalism or empiricism to the Nietzschean notion of our will to power leading to the ultimate evolutionary achievement of

the *Übermensch*, what was not noticed was the disappearing self in the background. While the post-modern philosophies arose animated by philology and linguistics and invested more power in the self to construct reality that, though not universal, served to reify local self-determined moral laws, the materialists were presiding over the dissolution of this same self. The fact of this is glimpsed in the “neuro” appendage to numerous academic disciplines.

Neuroscientists are not predisposed to concluding there is such a thing as “self.” My belief is that this is a case of scientific materialists declaring what is real on the basis of—and limited by—their methodological yields. Simply put, what is true is what the data demonstrate today or is projected to demonstrate tomorrow. The prevailing academic view today is that humans are nothing more than Democritus’ atoms interacting in innumerable and complex processes culminating, from a psychological viewpoint in effects we label with words such as “behavior,” “decisions,” and “choices.” These effects have emotional accompaniments, which are acknowledged as truly felt, even as they are stripped of all causality or significance in the material universe of outcomes. As an academic discipline, moral philosophy is shaped by this view.

But what now about the concept of ‘the soul’? On this topic, so central in religious thought, current philosophy has unquestionably something very relevant to say...And the essence of what it has to say is, to put it bluntly, that the “soul” is sheer myth. For current philosophy...finds no room for a “self”...and whatever may be the precise relationship between “self” and “soul.” it is at least certain that, where there are no “selves” in this sense, there can be no “souls” in any sense that interests the theologian. ...One does not exaggerate, I think, in saying that, explicit or implicit in the writings of the vast majority of philosophers today who concern themselves at all about the human mind, is the conviction that the term “self” stands, at most, only for particular mental states and events inter-related in a specific way, and perhaps stands only for some unique pattern of

bodily behaviour. ...*Philosophy* without a soul is, as we have just noticed, a commonplace in contemporary thought. But *Theology* without a soul would seem to amount to something very like a contradiction in terms. If talk about the soul be forbidden to the theologian, he might as well retire from business altogether. (Campbell, 2013, p. 6-7)

“What can the word ‘self’ mean to those who wish to deny its reality? It can only signify an illusion we all participate in, as individuals, societies, and civilizations” (Robinson, 2015, p. 7). Illusions are not without impact. Our post-modern world functions on the basis of people having free will and self-hood. We raise our children, run our businesses, legislate and enforce laws, and plan our futures as if self exists, is accountable, and is empowered to direct our steps. We feel proud, thankful, hopeful, ashamed, or malaise regarding the condition of self at this moment or in the past or future. We all live and operate this way even as we unwittingly accept a materialistic ontology that declares self an incoherent concept. Thus, included in my data to support this appeal to the restoration of human soul are the day-to-day lives we lead.

For most of us, such an appeal would be met with a shrug that expresses that most devastating question to a dissertation: “So what?” And in a certain way, that is the reason for my offering this as a contribution to the field of leadership. There is, in my view, a distinct lack of clarity regarding the ontological ground on which we attempt to stand up our theories regarding a good leader. Consequently, we live our lives on the basis of the existence of a metaphysical self while endeavoring to erect theories that are posited and tested using the current philosophies and methodologies informed by scientific materialism. This is a worldview that disallows metaphysics and theology and, therefore, does not answer to any faults brought on by their

elimination. I believe this is more than an unsystematic approach to how we should live; in my opinion, it is incoherent. We would do better to align our moral theories with an ontology and philosophy that not only explain the data of human experience, but also give us the answer to the answer to the fundamental “Why?”

Such an ontology is the metaphysical realism that held sway in moral philosophy for over two millennia from Socrates to Descartes. The theological ligament within this worldview was first injured in the West by its being categorized as a Christianized dogma by Enlightenment theists and atheists. It was finally severed in the understandable revolt against the political and intellectual hegemony perpetrated by authorities of the institution known as the Christian Church. Divorced from theology, the philosophy of morals pursued relations with economics, psychology, sociology—the aesthetics of Proust and Nietzsche. At the end of this line of partners stood waiting post-modern materialism, and, in its embrace, extinguished any flicker of a metaphysical flame.

The purpose of my thesis has been to shed some light on at least a portion of the history of moral philosophy and suggest our current moral vertigo can be ameliorated by a remarriage of moral philosophy with theology. I am not advocating a particular theological position. The universality of the golden rule is indicative of a theological reality observed by Hindus, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jews, Muslims, African and American Indian tribal ancestry religions, and, yes, Christians. It is a theological worldview shared with Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Cicero, Confucius, Philo, Aquinas, Locke, Kierkegaard, and Lewis. Invoking a First Cause, Unmoved

Mover, Cosmic *Nous*, and Creator of all that exists is not only aligned with the ancient and long history of philosophy regarding a transcendent standard of the Good, it is congruent with the most current scientific understanding regarding the origin of the universe culminating in sentient human life. There is a synergy of the ages palpable within a system that posits the existence of a Creator who orders the cosmos in a good way and gives purpose and meaning to humans—beings—who are made of heavy elements born in stars and are, thus, metaphysically connected to the light and energy that brought everything from nothing.

This light and energy coalesced into humans who bear the image of the Creator as seen in our meager mimicry of the Creator's inconceivable power by building cities, technologies, and other means of exercising dominion over the hardships of nature. This is a wonder accessible to anyone who gives pause to consider it. Even as we insulate ourselves from natural threats, humans with aesthetic gifts give praise to the beauty of our world in paint, music, prose, and dance. We should recapture the optimism of human excellence from the Renaissance period, but this time without discarding the *Logos* in favor of only human logic and reason. Rather, we must discard the material scientism that relegates us to advanced organisms that have evolved to moral beings to promote our survival, but are nonetheless nothing more than atomistic creatures. Morals based on current environmental conditions and the will to power are necessarily relativistic and given force only through the power of human legislation and law. Thus, we live in an imbalanced world where so much of what we know in our hearts is wrong is declared as right.

I do not believe there is any cure to this moral vertigo of our time through the current, post-modern social philosophies that deny the human soul, self, mind, and conscience. Rather, we should embrace the wonder of sentient humanity that acknowledges our understanding of what is right or wrong has varied through time, while being fully conscious that there *is* a distinction between right and wrong that is universal and permanent. We know this because we have been gifted with the human essence that includes a Law of the Good written in our hearts. Regardless of whether the transcendent source of the Natural Law is the impersonal divinity of Aristotle or Cicero, the Tao, Dharma, or the personal God of love of Paul and Aquinas, what animates our souls and gives rise to flourishing lives is an ultimate principle outside of human experience. The language by which we express this is found in the virtues of justice, courage, temperance, wisdom, faith, hope, and love. These are the dimensions of goodness and human flourishing toward which we naturally incline. This heliotropism is the outcome of our teleological self and has inspired the narratives of human triumph memorialized in poems, books, plays, symphonies, and accounts of great leaders throughout history.

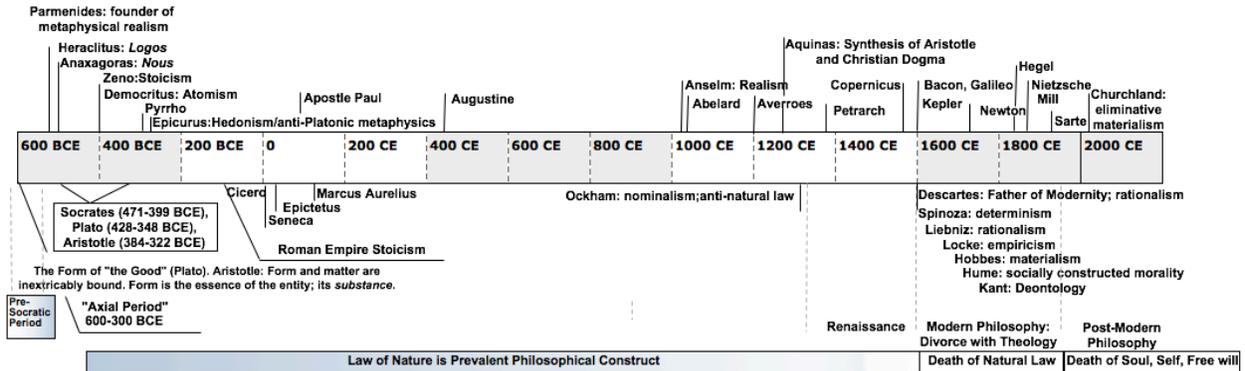
Now we know that when we situate leadership in virtues, we are rooting it in an ontological substrate that is nourished by the Creator of the cosmos with the light of the *Logos* that informs our soul's heart with a law of goodness. This law has not only the strength of the ages of humankind, it is anchored in the moment when the universe was created in a flash of light and energy unimaginable to we who would come later to ponder the fundamental question "Why?"

The virtues-based leader answers that question with the wisdom of the ages and eyes wide open to the daily data of human experience that validates we are more than material and metrics. We are, indeed, human *beings*. The virtues-based leader knows that part of our human essence is the desire to *be* the best version of ourselves. We are teleological people who desire to reflect our metaphysical nature through meaningful interconnections with others where we can practice the art of human flourishing. Therefore, the virtues-based leader understands that human flourishing is not an individualistic condition. It occurs in community where there is a shared belief in common human dignity.

All the while, this leader is guided by the Good that informs the conscience and mediates thoughts, attitudes, and actions. One who leads from the virtues is compelled by the greatest of these—love—to serve others in their heliotropic quest to bring their self to its ultimate *telos*. A virtues-based leader is guided by and leads others to the Good. I humbly offer this as the *definition* of a “good leader.”

Appendix A: Timeline of western philosophers

Timeline of Major Western Philosophical Ideas



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