With the World at Heart

Studies in the Secular Today

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1.
We follow the dead to their graves
and our long love follows on
beyond, crying to them, not
"Come back!" but merely "Wait!"
In waking thoughts, in dreams
we follow after, calling "Wait!
Listen! I am older now. I know
now how it was with you
when you were old and I
was only young. I am ready
now to accompany you
in your lonely fear." And they
go on, one by one, as one
by one, we go as they have gone.

2.
And yet are we not all gathered
in this leftover love,
this longing become the measure
of a joy all mourners know,
have known, and will know?
An old man's mind is a graveyard
where the dead arise.

WENDELL BERRY
Sabbath Poem XII, 2000

For, when we love a place, we dwell there in the heart.
AUGUSTINE

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to our daughters and my parents together, as well as to the memory of my dear departed brother, for their love means the world to me.

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Portions of this book have appeared in previous contexts, which I gratefully acknowledge here. Chapter 1, "When We Love—A Place: World's End with Cormac McCarthy," is a revised version of what appeared originally as "With the World at Heart: Reading Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* with Augustine and Heidegger," reprint permission granted by the University of Notre Dame, *Religion and Literature* 39, no. 3 (Autumn 2007). Chapter 5, "Thinking Love and Mortality with Heidegger," is derived in part from an article published in *Medieval Mystical Theology* in 2012, "Notes on Love and Death in Augustine and Heidegger," available online: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1558/mmt.v21i1.9. And brief sections in "Preview: The Demands of the Day," and in chapter 5, "Thinking Love and Mortality with Heidegger," derive from material, here revised and significantly resituated, that appeared previously in the essay "Secular Moods: Exploring Temporality and Affection with *A Secular Age*," in *Working with* A Secular Age, edited by Florian Zemmin, Colin Jager, and Guido Vanheeswijck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016).

Abbreviations of Main Texts Cited

The following texts are cited parenthetically within the work.

Augustine of Hippo

C — *Confessions of St. Augustine*, with book and chapter number. I draw variously on the English translations of William Watts, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); of R. S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin, 1961); and of F. J. Sheed (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2006). Latin citations are taken from Augustine, *Confessionum Libri XIII*, ed. Lucas Verheijen (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981).

TJ; PCC — *Tractates on the First Epistle of John*, in *The Fathers of the Church: Saint Augustine, Tractates on the Gospel of John 112–24*, trans. John Rettig (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995). Tractate and section numbers are followed by page number of this English translation. Latin citations, given by column number, come from J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* 35 (Paris, 1841).

Jacques Derrida

CF — "Circumfession," with English pagination and period number, followed by French page number. In Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Jacques Derrida, "Circonfession," in *Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Seuil, 1991).

Ralph Waldo Emerson

E "Experience," *Emerson's Essays: First and Second Series Complete in One Volume*, intro. Irwin Edman (New York: Harper and Row, 1926, 1951).

Martin Heidegger

PRL; GA 60 *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, in Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Matthias Jung, Thomas Regehly, and Claudius Strube (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1995), vol. 60.

BT; SZ *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1962); *Sein und Zeit*, Sechzehnte Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1986).

GA 20 *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, in *Gesamtausgabe II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1923–1944*, vol. 20.

GA 83 *Seminare Platon-Aristoteles-Augustinus*, in *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2012), vol. 83.

WPF; WD "What Are Poets For?" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971); "Wozu Dichter?" in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1950).

Jean-Luc Marion

ALS; ISP *Au lieu de soi: L'approche de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008); *In the Self's Place: The Approach of Saint Augustine*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012); some translations modified.

Cormac McCarthy

R *The Road* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

Jean-Luc Nancy

A *Adoration: The Deconstruction of Christianity 2*, trans. John McKeane (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013); *Adoration: Déconstruction du christianisme, 2* (Paris: Galilée, 2010).

INT "L'Intrus," in *Corpus*, trans. Richard Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008); originally *L'intrus* (Paris: Galilée, 2000).

Friedrich Nietzsche

SE "Schopenhauer as Educator," in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); "Schopenhauer als Erzieher," in *Nietzsche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Dritte Abteilung (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), vol. 1.

Preview:
The Demands of the Day

Attempting, for some time now, to write a study of love and mortal temporality that I felt might contribute to discourse concerning the nature of secular experience today, I find myself having written a set of texts that are also at bottom about education.

An opening question for the study I anticipated, emerging in and through my previous book *The Indiscrete Image: Infinitude and Creation of the Human* (2008), was twofold: how might we understand, and experience, the creative roles played by love in opening and sustaining the mortal worlds we inherit, build, inhabit, and pass on; and, reciprocally, what constructive roles do those worlds play in making possible the possibilities of our love? The modern and contemporary thinkers who have proved most compelling to me on these questions surrounding love and our temporal worlds, it turns out, link that question recurrently—and in the end, I think, inextricably—to reflection on the intentions, practices, and consequences of teaching and learning. The question, then, of a love that turns secular, because given to world and time, will prove near its core to be a question also about the experience of education and its relation to the day—the day both in the sense of our present time or age and in the sense of everyday life and its demands in such an age.

In retrospect, the question of education shows itself to be already operative within the analysis of experience that framed the explorations of time, language, and desire that I carried out in *Indiscretion: Finitude and the Naming of God* (1999), which constitutes the first element within a trio whose third part unfolds in the following pages. Taking up from within contemporary post-Heideggerian debate (most notably between Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion) the question of whether and how the Christian, and more specifically pseudo-Dionysian, traditions of "negative" or "apophatic" and

"mystical" theology might be understood as "ontotheological," *Indiscretion* comes to draw a contrast between, on the one hand, the existential construal of temporality in Martin Heidegger, the thinker who identifies and elucidates the essence of ontotheology in order to think beyond it, and, on the other hand, the dialectical conception of time in G. W. F. Hegel, the thinker who, for Heidegger, brings the ontotheology of Western Christian tradition to its fullest and most powerful positive expression. Focusing on the question of experience (Erfahrung) in Hegel, or more precisely on the question of a philosophical "science of the experience of consciousness" (the title Hegel first gave to his *Phenomenology of Spirit*), Heidegger helps us to understand that time for Hegel consists most fundamentally in the existence of the concept that has not yet comprehended itself. As Hegel puts it in the last pages of his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which treat "Absolute Knowing," "time is the concept itself that is there [der da ist] and which presents itself [sich . . . vorstellt] to consciousness as empty intuition; for this reason spirit necessarily appears in time and it appears in time just so long as it has not grasped its pure concept, i.e. has not annulled [tilgt] time."[1] According to that definition of time, the essential work of temporal experience is to educate consciousness to its own concept such that consciousness eventually conceives itself fully and thus fulfills the purpose, or achieves the goal, of its own education; in other words, it completes a necessary movement, from natural consciousness to real knowledge, along a road on which, as Hegel puts it in his introduction to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, "the sequence of shapes through which consciousness passes . . . is the detailed history of consciousness' own education [Bildung] to the level of science."[2] Within such a teleological consummation of temporal experience, the work of time is, in some deep sense, finally and fully realized, and the self-difference of consciousness that Hegel understands to drive time is overcome: human consciousness is reconciled with itself in the self-consciousness of absolute knowing, and its world-historical alienation is thereby resolved.

This construal of time undergirds Hegel's conception of human experience, especially in its world-historical dimensions, as driven and structured by the struggle of human spirit to overcome its alienation both in relation

1. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 487 (translation modified); *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Reinhard Heede, in *Gesammelte Werke* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1980), 9:429. For a fuller discussion of this understanding of time, see my *Indiscretion: Finitude and the Naming of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), "The Temporal Experience of Consciousness: Hegel's Difference of Consciousness and Heidegger's Ontological Difference," 59–63.

2. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 50; *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 56.

to the realm of nature, in which scientific rationality will finally see nothing alien to itself, and in relation to the realm of spirit itself, where likewise even the most extreme forms of apparent otherness, difference, or negativity—such as that of God, or death—finally serve as a path through which human spirit finds a reflection, and realization, of itself. The teleological version of history to which this conception of time is essential understands that history as nothing less than the world-historical education of human thought to its own self-comprehension, an education that by necessity does achieve its goal. The religious expression of this educational process as Hegel understands it reaches its fullness (and its paradigmatic status for Hegel) in the Christian, and more specifically Augustinian, conception of divine providence, according to which the apparent deviations of humanity from God's intention for humanity—in other words, the negativity of sin in which humanity differs from, or stands at odds with, itself because it turns away from, and stands at odds with, God—in fact serve God's providential plan that history shall educate humanity back to God and thus back to itself, in this way making use of time in order to achieve the eternal. As Augustine puts it in *The City of God against the Pagans* (bk. 10, chap. 14) while discussing the subjection of all things to God's providence, "the right education [recta eruditio] of that part of the human race which consists of the people of God has, like that of a single man, advanced through certain epochs or, as it were, ages [per quosdam articulos temporum tamquam aetatum profecit accessibus], so that it might rise from temporal to eternal things, and from the visible to the invisible."[3]

While in Hegel's concept of experience the (self-) education of consciousness to its full self-consciousness means that experience for Hegel effectively catches up with itself, finally overcoming the self-difference that structures and drives the time of experience, Heidegger's analysis of the primordial temporality that conditions our finite, and inescapably mortal, Being-in-the-world signals, on my reading, the senses in which the temporality of experience disallows any such consummation of time, or any such overcoming of self-difference. Existing always already as "having-been" and, simultaneously, as ever still yet "to be," I temporalize my Being-in-the-world, as Dasein, in such a way that I can neither get "behind" or "before" my having-been so as to initiate, control, or contain it; nor ever "catch up" with my to-be, so as to take hold of it in some fully present and finally delimited actuality. In sum, in my temporal, and constitutive, self-difference, I can never stand before

3. Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans* 10.14, trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Latin text in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 47 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955).

or after myself, and I can therefore never experience, still less comprehend, the actuality of my Being in any consummate plenitude. By contrast to the overcoming of time's "not yet" in Hegel's teleological conception, the "not yet" of existential temporality in Heidegger remains insuperable. Dasein exists as the ever self-differing "between" of a having-been and a to-be that are constituted in and through each other, and that both remain, thanks to that reciprocal constitution, essentially open and ongoing, themselves recurrently differing from themselves.

It is just this self-difference—mortal in its natality and natal in its mortality—that remains insurmountable in a way that the "difference of consciousness" in Hegelian thought does not. And if that difference of Heidegger from Hegel on the question of temporal difference entails also a thinking beyond Hegel's ontotheology, *Indiscretion* conjectures, then perhaps we can read the traditions of negative theology to resist ontotheology in ways analogous to those in which our mortal self-difference resists the consummation and closure of experience in Hegel. We might then consider an "apophatic analogy" between the logic of our Being-toward-God in the traditions of mystical and negative theology and the logic of our Being-toward-death in the existential phenomenology of Heideggerian tradition: in both cases, the possibility of my thinking and language orients me fundamentally in relation to that which thought and language can never bring experientially into the presence of an actuality or the actuality of any presence. Along thanatological as well as theological lines, *Indiscretion* suggests, our experience of unknowing and impossibility can be in fact generous, or generative: spurring poetic imagination, or indeed giving the ground and condition of creativity itself. A work that opens with questions relating to negative or mystical theology thus leads to a field of reflection concerning negative or mystical anthropology and its potential bearing on the nature of human creativity—the latter taken up, in turn, by *The Indiscrete Image: Infinitude and Creation of the Human.*[4]

Building on *Indiscretion, The Indiscrete Image* sets ground for the present study by tracing lines both of traditional theological and of modern theoretical thinking that link—in strikingly similar ways—human indetermination and unknowing to human creative capacity. From mystical theological conceptions of the human as the incomprehensible image of an incomprehensible God within the traditions of Gregory of Nyssa, John-Scotus Eriugena, Nicholas of Cusa, and Pico della Mirandola; through evolutionary understandings of the human as neotenic in the lineage of Louis Bolk, Georges

4. Thomas A. Carlson, *The Indiscrete Image: Infinitude and Creation of the Human* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Lapassade, and Stephen J. Gould; to more recent theorizations of human creativity developed, in light of technoscientific postmodernity, by thinkers such as Michel Serres, Mark C. Taylor, and N. Katherine Hayles; one finds an image of the human according to which its relatively unfixed, indeterminate, and hence incomprehensible character yields—by both demanding and allowing—human creativity, and thus change, which in turn feed back into our human indetermination and unknowing.

The human as creative creature, and indeed as inherently world-building, has been a central figure in the twentieth and now twenty-first centuries for the humanities broadly and for the field of religious studies more narrowly. Even more pointedly, it has been a central figure in those areas of religious studies and related fields pertaining to the question of "secularization," from the influential sociological work of Peter Berger to a later study such as Marcel Gauchet's *Disenchantment of the World.*[5] In his influential and (despite the numerous debunkings and dismissals, including his own) still relevant treatment of secularization in his 1967 study *The Sacred Canopy*, for example, Peter Berger draws explicitly on neotenic theory in light of philosophers like Hegel, Marx, Max Scheler, and Heidegger to argue that the distinctively human, sociocultural enterprise of world-building stems from the human's biological incompletion and its lack of fixed instinctual program—from the fact that humans, by contrast to other mammals, are born effectively premature and thus are "curiously 'unfinished' at birth."[6] Such prematurity and incompletion place the human, temporally speaking, in delay with respect to itself; coming into the world too early, or "ahead" of itself, in the sense that it is not yet quite finished, the human turns creative in an effort to "catch up" with itself, an effort whose movement remains endless and direction unfixed. "The condition of the human organism in the world is thus characterized by a built-in instability," Berger writes in the opening pages of *The Sacred Canopy*. "Man does not have a given relationship to the world. He must ongoingly establish a relationship with it. The same instability marks man's relationship to his own body. In a curious way, man is 'out of balance' with himself. He cannot rest within himself, but must continuously come to terms with himself by expressing himself."[7] Articulating here in biological and social terms an understanding of the human that comes close to what Heidegger signals

5. Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*, trans. Oscar Burge (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), published originally in French in 1985 as *Le désenchantement du monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

6. Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 4.

7. Berger, 6.

ontologically in his claim (which served as epigraph for *The Indiscrete Image*) that "man is that inability to remain and is yet unable to leave his place,"[8] Berger goes on to highlight the temporal character of this "balancing act" between the human and its world, according to which "man is constantly in the process of 'catching up with himself.' It is in this process that man produces a world."[9] An ever-unfinished world, then, reflects, in and through its ongoing creation, the indetermination of its always unfinished creator.

As I emphasized in *The Indiscrete Image*, and as Berger highlights in the dialectic of world-building that informs his theory of secularization, the unfinished character of the human and the human world—which are each open to ongoing re-creation in and through the other—makes of the human a being who requires, and allows, ongoing social and cultural formation. From this perspective, the human is, to the core, a creature of education, a student from premature beginning to never wholly accomplished end. Insofar as the human is born without having, or knowing, a given program or path, these remain ever to be invented and cultivated, recurrently to be learned and recurrently to be taught.

Attentiveness to the constructive role of the human subject in opening a world, and in setting the conditions of our engagement with the world, predates modern sociology, no doubt, and is a central theme in modern philosophy at least since Immanuel Kant (if not already a figure like Nicholas of Cusa). Resistance to such a construal of the human subject, both in the modern philosophy that Kant represents and in the human sciences adopting similar principles, has been a hallmark of contemporary thought in the lineage of Heidegger, and especially among thinkers significantly informed, as was Heidegger himself, by forms of religious thought and existence developed in the traditions of Paul, Augustine, and Dionysius that shape the late antique, medieval, and early modern worlds. Among contemporary thinkers, the work of Jean-Luc Marion stands out in this regard, having emerged and developed as it did, along both phenomenological and theological lines, in fairly explicit resistance to what in the human sciences and related philosophy appears to Marion as an effectively idolatrous way of thinking. Marion defines the logic of the idol by contrast to that of the icon, and the distinction between them concerns at bottom two different directions of intentionality

8. Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 365; *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt—Endlichkeit—Einsamkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), 531.

9. Berger, 6.

in our seeing or thinking: in the idol, the divine is made to appear according to my intentionality, and it therefore shows up only within the already-given categories and conditions of my thought or vision; whereas in the icon I find that, prior to whatever I manage to see or think, I am already envisaged or intended by a gaze that radically precedes and exceeds the logic and limits of my categories and conditions.[10] While his critique of human-scientific understandings of the human as world-building might set Marion's phenomenology of iconic revelation in real tension or even sharp opposition to central, constructivist, tendencies within the field of religious studies, *The Indiscrete Image* argues that the world-building human, understood as "indiscrete image," or as a (self-) creative creature who lacks pregiven model, may better be understood as neither idolatrous nor yet, according to the alternative Marion wants to posit, iconic. It is not idolatrous because it finds in the world that it creates not the comprehension afforded by some discrete and stable reflection of itself and its own pregiven categories, or what Marion would call the "invisible mirror" of the idol, but instead an open and ever-changing counterpart to its own indetermination, instability, and incomprehensibility. But it is not quite iconic either, insofar as it remains decidedly in and of the world, whereas the iconic self in Marion (like the ethical self in Emmanuel Levinas, to which Marion's iconic thinking is indebted) answers to a decidedly extraworldly intention.

If this difference between idolatrous and iconic intentionality may be understood as one between two differing turns of love—insofar as it is finally love's intentionality that is most fundamental for Marion—the question emerges, in light of my explorations of the human as indiscrete image, whether and how its love, resisting the alternative between idolatrous closure and iconic exteriority, might actually open, structure, and sustain a world. One of the guiding intuitions operative in that question's emergence, to be explored and developed now in the present work, is that the question of love's role in our world-building, or likewise the role of our worlds in sustaining our loves, might bear in fundamental ways on discourse and debate surrounding the secular today.

Common understandings of secularity within current discourse, both popular and academic, can seem to align it with what Marion can see to be the

10. For an introduction to the differing intentionalities and operations of idolatrous and iconic consciousness, see the first two chapters of Marion's groundbreaking *God without Being*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, 2012), "The Idol and the Icon" and "Double Idolatry."

idolatrous tendencies of modern thought and culture. This would be the case, for example, in the common equation of secularity with the technoscientific modernity whose idolatrous character, in Marion's sense, Heidegger indirectly suggests when he speaks of the "delusion" that modern humanity suffers within the essence of modern technology, where, as man "exalts himself to the posture of the lord of the earth . . . the impression comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise in turn to one final delusion: It seems as though everywhere and always man encounters only himself."[11] Within the field of secularization debate among academics, we can note two important voices that inherit and develop a sense of modern humanity as subject to this delusion or idolatry: Karl Löwith, at midcentury, and, at the century's turn, Charles Taylor.

As Heidegger often notes, the delusional posture within which modern humanity sets itself up as lord of the earth—the thought whose abyssal implications Nietzsche makes central to his Zarathustra—goes hand in hand with a construal of nature, typical of modern metaphysics, that reduces nature to a realm of the calculable. This Heideggerian thinking about nature, technology, and the distinctive metaphysics sustaining them in Western modernity bears on secularization theory in any number of ways, not least of which is the contribution to such debate by Heidegger's student Karl Löwith. The subject who can find itself (or believe itself) reflected in the realm of nature—insofar as nature is reduced to that which can be calculated, ordered, and taken hold of by the subject—plays a crucial role, indeed, in the secularization thesis that Löwith advances in his 1949 *Meaning in History*. There, Löwith understands secularization not as a simple decline or disappearance of religion, but much more as an extension—both a continuation and a broadening—of religious thinking in a translated (and illegitimate) form. More pointedly, Löwith argues that the subject of modern Western imperialism, drawing indispensable impetus from Jewish messianic and Christian eschatological energies, finds itself reflected not only in nature, technoscientifically, but also, spiritually, in world-history and culture. Driven by these messianic and eschatological energies, Löwith suggests, our Western, secular modernity assumes a Christian understanding of the human as *imago Dei*, which turns all of nature and culture alike into a global mirror. "While the spirit of Europe declined," he asserts, "her civilization rose and conquered the world. The question," he then continues, on the book's concluding page,

> is whether this tremendous sweep of Western activity has anything to do with the nonsecular, religious element in it. Is it perhaps Jewish Messianism and Christian eschatology, though in their secular transformations, that have developed those appalling energies of creative activity which changed the Christian Occident into a world-wide civilization? It was certainly not a pagan but a Christian culture which brought about this revolution. The ideal of modern science of mastering the forces of nature and the idea of progress emerged neither in the classical world nor in the East, but in the West. But what enabled us to remake the world in the image of man? Is it perhaps that the belief in being created in the image of God, and the Christian command to spread the gospel to all the nations for the sake of salvation have turned into the secular presumption that we have to transform the world into a better world in the image of man and to save un-regenerate nations by Westernization and re-education?[12]

Resonant with any number of more recent critical projects aiming both to elucidate and to counter the imperialistic and totalizing tendencies of globalization today, and notably as these relate to understandings of religion and secularization,[13] Löwith's account of Western modernity's secularized humanity as closed in on itself and, in effect, idolatrous (not his term) might appear, at first glance, close kin to Charles Taylor's more recent and much discussed treatment of secularization, where a "closed world system" eclipsing or foreclosing transcendence reflects the pretension to self-possessed closure on the part of the "buffered" modern self. While interpreting what is ostensibly the same technoscientific modernity, however, Löwith and Taylor see markedly different conceptions of time to be operative in that modernity.

In its understanding of secularization as the persistence of traditional religious thinking within a modern vocabulary and conceptual frame, *Meaning in History* is built around the claim that Christianity remains the decisive source for a modern thinking that advances "a systematic interpretation of universal history in accordance with a principle by which historical events and successions are unified and directed toward an ultimate meaning."[14] The modern idea of history as ultimately, and universally, meaningful depends, Löwith argues, on the conviction that history has a goal toward whose realiza-

11. Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 27.

12. Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 203.

13. See, e.g., Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), and Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

14. Löwith, 1.

tion history is thought to make progress. Such a view of history as teleological and progressive, he insists, derives from the eschatological consciousness of Christian tradition, whose providential understanding of sacred history finds its exemplary expression in Augustine's *City of God*. In both contexts, hope depends on the conviction that the future is one of purpose and fulfillment. "The future is the 'true' focus of history," Löwith writes, "provided that the truth abides in the religious foundation of the Christian Occident, whose historical consciousness is, indeed, determined by an eschatological consciousness. . . . The significance of this vision of an ultimate end, as both *finis* and *telos*, is that it provides a scheme of progressive order and meaning, a scheme which has been capable of overcoming the ancient fear of fate and fortune."[15]

If such Christian eschatological consciousness, with its providential scheme of history, finds its single most influential expression in Augustine's *City of God*, Löwith reasonably suggests, an exemplary translation should be seen in Hegel's philosophy of history, according to which history as a whole proves meaningful thanks to its progressive realization and final consummation of history's purpose: the thoroughgoing human freedom that consists in spirit's rediscovering itself in all otherness, thereby overcoming the (seeming) alienation of its own self-difference. Although, as Löwith points out, Hegel may deviate from Augustine's intentions by applying Augustine's transcendent idea of providence to the immanence of human history in this world (which Augustine never intended), he does, we should emphasize, understand meaningful temporal movement according to the same scheme, where history's anticipated future and goal are eventually and, according to necessity, finally fulfilled—such that historical consciousness in its end fully recollects and comprehends the logic that proves to have been guiding history from the beginning. For Augustine and Hegel alike, the promise of the beginning is realized in the end both fully and necessarily.

While Hegel applies to the realm of secular time a providential scheme that Augustine understood as relevant, in its transcendence, only to a sacred history that differs sharply from the secular, what Augustine and Hegel share is the conviction that the human adventure in time proves to be meaningful, and that it warrants hope, only to the degree that we live toward a future whose final realization consummates a plan or a rationality that has been governing that human adventure throughout. In Löwith's estimation, this illegitimate application to secular history in its immanence of a providential and eschatological scheme that Christianity understood as transcendent yields not only Hegel's philosophical claims to absolute knowing at the end

15. Löwith, 18.

of history but also the likewise totalizing impulses of a Western imperialism that can instantiate the logic of idolatry we have signaled.

Charles Taylor, by contrast, while troubled also about a form of human closure in modernity that might be construed as idolatrous, understands such closure to result not from a misguided translation of Christian thought but from an experience of time that in fact abandons the coherence of the "higher times" that one would, on his view, find in a religious thinker like Augustine.

Against the background of an Augustinian thinking that courses deeply through the Latin Christian West with which Taylor is primarily concerned in his much discussed *A Secular Age*, one might ask whether the formulation itself of a "secular age" is not redundant, insofar as the "secular" is already a fundamentally temporal category, defined in the Augustinian frame—which takes the *saeculum* as "the world of men and time"[16]—less by contrast to the "religious" and more according to some basic distinction between a (created) world we inhabit temporally, under threat of mortality, and a life we might hope for beyond that world and threat. So long as we are speaking of an age, and therefore of temporal passing, are we not speaking at least implicitly already of the secular? And so long as we are speaking of the secular, are we not speaking already of ages in their passing? In his effort to identify and elucidate the distinctive traits of a Western modernity commonly and often confusedly understood as "secular," Taylor, like Löwith, is quite right to emphasize the question of temporality. However, rather than see the persistence of a Christian, Augustinian time-consciousness in modernity, Taylor sees a "crisis" of modern time consciousness that yields an empty, homogenized time flow quite foreign to the "higher times" of a religious thinking and experience like Augustine's. The "pervasiveness of secular time" for Taylor is inextricably bound with "the predominance of instrumental rationality" and the "buffered self" who wields it. "So the buffered identity of the disciplined individual moves in a constructed social space, where instrumental rationality is a key value, and time is pervasively secular. All of this makes up what I want to call 'the immanent frame.'"[17]

Organizing much of his discussion around the interrelated (and questionable) distinctions between "belief" and "unbelief" and between "transcen-

16. As R. A. Markus puts it in his classic study *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of Saint Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), xxii.

17. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 524. For a fuller reading of Taylor on the question of time and affection, and in relation to Hegelian and Heideggerian receptions of Augustine, see my "Secular Moods: Exploring Temporality and Affection with *A Secular Age*," in *Working with* A Secular Age, ed. Florian Zemmin, Colin Jager, and Guido Vanheeswijk (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2016).

dence" and "immanence," Taylor maps those distinctions with respect to two different temporalities: on the one hand, the elevating and fulfilling relation to "higher times" made possible by traditional religious belief in transcendence, and, on the other hand, our entrapment in the flatness and emptiness of an immanent "secular time"—the price one pays, it seems, for "unbelief." Taylor associates such "secular time," furthermore, with the logic and movement of instrumentality and its calculating measurements of a time-flow that has been rendered linear and homogenous. "A purely secular understanding," he writes,

> allows us to imagine society "horizontally," unrelated to any "high points," where the ordinary sequence of events touches higher time. . . . From this we can measure how inexorably the modern age has led us more and more to understand or imagine ourselves exclusively in secular time. This has partly come about through the multiple changes that we call collectively "disenchantment." It has been immeasurably strengthened by the legacy of the drive for order which has become part of what we understand by civilization. This has made us take a stance towards time as an instrument, or as a resource to be managed, and hence measured, cut up, regulated. The instrumental stance by its very nature homogenizes; it defines segments for some further purpose, but recognizes no intrinsic qualitative difference. This stance has built the rigid time frame in which we all live.[18]

Reminiscent of Heidegger's critique of the calculative rationality and technological power that preoccupy modern thought and culture, Taylor's understanding of "secular time" likewise clearly inherits and extends the influential analysis of rationalization and disenchantment in Max Weber. When Taylor notes the inability of secular time—in its never-ceasing, flat and empty flow—to "gather" in the way of higher times, he repeats fairly directly the line of thought that leads Weber, in his 1917 lecture "Science as a Vocation," to take up Leo Tolstoy's question of what "meaning" life—and death—might have in modern civilization. "What [Tolstoy] brooded about increasingly," writes Weber,

> was whether or not *death* has a meaning. His answer was that it had no meaning for a civilized person. His reasoning for this was that because the individual civilized life was situated within 'progress' and infinity, it could not have an intrinsically meaningful end. For the man caught up in the chain of progress always has a further step in front of him; no one about to die can reach the pinnacle, for that lies beyond him in infinity. . . . For [a civilized man] can seize hold of only the minutest portion of the new

18. Taylor, *Secular Age*, 713–14.

> ideas that the life of the mind continually produces, and what remains in his grasp is always merely provisional, never definitive. For this reason death is a meaningless event for him. And because death is meaningless, so, too, is civilized life, since its senseless "progressivity" condemns death to meaninglessness.[19]

For Weber's Tolstoy, death and therefore life prove meaningless within modernity's progressive time because that time simply marches on, or flows away, without preserving—or, as Taylor would put it, without "gathering"—the temporal life and accomplishments of the individual in any culminating fulfillment. By contrast to Abraham or some "peasant in olden times," for whom it was (perhaps) possible to die fulfilled and satisfied, having accomplished what life had to offer, civilized man's life and death, the worry goes, are rendered meaningless by an undifferentiated temporal movement of ceaseless dispersal and eventual forgetting.

This contrast between dispersal and gathering is crucial to Taylor's understanding of the difference between secular time, as one of dispersal, and the "higher times" of religion, which on his view allow for the sort of gathering whose ideal form and fulfillment would be eternity. For Taylor, both the march of technoscience, in its calculating and instrumental rationality, and the experience of mortality in modern secular contexts threaten us with meaninglessness because through them the forces of dispersal defeat those of gathering. The modern crisis of time-consciousness and a modern crisis before death go hand in hand for him, and both relate directly to the logic and tempo of instrumental rationality within modern technoscience.

A focus on technoscience and its antagonism with "religion" stands at the heart of a narrative that Taylor takes to exemplify thinking about secularity within the "modern humanist culture" where the human circles back upon itself in a "closed world system" inhabited by "buffered" selves. According to that thinking, "modern secularization" amounts to "a recession of religion in the face of science, technology, and rationality."[20] While Taylor interprets this recession to be the result of a "death of God" that he takes (again problematically) to mean "that one can no longer honestly, lucidly, sincerely believe in God," his larger argument against modern "subtraction" theories does call our attention productively to overlooked affective shifts—relating to ethical

19. Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2004), 13; "Wissenschaft als Beruf," in Max Weber, *Gesamtausgabe*, Abteilung I: Schriften und Reden, vol. 17, ed. Horst Baier et al. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1984), 87–88.

20. Taylor, *Secular Age*, 573, 574.

and spiritual life—in our transition to a secular age. Within the "'subtraction' story of the rise of modern humanism," Taylor contends, an "exclusive humanism" is what remains—for a neutral and objective rationality—once we have left behind all of the irrational superstition and fanaticism of religion. Taylor is right, I believe, to argue that secularization and humanism are not well understood in terms of any such simple move to a neutral and objective position freed up by the triumph of reason over misguided forms of religious thought and practice (as some notions of progress might have us think); modernity, he helpfully emphasizes, entails not simply the rise and spread of certain forms of reasoning but a whole web of commitments and inclinations that touch us at other levels and should themselves be understood as ethical or spiritual. This ethical or spiritual sense of modernity—as bound to distinctive forms of culture and the "new understandings of self, agency, time, [and] society which Western modernity has generated"[21]—is what the various subtraction narratives simply miss. If Taylor is quite right to resist this common (and recently revived) story about some neutral rationality's rise and displacement of religion, however, Taylor's characterization of the humanism involved—and of its shortcomings vis-à-vis "religion" as Taylor understands it—does neglect, I think, an important direction for thinking about the secular today in terms of affection and temporality.

What Taylor's thinking about the closure of modern humanism misses stands out in his treatment of death. To his perspective, the shortcomings of modernity's closed world system and exclusive humanism become clear in the crisis of meaning that he believes death to bring about. In answer to a criticism that religious "yearning for eternity" is a "trivial and childish thing," Taylor argues that it much rather "reflects an ethical insight, the one expressed in the Nietzschean phrase, which could be put negatively, that death undermines meaning." "All joy strives for eternity," Taylor writes, glossing Nietzsche's suggestion that *Alle Lust will Ewigkeit*, "because it loses some sense if it doesn't last." Putting the point in terms of an essential tie he sees among happiness, meaning, and love, Taylor holds that "the deepest, most powerful kind of happiness, even in the moment, is plunged into a sense of meaning. And the meaning seems denied by certain kinds of ending. That's why the greatest crisis around death comes from the death of someone we love."[22] Strangely evoking Nietzsche to argue that transience and mortality compromise the meaning of our loves, Taylor seems to frame the matter according to just the nihilistic alternative that Nietzsche energetically struggles against: if there is

21. Taylor, *Secular Age*, 573.

22. Taylor, *Secular Age*, 722, 721.

nothing "beyond" "this" life's end, the reasoning goes, if a life does not endure past death, and indeed eternally, then the "meaning" of this life is somehow compromised. Within Taylor's evaluation of temporal transience along these lines, death signals the extreme of time's dispersal, and in this it seems to threaten the distinctively human work of "gathering" out of, and in resistance to, such dispersal—a work exemplified for Taylor by the movement of love. The religious yearning for eternity, he posits, constitutes an extension of the gathering work that love does already within time:

> One of the things which makes it very difficult to sustain a sense of the higher meaning of ordinary life, in particular our love relations, is death. It's not just that they matter to us a lot, and hence leave a grievous hole in our lives when our partner dies. It's also because just because they are so significant, they seem to demand eternity. A deep love already exists against the vicissitudes of life, tying together past and present in spite of the disruptions and dispersals . . . . By its very nature it participates in gathered time. And so death can seem a defeat, the ultimate dispersal which remains ungathered.[23]

It is striking, given the themes and figures operative in the mix, that Taylor does not treat at greater length the concern of Nietzsche to argue that we need not (and should not) appeal to the unity and eternity of any "true being" in order to affirm the becoming—which is to say the arising and the passing away—of life. And it is likewise striking that he would give so little attention to Freud's views on transience and loss, where the beauty and joy of life are not contradicted but indeed conditioned and confirmed by its mortal finitude. Along these lines of difference between Taylor and thinkers like Nietzsche and Freud (or their later heirs such as Jacques Derrida or Mark C. Taylor), one can sense the deep resonance in Taylor of an Augustinian thinking that finds in modern time consciousness not the translation of Christian eschatological and providential thinking that Löwith sees there but the meaningless stream of time that troubles Weber's Tolstoy.

While the modern conception of time in terms of "progress" by means of humanity's rational self-assertion appears to Löwith as an illegitimate extension of Christian providential thinking, and while Charles Taylor sees in such rational self-assertion rather a construal of time that abandons Christian thinking and leaves us to dwell isolated and unfulfilled in the immanence of our closed world systems, a third important voice within secularization debate offers an important alternative to these two perspectives: that of Marcel Gauchet. While highlighting the human work of world- and self-creation in

23. Taylor, *Secular Age*, 720.

technoscientific modernity, Gauchet comes to understand the temporality of such work along lines that defy the idolatrous closure one might see in either of the temporalities that Löwith and Taylor identify as distinctively modern and secularizing. According to the political history of religion that Gauchet writes in his 1985 *Disenchantment of the World*, the long-term movement of humanity, via monotheism, from a religious existence in which humanity subjects and conforms itself to an order already established, and thus fixed, by the gods in a distant past, to a modernity in which we look instead to the future by creating our own world and, in that way, ourselves, does not in fact yield the closure, or idolatry, of any human self-presence. It rather exposes creative humanity, and its world, to their own inherent and inescapable otherness: "A society subject to itself," Gauchet writes in a section titled "Living-with-Ourselves: Absorbing the Other," "points to a very specific type of organization and mode of functioning based on internal difference, and hence is at the opposite remove to both an external religious functioning and the consequent all-inclusive self-presence one might have expected. Thus subjection to the past was replaced not by sovereign freedom conscious of the here and now, but by the relation of self-identity through the other of the future. This is why it is accurate to speak of a transference of the other from outside to inside the human sphere." While highlighting the human creativity, and self-assertion, operative in the technoscientific modernity whose delusional, idolatrous, imperialistic, or closed inclinations can trouble Heidegger, Marion, Löwith, or Charles Taylor, Gauchet points to an unknowing that he sees as conditioning the temporality of such creativity—and thus to an alterity that conditons and haunts the worlds we create. "When the gods abandon the world," Gauchet contends, "when they stop coming to notify us of their otherness to it, the world itself begins to appear other, to disclose an imaginary depth that becomes the object of a special quest."[24]

For Gauchet, a paradox of modern humanity's creative self-assertion is that it yields not an idolatrous closure that would reflect us back to ourselves in a discrete and comprehensible image but an ongoing opening to our own recurrently renewed unknowing. "The way in which we work to generate [the future] prevents us from knowing it. And we have no doubt reached the critical point where the very accumulation of the means of change marks the futility of the ideological ambition to predict the in principle unknowable future. The more we try to control the future, the more open-ended it becomes." Gauchet takes the temporality of our creative and self-creative humanity today to entail a secularization that diverges sharply from the different kinds of closure that might define secularization for influential thinkers such as Löwith or Charles Taylor; and while he contrasts that secularization with a certain form of religion, we can note also how deeply its logic resonates with that of the indiscrete image we traced previously not only in technological but also in mystical-theological contexts. Gauchet's most striking lines in this latter direction are worth citing at length. Writing against the background of his contention that "the revolutionary cause, which promised humanity's ultimate self-reconciliation" has collapsed, and that "the classic ideological discourses of futurity, whether in the progressivist version of continuity, or radical versions of a revolutionary break, have been exhausted and made obsolete by historical change,"[25] Gauchet goes on to read the meaning of our secularization as a looming of the unknown future:

> The *secularization of history* is completed as the future becomes unrepresentable. The faceless and nameless future, unconstrained and unaffected by occult determinism, is the *pure future*, removed from the theological cocoon which concealed it for two centuries. From now on, no more diviners, mediators, and sacrificers. For herein lies the future's main paradox: the more the order of the invisible comes to light, the more secular it becomes; the more unpredictable it becomes, the less inevitable it is; the more accountable it makes us, the more it teaches us that we create it. The less possible it is for us to consider the future an object of superstition and worship, the more apparent it becomes that the future will be *other* than we imagine. The more we accept ourselves as the authors of history, the only remaining enigma is we ourselves. The ordeal of otherness has become the reference point forcing freedom on us, as sure sign that we are governed by a logic opposite to the religious one of origins.[26]

In light of this contention that the secularization of history entails the experience of an unknowing that results from, and also sets the conditions for, the work we ourselves do to create and shape our world and time, Gauchet's "disenchantment of the world" may seem to differ significantly from what that latter phrase means—or from what people commonly assume it to mean—in its earlier and more famous use, in Max Weber's "Science as a Vocation." However, a closer look at Weber's lecture may show that the belief in scientific calculation and technological control that Weber sees to define the "disenchantment of the world" does not, for all that belief's strength, free us in modernity from our unknowing fate—or from the fact, as Weber pointedly asserts, that while the gods whose eternal struggle continues today "have

24. Gauchet, 203.

25. Gauchet, 191, 203, 179, 184.

26. Gauchet, 184–85.

been deprived of the magical and mythical, but inwardly true qualities that gave them such vivid immediacy" in previous worlds, "these gods and their struggles are ruled over by fate, and certainly not by 'science.'"[27]

The title alone, "Science as a Vocation," can seem for many to signal an inextricable tie, or even the equation, between "secularization" (a term Weber does not use in the text) and a "disenchantment of the world" (Entzauberung der Welt) that, according to Weber, has been unfolding for millennia in the West but reaches a high point with the calculating and instrumental rationality of modern science and related technologies. To be sure, within Weber's definition and analysis of that modern disenchantment, one might well see, at least at first glance, a logic resembling that which supports the delusion of technological humanity in Heidegger, or the idolatry whose analysis in Marion can be read to echo Heidegger, or the closed world system of Charles Taylor. For Weber clearly does hold that the "rationalization" yielding modern disenchantment "means that in principle . . . we are not ruled by mysterious, incalculable forces [in the world we inhabit], but that, on the contrary, we can in principle master all things by calculation [daß es also prinzipiell keine geheimnisvollen unberechenbaren Mächte gebe, die da hineinspielen, daß man vielmehr alle Dinge—im Prinzip—durch *Berechnen beherrschen* könne]. This means that the world is disenchanted [Das aber bedeutet: die Entzauberung der Welt]."[28]

While the text is most widely known, or at least referenced, for this thesis on disenchantment, for its related diagnosis of modernity, and for the roles these have played in discourse surrounding the question of "secularization," its most important contribution to thinking about the secular today may stem more, I believe, from the fact—less commonly highlighted—that the

27. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 23; "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 100. Among recent revisitations of the meaning of disenchantment, both today and in Weber's time, see esp. Jeffrey L. Kosky, *Arts of Wonder: Enchanting Secularity—Walter De Maria, Diller + Scofidio, James Turrell, Andy Goldsworthy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), which, against the background of modern thinking and its principles of sufficiency and lucidity, explores the places of mystery and wonder, and the questions of dwelling, opened by contemporary art work that many would assume to be secular; and Jason A. Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), which cautions against the "myth of no myth" by richly tracing overlooked and complicated relations between the emergent human sciences and various forms of occult thinking they are often assumed to leave behind.

28. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 12–13 (translation modified); "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 87.

text is also, fundamentally, about teaching and learning as these relate to what Weber calls "the demands of the day."

An allusion to lines from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* concerning the question of duty—"What is your duty? The challenge of the day"[29]—Weber's appeal to the demands of the day or to the challenge of the day (die Förderung des Tages) is integral to his lecture's preoccupation with the question of time. In fact one could read the entire text as an inquiry into the question of the day: both the day in the sense of the time or age or epoch in which we live, namely, a modernity that Weber works to diagnose; and the day in the sense of our lived temporality—the everyday life that, for reasons Weber identifies and elucidates, can prove indeed to be a challenge to each and all of us in our modernity.

This temporal framing, at both levels, relates intimately to the text's central concerns and claims regarding the question of education. At the proximate level, Weber finds himself (on November 7, 1917, in Munich) addressing students of his day who had invited him to contribute to their series of talks on the question of "'*geistige Arbeit als Beruf*'—intellectual or spiritual work as a calling."[30] Weber perceives in those students, as in the youth of his day more generally, a yearning and seeking for what they believe is denied to them by their everyday life: meaningful experience and, through such experience, a cultivation of "personality." In their invitation to Weber, he hears a call, likewise common in the day as he sees it, for the kind of leader who, the students believe, might answer such yearning. Weber's own answer, which he works out in and through a diagnosis of the day in the sense of the age or epoch of modernity, entails near its core not only a discourse on his understanding of education but also a living practice of it.

In that practice, as in Weber's understanding of the proper role of the teacher, and student, we should read him, I think, as close kin both to Freud and to Nietzsche. With respect to the former, we can read Weber to propose and practice something quite close to what Freud had understood, and encouraged, as our "education to reality." Insofar as such an education is directed toward the wishes governing our illusions, it entails less a (frequently caricatured) theoretical or scientific effort to "get" reality "right" in terms of adequate representation, and more the never finished work of adjusting one's expectations—affective as much as intellectual—in relation to the real and its unavoidable dissatisfactions. Freud's explicit analyses of religion in works

29. Goethe, *Wilheim Meisters Wanderjahre*, in the *Weimarer Ausgabe* (Weimar, 1907), vol. 42, sec. 2, p. 187, as cited in Weber, *Vocation Lectures*, 31.

30. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, eds., introduction to Max Weber, *Vocation Lectures*, xiii.

like *Future of an Illusion* (1927) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929) are, to be sure, an important element within his thinking about such an education to reality, insofar as he sees in religion the driving wish for a full and final satisfaction that he takes to be at odds both with our social being and with our individual psychic constitution. But the Freud most relevant to our inquiry into the secular here, as related to Weber and others, is the Freud of his short 1915 text "On Transience," which argues that the transience of life not only does not compromise its beauty or joy; it is one of their fundamental conditions. As I'll suggest, while Weber's thinking about time clearly abandons any dream of providential or other teleological consummation or fulfillment, it also rejects the nihilistic alternative of despair. In this regard, the Weber who resonates with Freud and his education to reality seems close kin also to Nietzsche, for Weber's understanding of the broader context in which such an education is called for aligns significantly with Nietzsche's thinking about the death of God: lacking any one and final word on the meaning or value of life; lacking any single, stable, and extra-perspectival position from which such ultimate judgments might be securely made and held; the modern context in which Weber and his students find themselves, he insists, is defined by the unavoidable and endless struggle of competing, and irreconcilable, ultimate viewpoints, which operate much like the gods of old, but as impersonal forces within a world that has been disenchanted.

This is the context, Weber suggests, that explains both the yearning he senses among the youth of his day and the impossibility of that yearning's satisfaction within their everyday lives: "Nowadays," Weber writes,

> we have the religion of "everyday life" [Heute aber ist es religiöser "Alltag"]. The numerous gods of yore, divested of their magic [entzaubert] and hence assuming the shape of impersonal forces, arise from their graves, strive for power over our lives, and resume their eternal struggle among themselves. But what is hard for us today, and is hardest of all for the young generation, is to meet the challenge of such an *everyday life* [einem solchen *Alltag* gewachsen zu sein]. All chasing after "experience" ["Erlebnis"] arises from this weakness. For weakness it is to be unable to look the fate of the age full in the face.[31]

In light of just this pluralistic and disenchanted everyday life, and in answer to a youthful evasion of it, Weber refuses to give students what they may believe they want, which is not only "experience" but also the kind of leader who might guide them to it, so to reveal the meaning of it all. At the heart of such refusal is the understanding of teaching that corresponds to Weber's

31. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 24; "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 101 (Weber's emphasis).

understanding of science and its role in modern life. That understanding, we should note, actually places Weber at odds with two different directions of wish: the wish, to be sure, of youth that they might escape the disenchanting force of science and arrive at a kind of meaning that disenchantment forecloses, but also the wish of those who continue to seek in science itself a meaning that the youth at least are astute enough, or spiritually attuned enough, not to seek there.

The teacher cannot be the kind of leader these students may crave, Weber argues, because the teacher must be a scientist; but the teacher, as scientist, also cannot deliver the kind of meaning—or happiness—that some might look for in science. (Their number, it seems to me, may be greater today than Weber estimated in his day: "Thus a naive optimism had led people to glorify science, or rather the techniques of mastering the problems of life based on science, as the road to *happiness*. But after Nietzsche's annihilating criticism of those 'last men' 'who have discovered happiness,' I can probably ignore this completely. After all, who believes it—apart from some overgrown children in their professorial chairs or editorial offices?"[32]) In both cases, the key to Weber's analysis will be his attentiveness to the limitations of science—and his insistence that whatever value or meaning science may have depends on acknowledging and living with those limitations.

His insistence on limitation is at the heart of Weber's famous and often caricatured discussion of the distinction between fact and value. In no way naive about the ease with which scientific analysis might achieve "objectivity" or "neutrality," Weber insists that the job of a teacher, as scientist, is to teach facts and logical relations as they operate within any given system (which means not only natural or physical systems but also political, cultural, religious, etc.); the teacher's job is not to pronounce judgment on the ultimate value or meaning of those facts and relations. To attempt the latter is to confuse the role and competences of teacher with those of leader or advocate, prophet or demagogue. It is also to misunderstand the nature of our ultimate commitments—including, first and foremost, any such commitment to science itself. Despite what might be suggested by the predominant economics and politics of our contemporary university, or of our STEM-obsessed and technoscientifically bewitched culture more broadly (where the overgrown children are perhaps not a minority), scientific reasoning, Weber well contends, not only cannot judge the ultimate value or meaning of whatever systems it studies; it cannot even establish scientifically its own ultimate value or meaning. These must be presupposed. This is a crucial but often overlooked

32. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 17; "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 92.

point within the logic of Weber's position. For to live the life of science as he lucidly confronts it, to commit oneself to it, is to presuppose—without any rational-scientific ground—that such a commitment is somehow ultimately meaningful or valuable; the rational enterprise that ensues from the commitment can never dictate or guarantee that commitment, or its meaning.

One must appreciate this insistence in Weber's analysis on the limitations of science, and on the power that derives only from such limitation, in order to see and understand how scientific enterprise is for him a matter of passion, or even intoxication—and in order to recognize likewise how scientific teaching is, or should be, an ethical undertaking. In noting both the indispensable role of passion in scientific life and the ethical significance of teaching, Weber is responding to a crisis of meaning that relates to the experience of time in the modern culture shaped by science. As we've noted, it is a cluster of questions concerning temporality that leads in Weber's text, as in the modernity it addresses, to the question of whether and how science, or life in a scientific civilization, might or might not be meaningful (above and beyond science's practical applications). Because the movement of science intends and entails the open-ended possibility of progress, one enjoys within that movement neither any security that one actually will achieve anything worthwhile through the movement (because progress is possible but not necessary) nor any hope that one's achievements, however great they may be, will constitute something ultimately lasting (because the progress of science is "infinite," and to participate in it is to will, at least implicitly, that one's own achievements should contribute to a movement that shall eventually render those achievements obsolete). The latter point is fundamental to the suspicion of Tolstoy, which Weber highlights in framing his discussion, that individual death, and hence life, are meaningless in a civilization whose temporality is modeled on, or defined by, scientific progress. As I read him, however, Weber neither accepts nor ends in this nihilistic despair; but his position likewise abandons the kinds of ultimate meaning or consolation that the youth of his day, or the overgrown children, may seek. (In this sense, Weber is an important source for Hans Blumenberg's argument, contra Löwith, that Christian eschatology, as a story of necessary and ultimate fulfillment, could never have yielded, by simple translation, the more modest understanding of time that emerges with the experience of progress in early modern science: progress as always possible but not necessary, and as open-ended and hence always provisional.)[33] The task as Weber sees it is to live temporally with uncertainty and disappointment without coming to despair, and the keys for this are passion, the devotion of genuine personality, and a commitment to teaching and learning as ethical tasks.

These are all themes that Weber talks about in his discourse on science and scientific teaching, but even more, they are themes enacted by him through that discourse, which constitutes an exercise in the thing about which he speaks. In addressing the students before him, Weber calls their attention to the conditions of university life, wherein chance plays an inescapable role in one's landing (or not) and keeping (or not) an academic position; highlighting the likelihood that "you," in your academic life, will need to watch mediocrity after mediocrity pass beyond you, Weber notes that these external conditions demand also a certain inward disposition, and in this he is doing what he takes to be essential work for a teacher: confronting his audience with inconvenient facts, he awakens them to their need to live through disappointment, and he challenges them to ask honestly whether they believe they can do so without coming, as so often and understandably happens, to bitterness and resentment.[34] These questions of disposition are decisive not only in relation to the external workings of the university but also in relation to the internal logic of scientific work itself. According to that logic, the ascetic dedication of the scientist—the willingness and ability to specialize, the unrelenting diligence—remains indispensable, but it does not free the scientist from exposure to chance in the work itself. One will surely not, in one's work, achieve meaningful results without diligence, but diligence alone guarantees in no way that the inspiration for a new idea or insight will ever come.

Famous for lamenting the modern age as one of specialists without spirit, Weber soberly accepts the reality that specialization is unavoidable, but he argues also that answering the demand for specialization in science requires,

33. See Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983); and for a helpful summary of the Blumenberg-Löwith debate, see Robert M. Wallace's "Progress, Secularization and Modernity: The Löwith-Blumenberg Debate," in *New German Critique* 22 (1981): 63–79. An element within Blumenberg's analysis worth attending to, both with respect to the character of science and with respect to the nature of secularity, is the self-critical modesty he sees come to characterize modern science subsequent to its initially inflated, and then disappointed, expectations of definitive, socially and ethically positive, results. A similar attentiveness to the modesty of secular thinking in early modern political contexts can be found in Julie E. Cooper, *Secular Powers: Humility in Modern Political Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

34. For a lucid and timely discussion, in light of Weber and Nietzsche (as well as Erving Goffman, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Alexis de Tocqueville), of the exposure to chance and consequent experience of resentment as increasingly prevalent traits of modern and contemporary life, see Bryan S. Turner, "Max Weber and the Spirit of Resentment: The Nietzsche Legacy," in *Journal of Classical Sociology* 11, 1 (Feb. 2011): 75–92.

in fact, a passionate—and personal—investment in the enterprise. We must act, indeed, as if "our soul" itself depends on getting right a conjecture whose real origins and consequences we ourselves may never know or enjoy. In this sense, our work can seem to come from, and give itself to, "the ages." The cultivation of our passion in relation to this deeper sense of time, which is demanded by the cold, ascetic logic of science, is also what makes of science a vocation—and what renders science a genuinely human undertaking:

> Nowadays, a really definitive and valuable achievement is always the product of specialization. And anyone who lacks the ability to don blinkers for once and to convince himself that the destiny of his soul depends upon whether he is right to make precisely this conjecture and no other at this point in his manuscript should keep well away from science. He will never be able to submit to what we may call the "experience" ["Erlebnis"] of science. In the absence of this strange intoxication that outsiders greet with a pitying smile, without this passion [Leidenschaft], this conviction that "millennia had to pass before you were born, and millennia more must wait in silence" to see if your conjecture will be confirmed—without this you do *not* possess this vocation for science and should turn your hand to something else. For nothing has any value for a human being as a human being unless he *can* pursue it with *passion* [Denn nichts ist für den Menschen als Menschen etwas wert, was er nicht mit *Leidenschaft* tun *kann*].[35]

Passion, then, which alone for Weber endows science, or anything else, with a genuinely human value, is crucial to his understanding of authentic personality, and he sets his own understandings of passion and personality at odds with the "idols" of experience and personality current among the young of his day. The cult of these idols, which is sustained, Weber worries, by the media of contemporary mass culture, will be countered with the "personality" of the scientist, which is defined solely by his or her devotion, for "the only person to have 'personality' is the one who is *wholly devoted to his subject* [der *rein der Sache* dient]."[36]

35. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 8; "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 80–81 (Weber's emphasis).

36. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 10; "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 84. In terms of such devotion, the scientist resembles the artist, but these two figures differ notably for Weber in terms of their relation to time, and that temporal difference is crucial to Weber's entire discussion of meaning in relation to science and modernity more broadly. Whereas the realm of art may undergo, through time, movements of change that do not invalidate a genuine artistic achievement, Weber argues, the experience of time in science, thanks to the movement of progress, demands resignation on the part of the scientific worker to the fact that her results, never guaranteed to occur in the first place, are also always provisional—her achievements, should she manage any, always destined to an obsolescence that she must herself in some sense will. Just as the one devoted to science must be resigned to the fact that chance—rather than calculation—determines whether and how inspiration comes, so she must be resigned to the fact that scientific progress is, and intends to be at its core, "infinite" or endless—such that no final or ultimate fulfillment can be achieved or, thus, enjoyed within the temporal movement driven by the logic of scientific progress.

If the open-ended character of progress in science, and the essentially related movement of ongoing, endless change in modern culture more broadly, generate the suspicion, voiced so well for Weber by Tolstoy, that individual death—and hence life—in modern culture are meaningless, Weber's response to that suspicion rejects both the hope of ultimate fulfillment and the alternative of nihilistic despair, and it does so by appealing, on the side of scientific work, to passion and devotion, and by appealing, on the side of teaching, to its ethical significance.

As we have noted, science and hence the teacher in Weber's sense cannot rightly make judgments of ultimate value or meaning, nor advocate for party positions—but the teacher's adhering to this fact is tied essentially for Weber to nothing less than the meaning and value of teaching as an ethical undertaking. While science and its teaching cannot dictate the ends we choose in life, nor estimate their ultimate value or determine their ultimate meaning, science and its teaching can aid us, even compel us, to cultivate clarity concerning the positions we hold—or concerning the "gods" we serve and/or offend—and it can thus enrich our sense of responsibility for the presuppositions and implications of the lives we lead.

> If we understand the matter correctly . . . we can compel a person, or at least help him, *to render an account of the ultimate meaning of his own actions.* This seems to me to be no small matter, and can be applied to questions concerning one's own personal life. And if a teacher succeeds in this respect I would be tempted to say that he is acting in the service of "ethical" forces, that is to say, of the duty to foster clarity and a sense of responsibility [er stehe im Dienst "sittlicher" Mächten: der Pflicht, Klarheit und Verantwortungsgefühl zu schaffen]. I believe that he will be all the more able to achieve this, the more scrupulously he avoids seeking to suggest a particular point of view to his listeners or even impose one on them.[37]

While the ascetic self-restraint of the teacher might seem a gesture of withholding in relation to the student's yearning, a niggardly refusal to grant the student's wish, we should understand it much more as an act of generosity. It may even approximate, I'd venture, a work of love, insofar as it attempts at its core to enable the other to be who she is, and who she will be—a defini-

37. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 26–27; "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 104.

tion of love, we will see in the coming chapters, operative in the theology of Saint Augustine as also, later, in the existential phenomenology of Augustine's reader Martin Heidegger, and then again in some of Heidegger's more recent heirs. The restraint or withholding of the teacher, a certain kind of reticence, on this reading, gives room, and time, for the student to be herself and thus to learn and become. "Perhaps the most challenging pedagogic task of all," Weber states (within passages rightly noting the frequent lack of connection between the quality of teaching and the enrollment numbers in any given course), "is to explain scientific problems in such a way as to make them comprehensible to an untrained but receptive mind, and to enable such a person—and this is the only decisive factor for us—to think about them independently."[38] From this perspective, teaching tends to the capability of the student in her separated being, and insofar as teaching intends to enable the student in that being, to enrich or expand her scope of possibility, its proximity to a work of love suggests itself.

The suggestion grows stronger if one reads Weber's distinction between teacher and leader in light of a distinction that Heidegger makes in *Being and Time* between two different directions that can be taken by one's positive care—or solicitude (Fürsorge)—for others, a care whose analysis in Heidegger owes more than a little to Augustine's understanding of love as a willing that the beloved be. Whereas one direction of solicitude "leaps in" for the other to deal with some concern of hers for her, or "in her place," then to hand everything back to her as already dealt with or "taken care of"; the contrasting direction of solicitude consists in a "leaping ahead" of the other—not to take care of her concern for her, or in her stead, but rather to enable her to take up herself, and as distinctively hers, the care thanks to which alone she can ever have the delimited concerns she does have. The person at a lectern who confuses leadership with teaching, we might say, translating the Weberian analysis into Heidegger's terminology, is one who leaps in when he or she ought to be leaping ahead: the point of teaching, on this view, is not to deliver or to impose, as ready-made or already taken care of, the party positions that a student ought then to hold and pronounce;[39] the point is to enable the student more clearly to understand, and on that basis to answer

38. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 6; "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 79.

39. The extreme of such a logic can be seen in the totalitarian uses of propaganda, as Robert Harrison lucidly notes, drawing on Hannah Arendt, in his *Juvenescence: A Cultural History of Our Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 136: "It took Hannah Arendt to show how the primary goal of totalitarian regimes was to do our thinking for us, and to make it impossible for ourselves, precisely by filling the silence inside our heads with the constant noise of propaganda."

more richly for, the meaning of her own positions and conduct, whatever they happen to be, or become. The genuine teacher does not leap in for the student and take over the work of making for her whatever judgments of value or meaning might be at stake in *her* life; the teacher rather leaps ahead in the effort to enhance the student's capacity for such judgment.

If the work of teaching might in this sense be understood as one of love, that love is tied intimately, essentially, to the time in and through which the student lives—the day in the sense of the age, and the day in the sense of the everyday life, and time, whose routines become a challenge in the distinctively modern day that Weber diagnoses. That day, as Weber signals in his concluding line, while perhaps not granting the kinds of experience and meaning that students long to find in it, can entail nonetheless an awakening to the passion—or the *daemon*—that holds and drives the singular life that is one's own. Teaching, then, would be itself a work of passion that awakens the student, potentially, to her own distinctive passion. As an ethical work, teaching opens and binds the student to a manner of living the everyday in our day. It might thus be understood, and practiced, as a work of love oriented essentially to time, and doubly: helping the student to live the time of her everyday life with a clarity and responsibility that would entail acknowledging, even affirming, one's being fated to the age, or day, that is hers.[40]

If we can here read Weber to be encouraging, and practicing, an education to reality that resonates with Freud, we should see that education also as aiming to teach, or to enable, an affective capacity akin to Nietzsche's *amor fati*. Weber scholars David Owen and Tracy Strong make this point well in their introduction to "Science as a Vocation," emphasizing that when Weber is "specifying the fateful character of scientific activity and commitment to science" he is "specifying the conditions of 'love of scientific fate' in all its difficulty. From this Nietzschean perspective, Weber's concern with what it is to have a vocation for science is a concern with what it is to love one's fate as a scientist, that is, to embrace our condition of being thrown into the world as it is."[41] While suggestively acknowledging here a role for love in Weber, Strong elsewhere argues, along lines that miss what I myself want to empha-

40. This reading is reinforced by a wonderfully suggestive note that Owen and Strong offer on the term *daemon*: "The term goes back at least to Socrates in the *Symposium*, but it was given currency among the educated German public by a poem by Goethe with the title *Dämon*, which was obviously known to Weber and contains *inter alia* the lines: 'Even as the sun and planets stood to salute one another on the day you entered the world—even so you began straightaway to grow and have continued to do so, according to the law that prevailed over your beginning. It is thus that you must be, you cannot escape yourself.'" *Vocation Lectures*, 31.

41. Owen and Strong, eds., introduction to Max Weber, *Vocation Lectures*, xxxiv.

size about Weber's attentiveness to teaching, that while we find in Nietzsche a rich if often overlooked thinking of love, and of its ties to education (to which we will return), we find in Weber's construal of scientific vocation a "passionate devotion to a cause" that is not quite love because "for Weber one gives oneself over, not to a person, but to something abstract and conceptual. The dedication is in the realm of thought."[42] This assessment poses a false alternative, I think, between Weber's passionate devotion to the realm of thought and its demands, on the one hand, and, on the other, the giving of oneself to other persons that is entailed by love; for as Weber makes powerfully clear, the meaning of science as a vocation involves not only the call that one answers in becoming a scientist but also the call that the scientist makes, in turn, to those—persons—she works to teach, something she does within an ethical undertaking whose central aim is to enable others to be, or to become, who they are.[43]

As Strong rightly notes, Weber's thinking about responsibility is framed rhetorically by repeated appeal to notions of maturity, and such appeal, we can note in turn, plays an important role not only in this Weberian discourse on disenchantment, or in the related critique of illusion one finds in Freud, but also in secularization discourse more broadly. Such discourse often does seem to associate secularization, especially via modern science, with adulthood, maturity, and rationality, while placing religion on the side of infancy or childhood, immaturity, and the irrational superstition of primitives or premoderns. The rhetoric of maturity, both individual and civilizational, can indeed be striking in Weber (as already, of course, in the Enlightenment thinking typified by Kant). But we should also not forget two important facts. First, the "savages" (die Wilden) of whom he speaks are, in his view, likely to have had a richer and more thorough understanding of their worlds than we moderns do of ours. And second, while he attacks the "overgrown children" he believes one can still find in the natural sciences and a few edi-

42. Tracy Strong, "Love, Passion, and Maturity: Nietzsche and Weber on Science, Morality, and Politics," in *Confronting Mass Democracy and Industrial Technology: Political Theory and Social Theory from Nietzsche to Habermas*, ed. John P. McCormick (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 40.

43. Becoming who we are is both the theme and the title of Andrew Norris's illuminating study of politics and practical philosophy in the work of Stanley Cavell, which in its final chapter, "Receiving Autonomy," engages Weber, Emerson, and Nietzsche on themes close to our own here, most notably those concerning education and the heart. See *Becoming Who We Are: Politics and Practical Philosophy in the Work of Stanley Cavell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

torial offices, he clearly appreciates the potential of the youth to whom he addresses his teaching—and he will actually posit an essential tie between youth itself and the "passion" he sees to be indispensable for science and any other genuinely human undertaking. While in "Science as a Vocation" Weber claims that "nothing has any value for a human being as a human being unless he *can* pursue it with *passion* [Leidenschaft],"[44] he ties such passion in the conclusion of his 1895 inaugural lecture at Freiburg University ("The Nation State and Economic Policy") to a youth that is not measured by years: "youth," he posits, "has the right to stand up for itself and its ideals. Yet it is not years that make a man grow old. He is young as long as he is able to feel the *great* passions [den großen Leidenschaften] nature has implanted in us."[45]

The studies in the secular to be pursued through the pages gathered here concern just the kind of youth that even Weber, for all the rhetoric of scientific maturity, counts as essential to undertakings of genuinely human worth, and notably the undertaking of learning. Along these lines, we will trace and call attention to a heritage of modern thinking that repeatedly ties the spirit of learning to youth—and the youthful heart of learning to the creation of worlds and to the essentially related challenge of everyday life. As Weber's diagnosis of modernity suggests, the task of remaining awake or alive to the day amidst the everyday grows increasingly difficult as modern culture is driven ever more thoroughly and rapidly by scientific rationality and technological power. Along similar lines, Heidegger contends that the reduction of nature within modern thought to the realm of calculation goes hand in hand not only with a homogenized and derivative construal of time as the flowing stream of "nows" but also, in and through this latter, with an effacement of the very difference that makes a day. Heidegger signals the threat of such effacement already in *Being and Time*, where he notes that "our understanding of the natural clock develops with the advancing discovery of Nature, and instructs us as to new possibilities for a kind of time-measurement which is

44. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 8; "Wissenschaft als Beruf," 81.

45. Max Weber, "The Nation State and Economic Policy," in Max Weber, *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 28, cited by Strong, "Love, Passion, and Maturity," 26. Weber continues along nationalistic lines that would be worth reflecting on in light of the current resurgence of nationalism in the U.S. and elsewhere: "Thus—allow me to conclude here—it is not the burden of thousands of years of glorious history that causes a great nation to grow old. It will remain young as long as it has the capacity and the courage to keep faith with itself and with the great instincts it has been given."

relatively independent of the day and of any explicit observation of the sky."[46] If we recall the etymological proximity in Latin of the day (dies) to the god (deus),[47] and if we remember likewise that the temple is that which cuts off a space for observation of the sky, we might intuit already the potential religious charge of a clock time and calculation that absolve themselves from any difference between the day and anything else.[48]

Such an eclipse or effacement of the difference that makes a day threatens inextricably the articulation of a world, or of genuinely worldly places, as Heidegger will suggest repeatedly in subsequent writing—as for example in his 1955 "Memorial Address," where he laments the "illusion of a world that is no world," into which we fall thanks to the sway of a calculative thinking so thoroughgoing that we take it as the only thinking, and thanks likewise to the sway of communicational technologies that are "closer to man today than . . . the sky over the earth, closer than the change from night to day."[49] The threat that troubles Heidegger here—of world-loss and its eclipse of the day—proves greatest where that very threat, thanks to the illusion of a world that is no world, goes unseen. Within such illusion, or within the essentially related delusion of a technoscientific humanity that everywhere and always sees only itself, world-loss hides itself, and we feel all too at home in our homelessness; we risk losing our world just when we seem most comfortably and securely to possess, comprehend, and control it. Much as in Augustine, we will see, so in Heidegger we can be most estranged when everything seems most familiar, we can find ourselves most at a loss when we feel ourselves most self-possessed—and we can be returned to ourselves, renewed and reawakened, through the sudden disruption or suspension of such alienating familiarity.

To open the studies of world and heart that unfold in the following chapters, then, I will turn in the first chapter to Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, which I

46. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1962), 468; *Sein und Zeit*, Sechzehnte Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1986), 415. Hereafter cited parenthetically as BT, English page number; SZ, German page number.

47. *Dies* and *deus*, along with *dieu*, *Zeus*, and *Jupiter* likely share a root in the Sanskrit *dyaúh*. See the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*.

48. For two recent and provocative analyses of the economies and cultures related to our day's effacement of the day, see Mark C. Taylor, *Speed Limits: Where Time Went and Why We Have So Little Left* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014); and Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (London: Verso, 2014).

49. Martin Heidegger, "Memorial Address," in *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 48.

read as staging, in all of its paradox and illuminating power, just the kind of crisis that awakens us to the world through its near-total catastrophe. In that staging, my reading argues, McCarthy works out one of the most powerful meditations we have in contemporary literature on the role played by love in opening and sustaining our worlds—and on the role of world and its mortal temporality in making possible the loves we live. In and through such a reading, we can begin to articulate both a construal of love in the secular register and an understanding of secularity as an orientation of our affection with respect to time. In going on to flesh out such a thinking of love and the secular, I will focus on trajectories of deconstructive and phenomenological philosophy, most notably in the twentieth- and twenty-first-century French context, that, thanks especially to the influence of Heidegger, both inherit and variously revise an understanding of love and temporality that courses through the Christian West from Augustine onward.

Our second chapter, thus, will trace in Augustine what seems to me a striking phenomenological insight into the roles played by love and its temporality in opening and sustaining the worldly places we inhabit. He comes to this insight by suffering a world-threatening crisis: the experience of a beloved friend's death. Having enjoyed all too comfortably the presence of his friend, Augustine suddenly confronts the emptiness and darkness of all the worldly places that he and his friend once shared. In that very darkness and emptiness, Augustine comes to see that it had been the movement, and direction, of his love, and its temporality, that opened and sustained the places of his dwelling. Those places had been made habitable thanks to their shared enjoyment in the friend's presence and, in the friend's absence, thanks to the memory that those places had once been shared, and thanks to the anticipation, enabled by such memory, that they would eventually be shared again. Rather, however, than affirm the powerful phenomenological insight that he achieves thanks to his grieving, Augustine decides instead that suffering such grief derives from a misdirection of his love toward a mortal and the life shared with him. Insofar as that mortal and that life are both destined to pass, the love directed to them, Augustine reasons, is ever already implicitly sorrow, and thus, because unhappy, untrue. Because he takes the end of love to be perfect happiness, a rightly ordered love must enjoy a happiness that is indemnified against loss and its suffering—something that a temporal love can do only if it loves the mortal in the eternality of God, where nothing loved is ever lost.

Augustine's construal of sorrow as the result of a sinfully perverted love can seem to place in question whether, and how, his thinking affirms temporality, which he does count, on some level, as good because created by God.

That question relates in turn to Augustine's standing with respect to metaphysics, and hence to the destruction or deconstruction of metaphysics in Heideggerian and post-Heideggerian philosophy. To take up these questions, I turn in chapters 3 and 4 to two of the more significant engagements with Augustine among post-Heideggerians. Jean-Luc Marion, I argue, richly demonstrates that Augustine's confessional discourse does not, in fact, answer to the description of metaphysics if we take metaphysics to be a discourse that offers a (causal) response to the metaphysical question par excellence of why there is being rather than nothing. As a confessional discourse, Marion beautifully argues, Augustinian discourse is a discourse of avowal and praise, whose purpose is not to define or explain God in order thus to explain and comprehend Being, or the world, making them intelligible to us, but rather to place the speaker of this discourse in loving response to the love of God, which alone first calls to us and enables us to be—in and as responsiveness. While Marion's argument along these lines proves illuminating both with respect to metaphysics and with respect to the distinctiveness of Augustine's confessional discourse as *theo*logical, it proves less convincing, I suggest, in demonstrating an affirmation of time in Augustine that would escape a charge such as Nietzsche's that Christian metaphysics is characterized by a moralizing objection to the suffering of loss and death (as well as of procreation and birth). Jacques Derrida's engagement with Augustine stands out in this respect, for while not as deeply engaged with the Augustinian text (or tradition) as Marion's reading is, Derrida's interpretation does productively read Augustine "against" Augustine by reading according to the "time of his syllables"—while at the same time inheriting and developing what might still be read as a fairly Augustinian construal of self. Much like the Augustine who, in his thinking of the *interior intimo meo et superior summo meo*—the God who is both more inward to me than my innermost and higher beyond me than my outermost—Derrida will understand the self to be constituted, at heart, by an intimate strangeness. In a marked divergence from Augustine, however, Derrida translates the work of such intimate strangeness into a decidedly mortal-temporal register—one that entails an understanding of love, and its joy, as conditioned essentially by the sorrow of death.

This inheritance and revision of an Augustinian thinking of the heart in Derrida can be read, chapter 5 argues, as the extension of a similar, perhaps deeper, inheritance of Augustine and his thinking of the heart by Heidegger. While a range of fine recent scholarship allows us to appreciate more fully just how deeply Augustine, and the broader Christian-Augustinian tradition

(especially Luther), informs the thinking that yields *Being and Time*,[50] many readers of Heidegger, and especially those engaged with Augustine (like Marion) tend to see a failure in Heidegger to give love its due in his philosophy—a failure often linked to Heidegger's purported preoccupation with death and with anxiety before death, which are thought to eclipse a thinking of love along with any genuinely relational understanding of human existence. Calling into question common understandings both of Heidegger and of love, I argue in this chapter that the singularity of our Being-toward-death as Heidegger understands it can be seen not to compromise but to condition our love relations, just as we might see love as that which attends distinctively to the other in the singularity of her mortal fragility. Such a thinking of love, this chapter further suggests, is not restricted to *Being and Time* (where the term itself remains, admittedly, relatively scarce) but indeed recurs, at times fragmentarily and at times quite centrally, across the sweep of Heidegger's writing and teaching, from his early lectures in the late teens and early 1920s, where he claims that "understanding is in love"; through seminars and other writings in the 1930s, where he understands love as a fundamental mood of philosophy and defines that love in the Augustinian terms of a letting or willing that the beloved be; to a text like "Letter on Humanism" in the 1940s, where he claims that thinking entails a letting or enabling of Being that means to favor or to love; and on to his first seminar after the war, in the early 1950s, where he defines thinking itself as a taking-to-heart.

Heidegger's thinking of the heart can be read to entail, I argue, not only a reception and revision of Augustine's *interior intimo meo* but also the related understanding of alienation according to which I can be most lost to myself when I feel most familiar, or self-possessed—and where thus I can be returned or reawakened to myself through a crisis of estrangement. I explore the forms of learning that we can undergo through such estrangement in the book's final two chapters: in chapter 6 investigating with Robert Pogue Harrison and Jean-Luc Nancy the forms of estrangement that may be operative at the heart of our technological existence today, and in chapter 7 taking an historical step back to an American heritage that may well be informing

50. See especially Ryan Coyne's *Heidegger's Confessions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), as well as Christian Sommer's *Heidegger, Aristote, Luther: Les sources aristotéliciennes et néo-testamentaires d' Être et Temps* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2005); and Christophe Perrin's "Les sources augustiniennes du concept d'amour chez Heidegger," in *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 107, no. 2 (2009): 240. The foundational earlier work of Thomas Sheehan, Theodore Kisiel, and John Van Buren also remains indispensable.

already—thanks to Nietzsche's love for Ralph Waldo Emerson—the Continental lineage I have been engaging in Heidegger and the post-Heideggerians. In both Emerson and Nietzsche, this final chapter argues, a thinking of nature, or life, in their pervasive but therefore also evasive power, is inherent to the nature of thinking as a recurrent awakening to the youth that is essential to learning and to the creation of worlds. Such creation, I suggest in my conclusion, calls today for an intergenerational thinking attuned to love's essential but fragile temporality.

1

When We Love—A Place: World's End with Cormac McCarthy

To live "with the world at heart," according to the immeasurably influential turn that Christian thought takes with Augustine of Hippo (354–430), to dwell in the world in one's heart (habitare corde in mundo) rather than merely in one's flesh (carne), is to be in truth already dead. If I live with the world at heart, I inhabit what Augustine calls in his *Confessions* a "living death" or a "dead life." In such a living death—which, so long as we live it, we do not know or even suspect to be a death—we are closed off from the only true life, and thus from the only true happiness, because we are bound in our affections to change, dispersion, and loss. According to Augustine, genuine happiness and its distinctive life suffer, by definition, no loss, and thus we enjoy real life and its happiness only when we are freed of loss, in the one and immutable God. In light of his teleological and eudaemonistic construal of human existence, according to which the end of love is enjoyment, Augustine presents us with a stark decision: "What do you want? To have temporal things and to pass away together with time, or not to love the world and to live forever with God?"[1]

Through his inheritance of the New Testament writings of John and Paul, Augustine understands "world" not simply as created fabric of the heavens and the earth, or something akin to the "natural world" we might conjure in

1. Augustine, *Tractates on the First Epistle of John*, tractate 2, sec. 10, p. 152; hereafter cited parenthetically as TJ, tractate and section numbers followed by page number of the English translation, *Tractates on the First Epistle of John* in *The Fathers of the Church: Saint Augustine, Tractates on the Gospel of John 112–24*, trans. John Rettig (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995). Latin citations, given by column number, come from J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* 35 (Paris, 1841), hereafter cited parenthetically as PCC.