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PETER REDPATH'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Peter Redpath is the author of a magisterial three-volume study in the history of philosophy.[1] This trilogy shows that he is an excellent historian. His trenchant analysis of key developments in the history of Western thought demonstrates that he is also an outstanding philosopher. This comes as no surprise. He is committed to the belief that the history of philosophy is the laboratory of philosophical discovery and is the best way to obtain a philosophical education. Because Redpath aims self-consciously to understand philosophy in its historical and philosophical context, and because he maintains that philosophical ideas profoundly influence history, I am disposed to call him a "philosopher of history." Those familiar with his work might find such a description unacceptable. After all, is not the philosophy of history of modern provenance? Ought we to associate someone who has spent his life laboring in the vineyard of St. Thomas Aquinas with the likes of Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel, whose names come to mind when we speak of "the philosophy of history"? Aren't these the thinkers whom Redpath condemns as incorrigible nominalists and "transcendental sophists"?

[1] See *Cartesian Nightmare* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1997); *Wisdom's Odyssey: From Philosophy to Transcendental Sophistry* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1997); and *The Masquerade of the Dream Walkers* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1998).

How could I dare put him in their company? The association appears even less acceptable when, according to Redpath's own account, these anti-realists and nominalists essentially nullify classical philosophy and replace it with a program of utopian politics. Besides, as a philosopher under the influence of Aristotle, wouldn't Professor Redpath accept Aristotle's judgment that history is the lowest of the sciences, even below poetry?[2]

These are points well taken. Then, again, St. Augustine was a philosopher of history, arguably the father of the subject. So, there is a precedent. A philosopher of history seeks to discern its meaning. Since one is not obligated to interpret history simply through the lens of modernist thought, one can explain the philosophy of history in an alternative way. Redpath finds an alternative in his philosophical anthropology, a philosophy of the human person influenced by the principles of St. Thomas' Christian philosophy, an integration of Aristotelian sense realism, metaphysics, and Christian theology. One might say that Redpath has an *analogous* philosophy of history. History has meaning but not in the way modern idealists understand it.

Professor Redpath aims to understand history through an intensive examination of the history of philosophy. Convinced that ideas have consequences, he believes that a deep understanding of the history of thought enables one to understand the philosophical significance of the past and how it bears on the present and the future. Anyone whose aim is to grasp the principles of history in this way is a philosopher of history. In spite of the influence of Aristotle on his thought, Redpath is not limited by Aristotle's conception of history. As a Christian philosopher he looks at history differently from the way the ancient Greeks understood it. As a Christian philosopher, Redpath is sensitive to the metaphysics of creation specific to Christianity. Time and space are not determined eternally as in the ancient Greek worldview. God's free

[2] Aristotle, *Poetics*, Ch. 2, 1451b, 5-7.

creation of the cosmos and special creation of the human person make history significant in a way that Aristotle could not have understood.

This background makes it possible to discern a philosophy of history in Redpath's grand tour of the history of philosophy. To show this, my article will have two tasks. First, I will provide a synoptic narration of the history of philosophy, outlining those developments highlighted in Redpath's trilogy. In other words, I will summarize the history of philosophy *as Redpath sees it*. This narration outlines the content from which he extrapolates a philosophy of history. My second task will be to illuminate the central features of this philosophy of history. One might say that I will first present the *subject matter* (an outline of the history of philosophy) and afterward elucidate its *form* (an outline of his philosophy of history). By accomplishing this latter, I will also be able to comment on Professor Redpath's diagnosis of Western society's current moral and political malaise and his prescriptions for reversing its decline. Such a commentary is relevant because Professor Redpath believes this decline is directly related to the loss of philosophy in culture.

PART ONE

Classical Early Greek Philosophy: Origins and Forecasts

Most histories of ancient philosophy open with the prosaic report that philosophy began in Miletus in the sixth century B.C. While a typical history of philosophy will surely recognize philosophy's origin, it is treated more as a curiosity than as a revolutionary event. The beginning of philosophy is sometimes discussed as if it were merely an occasion for a succession of philosophers who followed. For Redpath, however, philosophy's origin was an earth-shaking event. In fact, it was something of a singularity. There were several reasons for this. First, the philosophers re-defined wisdom and broke the monopoly of elites who claimed its ownership. As a corollary to this change, Greek philoso-

phers reinforced democratic sensibilities that may have already existed in Greek culture. Secondly, by virtue of how the ancient Greeks defined philosophy, they were undoubtedly the discoverers and originators of the discipline. Accordingly, they have ownership of the nature of philosophy, obligating one to test whether subsequent thinkers are *bona fide* philosophers only in light of whether they conform in their thinking to the Greek's understanding of the discipline. Thirdly, the philosopher's conception of wisdom enabled them to distinguish themselves from the class of poets and sophists. This distinction was important in the rise of Socrates and the development of Plato's philosophy. Moreover, it is arguably a predictor for the whole development of the history of philosophy, a tension between philosophers and poets, as prophesied by Plato in the tenth book of the *Republic*.[3] A brief narration of the defining events in Greek philosophy will support these claims.

The ancient Greeks declared that philosophy begins in wonder, a state of mind that generates insecurity. Aristotle is famous for this declaration,[4] an announcement that also explains why he opens the *Metaphysics* with his classic statement that human beings desire to know.[5] Wonder motivates a human being to seek explanations of things. Uncomfortable with perplexities about nature and the human condition, the human person seeks explanations. Explanation genuinely takes place when one knows causes. Of course, the pursuit of explanations alone does not suffice to specify philosophy, for poets seek explanations too. Aristotle admits this fact and concedes that poetry, like philosophy, is inspired by wonder.[6] What differentiates the philosopher from the poet? The poet seeks explanations in light of primary causes.

[3] See my essay: "Why Can't Philosophers and Poets Get Along? Reflections on an Ancient Quarrel," in *A Piercing Light: Beauty, Faith & Human Transcendence*, ed. James M. Jacobs (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 267–285.
[4] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. 1, 2, 982b12-14.
[5] Id., Bk. 1, 1, 980a1-982a10-15.
[6] Id., 982b17-18.

In other words, the poet relies directly on the gods as the causes of things. The philosophers seek explanations in light of secondary causes.

This quest for knowledge of causes points to Greek genius. The hallmark of Greek philosophical culture was its interest in knowledge for its own sake. At least for the Greek philosophers, contemplation (*theoria*) had value unto itself in a way that other cultures had neglected. While the usefulness of things (*praxis*) arrested the attention of other societies, *theoria* was a unique fascination of the Greeks. Werner Jaeger states the matter succinctly:

> Perhaps what is most characteristic among the merely human features of these first philosophers (who were not yet called by this Platonic name) was their specific spiritual attitude, their complete dedication to knowledge, and their immersion in contemplation, which to the later Greeks (but also certainly to their contemporaries), seemed completely unintelligible, yet evoked the highest admiration.[7]

By this interest in secondary causes, the philosophers did not intend to discount the gods. But they did not make the gods constitutive of their explanations of nature. Thales accepted that the gods exist. Did he not say everything is full of gods? Presumably, he accepted that Poseidon had some relationship to water on earth. But he sought an explanation that did not appeal to mythic explanation. He and his philosophical descendants looked for *proximate* explanations, not *remote* ones based on the gods. Proximate explanations relied on the evidences of the activities of natural things. The philosophers, perplexed by information given to the senses, sought to resolve the perplexity (wonder) by identifying proximate causes.

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[7] Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Vol. 1, trans. Gilbert Highet (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1965), 179. For helpful observations on this aspect of Greek thought see Piotr Jaroszyński, *Science in Culture* (Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Editions Rodopi, 2007). In fact, the above quotation appears on page 13 of Jaroszyński's book.

Proximate or "secondary" causes are principles accessible to anyone of ordinary intelligence, should he or she inquire successfully into the natures of things. While this search for secondary causes seems innocent enough, it actually produced cultural reverberations throughout the ancient Greek world. The reason for this is that, prior to the emergence of the philosophers, the ancient Greek poets and priests had a monopoly on wisdom. From time immemorial the cultural presumption had been that, if someone was wise, he must have had a privileged relationship with the gods. But the philosophers dared to proclaim that anyone, not just someone belonging to the priestly or poetic caste, could be wise, provided he or she exercised the proper discipline of mind observing and interpreting what is evident to the senses. Hence, the advent of philosophy was actually a revolutionary event. Aware of this assertion of democratic sensibilities in the culture, the poets and priests took exception to the influence of the philosophers. Their disapproval sometimes expressed itself as overt hostility, even having political consequences. Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, and Socrates were the most famous targets of the poets' disfavor.

Although the philosophers intended no disrespect of the gods, the poets misunderstood the philosophers' project, the investigation into secondary causes. In the poet's mind the philosophers were atheists. Of course, the word "atheist" for an ancient Greek meant something different from what it means today. An atheist was not someone who denied the existence of the gods. The ancient Greeks accepted the existence of the gods as obvious.[8] So atheism in the modern sense was not an issue for them. Instead, an atheist was someone who worshipped gods different from the established pantheon. The poets' reasoning was straightforward, even if mistaken: since the poets believed wisdom could only be obtained by someone's privileged relationship with a god or goddess, they presumed that the philosophers had alliances with gods. But

[8] Just as they accepted that the universe had been around forever. That the gods might not exist or that the universe might not be eternal did not enter the Greek mind.

since the philosophers did not invoke the gods of traditional mythic explanation, the poets inferred that the philosophers must be guilty of worshipping different gods, gods not authorized by orthodox polytheism. This background explains Meletus' curious charge that Socrates was an atheist. How could Socrates be an atheist when everyone knew he revered his *daimon*, who, Socrates infers, must be a god or goddess or son or daughter of a god or goddess?[9] Meletus did not handle the charge adroitly, but his charge had its context because of the traditional poets' understanding of atheism. Socrates was an atheist because he worshipped a god not authorized by the state.

As far as Plato was concerned, this confusion showed the shallowness of the poetic class. He blamed them for Socrates' death, and did not forgive them. In the dialogues, he depicts them as being in league with the sophists, a class of rhetoricians who, Plato believed, were undermining the common good of Athenian civilization. The sophists believed that because of the significance of their high birth or ancestry they had gifts of discourse that entitled them to dominate others. They believed that through wit and words, they could conquer anyone personally or dialectically. But since they could not dominate Socrates, they learned to despise philosophers on the rebound.

Aristotle's achievement was to deal with the sophists, the poets, and his predecessors by specifying the different kinds of knowledge. In *The Posterior Analytics* he explicated the principles and elements of science, universal and necessary knowledge in light of causes. Aristotle's account of science is important because (1) it equates philosophy (*philosophia*) and science (*epistēmē*), indicating that the modern presumption that philosophy (a discipline now consigned to the so-called humanities, a repository of opinion and aesthetics) is not the same as science is misguided, and (2) it explicates that Aristotle's predecessors were striving to understand science as a resolution of the problem of the one and the many, finding intelligibility and causal explanation in a

[9] Plato, *The Apology*, 26b-27e.

multitude of things. Aristotle's philosophy of science has profound influence on St. Thomas Aquinas. I'll defer my comments further on the matter until I discuss him.

Since the Greek's were philosophy's founders, much of Professor Redpath's philosophy of history will emanate out of his reflections on the significance of the Greeks. I will re-visit this point in Part Two of this article.

Hellenistic and Medieval Thought: The Eclipse of Philosophy

There is an accepted view that Plato and Aristotle continued to dominate Greek culture after their deaths. This belief does not agree with the facts. The prevailing Greek culture was materialistic and skeptical. The culture could acknowledge that Plato and Aristotle had argued in a convincing way that there were divine principles and that the universe had metaphysical significance. But their arguments were too abstract, the objects of their metaphysical speculations—Plato's Forms and Aristotle's God—were too remote to make a personal and practical difference in the life of a Greek citizen. As a result, the prevailing skeptical mood of Greek society ignored the speculative wisdom of Plato and Aristotle. The Greeks' distaste for speculation inclined them to practical thought, a tendency reinforced by political circumstances, as Greece was first dominated by the Macedonian regime and eventually absorbed into the Roman Empire. When the individual is submerged under an impersonal political sovereignty, survival is paramount and speculation is devalued. This political circumstance also encouraged the formation of major schools, whose concentrations were mainly practical in nature. Membership in the Cynic, Cyrenaic, Epicurean, or Stoic school gave a person social standing, a sense of belonging, and prescriptions for living.[10]

[10] A philosopher's identity was measured by a kind of quasi-religious allegiance to his school. These schools made one conspicuous in dress and behavior. "Gilson notes that

Under these circumstances Hellenistic culture lost the early classical Greek's conception of philosophy. Stoicism was most influential in this turn toward a different conception of philosophy. By the time of Cicero (first century B.C.), philosophy was generally understood to mean knowledge of things human and divine and of their causes. This definition represented a poetic turn and a departure from the earlier Greek conception of philosophy as the exercise of the intelligence to reduce sense wonder to causal explanation. For the Greeks philosophy was about reflection on things evident to the senses. It was not a focus primarily on the human in relation to the gods. To look at philosophy in that way was to revert back to the original poetic conception of wisdom. Such a reversion fit well into the Stoic view of reality, according to which the divine principle of things, alternatively called Zeus, Cosmic Reason, and *Logos*, was immanent in all things, so much so that the Stoics sometimes spoke of the human being as a god in miniature, or a microcosm of the Divine Reason animating the universe. Philosophy was no longer a Socratic, objective, dispassionate examination of information first presented in sense awareness. Philosophy became a poetic interpretation of experience, as the human person sought to relate to god so as to live an undisturbed life. To be wise the philosopher must think like Zeus. The circle back to the poets was complete. Friendship with Zeus became the aim and measure of wisdom. For this reason Seneca would declare that the epics of Homer anticipated all the wisdom of the philosophers.[11] Why not? For the Stoics philosophy ought never to have left the poet's domain in the first place.[12]

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in the second century people could often as easily recognize a philosopher on a street as today we can identify a member of the clergy. A philosopher did not live, talk, or dress like other people." Redpath, *Wisdom's Odyssey*, 41. See Étienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), 11.

[11] Seneca, "On Liberal and Vocational Studies," in *Seneca's Moral Epistles*, Vol. 5, trans. Richard M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1917), 253.

[12] Plotinus and the Neoplatonic school broke the trend the Stoics advanced. Relying on dialectical method, the Neoplatonists made philosophy's starting point a reflection on

The Stoics prepared the way for Christian culture. The Stoic belief that philosophy was a practical wisdom making one god-like had perhaps an analogous counterpart in Christian *praxis*. After all, had not Cicero also defined philosophy "as an expeller of vices and searcher of virtue."[13] The Stoic program seemed somewhat congenial with the Christian aim of moral perfection. Early Christian Church Fathers had motives for relying on the Stoics and other philosophers to make Christianity presentable to the prevailing pagan culture. The Church Fathers borrowed from the philosophers to make Christianity palatable to the intellectuals. They sought an apologetics "to reconcile the truths apprehended through unaided natural reasoning with those revealed in Scripture."[14] For early Christian intellectuals "the whole domain of philosophy becomes susceptible to the regulation by the higher poetry of divine revelation and incomplete in its nature without such regulation."[15] They interpreted this regulation to mean that philosophy is subordinated to theology, either as a preparation or a servant.

This subordination of philosophy to theology became explicit in Augustine. For Augustine philosophy became the material object of a subject whose formal object was theology. As a rhetorician Augustine studied philosophy as a liberal art, a skill or set of skills to explore and clarify articles of faith. Philosophy is of assistance in "faith seeking understanding." St. Thomas expressed Augustine's attitude toward philosophy in this way: "Whenever Augustine, who was imbued with the doctrines of the Platonists, found in their teaching anything consis-

how unity appears in multiplicity in sense experience. While the philosopher began in sense wonder, he terminated his quest for wisdom by transcending philosophy altogether in mystical monism. Ironically, the Neoplatonists' influence was most decisive in the formation of Christian theology, which Plotinus and Porphyry despised.

[13] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. Andrew P. Peabody (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Grown, 1886), 253.

[14] Redpath, *Wisdom's Odyssey*, 33.

[15] Id., 117–118.

tent with faith he adopted it; and those things he found contrary to faith he amended."[16]

If we take poetry in the broadest sense to mean a way of knowing under the guidance of inspiration, late antiquity and the early middle ages subordinated philosophy to poetry. In the wake of Pagan and Christian reinterpretations, the early classical Greek meaning of philosophy was lost, replaced by a variety of competing definitions. The encyclopedist Cassiodorus (sixth century) reports that philosophy had come to mean one of six things: (1) knowledge of what exists and how it exists; (2) knowledge of divine and human things; (3) preparation for death; (4) assimilation of man to God; (5) art of arts and science of sciences; (6) love of wisdom.[17] Evidently, philosophy had been taken up into a kind of rhetoric as a liberal art in service of theology. The rhetorical and religious traditions of Stoics and Christians shaped these definitions. The historian Michael Curtius observes that by the close of the Roman Empire, the word "philosopher" had blended with "rhetor" and "sophist" and "theologian."[18]

A "rhetor" and a "sophist" are products of training in rhetoric and dialectic. Once the word "philosopher" was understood in these ways, it was natural to think of philosophy as one or more of the liberal arts. This conception of philosophy dominated the middle ages until the thirteenth century.

By the eleventh century, the art of dialectic became pre-eminent, a cultural phenomenon that convinced most intellectuals that philosophy is so much logic. (There is a similar tendency to identify philosophy with logic today.) The dialecticians especially tried to resolve the problem of universals, a controversy they inherited from the works of Boethius and Porphyry. However, the dialecticians were unsuccessful

[16] Id.
[17] Id.
[18] Id., 43.

because, unlike Boethius and Porphyry, they mistook the problem of universals for a problem of logic instead of metaphysics.

Aquinas: From the Water of Philosophy to the Wine of Theology

The discovery of the Arabicized Aristotle in the thirteenth century profoundly changed the course of medieval philosophy. Simply put, it was the occasion for the rediscovery of the nature of philosophy itself. Upon commenting on Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas discovered that medieval conceptions of philosophy did not conform to what Aristotle, and presumably the other ancient Greeks, meant by the term: the *habitual* exercise of the intellect so as to reduce sense wonder to causal explanation. Having lost an appreciation of sense realism, medieval thought confused philosophy with various rhetorical traditions. Having realized this, Aquinas judged decisively that "the seven liberal arts do not sufficiently divide theoretical philosophy."[19] This is not to imply that St. Thomas labeled himself a "philosopher." He called the philosophers "pagani," in deference to the fact that the pre-Christian ancient Greeks discovered or originated the discipline. St. Thomas was a philosopher in an analogical sense: a Christian philosopher. This is philosophy governed by a higher science, the science of theology. For St. Thomas philosophy was the material object of a higher science, whose formal object was revelation.

By becoming Christian philosophy, philosophy does not lose its power or significance. Christian philosophy, which is really theology, is not less efficacious than classical pagan philosophy. Grace does not destroy but perfects nature. Science for St. Thomas is a habit, the perfection of a faculty or power integrated with the knower's other human powers. Reflecting on knowledge as habit formation, Gilson notably

[19] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the de Trinitate of Boethius*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 3, in *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, trans. Armand Maurer, 4th edition (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1986), 17.

observes that the whole knower is engaged in any act of knowing. We sense with our intelligence; we intellectualize with our senses.[20] So understood, the knower integrates all his faculties or powers, including the efficacy of grace in his life. After all, the whole (integral) knower knows. Knowledge is not merely the activation of a discrete power—say, external senses, imagination, memory, or intelligence—as though any one of these could operate independently of the other human knowing faculties. If knowledge is a habit, it is existential, involving the entire person. Therefore, for a Christian the philosophical habit must be under the higher regulation of grace. Christian philosophy is natural understanding subordinate to theology. St. Thomas' analysis of knowledge as a habit is rich in its implications. Once he discovers what philosophy is, he recognizes how his activity of thought differs from the habitual activity of the classical philosophers. He is not a philosopher in the strict sense, because he is not one of the *pagani*. And yet, he has discovered what classical Greek philosophy is. He recovers the genuine nature of philosophy which has been lost since classical times.

By recognizing that philosophy was part of Christian philosophy, Aquinas could readily reply to those who challenged whether the discovery of pagan philosophers would be relevant to Christian wisdom. To this challenge, Aquinas replies simply that the Christian knower transforms "the water of philosophy into the wine of theology."[21] So, the fullness of philosophical understanding is in Christian philosophy. It is philosophy elevated and transformed by Christian theology. The result is the lasting achievement of St. Thomas' writings: the definitive synthesis of faith and reason.

Along with the recovery of philosophy, St. Thomas recovered science, classical philosophy's conception of *epistēmē*. This recovery

[20] Étienne Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*, trans. Mark A. Wauck (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 171–193.
[21] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the de Trinitate of Boethius*, q. 2, a. 3, ad 5, in *St. Thomas Aquinas: Faith, Reason and Theology*, trans. Amrmand A. Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1987), 50.

took place because Aristotle equated philosophy and science. Aquinas understood precisely how sense realism grounds science. Science is a way of finding intelligibilities in substances known by our senses. This means that science grasps how something is a one in a many. Substances have intrinsic relationships, many of which are necessary. The explication of these relationships establishes science.[22]

Aquinas realized that for Aristotle, a substance is a principle of organization, a generic universal, containing necessary accidents (or properties) which relate to the essence of the substance. A substance is an organization, consisting of parts. Understanding how these parts are related (or "orchestrated," if you will) generates science. Science is the explication of the necessary relationships, some of which involve contrariety, that make up a substance. A substance is a universal, but not a logical universal, a mere idea. Instead, it is a causal universal. Whereas logical universals, as mere ideas, are existentially neutral, prescinding from the actual conditions of things, causal (or philosophical) universals are grounded in the existence of substances. Aquinas realized that the difference between logical and philosophical universals is crucial. Otherwise, the philosopher will mistake philosophy for logic.

Moreover, Aquinas realized that a plurality of sciences can be recognized once substances are understood as unities in multiplicity (a single substance relating to many properties or contraries). The knower can contemplate substances for their own sake, thus bringing about speculative science (*physics* contemplating how qualities obtain in substance; *mathematics*—how quantities obtain in substance; and *metaphysics*—how substances are what they are in themselves). Then again, the knower can consider (1) how the human person (considered scientifically as a substance) ought to conduct his or her life (ethics and politics), and (2) how he or she can make things (productive art and sci-

[22] Some examples will clarify this account of science: geometry, medicine, productive knowledge, engineering: bicycle.

ence). Hence, practical science too can be explained as another analogical application of the problem of the one and the many.

The Renaissance: The Battle of the Arts

While there is an "accepted view" among many educators that St. Thomas is a stodgy medieval theologian, who presumably has been promoted uncritically by the Catholic Church as its anointed Doctor, the truth of the matter is that Aquinas was a revolutionary figure. He not only resurrected pagan Greek philosophy, he incorporated into his writings the wisdom of Muslims, Jews, and Pagans. This inclusiveness made some Church authorities uncomfortable. While the Dominican Order may have anointed Aquinas as the premier theologian, the leadership of the Church was ambivalent, or worse. Three years after the death of St. Thomas, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard Kilwardby, and the Bishop of Paris, Étienne Tempier, condemned his writings as misguided and dangerous. They were unable to see how anyone so cozy with Muslims and Pagans could have anything constructive to say about Christian theology. Outside institutions and venues where the Dominicans exercised considerable influence, directors of seminaries discouraged the study of St. Thomas. Centuries passed before Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) mandated that Aquinas become a staple for seminary instruction.

At any rate, the death and condemnation of Aquinas had its cultural effects. The neglect of Aquinas meant ignorance about his recovery of genuine philosophy, even as he had absorbed it into Christian theology. As a result, the culture reverted back to supposing that philosophy was one or more of the liberal arts. The dominant arts were dialectic and rhetoric, especially the association of rhetoric with theology. Impatient with the stale dominance of these two disciplines of the *trivium*, some academic leaders in the universities asserted the "rightful place" of poetry. These academicians argued that the poetic way of

knowing, not philosophy (which they mistook for dialectic or logic), was the path to pagan wisdom.

The poet's champion was Petrarch who, in a famous address on the steps of Roman ruins in 1351, maintained that replacing philosophy with poetry as the humanist's dominant discipline could serve several purposes: (1) poetry could better discern the meaning of pagan wisdom expressed by the Greek and Roman poets; (2) poetry puts the knower in more intimate contact with nature; (3) hence poetry could provide a better handmaiden for theology; (4) poetry could restore Italian national pride as the poets began to discover the ancient Roman wisdom.

Concurrent with the humanism of the poets was the work of William Ockham. Ockham was no poet but he did share the poet's rejection of Aquinas' scholastic philosophy. Ockham's dismissal was based on his thorough-going nominalism, according to which so-called universals (abstractions or concepts) signify names only and have an unknown origin (*natura occulte operatu in universalibus*).[23] This was a departure from Aquinas' influential moderate realism, which held that the intellect could abstract common features from real (mind-independent things) so as to form concepts. While concepts are actual only in the mind, they potentially have a real foundation in things. Under Ockham's influence, philosophy was no longer regarded as an effort of the intellect to communicate with reality. Instead, philosophy became a reflection on the inventory of the mind's ideas (psychological states). This nominalism, reinforced by the poet's reduction of wisdom to the power of words, convinced educators that science or wisdom consists in organizing ideas into words and propositions to be placed in books. Wisdom was no longer habituation of the faculties of the sense realist to grasp the natures of real things. Instead, the sciences became "bodies of knowledge," instructive by virtue of their coherence of words and propositions.

[23] William of Ockham, *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, ed. Philotheus Bohner (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1939), 1, 2, 7.

Coincidental with this nominalism and poetic humanism was a brewing feud within the faculties of the arts in the universities. Tired of the millennial-old wrangling of the poets and dialecticians, some educators sought an alternative, which they found in mathematical physics. This pitted the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy) against the established *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic). By the time of the late Renaissance, the *quadrivium* became triumphant in the schools. Curiously, the mathematicians co-opted the rhetoric of the poets and the nominalists and made it their own. Just as poets and nominalists reduced knowledge to what appears in books, so the pioneering mathematical physicists made their "body of knowledge" about words and propositions in the form of mathematical symbols. Hence, Galileo says:

> Philosophy is written in this greatest of books which stands always open to our gaze; I mean the universe; but it cannot be understood unless one first learns the language and the characters in which it is written. It is written in the language of mathematics and the characters are triangles, circles and geometrical figures . . . Within these . . . the investigation of nature is wandering in an obscure labyrinth.[24]

With this maneuver, the champions of the *quadrivium* usurped the dominion of the poets in the culture. This usurpation occurred at the threshold of modern thought, in which one finds thinkers like Hobbes and Descartes deferring to the language of mathematics. While these thinkers were nominalists, they found in mathematics a way to organize perceptions or ideas (the imagination) so as to produce science. They maintained that science comes about when the human mind manages to be productive for practical and technical purposes. Without the exercise of will taming the imagination there is no science. Without science

[24] Quoted in A. Robert Caponigri, *Philosophy from the Renaissance to the Romantic Age*, vol. 3 of *A History of Western Philosophy* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1963), 146.

there is no knowledge or purposiveness in human life. Hobbes likens the wandering, unscientific, unregulated human intellect (which for Hobbes means a train of perceptions in the imagination) to the aimlessness of a spaniel before he discovers the scent of the animal to be pursued. Once he finds the scent, his task is sensible, purposive.[25] So, the human mind (imagination) needs its train of ideas to be coordinated. This order and purposiveness is supplied by the social contract. Peace enables human beings to give direction to their efforts. Once our imagination is directed, science can exist and flourish.

As a defender of the *quadrivium*, Hobbes believed that mathematics is the most reliable way to impose direction on the mind. As a nominalist in the Ockhamite tradition, Hobbes believed that mathematics is simply an *a priori* discipline. It requires no theories of abstraction, nor does it require sense realism as formative of the intellect. Mathematics is a means to regulate the mind. Its regulative power is all that is required for science to exist as a coherence of ideas. Science need not be a knowledge of substances and causes.

Mixed into all of these developments was the conviction that Renaissance thinkers were the beneficiaries of an esoteric-wisdom tradition. I refer to a tradition that certain Jewish intellectuals, such as Philo of Alexandria, transmitted to the Christian West. While this esoteric tradition is fanciful, it exercised strong influence on thinkers such as Newton and Descartes, who professed to be new visionaries of science. This esoteric teaching had its genesis in ancient times. It appears to have been first promoted by Artapanus (first century B.C.), who declared that the Jews actually should get credit for Greek wisdom, since *Musaios*, the teacher of Orpheus, was actually Moses. Before the rise of Greek and Roman culture, Moses had mastered all of theoretical and practical science. Moses had transmitted this wisdom to Orpheus but its ancient Hebraic origin had become lost to the wider culture.

[25] Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), 6.

However, it had been preserved and passed along covertly to the *cognosenti* across the generations. Philo reasserted this apocryphyal teaching in the first century, passing it along to the early Christian apologists and St. Ambrose, who, in turn, transmitted it to St. Augustine.[26]

The early Church fathers exploited this apocryphal teaching in order to make Christian doctrine appear respectable to Pagan intellectual critics. If Greek pagan wisdom was actually on loan from the Jews, the Greek's claim to originality was undercut. The Jews came first. At any rate, the legend of this apocryphal teaching persisted beyond the middle ages, when Renaissance poets and mathematicians laid claim to the Mosaic legacy. The poets, representing the *trivium*, professed descent from this long line of Mosaic teachers to give them standing as theological poets. But like the poets, the mathematicians, representing the *quadrivium*, claimed the same legacy, believing it equipped them better than the poets to uncover for the West a wisdom that had been buried in history.

Descartes' Dream

It required exceptional minds to recover and decipher the lost wisdom. Sir Isaac Newton anointed himself as such an exception. Born on Christmas Day he described himself as one of the Magi, whose gift was to envision the mind of God as a mathematical mind. His revolutionary science extrapolated from this vision.[27] Another self-identified exception was René Descartes, whose significance historians indicate by calling him "the father of modern philosophy."

Jacques Maritain was a philosopher who had an inkling of Descartes' connection with the esoteric teaching. Maritain makes the connection obliquely in his book *The Dream of Descartes*, published in 1944, although it contains chapters which first appeared as articles as

[26] Redpath, *Wisdom's Odyssey*, 42–47.
[27] Redpath, *Masquerade of the Dream Walkers*, 9–32.

early as 1920.[28] Maritain interprets Descartes' philosophy as a reaction to a dream, with which Descartes was smitten on sixteenth of November, 1619. There are many strange elements of this dream which need not distract us here. But there are elements which Maritain emphasizes that conform to Professor Redpath's interpretation of modern philosophy as more a rhetorical tradition, in the sense of a conflation of mathematics and poetry, than a tradition echoing classical Greek philosophy (sense realism).

According to Maritain, Descartes' dream impelled him to envision philosophy as a rhetorical instrument for designing a nominalistic system that would stand as a complete and univocal science—in fact, it would stand as the unification of all sciences. Maritain comments on three central elements of Descartes' dream:

> he is awakened by a burst of noise like a crack of lightning and sees thousands of sparks in his room. In a third and final dream he sees upon his table a Dictionary and a *Corpus poetarum*, open at a passage of Ausonius: *quod vitae sectabor iter?* (What path shall I follow in life?) . . . We gather [Maritain continues] that the Dictionary signifies "all the various sciences grouped together," and that the *Corpus poetarum* "marks particularly and in a very distinct manner, Philosophy and Wisdom linked together."[29]

Recalling that poetry derives from the Greek verb *poieō*, meaning to make, Maritain recognizes that the two books, the Dictionary and the *Corpus poetarum* are iconic in a culture dominated by nominalists and poets. Descartes' *quadrivium*-inspired rhetoric of a systematic logic of clear and distinct ideas can create a new science. Because Descartes' system is *ideosophy*, Maritain believes, it is really a creation, a work of art rather than of philosophy, a point Gilson has made.[30] What stabilizes

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[28] Jacques Maritain, *The Dream of Descartes*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944).
[29] Id., 14.
[30] Étienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1949), 212–213. Gilson puts it this way: "The magnificent 'systems' of

Descartes' system? It is ideas, not real things. Ultimately, it is will. For it turns out that when the will arrests the intellect and does not allow it to wander, clear and distinct ideas emerge. Are the cornerstones of modern thought ideas and will? Are they the substance of modern philosophy that is really rhetoric? When one examines how Descartes himself interprets his dream, it is plausible to argue that he sees himself as an anointed Magus, carrying on the apocryphal tradition that the Renaissance poets believed in. The Magus, because he is special, because he has the special gift of will power, discovers a complete scientific system in his soul. This system is a rhetoric of clear and distinct ideas. If this is so, it sheds a new light on the origins of modern thought.

It especially sheds light on the closing chapter on modern thought: the cultivation of Rousseau's ideology. Rousseau is modernism's closing chapter because Rousseau is the quintessence of modern thought and the father of Postmodernism. Rousseau picked up the pieces of Descartes' failed system. Rousseau did not believe that clear and distinct ideas were buried in our soul awaiting excavation by a mind directed by Cartesian method. Descartes' dualism annoyed him. To escape this Rousseau spiritualized the universe[31] and claimed that clear and distinct ideas emerged in history, not in Cartesian science. Since the past buried clear and distinct ideas, suffocating them and preventing their emergence, history is a record of the benighted past. Since the past is the reason for the present, the institutions that pass as enlightened and civilized (such as family, education, government, and religion) are actually unenlightened and barbaric. Out of Rousseau emerges the modernist vision of progress and a new interpretation of history, an awareness of the past so as to prescribe a progressive future.

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those idealists who bear the title of 'great thinkers,' and wholly deserve it, belong to the realm of art more than in that of philosophy . . . No more than science, philosophy cannot be system, because all systematic thinking ultimately rests upon an assumption, whereas, as knowledge, philosophy must rest on being."

[31] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or on Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 285–287.

Modern thought is largely a recapitulation of Rousseau in various forms (Kant, Hegel, Marx), although the Anglo-American, so-called "analytic" fashion in the English-speaking universities is arguably a return to the medieval reduction of philosophy to one of the liberal arts, dialectic. As such, it is another failure to observe Aristotle's warning: don't mistake philosophy for logic.

PART TWO

From History of Philosophy to Philosophy of History

With this synopsis in place, I can briefly spotlight and summarize the principal themes that constitute Professor Redpath's philosophy of history. For Redpath the history of philosophy is a window on the march of history. Because ideas have consequences, success or failure in philosophy is crucial for judging social well-being. Sound philosophy, especially as it exists in education, is a necessary condition for sound leadership, and without sound leadership society is in peril. In light of my synopsis, Redpath believes that civilization is at great risk. Some may allay their worries by seeking remedy in religion, even pietism. For Redpath, religion is not enough. Bad philosophy can disorder religion, just as much as it can disturb other elements of culture. How do we not disorder our religious judgment, if we disorder our philosophical common sense? Redpath's concern is not that we're losing our faith but that we're losing our reason.

For Redpath the meaning of history is evident in the fate of philosophy. Certain changes in philosophy have been significant enough to affect, even transform, culture. Redpath's philosophy of history results from his judgment about these key historical transformations. Some of these events he celebrates as positive. However, he laments that other changes have been problematic, even destructive. Much of Redpath's philosophy of history emerges as he diagnoses what went wrong in the history of philosophy.

While Redpath is a master diagnostician, he does not neglect offering remedies. By knowing what has gone wrong, he knows how to set things right. His own philosophical education supplies the leadership he has looked for in history. Here I supply a brief summary and commentary of Redpath's appraisal of water-shed events in the history of philosophy. His interpretation of these events constitutes the basics of his philosophy of history.

The Greek Ownership of Philosophy

The origin of philosophy is an important principle in Professor Redpath's philosophy of history. The ancient Greeks realized that sense realism grounds wisdom. Since the attainment of wisdom is crucial to historical development, it is crucial to understand its originators. The original philosophers knew that wisdom can be accessed by all. For this reason, philosophy ought to be an objective in all education that aims to be complete. A person of ordinary intelligence can acquire wisdom because our senses can give our intelligence information about the operation of natural, or secondary, causes. The philosopher is confident that our knowledge is informed by the world of mind-independent things. This means that our minds are in contact with reality; that the content-determining cause of our intellects is our common-sense acquaintance with substances and their causes. This conception of philosophy is the hallmark of Greek thought. In Redpath's account of history it has a twofold significance: (1) it describes the original philosophers' conception of philosophy, and (2) it serves as the standard of philosophy. Since there is no good reason to abandon the Greek conception of philosophy, Greek philosophy is the measure of philosophy itself. Greek sense realism is the Gold Standard, so to speak, for philosophy.

The Significance of Aquinas

The Greeks failed to transmit philosophy with its disciplinary integrity intact to later generations. This failure, for Redpath, is one of the tragedies of history. However, after a millennium of philosophical forgetfulness, philosophy was revived in the work of Aquinas. This revival took place in two ways. First, Aquinas adopted Greek philosophy and made it part of the family of Christian theology. This adoption did not do violence to philosophy because grace perfects nature. Still, philosophy was transformed by becoming subordinate to the theological habit of mind. The result was Christian philosophy, in which philosophy found a home in the full wisdom of theology. In Christian philosophy there is retained some aspects of the ancient Greek habit of mind. But under the higher regulation of theology, it is present in Christian wisdom in a way similar to and yet different from Greek philosophy. For Aquinas, philosophy exists in Christian philosophy in an *analogical* sense. For Redpath this Thomistic synthesis—this happy relationship between faith and reason—is a crucial event in history, because it supplies the principles to explain how human beings ought to live individually and socially.[32]

[32] Professor Redpath's interpretation of St. Thomas' Christian philosophy has provoked controversy. Redpath objects to a common interpretation of Aquinas, according to which his philosophical work is essentially different from his theology. His philosophy is autonomous, independent of his theology. On this interpretation (a dominant one in the history of Thomistic studies), philosophy (just as the ancient Greeks understood it) exists as a separable body of knowledge, existing alongside, but different in kind from, theology. Aquinas sometimes writes as a philosopher, sometimes as a theologian. But the two disciplines are different in kind because the one relies only on natural reason and the other involves revelation. Redpath rejects this stock interpretation of the Thomistic synthesis. It fails to appreciate that knowledge is a habit, a living act of mind perfecting our faculties, and not merely an inventory of propositions ("a body of knowledge"). For a Christian philosopher, theology is always operative in philosophy, as it elevates his or her habit of mind by grace. See Peter Redpath, "The Romance of Wisdom: the Friendship between Jacques Maritain and Saint Thomas Aquinas," in *Understanding Maritain*, eds. Deal Hudson and Matthew Mancini (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987), 91–113.

Secondly, the Thomistic synthesis enabled Aquinas to recover Aristotle's conception of science. For Redpath this is an important event for history. Modern thought has a narrow and diminished conception of science. It has also perpetrated the confusion of separating the disciplines of philosophy and science. Aristotle understood that philosophy and science (because each demonstrates necessity and universality through causes) are the same. The mistaken separation of philosophy and science has done great harm to culture.

Since early modern times, science has been reduced to mathematical physics. This means, of course, that metaphysics is not a science. Moreover, philosophical anthropology and morality are made unscientific. In the wake of this reductionism, it is assumed that only social science can access human nature. Social science claims legitimacy by aping mathematical physics. But such method, if it claims to be exhaustive, nullifies freedom and dignity. How can the person be free and morally responsible if only an organic machine? This explains why there is so much language of determinism and relativism in social science. For Redpath this narrow account of the human person has provoked disorder in society. The record of history is affected by whether or not educators understand human nature. If science fails to describe the human being correctly, and if science cannot prescribe how we ought to live, the results are bound to be ugly. The rest is history.

For Redpath, however, there is a solution: Aquinas' account of science, as a demonstration of causes through an analysis of the one and the many (as my synopsis discussed above), could correct the reductionism in modern science and rehabilitate scientific education. The identity of philosophy and science could be restored. If one can know substances and causes, a deeper metaphysics of knowledge can ground science. This broadening of science would in no way threaten or undermine the genuine achievements of mathematical physics. But it

would complement modern science with an explanation of knowledge that would strengthen scientific education.[33]

The Deformation of Science: Descartes' Dream, Our Nightmare

Another mainstay of Professor Redpath's philosophy of history is his assessment of René Descartes. While it was John Locke who professed to refute Aristotle's hylomorphism, and who was largely responsible for the standard caricatures of Aristotle's science, René Descartes, a generation before Locke, had already gotten credit for engineering a new, non-Aristotelian, vision of science through the construction of a nominalistic system. It is difficult to overstate the significance of Des-

[33] Professor Redpath has warned that much history of modern philosophy is something akin to a Soviet history. Many historians, having accepted the presumptions of modern thought (its nominalism, skepticism, etc.) interpret the so-called rise of modern science through an ideological lens, and the result is revisionism instead of history. In late Renaissance and early modern times, a narration prevailed according to which the achievements of modern physical science "proved" that Aristotle's *epistēmē* was obsolete. This narration advanced three arguments to refute the Stagirite: (1) Aristotle minimized, if not ignored, the mathematical or quantifiable aspects of nature, and thus did not grasp the power of science to predict, statistically enumerate, and technologically control the behavior of matter. (2) Aristotle's multiple errors of observation and experimentation prove that his conception of *epistēmē* is unsound. (3) The methods and achievements of modern science are discontinuous with the past, pioneering new frontiers of empirical investigation, altogether inaccessible to their Scholastic predecessors. While these three claims have become the accepted interpretations of the fate of Aristotelian science, they have more basis in rhetoric than in fact. First, while Aristotle did not have an exhaustive science of quantification, he successfully concentrated on other aspects of nature, providing a well-rounded science in contrast to the narrow science of the modernists, who mainly reduce science to mathematical physics. Secondly, Aristotle's errors of an empirical kind do not nullify his successes in metaphysics and in Aristotelian physics. Once his empirical errors are corrected, his metaphysical principles remain coherent with the corrected results. Aristotle's metaphysics of science, which takes into account matter and form, act and potency, substance and accident, and real and abstract relations, does not stand or fall on his errors of empirical interpretation. Thirdly, modern science builds upon the work of scientists from scholastic times. Galileo and Newton, to mention two prominent scientists, rely implicitly on the four causes. See Edward Feser, *The Last Superstition*: *A Refutation of the New Atheism* (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2008), 65–67.

cartes' system for Redpath's philosophy of history. Because Descartes disordered our understanding of science, philosophy, and human nature, culture today still suffers the repercussions of Cartesianism. This is so, even if modern educators explicitly reject Descartes. His influence is nonetheless evident in their thought.

Redpath understands Cartesian science as a conceptual system. Just as Hobbes had argued that science can only come about when the mind can be ordered or regulated so as to think in a purposeful way, so Descartes believed that stability of consciousness is the key to the formation of science. An unstable mind cannot achieve truth in any way. So a consequence of this demand for stability of thought is that truth itself is not possible until science is formed.

Descartes is contemplating the nature of science in the wake of Ockham's nominalism. Descartes presupposes (a presumption that will become more explicit in Locke) that the knower knows primarily his own ideas, not things. The knower does not know directly what John Deely calls mind-independent things. Since the mind does not know real things, what is the measure of science? Like Hobbes, Descartes believes science emerges as the knower steadies his mind. But whereas Hobbes provides such stoppage by the social contract, Descartes does it with the discovery of clear and distinct ideas. These ideas are buried (hidden) in the knower's soul. Should the knower be exceptional like Descartes (recall his dream), he can arrest his wandering consciousness so that clear and distinct ideas become evident. The will tames the imagination; thereby science is born. Truth is now possible, because without science there is no truth. Truth cannot be obtained by a wandering mind; hence science is the condition for any and all truth. Speaking to the primacy of science for Descartes, Gilson observed that Descartes operated by a stark either/or: either we had science and were certain of

everything by a unitary method or we had no science and knew nothing at all.[34]

As corollaries of this summation of Descartes, Redpath emphasizes (1) that science is a nominalistic system; it is not about things but ideas; it could only be about things by representationalism; whether the system speaks to things would be a matter of guesswork; (2) that science is a logical system; philosophy has devolved into logic; (3) that all the talk about clear and distinct ideas does not obscure the fact that the primary agent in Cartesian science is will, that which is required to arrest the wandering train of imagination.

Professor Redpath's reflections on Descartes impel him to make a bold conclusion about modern science. Since modern nominalism does not allow knowledge of the external world, the knower himself has to be the measure of knowledge. Descartes supplies that measure through will. According to Redpath, the primacy of will in modern thought (most fashionable in Nietzsche) is a product of the Cartesian legacy. What is more, will is a necessary condition for modern science. Redpath credits Gilson for recognizing this fact. In his essay "The Terrors of the Year 2000," Gilson describes modern science as the determination of the will of the scientific community to produce technology, a technology that is self-validating.[35] In the laboratory, science is "efficiency of will," the resolve to put Nature on the rack and torture her for her secrets.[36] Like Gilson, Redpath doubts that such a vision of science can be anything but amoral. Cartesianism rationalizes amoral science. The influence of Descartes shows that, what may appear to involve intramural debates among intellectuals (communities of nominalists in

[34] Étienne Gilson, *Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), 140.
[35] Étienne Gilson, *The Terrors of the Year 2000* (Toronto: St. Michael's College, 1949), 5; 14–16.
[36] Bacon is famously reputed to have made this remark about torturing nature. Apparently, Bacon never said it. It appears to be a statement Leibniz made about Bacon's view of science. See Nieves Mathews, *Francis Bacon: The History of a Character Assassination* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1996), ch. 24.

the seventeenth century), can actually generate dire consequences in history. Redpath's judgment that Cartesianism has disordered Western science is decisive in his philosophy of history.

The Influence of Rousseau

A century before the writings of Nietzsche championed the significance of will, Rousseau made it a constitutive principle in his account of politics and of history. Redpath realizes that Rousseau's treatment of will extrapolates from Rousseau's assessment of Descartes' system. Rousseau judged that Descartes' system failed because it rested on an untenable dualism of mind and matter. This dualism is especially problematic because in Descartes' system mind and matter cannot communicate with each other. Several thinkers—from Malebranche and Spinoza to Leibniz and Maine de Biran—tried to resolve this intractable dualism. Rousseau proposed his own radical solution: since it is obvious that in the world of experience matter and mind communicate, it is reasonable to hypothesize that Descartes' dualism does not exist. Rousseau declared that only minds are substances. If only minds or spirits exist, then nature is nothing but substances in communication. Rousseau even went so far as to think that things, like minerals, that common sense judges to be inanimate are, in reality, animate.[37]

Once this hypothesis was in place, Rousseau made another. While he accepted that science must be a system of clear and distinct ideas, he rejected the belief that God had infused these ideas in our souls, awaiting their divulgence by Cartesian method. Instead, Rousseau believed that clear and distinct ideas emerge in experience, as the human person becomes, like Rousseau's exemplar Emile, aware of himself as first a being living by instinct, as second a being aware of others, and as third a being (a civic being) who lives for others. In other words, science does not emerge from excavating innate ideas in one's

[37] Rousseau, *Emile or on Education*, 285–287.

soul. Instead, science emerges in history as the human person experiences the "call of conscience," which is the obligation to develop as an unselfish being. Since our true self is an enlightened self, an altruistic self, a rightly ordered will subordinates our wants and selfish interests and directs us to become purely civic beings, living for others. For Rousseau history has come of age, aspiring toward a society of people who mature like Emile (a person of empathy and duty), having answered the call of conscience, to seek full consciousness as social beings. Rousseau has given birth to the Progressive view of history. According to Redpath, it is difficult to overstate the influence of Rousseau's theory of will on the shaping of Western history. One of the outcomes of Rousseau's progressive vision of history is that the past must be, by definition, denigrated. Redpath has gone so far as to argue that the Enlightenment, by virtue of imbibing Rousseau's conception of progress and condemnation of the past makes, is implicitly anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic.[38] This means that people are robbed of the wisdom of the past, which is prejudged by Rousseau as benighted. Wisdom and authenticity for Rousseau are measured by transcending the past. This calls for civic man to institute enlightened government to reform all the institutions handed down by the past, institutions that may appear civilized but, in fact, are barbaric.

For Redpath, taking stock of Rousseau has great explanatory power, revealing why, especially among cultural elites, there is indifference to and often contempt for traditional religion and traditional institutions, such as family and education. Redpath would lay most of the annoyances of political correctness at Rousseau's doorstep.

Neo-Averroism

Redpath credits Étienne Gilson with an insight that enables him to interpret how the doctrine of the Hidden Teaching still exercises

[38] Peter Redpath, "Anti-Semitism as an Enlightenment Metaphysical Principle," *Contemporary Philosophy* 23:3-4 (May/ June & July/August, 2001).

influence on modern culture. This insight appears in *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, in which Gilson declares that the Averroistic teaching of the Masters of the Arts in late medieval universities influenced the construction of nominalistic science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[39] Today, the Hidden Teaching might not be formally invoked, as it might have been by Petrarch or Descartes or Newton, but it still has residual influence in culture. It shows up as an Averroistic tendency among the intellectuals.

What does Redpath mean by this Averroism, or "Neo-Averroism"? In Redpath's philosophy of history, Neo-Averroism refers to something akin to Eric Vogelin's judgment that a presumptive Gnosticism dominates modern culture.[40] This Gnosticism refers to a confidence that, as the human person becomes fully self-conscious, the human person will aspire to a utopian end-point for history. Participation in this consciousness authenticates the human person. Those who dissent are benighted. Redpath understands Vogelin's judgment about modernist Gnosticism as being in accord with Rousseau's definition of the "enlightened intellectual" as scientific, progressive, and tolerant. Like Vogelin, Redpath believes that there is a presumption in the culture that right-thinking people approximate Rousseau's enlightened intellectual. This is true even among those who have never heard of Rousseau. It obtains because his influence in the culture is profound.

What precisely do these remarks on Gnosticism and Rousseau's conception of the enlightened intellectual have to do with Averroes? In the twelfth century, Averroes advanced that philosophers, not theologians or logicians, had the primary right to interpret the Koran. This was crucial, he argued, for protecting the Koran from heretical interpreters. Since philosophy grasps the truth, the Koran must conform to philoso-

[39] Étienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), 65.
[40] Eric Vogelin, *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* (Wilmington, Delaware: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2004).

phical wisdom, for the Koran is the essence of truth. Having realized that the philosophers were in a cultural battle with theologians, poets, and dialecticians, he sought to interpret the standing of philosophers in society so that their understanding of Islam would have priority over theologians and dialecticians. To secure the dominance of philosophy, he contrived that there are three categories of the human mind. These categories are distinguishable because each represents a descending order of adequacy in grasping the truth that defines the Koran. The first kind of mind is the scientific mind of the philosopher, who discerns the "interior" truth that is hidden to non-philosophers. This is truth that is genuinely scientific because it results from demonstration through causes, knowledge of a universal and necessary kind. The second kind of mind is that of the logician or theologian. This type of mind is unscientific, relegated to grasping truth in its exterior or symbolic meaning. This kind of mind can aspire to nothing higher than logical interpretation and probability. The third kind of mind is the poetic mind of the simple religious believer, who relies on imagination, emotion, and rhetoric to know the Koran.

Averroes stresses that each of these minds seeks the same object: the unitary truth that is the Koran. But it turns out, Averroes holds, that the Koran has an exterior and symbolic meaning for the mind untrained in philosophy. Only the philosopher can know its interior and hidden meaning. The interpreter of the Koran knows its highest meaning is its revealed meaning, but, for Averroes, revelation lies in its philosophical, or scientific, meaning.[41] In sum:

> Averroes thought that philosophical truth is the highest type of human truth. This means that, for Averroes: (1) human truth is the highest type of Koranic truth, (2) the highest type of human truth is philosophy, or science, (3) philosophical, or scientific,

[41] Peter Redpath, "Justice in the New World Order: Reduction of Justice to Tolerance in the New Totalitarian World State," *Telos* (Winter 2011): 185–192,

truth is present in a hidden fashion in the Koran, and (4) only philosophers can recognize it![42]

Redpath argues that this Averroistic trinitarian hierarchy, when adapted and applied to the interests of modern intellectuals, becomes the rationale for the Gnosticism that describes the age, from Petrarch to the present day. While it is true that modern thinkers do not define the scientific mind as Aristotelian, they nonetheless argue, like Averroes, that only those scientifically trained have the right to authority in culture. After all, as a disciple of Aristotle, Averroes believed that "science" meant demonstration in the way the Stagirite understood it in the *Posterior Analytics*. Nonetheless, the post-medieval culture adopted the Averoistic strategy, even if they rejected Aristotle as the standard of science.

The "new science" claimed this right by virtue of its monopoly on wisdom. The sources, standards, and kinds of wisdom in the modern age have changed over the centuries. And yet, in their different ways, they have expressed the Averroistic conviction that only those who own genuine science know the truth and earn the right to intellectual and social leadership. Accordingly, in Petrarch's time, poetry was science. Hence, the poet had highest Averroistic authority. It was the poet, Petrarch believed, who was the true theologian. In Descartes' program, it was the master of a systematic nominalistic science, who, through strength of will, can excavate clear and distinct ideas that God has buried in his soul. One who cannot talk the language of the Cartesian system is a purveyor of rhetoric, symbols, and imagination, falling short of Averroistic science. For Rousseau, the enlightened mind knows that Cartesian science failed. Cartesian dualism undermines Descartes' project. Science cannot be a logical system of clear and distinct ideas. But as the human mind becomes enlightened (just as Emile matured) his-

[42] Peter Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (St. Louis, Missouri: En Route Books & Media, 2015), 23. See also Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 218–219.

tory does the work for the human soul that Descartes' system failed to do: the discovery of clear and distinct ideas as they emerge in history. History is human specific; so it is revelatory of human nature. As clear and distinct ideas emerge in history, human persons become aware of themselves. Since as persons we cannot achieve self-consciousness, self-realization, without communion with others, the old ways that contribute to tribalism and selfishness must be overcome. History, then, is a progressive project toward the fulfillment of man as "civic man," empathic man, whose sole desire is to serve others, Rousseau's vision of a socialist utopia.

For Redpath, sadly the arc of history has brought us to a culture in which Rousseau's vision of a utopian society as history's final cause has become axiomatic. Authentic, enlightened, scientific intellectuals—those who have brought to fruition the Rousseauian understanding of history—are the heirs to Averroistic science. According to Redpath, it is crucial for philosophers, as opposed to ideologues, to understand the terms and the dynamics of this new Averroism. If it escapes our attention, we cannot correct it. To correct it, we need to detect the Rousseauian assumptions in the modern view of cultural science and leadership. Specifically, we need philosophers trained in classical Greek wisdom, completed and fortified by Christian revelation's deeper understanding of the human person, to challenge Neo-Averroism in the culture.[43] This is the difficulty modern reformers face because the institu-

[43] While I do not have space here to address it, Professor Redpath comments on another dimension of Averroism evident in modern society. I refer to Averroes' controversial interpretation of Book 3 of *De Anima*. Averroes rules out the agent intellect as a power constitutive of the individual human soul. Averroes argued that the agent intellect is disembodied and merely present to the embodied person while alive. The agent intellect affects the human knower, but its nature it is extrinsic to the person. Since the agent intellect is not a faculty intrinsic to the life of the knower, there are no grounds to think the human knower can survive death as an intelligent or conscious substance. Redpath makes much of the fact that this part of Averroes' teaching—the treatment of the agent intellect as extrinsic and independent of the living, individual embodied knower—also appears in modern culture. In his dismissal of Cartesian dualism, Rousseau spiritualizes the universe. Rousseau's metaphysics becomes a kind of animism. History is not about

tions of education are controlled by Rousseauian educators. Would-be reformers are relegated to the lower tiers of the Averroistic hierarchy. They are prejudged as benighted, or patronized as speaking a language that is not scientific, just as Averroes patronized the theologians and the common Bedouin believers.

The rationale for this prejudgment is a Neo-Averroistic conception of tolerance. This is one of Redpath's signature interpretations of modern culture, an interpretation that speaks again to Rousseau's influence. I refer to the mutation of tolerance from a classical moral principle to a relativistic and metaphysical principle. Tolerance used to signify a quality of justice that obligates a person to suffer the existence of a lesser evil (getting along with whom one disagrees) in order to prevent the existence of a greater evil (avoiding social strife). This classical conception of justice is captured in the statement apocryphally attributed to Voltaire that while he may disagree with what an opponent says, he will fight to the death for his right to say it.[44]

Redpath argues that the conception of modern progress cannot be understood unless one realizes that tolerance no longer carries this classical meaning. Through the influence of Rousseau, the modern conception of tolerance (1) reduces justice entirely to tolerance (which it often calls "social justice"); (2) regards tolerance as an enlightened disposition to accept forms of personal and social human behavior that the past did not accept, or may have condemned; (3) understands tolerance (and

individual persons, but about an animistic intellect representing the enlightened mind. Rousseau arguably projects this universal enlightened spirit as the agent of history. Individual persons somehow manifest the activity of this universal spirit, but their status as substances is arguably marginal. Of course, this is a forecast of Hegel's view of history. Redpath sees in Rousseau's conception of enlightened, progressive history an analogy to Averroes' disembodied universal agent intellect. See Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, 28.

[44] Popular reports attribute this remark to Voltaire. Apparently, he did not say it. Instead, Evelyn Beatrice Hall (pseudonym Stephen G. Tallentyre) in her biography of Voltaire wrote the statement, as her way of capturing a conviction the Frenchman surely had. Evelyn Beatrice Hall, *The Friends of Voltaire* (New York: Putnam's, 1906).

justice) to be a metaphysical or hermeneutical principle, not a moral one. Tolerance is a sign that a person is enlightened and in contact with social, progressive reality. Tolerance is a tool for reading history, authenticating one's fitness to associate with enlightened minds, and participating in the march of scientific progress.

Kant, who believed that Rousseau (along with Newton) was one of the geniuses of the eighteenth century, made this altered view of tolerance part of the social contract, as he explains in *What is Enlightenment?* According to Kant, only those who understand the nature of Enlightenment (as Rousseau has articulated it) belong to the "Reading Public." Only they have a right to discourse in the public square, for speech must be more than noise. It is coherent speech when it is enlightened. The influence of Kant's conception of the social contract has encouraged the belief that an enlightened person has certain "accepted" points of view, beliefs corresponding to the ideology of progressive intellectuals.[45]

The conception of tolerance as a metaphysical or hermeneutical principle explains away the bemusement of many conservatives who are sometimes victimized by political correctness. People who preach tolerance will often exclude conservatives and traditionalists from consideration in certain contexts. For example, conservatives are seldom invited to speak on college campuses in the United States. When they are invited, they often experience discrimination in a way "politically correct" speakers do not. It is not hard to multiply similar examples.[46]

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[45] Redpath, *Masquerade of the Dream Walkers*, 108–109.

[46] Thomas Sowell provides many examples in his fine book *The Vision of the Anointed* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 149–182. Sowell understands how tolerance provides a hermeneutical strategy for the Rousseauian elite. Sowell explains that the strategy is simple: the elites in government, economics, and media divide the society into *mascots* and *targets*. This division coheres with their vision of what they want culture to be, a point of view judged presumably superior by those who possess it, a self-righteous perspective Sowell calls "the vision of the anointed." This vision is essentially Rousseauian. It presumes that traditional Western societies are essentially benighted. As the anointed begin to control the different arms of the society—the government, the media,

But Redpath's interpretation and analysis of contemporary tolerance and its political applications explains away the bemusement of conservatives. Conservatives believe Rousseauian monitors of tolerance are inconsistent. They exercise a double standard, being tolerant of social views they like but being intolerant of views they do not favor. But Redpath's account of contemporary tolerance as a Neo-Averrostic principle brings new light on its application in today's social and political discourse and behavior. Because tolerance is a metaphysical principle (a way of demonstrating what it is to be an enlightened human being, socially empathetic, on terms that Rousseau would demand) or a hermeneutical principle (a way of interpreting the backward past as giving way to an enlightened progressive present and future), it is perfectly coherent with Neo-Averroistic tolerance to support progressives and loathe conservatives. By Rousseauian definition, the latter are unenlightened. It is the business of civilization to marginalize them, or worse. In recent generation, history has suffered from the willingness of Rousseauian ideologues to generate Orwellian outcomes in the culture—all in the name of tolerance.

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the courts, the academy, the legal profession (even the clergy!)—they engineer social change and outcomes by discriminating between the anointed and the unenlightened. In practice, Sowell argues, this distinction is manifest in the way the anointed adopt certain members of the society as mascots (victims) and other members as targets (victimizers). This has the advantage of absolving the anointed from having to justify their worldview or their judgment about specific cases. As Peter Redpath has observed, they proceed like fundamentalists: they simply presume that they are enlightened and that those who disagree with them are benighted. For example, homosexuals are mascots, while Americans (like evangelical Christians and Catholics) who defend traditional marriage are targets. Muslims are mascots, while those who would call a fraction of Muslims terrorists are targets, proper objects of opprobrium because they assert their dominant numbers and traditional privilege and advantage to judge other groups. Examples of targets are business owners or executives, conservatives, Republicans, orthodox Protestants, Catholics, and Jews (especially Jews who support Israel), soldiers, sailors, military leaders, and the police. Much of the rhetoric of progressive politics exploits this vision of the anointed. In addition to gays and Muslims, mascots include blacks, women (especially single women), vagrants, illegal immigrants, criminals, prisoners, unwed mothers, abortionists, Hollywood professionals, artists, musicians, and activist judges and lawyers who seek to change the status quo.

CONCLUSION
Quo Vadis, Clio?

Where is the Muse of history taking us? My reflections on Professor Redpath's philosophy of history make it clear that he is alarmed at the drift of Western culture. Will Clio enjoy a more salutary future? Redpath is not particularly optimistic. But optimism is a human business. Hope involves God. As a Christian philosopher, Redpath is ever hopeful. What does he prescribe to help Clio have a peaceful and healthy life on balance? Since a culture cannot thrive by forgetting its theological, metaphysical, and moral principles, Redpath prescribes a restoration of those principles that made Christendom flourish. Those principles came originally from the legacy of the ancient Greeks, who realized that human beings have dignity and freedom by virtue of their reason and moral judgment. Christian wisdom reinforced and amplified this philosophical anthropology by celebrating that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God. This combination of Greek and Christian wisdom Gilson called the Western Creed. It is the substance of Christendom.

To speak more precisely, to revitalize Christendom culture needs to restore (1) sense realism, (2) faculty psychology (according to which arts and sciences perfect or habituate our cognitive nature), and (3) virtue ethics (according to which the moral habituation of the person makes possible happiness for both individual and community). These constitute the signature legacy of the ancient Greek philosophers. Additionally, Redpath calls for a synthesis of Greek wisdom with Christian theology. Jesus Christ calls our destiny to him. He is the Alpha and Omega of history. This combination of Greek wisdom and Christian theology is the essence of the Thomistic synthesis, wherein are the principles explaining Christendom, the glory of Western Civilization.

Lastly, given that there is resistance to this revitalization of Christendom, Redpath exhorts us to have courage, for courage makes all the other virtues possible.

There is urgency. If civilization does not implement these remedies successfully and soon, Clio may again have to live in interesting times.

PETER REDPATH'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

SUMMARY

Peter Redpath is a distinguished historian of philosophy. He believes that the best way to acquire a philosophical education is through the study of philosophy's history. Because he is convinced that ideas have consequences, he holds that the history of philosophy illuminates important events in history. Philosophy is a necessary condition for sound education, which, in turn, is a necessary condition for cultural and political leadership. Hence, the way educators and leaders shape culture reflects the effects of philosophy on culture. In light of this background, it is possible to discern in Redpath's account of the history of philosophy a corresponding philosophy of history. This emerges as he explains how philosophers have produced changes in thinking that have profound consequences for the culture at large. Some of these changes, many of them significant, have been positive, but others have been disastrous. Much of Redpath's philosophy of history diagnoses what went wrong in the history of philosophy so as to indicate why modern culture suffers considerable disorder. The good news is that Redpath's philosophy of history prescribes ways to correct Western Civilization's current malaise.

KEYWORDS: Peter Redpath, history, philosophy, education, culture, politics, leadership, Western Civilization, Christendom, poetry, sophistry, science, wisdom, theology, liberal arts, Thomas Aquinas, metaphysics, Petrarch, humanism, nominalism, Descartes, Rousseau, Averroes, Christian philosophy.