

Learned Ignorance? On Enlightened Blindness to the Divine and the Demonic

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Abstract: The Kantian “limits of knowledge” powerfully regulates the Enlightenment-framed contemporary academy as secular, methodologically atheistic, and functionally materialist when it comes to public knowledge. This shapes all science and religion discourse considered palatable to an Enlightenment sensibility. This limit makes public knowledge blind to the divine and the demonic in everyday life (and *in extremis*). The paper argues that this blindness illustrates the abstract and artificial conception of reality that governs academic knowledge. If “religion” adapts itself to these limits in order to dialogue successfully with “science” in an Enlightenment framed academy, it also becomes abstract and artificial. Using Nicholas of Cusa and Johann Hamann, the paper attempts to reclaim “learned ignorance” as a viable alternative to the Kantian “limits of knowledge.” Returning to the “science and religion” domain, the paper concludes by noting that conflict in the basic framing of reality and knowledge is now inherent if theology is to uphold a learned ignorance perspective on reality and natural philosophy. I argue that this sort of conflict should not be feared and is necessary to save modern science from floundering in its own metaphysical vacuum or being swept aside by a post-truth totally poetic constructivism.

Keywords: demonic; divine; Kant; limits of knowledge; Nicholas of Cusa; science and religion

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Arguably, the central principle of intellectual propriety in the contemporary Western academy is a broadly Kantian respect for “the limits of knowledge.”¹ Here, logic is entirely formal, and knowledge is entirely empirical, and there shall be no speculation about “God’s eye” transcendent delusions, such that all legitimate human knowledge and action must be situated within a completely human perspective.² Respecting the fact that pure logic and objective science cannot give us demonstrable and substantive knowledge about, say, God, means that there is a clear range of things that Enlightened academic propriety will and will not permit into the discourse of respectable knowledge and interpretation pertaining to “religion.”³

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- 1 Presuming that many of the readers of this esteemed journal are not professional philosophers, this footnote is designed to open up the investigation of the Kantian concept of the limits of knowledge, starting with the short and highly accessible, and moving to the long and more technically philosophical. For a short and accessible introduction to a Kantian conception of the limits of knowledge, see Farid Alsabeh, “Immanuel Kant on the limits of knowledge,” *Medium*, 22 February 2019, <https://falsabeh.medium.com/immanuel-kant-on-the-limits-of-knowledge-fe3e928ea644> (accessed 20 January 2024). Alsabeh’s account is—from my reading of Kant—both clear and, in overview terms, philosophically fair. There are ambiguities in Kant’s thought as regards objective knowledge which Alsabeh’s helpful account does not open up, and these ambiguities and aporias are helpfully summarised in Scruton’s book cited below. But the basic Kantian reason why we cannot know how things are in themselves is clearly outlined by Alsabeh in 1,300 words. For a considerably more rigorous account of Kant’s understanding of the limits of reason (which is more complex than an Enlightenment “take home” understanding of the limits of knowledge), see Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Lancaster University, Dr Garrath Williams’ fine article (15,000 words), “Kant’s Account of Reason,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2023, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-reason/> (accessed 20 January 2024). For an excellent introduction to Kant’s life and thought, see Roger Scruton, *Kant: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). If you wish to read Kant’s central argument about the limits of reason and the appropriate scope of knowledge, you must read Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (London: Everyman, 1993). This is a daunting text and well over two hundred years after its publication there remain complex interpretive differences as to what Kant really means and whether he really makes sense in contemporary philosophical scholarship.
- 2 See, for example, Kant’s discussion of “transcendental illusion” in *Critique of Pure Reason*, A292–98. Distinguishing between the right use of transcendental deduction and the always wrong temptation to any transcendent speculation, Kant explains that one must always pay proper “attention to the limits of the sphere in which pure understanding is allowed to exercise its function” (A294).
- 3 Throughout this paper, I will display some textual difficulty in using the

Let us think a bit further on God. In one direction, “the limits of knowledge” facilitates a broad intellectual church which accommodates a range of stances. For example, such limits are readily taken as validating evangelical atheists who think that because one cannot *know* about God, only a fool would *believe* in God. These limits also accommodate those who have a deep fascination with religious texts, behaviours, and beliefs, though they remain silent about God. More broadly, this “church” is entirely comfortable housing people who never even consider anything beyond what structures of knowledge and meaning the artefacts of human logic, science, and cultural construction can build. But be not deceived by this rich pluralism within the “Church of The Limits of Knowledge,” for there is a clear demarcation line that defines heresy. This line was drawn by that paragon of Enlightenment philosophical virtue, Immanuel Kant. Anyone who steps over the line of the knowledge only of what is real *for us*, and wants to ask substantive truth questions about what is *really* real in itself (crossing the boundary between phenomena and noumena) will be deemed an epistemic heretic, and will be treated in one of two ways.

The most genteel way to treat Enlightenment Heretics is to simply ignore their heresy and hope the offenders will grow out of it or learn to keep it to themselves when they are attempting to become scholars. For, with magnanimous condescension, the ethos of Enlightened intellectual respectability finds that most hum drum heretics, who do not understand learned ignorance, are largely harmless. But perhaps some academic clerics may really believe in the reality of God, may even believe that they experience some sort of knowable fellowship with God in prayer, and (shamefully) might even believe premodern superstitions claiming that God acts in human history in occasional miraculous ways. Yet, provided they keep these rationally and empiri-

words “science” and “religion.” Both of these terms defy any naturalistic and transhistorical definition, so there is much debate in the literature about whether these terms really have any agreed usable meaning or not. I do not intend to enter into that debate in this essay, though I have been directly engaged in it. See Paul Tyson, “After Science and Religion?” in *After Science and Religion: Fresh Perspectives from Philosophy and Theology*, ed. Peter Harrison and John Milbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 1–11.

cally unknowable inner convictions out of their scholarship, no one is really going to care about their private heretical predilections. On the other hand, should some scholar reject the doctrine that matters of ultimate meaning and reality cannot be mixed with *real* (methodologically atheist and reductively naturalistic) knowledge, then such a person will be denounced along a spectrum that starts with the crackpot, moves to charlatans exploiting the credulous, and includes more serious promoters of delusional pseudoscience. And let it be well noted, all heretics who transgress the limits of knowledge are to some degree post-truth, anti-science, disinformation conspirators, plotting against modern Enlightenment. Such nostalgic and backward-looking people are seeking to return us all to the cold, dark, and violent Age of Ignorance.

Three Different “Science and Religion” Responses to the Enlightened Limits of Knowledge

Rupert Sheldrake is an interesting example of a highly scientifically educated person, doing what might be described as respectable empirical research on, amongst other things, strange psychic phenomena. This is all well and good, but then he brings unorthodox metaphysics and even theology into how he theorises his research.⁴ Sheldrake is a difficult case in some regards for, on the one hand, he has done original research pushing back the frontier of knowledge in plant physiology and biochemistry that is highly respected. On the other hand, his explorations of consciousness and his questioning of philosophically materialist understandings of physical nature are dangerously unorthodox. So, he is some sort of crackpot, no matter how good his empirical studies might be, and no matter what his credentials. But Sheldrake—by all normal measures a capable philosopher, a sophisticated though adventurous theologian, and a Cambridge and Harvard educated biochemist and philosopher of science—is not in the same class of Enlightenment Heretic as, say, a Young Earth Creationist or an Intelligent Design advocate.

4 See Rupert Sheldrake, *The Science Delusion* (London: Coronet, 2020).

Michael Behe is a legitimately qualified and well published professor of biochemistry, but *Limits of Knowledge* (LOK hereafter) orthodoxy would not call him an eccentric and possibly harmless intellectual crackpot, but rather, a determined peddler of pseudoscience. For his natural theology work in Intelligent Design—though he is not a Young Earth Creationist—presumes to read divine purposes off from natural facts, and thereby casts doubt on aspects of current Darwinian orthodoxy in the domain of the origin, development, and nature of life.⁵ This we call pseudoscience because legitimate science strictly observes the LOK such that any properly scientific knowledge of life *must* presuppose only material, statistically determinate, and non-intelligent causes, and will certainly not entertain medieval formal (intrinsically intellectual) or final (inherently purposive) causes. To read purpose and the divine mind into natural causation is to abandon *real* scientific knowledge and to try and take learning back to the Dark Ages.

Unlike Behe, Christians who are orthodox Darwinian scientists, such as Denis Alexander,⁶ seek to show careful ways of arranging parallel features of both orthodox science and properly interpreted conservative Christian doctrines. This is acceptable to Enlightenment norms precisely because it pays such careful attention to upholding the autonomy of objective and merely positive science from any direct influence from interpretive and normative religious categories that reach beyond the LOK. The Enlightened academy is comfortable with any appeal to Scripture, religious doctrine, metaphysics, and religious experience that is held as outside of the domain of scientific and public knowledge, and provided no attempt is made to hold that such exotic and indemonstrable beliefs are treated as if they are, or should be, public knowledge. If such religion accepts the authority of science, and then interprets itself to agree with present scientific knowledge, this is unobjectionable, though it is scientifically unnecessary. Hence, at least in theory, Alexander's speculative enterprise in aligning Christian beliefs

5 See Michael J. Behe, *Darwin Devolves: The New Science about DNA that Challenges Evolution* (New York: HarperOne, 2019).

6 See Denis Alexander, *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?* (Oxford: Monarch, 2014).

with scientific truths is entirely acceptable. Alexander works hard, and largely successfully, to be a Christian presence in scientific knowledge that is acceptable to the broad Church of the Limits of Knowledge.

The “science and religion” domain provides plenty of interesting material to look at as regards how the Enlightenment LOK principle regulates intellectual orthodoxy in our academies. This essay is very much concerned with how these limits play out in the “science and religion” domain, but I want to take a seeming detour from that domain at this point in the essay. Let us now look at the peculiar manner in which the Enlightened LOK are determinedly blind to two categories of reality that are immediately obvious, pervasive, and deeply important in our experience of being human: the divine and the demonic. After unpacking this peculiar blindness, we will return to “science and religion.”

On the Enlightenment Blindness to the Divine and the Demonic

Throughout recorded human history, and in what we can piece together from before recorded history, it is a continuous and deep feature of human experience to encounter spiritual agencies of good and evil that are not—in the modern sense of the word—natural. This is not to say that pre-Enlightenment people saw what I will call the divine and the demonic as extra-natural. There were often held to be higher and lower levels of nonhuman spiritual agency present within nature, which did not preclude categories of divinity that really were supernatural, such as seen in the traditional Christian theology of creation. To Aquinas, for example, God as the grounds of all created being is ontologically immanent to creation at all times and places (hence the doctrine of divine omnipresence), yet God also entirely transcends creation as the Creator.⁷

There is a magnificent book by the renowned Classics scholar, E. R. Dodds, titled *The Greeks and the Irrational*.⁸ In this book the learned

7 See Simon Oliver, *Creation: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017) for a very helpful exposition of Aquinas’ theology of creation.

8 E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951).

Oxford don unpacks the complex interest of the ancient Greeks in that which transcends rational and natural (in the modern sense) explanation. It is a fascinating read. If anyone is familiar with Plato, they will be aware that Socrates lived his life in the presence of a daemon which forbade him to take money for teaching, and which spoke inner truths to him on a regular basis. Further, Socrates famously went to see the oracle at Delphi. Receiving divine messages was an unremarkable feature of Classical Greek life, though Hermes, the messenger of the gods, was a known trickster, and rightly interpreting the meaning of any pithy message from the gods was a perilous enterprise. Rhapsodes—Greek poets who had memorised the great Homeric sagas—were only any good if they were literally inspired by the muses when recounting the great ballads of the Greeks. Daemonic possession was integral to a good poetic, dramatic, or musical performance. Such possession could have illuminating or horrifying effect. Dionysian *sparagmos*, for example, was depicted in Euripides' play, *The Bacchae*, where female maenads in a state of possessed frenzy ripped King Pentheus to pieces. Unnatural violent physical power in the possessed was a known and feared phenomenon of Greek (and New Testament)⁹ experience.

It is important to recognise that the daemonic in Classical Greek antiquity should not be conceptually confused with the demonic in the Christian New Testament. Certainly, the Christian understanding of the demonic arises from Greek culture and from the same word used in antiquity. However, to the pre-Christian Greeks, the daemonic was not necessarily the domain of spiritual malice. The daemonic was an intermediary designation of divinity which could be either friendly or unfriendly to mortals (indeed, the fickleness of the gods is integral to Greek mythology). Yet Plato's high God is far above the daemonic domain. In the Christian understanding of spiritual cosmology, Greek categories of the daemonic become bifurcated into the angelic and the demonic; those intermediary spiritual powers aiding the Christian in the love of God and neighbour, and those intermediary spiritual pow-

9 See Mark 4:35–5:20

ers of wickedness in heavenly places, undertaking a war on God with the souls of mortals at stake.

From the above I wish to draw two conclusions. Firstly (with Plato in mind) much Greek Classical philosophy was in no sense incompatible with divine inspiration and spiritual significance. Indeed, Walter Burkert, the renowned scholar of ancient Greek religion, points out that the interplay between mortal immanence and divine transcendence is a central concern of Plato's philosophical religion.¹⁰ Secondly, when—below—I discuss the demonic and the divine, I do so imposing a Christian reading on these categories, meaning, thereby that the demonic concerns spiritual powers that are malicious, actively opposed to true human flourishing, and affiliated with evil. Equally, I am using the word “divinity” to indicate divine powers that are integral with human flourishing and affiliated with goodness. The experience of good and evil as open to spiritual energies and agencies that are superhuman is what I am concerned with when I speak of the divine and the demonic.

Throughout Western intellectual history, until the Enlightenment, there has always been a keen interest in the divine and the demonic as integral with daily life and the life of the mind. It is from the eighteenth-century Enlightenment onwards that intellectual attitudes start to change, and the divine and the demonic increasingly become—certainly after Kant—categories of superstitious belief that (if there be anything divine or demonic at all) are beyond the limits of real knowledge.¹¹ Pre-fortified with dogmatic unbelief, the Enlightened mind

10 Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 305–338.

11 See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 40. Here, Taylor notes that prior to a deep cultural shift towards the “buffered self” which his book locates as completed somewhere in the late nineteenth century, “the boundary around the mind was constitutionally porous. Things and agencies which are clearly extra-human could alter or shape our spiritual and emotional conditions ... [The] way in which we draw this physical/moral boundary today wasn't recognised then.” It goes without saying that the Christian Scriptures and all the saints and theologians of the Christian church prior to what Taylor describes as the “buffering” of the self (notionally cutting this constitutional porosity off) assumed spiritual porosity, and hence the divine and the demonic were taken for granted as integral features of normal Christian life. With C. S. Lewis, I take it that this older view

cannot see the divine or the demonic, even when staring them in the face.¹² This leaves a significant blind spot in the categories of knowable reality concerning our actual experience as moral and spiritual agents who encounter both good and evil, and who are engaged in the lifelong doxological contest between good and evil as regards our own agency.

Interestingly, cracks are opening up in the Enlightened worldview, particularly as regards the experience of evil and the demonic.

The Demonic, after Enlightenment

In his book *People of the Lie*, celebrated psychiatrist M. Scott Peck explores some rare cases where the person he is seeking to help steps beyond the boundaries of psychiatric or psychologically recognisable pathology, and into the domain of the spiritual energy of evil, as a power originating from beyond the individual.¹³ Perhaps contrasted with this outlook, Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* provides a vivid account of how normal people can end up performing horrendous atrocities of genuine evil.¹⁴ Arendt's central point, and it is a point of keen political significance, is that the person who does evil is not a rare and exotic monster, but rather an ordinary person, and evil is not some unfathomable and abnormal anomaly but a latent energy within all humanity. The demonic, Arendt implies, is latent within us all.

Combining Peck and Arendt, then, we might say that there is a spectrum of evil action wherein the spiritual energies seem entirely human at one end, and one in which they seem external to the human

is in fact true, and the modern buffered self—as powerfully present in our socially constructed reality as it is—is delusional. William Desmond is a fine contemporary advocate for the truth of spiritual porosity, and a deep critic of the buffered self. See William Desmond, *The Intimate Strangeness of Being: Metaphysics after Dialectic* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

12 George MacDonald was acutely aware of the manner in which moral and spiritual commitments shape one's interpretation of reality. In this context he notes: "seeing is not believing—it is only seeing." George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblins* (London: Puffin Classics, 1996), 173.

13 M. Scott Peck, *People of the Lie* (London: Arrow, 1990).

14 Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (London: Penguin, 2006).

and invading of the human on the other end, though it is possible that evil agency in humans is at once entirely natural and also firmly situated in a spiritual ecology that cannot be explained in the reductively naturalistic terms that arise by assuming the sixteenth century doctrine of *natura pura*.¹⁵ Whether such a thing as pure nature (nature that does not depend on divine grace) exists at all is something that Henri de Lubac has seriously questioned.¹⁶ The Christian doctrine of Christ the Logos of creation is indeed incompatible with modern reductively materialist naturalism, though traditional Christian Logos theology does not preclude genuinely undetermined human agency as regards spiritual choices as then played out in moral action.¹⁷ But these theological matters are not the central concern of this essay. The central issue here is that demonic energies—whether natural or spiritually exogenous to any given human agent—are evident in extreme immoral conditions, but also to a less obvious extent in any struggle to exercise good moral agency. This is something the LOK is intentionally blind to and must always explain away or explain differently.

The above does not mean that Enlightenment-framed scholarship has no interest in witches, demons, the devil, and theologies of spiritual warfare and the like. Indeed, there are thriving knowledge construction industries built around these topics in the academy. One of my colleagues at the University of Queensland—Professor Philip

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- 15 See Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 167–189, for a very brief description of this profound transition away from the deep and continuous ontological embedding of all creation in the Creator as a very significant move in the passage to modernity. What is going on in the sixteenth century as regards difficulties with prime matter as interpreted via Scottist accounts of haecceity and Ockhamist nominalism, discussions in Thomistic interpretation centring around Francisco Suárez and his complex integration of Thomistic, Ockhamist, and Scottist trajectories, and complex debates about the nature and meaning of grace and nature, makes the details of the development of *natura pura* a very demanding topic. The only relevant point here is that there is a powerful move towards making each individual physical being ontologically self-standing in the sixteenth century, and this becomes the grounds of modern naturalism thereafter.
- 16 Henri de Lubac, *Surnaturel: Études historiques* (Paris: Aubier, 1946).
- 17 John R. Betz, *Christ the Logos of Creation* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2023).

Almond—has produced fascinating books with top tier academic publishers on demonic possession, the devil, witches, the afterlife, and so forth.¹⁸ Professor Almond is one of the most erudite and delightful persons one could meet, who lost his Christian faith—imbibing LOK embedded historical critical biblical scholarship—whilst studying to become an Anglican priest as a young man. All his books study the development of historical narratives, gently touching on the psychology of believers in the paranormal within their historical context. The good professor obviously finds the poetic creativity, the politics, and the morality of religious belief deeply fascinating, even if it is nutty and disturbing, and oftentimes tragic and malicious. As to the question of whether the demonic or the divine themselves are real, Professor Almond’s enlightened scholarship shows no interest. These matters are clearly assumed to be phenomena of human psychology, indemonstrable belief, and credulous behaviour, with a dry and sometimes warm humour being expressed by the learned historical scholar in their description. Silence is politely reserved for those matters on which logic and reasonable historical demonstration cannot comment. Professor Almond is a noble exponent of enlightened scholarship conducted strictly within the Limits of Knowledge.

Terry Pratchett has continuity with scholars like Philip Almond in that the narrative world of spiritual belief is keenly fascinating at the same time as a modern materialist realism is assumed (though, as a narrative construct itself). Pratchett seems to be reverting to a somewhat Classical Greek conception of the gods and the intimate relation of the spiritual to the natural where the only entity approaching a high god is Death. Even so, Pratchett’s perspective is firmly within the Kantian “reality for us”—as we imaginatively and poetically interpret it—and never presumes to be about how anything *really* is. Human knowledge

18 See Philip Almond, *The Lancashire Witches* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020); Philip Almond, *Afterlife: A History of Life After Death* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Philip Almond, *England’s First Demonologist* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Philip Almond, *The Devil: A New Biography* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2014); Philip Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Philip Almond, *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

is always perspectival, always situated within narratives of meaning and practice that the individual does not really choose, always mysterious and surprising, because it never finally makes sense of how things really are. Meaning is the slippery, constructed, and always inadequate human response to the inexplicable experience of being.

Let us now briefly consider the divine.

The Divine, after Enlightenment

If Epicurus' rejection of a benevolent and omnipotent God because of the existence of evil is an argument used since Hume by enlightened humanists against traditional theists, then "the existence of goodness" is the other edge of that same sword, and it cuts against agnostic humanism. Which is to say that an ultimately utilitarian and hedonic account of the qualitative experience of goodness—as if goodness is a mere quantity of pleasure—is superficial and unpersuasive. Again, respecting the LOK, only the quantifiable and the formally determinate is ultimately admitted to knowledge, and every account of a quality—beauty, goodness, virtue—every immaterial process of our mind—truth-apprehending thought, intelligence, mind itself—every meaningful action that is not simply instrumental—love and meaning—and the intelligible cosmos itself, has to be reexplained so that these immediate qualitative, intellective, and spiritual features of our experience are "known" to *not* be what they seem to be. (So much for respecting reality as it is *for us!*) The LOK interprets all quality, meaning, and spirit *out* of legitimate knowledge, replacing these qualitative intangibles with reductive "observations" and instrumentally oriented theories that are amenable to the methodological atheism and functional materialism of Enlightened orthodox academic knowledge. Thus are meaning, goodness, love, and even truth scientifically extracted out of the world leaving us with only the phenomenological domain of apparent facts that can be interpreted any way you like, other than as substantively meaningful qualitative and spiritual truths.

Kant's attempt to create morality out of rational autonomy is rhetorically impressive, but no matter how noble rational duty is in practice, in his own theory, I cannot see how Kant's universal rational laws as qualitatively *good* can be derived from the mere *fact* that they are formally *logical*. Formal rationality in Kant's own system has no substantive content so there must be some philosophical sleight of hand involved to move from pure rational universality as a formal "fact of reason"¹⁹ to a practical but genuinely morally qualitative reality. In a purely logical and purely empirical phenomenological world, rational procedure never simply *becomes* qualitative, practical reason never simply *becomes* substantive moral meaning, any more than brains simply *become* minds.²⁰ Higher order capacities rely on lower order conditions, but it is an act of pure and unjustified (even unjustifiable) assertion based on an unwavering faith in a determinedly naturalistic functional materialism to require that lower conditions *must* produce higher order capacities. But "is" simply does not become "ought," "logical" simply does not become "right," "complexity" simply does not become "consciousness," inanimate matter does not simply become living. Qualitative distinctions between different orders of reality and meaning are only illusions if one is a determined materialist where the qualitative itself is ultimately an illusion. Facts and values, reason and meaning, brains and minds coinhere in the unity of our lives, but the three former terms of each pair are not the determinate cause of the later three terms, such that the later three terms are only really epiphenomena of the former. There is no *evidence* to support such a determined belief in the emergence of a total transition of kind from, say, logic to morality, quantity to quality, neurological activity to thought. As brilliantly as Kant tries to justify the purely logical emergence of moral truth, he does not achieve this alchemy.

19 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), 31.

20 See David Bentley Hart, *All Things Are Full of Gods* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2024; forthcoming) for a powerful set of arguments eviscerating materialist brain to thinking mind emergence.

Further, we do not *need* to tie the wonder of the world down to the rational and empirical limits of Enlightened faith-free knowledge. Indebted to John Duns Scotus, Gerard Manley Hopkins notices that each individual dappled thing is a wonder, and that the glory of God shines out through every feature of the cosmos, should we have eyes to see it. There is no credible reason not to take love, goodness, qualitative truth, intelligible essence, intrinsic meaning etc., as divinely gifted realities in which we live all the time.²¹ But our academy only embraces an abstract world of mere quantity, fact, and number (as Hume put it). Only phenomenologically demonstrable facts, the logic of linguistic engineering, and entirely poetically constructed and substantively indemonstrable meanings are epistemically admissible. This entails the “learned ignorance” of the demonic and the divine that all credible scholars respecting the LOK must confess.

Nicholas of Cusa, Kant, Hamann, and Desmond, on Learned Ignorance

At this point I want to outline briefly the manner in which Nicholas of Cusa and Immanuel Kant interpret the limits of knowledge in exactly opposite ways, and how Hamann critiques Kant pointing us back to Cusanus. William Desmond’s contemporary philosophy of “the between” then shows how Cusanus’ fifteenth-century stance, as thrown against Enlightenment philosophical hubris in the eighteenth century by Hamann, remains dynamic and persuasive in the present.

To Nicholas, “the foundation for learned ignorance is the fact that absolute truth is beyond our grasp.”²² This applies just as much to things we can have naturally credible knowledge of—empirical things and mathematical relations—as it does to that which totally surpasses our knowledge (God), even though in Christ God has supremely made

21 For an argument for taking the divinely graced realities of our ordinary experience of the qualities of goodness, beauty, and truth as *real*, see Paul Tyson, *Seven Brief Lessons on Magic* (Eugene: Cascade, 2019).

22 Nicholas of Cusa, *Of Learned Ignorance*, trans. Gerain Heron (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 10.

himself known to us. Nicholas—a lover of mathematics and natural philosophy—was definitely not a sceptic, but he was under no illusion that there really is *any such thing* as absolutely true reason and absolutely true experiential knowledge, for us. The absolute is only for God. But resting in the certainty of that Absolute, who is also the Creator, we can embrace what knowledge natural sensation and natural reason relatively and incompletely gives to us, in good faith. Thus the traditional view of Cusanus, rephrased by Hamann for Enlightenment ears, is that “it is pure idealism to separate faith and sensation from thought.”²³ The practical reliability (but certainly not any infallible interpretation) of sensory knowledge, and the abstract (but certainly not ultimate) certainty of human systems of logic (mathematics) and human meaning (language), can only be rightly appropriated if one acts in good faith towards the divine and always transcendent source of Truth. The aim of the Enlightenment to decommission faith and only rely on reason and science was inconceivable to Cusanus, and was considered an impossible pipe-dream by Hamann.

Kant’s LOK project seems humble and restrained, but in fact it is an attempt to mark off a small and artificially controlled arena where only that which is logically and practically demonstrable *to us* is taken as true, regardless of what stands both above and below human reason, language, and perception. Kant is seeking to define an arena where human knowledge, in its own finite and rational categories, is Master. This removes theology, traditional metaphysics, and good faith in Christian doctrine from the domain of valid knowledge, cutting out any higher grounds of reason (Logos) and any higher grounds of nature (the Creator) from sense, reason, and intuition. Once we believe our own propaganda (that only what is under the phenomenological domain of purely rational and purely empirical human epistemic mastery can be taken to be real), then we ever more reductively interpret the symbols and approximations of real meaning. In such manner we devalue that which we *can* incompletely know as mere epiphenomena

23 Quoted in Kenneth Haynes, *Hamann: Writings of Philosophy and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), xvii.

of some supposedly “pure,” rational, and empirical “reality,” which ultimately has no *real* qualitative meaning or value.²⁴

Hamann describes how the Kantian LOK process ends in impossible celebrations of academic nonsense thus:

The apodeictic certainty of mathematics depends on a ... portrayal of the simplest, most sensible intuition and then on the ease of proving its synthesis and the possibility of its synthesis in obvious constructions of symbolic formulas and equations ... However ... metaphysics [Hamann here means the Kantian “transcendental superstition”] abuses the word-signs and figures of speech of our empirical knowledge by treating them as nothing but hieroglyphs and types of ideal relations. Through this learned troublemaking it works the honest decency of language into such a meaningless, rutting, infinite something = x, that nothing is left but a ... magic shadow play... [of] empty sacks and slogans.²⁵

In his “Metacritique on the Purism of Reason,” Hamann points out that Kant’s central philosophical enterprise—the *Critique of Pure Reason*—is impossible because it is an artifice neither of pure logic nor pure sensation, but of *language*.²⁶ And language is an inherently graced and utterly astonishing mystery that no reduction of mathematics or objectivist sensory observation can in any manner master.

As Ronald Gregor Smith explains:

for Hamann... the “givenness of things” is in his view never purely arbitrary, but is always at the same time a sign, a speech, *the Word*. When [Hamann says], for instance, that “the whole ability to think rests upon language,” that “language is the sole ... instrument and criterion of reason,” that “without language there can be no rea-

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- 24 In the reductively mathematico-empiricist direction, see Lawrence Krauss, *The Greatest Story Ever Told ... So Far. Why Are We Here?* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2017). In the total social and “political” poetic construction of “meaning” direction, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
- 25 Johann Georg Hamann, “Metacritique on the Purism of Reason,” in *Hamann: Writings on Philosophy and Language*, 210.
- 26 Hamann, “Metacritique,” 205–218.

son,” and that language is the “Deipara, the mother of our reason,” he is thinking all the time of what he elsewhere explicitly says: “Without the Word there is no reason, no world. Here is the source of creation and government.”²⁷

The inescapably Christian theological point of appreciating that no human knowledge is ever absolutely true—and that this applies as much to rational and empirical truth statements as to metaphysical, moral, aesthetic, and theological statements—leads to amazement at the richness of the meaningful cosmos and joyful trust in its divine origin and destiny. Our small human languages (our *logoi*) in some strange measure participate in the divine *Logos*.²⁸ To trust in the superabundant richness, the astonishing overflow of meaning and splendour out of which reality arises, is the only way to be reasonable, the only way to see truly and to touch the world in which we live, the only meaning of meaning itself. Appreciating the limits of merely human knowledge should situate our knowledge as a function of the divine Word, and should tutor us in humble openness to God who speaks to us through every aspect of our experience of reality. This is the exact opposite of what the Kantian LOK does.

William Desmond is a powerful contemporary exponent of a Christian metaphysics of astonishment.²⁹ His “between” books³⁰ draw

27 Ronald Gregor Smith, *J. G. Hamann 1730–1788: A Study on Christian Existence* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), 85. The most able contemporary Christian philosophical theologian exploring the significance of Logos for natural knowledge and much else besides, of my acquaintance, is John Betz. See Betz, *Christ the Logos of Creation*.

28 It must be pointed out that Hamann’s “linguistic turn” has nothing to do with either Anglophone deflationary “linguistic” philosophies (such as Logical Positivism) or with postmodern performative adventures in interpretive miscommunication, such as celebrated by Judith Butler and, in perhaps a different register, Jacques Derrida. For those interested in understanding Hamann’s *Logos* theology, see John R. Betz, *After Enlightenment: Hamann as Post-Secular Visionary* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

29 Desmond’s work has direct bearing on the contemporary “science and religion” debate, particularly in rejecting the post-metaphysical Kantian limits of knowledge boundaries. See Paul Tyson (ed.), *Astonishment and Science: Engagements with William Desmond* (Eugene: Cascade, 2023).

30 William Desmond, *God and the Between* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008); William

out the ancient Greek meaning of *metaxu* (“between”) where our lives are always situated underneath a transcendence we can never master, and above an immanence we can never master, and we are unavoidably porous to both unknowables. Relinquishing the will to epistemic mastery—the idolatrous desire to “be as God” through special knowledge—is the pathway to discovering grace and revelation, ever held out to our minds by the Logos of God. And as one of the most powerful philosophers of our times, it will come as no surprise to learn that Desmond finds the post-metaphysical trajectory of philosophy after Kant, radically overrated.³¹

Back to Science and Religion and the Limits of Knowledge

There are reasons why C. S. Lewis is seldom thought of as among the more significant science and religion thinkers of the twentieth century. The natural sciences were not of any particular interest in his body of work, but the manner in which he stays firmly outside of the Enlightenment LOK in everything he writes—particularly as it pertains to the divine and the demonic—is arguably a more significant reason why he does not sit in the science and religion hall of fame.

Lewis was a lover of all learning, and not “anti-science” in any way, but he was very aware of the manner in which scientific atheism functioned as an ersatz theology and a counter-Christian religion in the rapidly secularising university, and in culture at large. Some of his most profound writing in this area is in his science fiction, which tends to be treated as purely imaginative and allegorical fantasies rather than serious theological engagements with scientific knowledge. Unlike thinkers like Pannenberg—who worked with enormous energy in interfacing rigorous theology with rigorous natural science—and un-

Desmond, *Ethics and the Between* (New York: State University Press of New York, 2001); William Desmond, *Being and the Between* (New York: State University Press, 1995).

31 William Desmond, *The Intimate Strangeness of Being: Metaphysics after Dialectic* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 89–119.

like dual qualified scientist and theologian thinkers like Polkinghorne, Lewis did not engage directly with science as such. But listen to this passage from *That Hideous Strength*:

The physical sciences, good and innocent in themselves, had already ... begun to be warped, had been subtly manoeuvred in a certain direction. Despair of objective truth had been increasingly insinuated into the scientist; indifference to it, and a concentration on mere power, had been the result. ... Dreams of the far future destiny of man were dragging up from its shallow and unquiet grave the old dream of Man as God.³² The very experiences of the dissecting room ... were breeding a conviction that the stifling of all deep seated repugnances was the first essential for progress ... [Scientists without sacred respect for both God and creation are] like straw in the fire. What should they find incredible, since they believed no longer in a rational universe? What should they regard as too obscene, since they held that all morality was a mere subjective byproduct of the physical and economic situations of men? The time was ripe. From the point of view which is accepted in Hell, the whole history of our earth had led up to this moment ...³³

Lewis deliberately violates the central principle of the Enlightenment LOK: never publicly treat the divine or the demonic as anything other than subjective derivatives of secular knowledge and culturally and psychologically constructed meaning. Spiritual contest—the war between Heaven and Hell—is the real business of life to Lewis. And knowledge, though secondary to that war, is never spiritually neutral and is always drawn into that spiritual war. The knowledge that rests in the graces of love, goodness, and truth is divine; the knowledge characterised by the lust for power, or a means of personal advancement, or the worship of humankind, or just a compulsive greed for more “how it works” curiosity, is always demonic. Kierkegaard likewise profoundly

32 One cannot help but think of Yuval Harari’s *Homo Deus* (London: Vintage, 2017) in this context.

33 C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* (New York: Scribner, 1996; originally published in 1945), 203.

grasps that the most fundamental epistemic concerns do not pertain to demonstrated rational and empirical truth, but to sin and faith.³⁴

An abiding concern with the divine³⁵ and the demonic³⁶ in ordinary life, and an awareness of the intimacy of states of the soul with approaches to knowledge does not fit Lewis to be taken seriously as a LOK-approved commentator on science and religion. But worst of all, Lewis openly derides the doctrine of progress.

As a fine scholar of Renaissance and Medieval literature, and with a strong background in the Classical thought world and Icelandic sagas, Lewis came to reject the “chronological snobbery” of his youth as a bright young rational atheist at Oxford.³⁷ He came to see that we are not more advanced than our forebears simply because we live in the present and can fly in planes and cheat death with penicillin. Rejecting the fashionable academic ideology of progress, Lewis holds that science and technology are no measure of human value, virtue, wisdom, piety, reasonableness, or kindness. Lewis has no qualms in connecting Darwinian ideology with the doctrine of progress too.³⁸ And rightly so. The doctrine of emergent evolution well predates Darwin in the nineteenth century with its most sublime philosophical expression in Hegel. But Darwin enables the conversion of high emergent idealism into reductively naturalistic scientific fact and—with the likes of Herbert Spencer—into a handy doctrine of the naturalness of competitive domination. Power-centrism disdaining metaphysical meaning is deeply embedded in modern science from its Baconian origins. Bacon is driven by the will to dominate nature, to rule over her, and a sense of enti-

34 For his masterpiece in theological epistemology see Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992).

35 See C. S. Lewis, *The Complete Chronicles of Narnia* (London: Collins, 2000). Here Lewis evokes an awareness of the divine presence and the spiritual struggle in ordinary life by the most wondrous allegorical fairy tales.

36 In *That Hideous Strength* Lewis takes us on a high imaginative ride with demonic powers. However, it is in his very humdrum portrayal of the temptations and anxieties of the early career scholar, and his intimate depictions of institutional politics at a college level, where he is at his most powerful in describing the demonic.

37 C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* (Bath: Chivers Press, 1998), 237–239.

38 C. S. Lewis, *Poems*, “Evolutionary Hymn” (New York: Harcourt, 1992), 55–56.

tlement to torture all secrets out of her in order to achieve the power of greater human utility.³⁹ Such practical concern with power over nature, and over technologically inferior peoples, translates very comfortably into nineteenth century imperial and commercial domination.

Notice how the LOK works in the doctrine of progress. Kant's transcendental deduction effects a phenomenological reduction of reality such that only that which lies *beneath* reason as merely regulative and universally applicable, and that which lies *within* the purview of scientific positivity and technological mastery (as necessities of the apparent world) is considered real. Any horizon of meaning and value that stands above human knowledge and action simply disappears from reality. Now—with staggering chronological snobbery—all the great saints and sages of the past are transformed into superstitious speculators whose childish notions of sacred value and transcendent reality can be ignored as ignorant and foolish.⁴⁰ Lewis accepts none of it, and is keenly aware of how “science” becomes the primary ideological vehicle of secular materialist pragmatism from the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, leading up to the collapse of broadly held Christian cultural assumptions in the 1960s.⁴¹

One can say Lewis is only concerned with scientism, which is true, but the interlocking roots of the wheat of honest and demonstrable natural knowledge and the tares of the cultural ideology of scientism—

39 See John Henry, *Knowledge Is Power: How Magic, the Government and an Apocalyptic Vision Helped Francis Bacon to Create Modern Science* (London: Icon, 2002). The Baconian venture in the new mathematico-experimental natural philosophy has, from the birth of the Royal Society, a very intimate association with aristocratic, naval, commercial, and military power.

40 For the iconic rhetorical apology for the Enlightenment as the long awaited rational and moral maturity of humankind, see Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?” *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, December 1784. For an English translation see: https://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/kant_whatisenlightenment.pdf (accessed 12 December 2023). See also Richard Dawkins' address to the Oxford Union on 18 February 2014, here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYY99oD_cvs (accessed 10 December 2023), where, with a cheeky smile, Dawkins explains how he despises theology. This public confession of his complete ignorance of the meaning of theology is met with appropriately knowing laughter by his oh so grown-up God-ignorant acolytes.

41 Lewis did not live to see the sexual revolution in popular culture. But this revolution was firmly in place in academic culture well before the 1960s.

particularly in our secularised and state-controlled education systems—are much more deeply bonded than Christian “science and religion” discourse usually cares to notice. But Lewis noticed it.⁴²

Conclusion: Suiting Up for a New Conflict

The “learned ignorance” of Nicholas of Cusa and the “limits of knowledge” of Immanuel Kant respond to the inherent impossibility of any human claim to a total rational, empirical, or metaphysical demonstration of indubitable truth, in opposite ways. To Nicholas, finding the small lamp of human understanding well suited to practical life, well suited to worship, and well suited to the diligent study of creation, is a cause for humble joy and loving faith in the Father of all Lights who dwells in unapproachable radiance. All our reason and knowledge are a function of relational good faith, and there can be no participation in truth without such faith. But this is not the Enlightenment LOK. Bracketing out divinity and the demonic, disallowing any partial knowledge of transcendent qualities and intrinsically intellectual realities, reducing the scope of meaningful scholarship to only what can be subordinated to merely regulative logic and the useful constructions of scientific knowledge and cultural meaning, and proceeding ever reductively onward ... one may ask, what is left of actual reality to know? The Enlightenment LOK intentionally locks out *actual* (unmasterable) reality in order to define a phenomenological “realism” that is very practically useful, but is an entirely abstract epistemic construct. This is the purchasing of power at the cost of truth, and the purchasing of a delusional sense of epistemic mastery at the cost of reality.⁴³

42 Lewis was very aware of education as spiritually and morally loaded (for good and for ill) mind formation. The manner in which a pervasive soft scientism, presupposing at least a functional materialism, has infiltrated education is explored with keen insight in C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1955).

43 Robert Pasnau finds these sorts of trade-offs at the very origin of the modern scientific age, where seeking to understand primary causes and first principles is traded for precision in describing phenomena. Galileo and Newton are explicitly working on this trade-off. See Robert Pasnau, *After Certainty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 14–18.

Granted, Kant is but one factor in this modern trajectory. The removal of intelligible form, moral meaning, and purpose from matter is another factor we have not touched on. The replacement of a Christian Aristotelian hylomorphic understanding of the material world with the modern atomic philosophy of matter radically flattens our sense of what the material world is. This is a key ingredient in the spiritual poverty of the modern life-world.⁴⁴ Our assumptions about what the material world is means we can no longer see the world as sacrament,⁴⁵ as a divinely graced creation,⁴⁶ as a spiritually active theatre,⁴⁷ as full of sympathetic and living agencies both above and beneath the categories of human intelligence.⁴⁸ But the baseless arrogance of Kant's so-called maturity, and the brazen anti-theological hubris of the so-called dignity and freedom of post-religious rational and scientific humanity, still carries the rhetorical day in our educational formation. The LOK still

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- 44 The revolution in the philosophy of matter effected by the likes of Pierre Gassendi, replacing Aristotle's hylomorphic understanding of the material world with a modern version of Democritean atomism was so successful and so complete that it goes hardly noticed by the non-specialist. But this is a profound shift in our understanding of the nature of nature. On that shift, see Lynn Sumida Joy, *Gassendi the Atomist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
- 45 The dependence of the world on sacramental realities, and hence the inherently sacramental nature of the material cosmos, is still well understood in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. See Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (New York: Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973).
- 46 See Betz, *Christ the Logos of Creation*.
- 47 Walter Wink gets some way towards recovering the meaning of spiritual struggle as an ordinary feature of life in the context of the Anabaptist commitment to reject *realpolitik* approaches to power. See Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).
- 48 See James Lovelock, *Gaia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). Lovelock tries to think of the biosphere as a self-regulating, possibly intentional, possibly agential, living organism. Earth Systems science is a fascinating field, but Lovelock's formulations have been highly contested. Lovelock himself became more scientific, and less mystical as Earth Systems thinking progressed, and as he fell afoul of reductive LOK orthodoxy. But his 1979 book marks a significant modern interest in recovering agencies in nature that are not reductively naturalistic. For a fine introduction to medieval sympathetic natural philosophy see Spike Bucklow, *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science and Secrets from the Middle Ages* (London: Marion Boyars, 2009).

functionally sets science against religion and still brackets all that is most pressingly important in life out from “reality.”

If we are to do “science and religion” without adapting religion to the manners and silences of the Enlightenment vision of the limits of knowledge, this is going to be read as a sad attempt to revive the now happily resolved war of backward religious fundamentalism against enlightened science and humanism. The reasons it will be read as such are simple: science won the twentieth century war of science against religion (hence there is no real conflict now). The battle between faith seeking a true but partial understanding of unmasterable reality, and a faith-free Enlightenment understanding that rationally and empirically *contains* phenomenological reality, is over. But now a new battle is brewing. This is between a tired scientific positivism that has no metaphysical warrants, and a powerful new postmodern irrationalism. Religion that does not play by the LOK rule book will be labelled anti-science and considered a force for irrational post-enlightenment darkness. But this is a misreading. Rather it is science’s oh so effective removal of itself from any theological warrant that has produced a postmodern irrationalism of pure meaning *poesis* and fully amoral normativity-constructivism.⁴⁹

I think Michael Hanby is right. The only way to save science from post-truth constructivism on steroids is a recovery of theology as the first philosophy for any viable natural philosophy. No God, no science.⁵⁰ Modern science may well die at the hands of basely pragmatic financial and corporate power that happily and manipulatively con-

49 On the nineteenth century separation of science from religion, see Peter Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015). On an anti-naturalist, anti-essentialist understanding of the complete linguistic and performative construction of human meaning, see Butler, *Gender Trouble*.

50 I am turning Hanby’s question into a statement here, but the statement does seem to fall out of asking the question as carefully as Hanby does. See Michael Hanby, *No God, No Science?* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). For similar recent enterprises in seeking to rethink modern natural philosophy from the theological first principles, see Larry S. Chapp, *The God of Covenant and Creation* (London: T&T Clark, 2011); Paul Tyson, *A Christian Theology of Science* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022).

trols research, economies, and states. Modern science might die at the hands of the algorithmic reduction of the individual to the consumer, and at the hands of educators formed by an academy suffering deeply from a postmodern cultural failure of truth confidence. As historians have clearly shown, there is no intrinsic opposition between science and religion, and Christian theology is the essential incubator out of which modern science arises.⁵¹ Equally, science cannot provide its own truth warrants. Science needs theology. Yet the reality is that the Enlightenment LOK is deeply opposed to theology as its first philosophy, and will probably defend the autonomy of science from metaphysics and religion to the death.

In this context, if we should try and open up human knowledge to a reality we cannot narrowly epistemically master, and if we should try and think about natural knowledge in the context of higher truths and unavoidable substantive philosophical commitments, there will be science and religion conflict. There is nothing to be gained by insisting that science and religion relations must always be friendly. For the only “friendly” that science will recognise is proper respect from religion for the LOK, upholding the autonomy of science, and judging truth (and the phenomenologically *real* meaning of religion) by scientific categories. Christians can go on bending around the manners of the Enlightenment forever, but this is to concede to the unreality of actual reality, and to let modern science die at the hands of its own metaphysical poverty.

There needs to be a new science and religion conflict. Not the conflict of Darwinian atheistic truth against a fading nineteenth-century natural theology where both “enemies” are equally embedded in reductive modern positivism. That was a conflict between two types of shallow metaphysics and two literal positivisms that was going to end badly for everyone (which it did). Evangelical Darwinian atheism is on the fade now, but it is also the case that Bishop Usher’s chronological

51 For a couple of excellent texts in this very fruitful domain, see Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986); Stephen Gaukroger, *The Emergence of a Scientific Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006).

enterprise will never hold broad credibility in the West again. Even so, various iterations of biblical literalism regarding the *hexaemeron* may well live on in their enclaves. This is because modern biblical literalist Christians, who have never abandoned early modern natural theology, remain inherently more reproducible than those who uphold a literalist commitment to the present cosmological theories of our natural philosophy and who mythologise central Christian doctrines to make them compatible with the present state of scientific knowledge. But Darwinian atheism and fundamentalist creationism were a sideshow anyway. More than a sideshow only in that this flashy conflict was a convenient diversion from the profound and uncontested secularisation of the academy from the 1870s to the 1970s. That secularisation was largely achieved through the separation of science from religion and the limiting of public truth-claims to the Enlightenment LOK. But the victory of science as master of public truth, and religion as a private meaning game for the unenlightened, will probably be pyrrhic for both modern science and modern religion.

Science needs to rest on a viable metaphysics and, from the origin of the university until the late nineteenth century, viable Western metaphysical visions of nature have been embedded in Christian theology.⁵² The success of the eighteenth-century push against Christian theology as the first philosophy for the West and as the warrant of its natural philosophy, finally arrives in the post-Christian era after the 1960s. This is not going well and shows significant signs of ending badly. For the sake of a viable science, and the recovery of the meaningful public pursuit of genuinely qualitative ends, let us not fear engaging in conflict with the Enlightenment LOK.

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52 Though the argument is from the 1970s, Hooykaas is still persuasive in maintaining that modern science rests on Christian theological warrants, and cannot long survive being cut off from the root system that made modern science flourish. See Reijer Hooykaas, *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2000).