

HISTORY AND “THE THINKING NOW OCCURRING”

D.G. Leahy refers to his work as “The Thinking Now Occurring” (which his students have come to refer to as “TNO”). This appellation is perhaps as provocative as the work itself. The first time I met the author in person, he disarmed his interlocutors by never using the locution “I think” to introduce his spontaneous discourse. “In the thinking now occurring,” he would utter—and then deliver himself of what he had to say. In his writings, the phrase functions as a complex name for the “thinking,” no longer quite denominable as theology or philosophy, that occupies the considerable change in the very being of intellectual activity, not to say the transformation of Being itself, that the work proclaims to be occurring in the present epoch “for the first time in history,” and which both the texts under his pen and the words from his mouth declaim. The phrase expresses the essentially historical nature of Leahy’s thought and the radically particular accent of its articulation of history. The present article attempts to work through some aspects of TNO’s historical thinking, but this requires an exposition of the major doctrines of The Thinking Now Occurring more broadly. I present this in two parts: “Faith and Philosophy in the Thinking Now Occurring,” which contains this exposition, and “Demurrers, Animadversions, Caveats, Cavils,” which expounds, obviously, difficulties that I have experienced with the work as an all-encompassing historical vision.

Part I

Faith and Philosophyⁱ

The Promise Fulfilled

There have been many attempts to reconcile religion with modern philosophy and contemporary science. These attempts often seek surreptitiously to court the approval of thought and/or science by proffering more or less arbitrary analogies between present day scientific results and religious tenets; or else they attempt to dictate to science the

grounds for its own research. The thought of D.G. Leahy, rather, takes the world that science finds as it is and discovers in the history of thought itself a course of development whose outcome is the fulfillment of an ancient spiritual promise: that faith shall find its own legs, as it were, and be reconciled with an exalted form of intelligence that faith itself had fostered; that intelligence—that is to say philosophy and its product, natural science—will open to the faith that in fact had brought it into being.

If the Christian revelation included the teaching that in the Christ is to be found not only the *Way* but the *Truth*, it is clear that for several centuries now this spiritual Truth has been diverse from the other kind of truth with which the modern scientific enterprise has concerned itself. If both forms of truth can be said to be rooted in the matter of the essence of existence, there would seem to be the possibility, the hope, and, on the part of revelation, the promise, that in the end the two truths will be seen as one. Leahy's seminal work, *Novitas Mundi*,ⁱⁱ traces the history (from the time of Thomas Aquinas to the recent past) of a progressive occluding of the "transcendental essence of existence" —the essence of existence as proclaimed in what Aquinas calls Sacred Doctrine—but it also announces and celebrates the occurrence of a change in the very substance of that history, through which this occlusion clears and the promise is fulfilled.

Novitas commences with an account of the absence of the notion of *existence* in the ancient world. The ancients, including, as an essential example, Aristotle, had no explicit knowledge of existence as a completed totality. Aristotle's highest deity keeps the universe revolving but does not bring it into being for the first time. With Christianity the principle of *creatio ex nihilo* situates the idea of existence itself within a transcendental horizon and equips it with a transcendental essence. Existence as a whole is comprehended as God's Creation.

Existence itself is now prepared to become an object of study, and human intelligence can now understand itself as being capable of studying it. In the High Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas, through his formulation of the Christian Faith as Sacred Doctrine, finds in *natural reason* an adequate instrument for pursuing such investigations and at the same time gives to it a place within Creation. Natural reason possesses the dignity of being the finite analog of an infinite, Divine intelligence. There is a limit to human capacity, and where that limit is reached, Sacred Doctrine itself rounds out the

picture of the totality of Being. Science itself is established as pertaining to nature, that is, to Creation, and the instrument for carrying it out, natural reason, is provided to man. But with the clarification of existence and human reason as such, possibilities appear that were not available to thinking prior to the Christian revelation and its establishment of the “transcendental essence of existence.” With the *certainty* of Sacred Doctrine, the *possibility* of doubt emerges. With the appearance of existence itself, the possibility that it might lack its transcendental essence becomes capable of articulation. Thus, beginning with Descartes, a two-fold transformation takes place that, while blocking Sacred Doctrine to science and reason, removes the limits placed upon them. Provided that thinking not consider existence as Creation and provided that thinking find some other analysis of its own activity than that afforded to it in Sacred Doctrine, thinking can and must now expand its researches to include fundamental questions that had belonged exclusively to Sacred Doctrine before. Sacred Doctrine now falls under a kind of interdict, and serious thought from Descartes through Heidegger and beyond must situate both human reason and existence without recourse to it. For each of the major thinkers, faith is, perhaps, allowed, but not allowed to penetrate its scientific preoccupations. Or if so allowed, it must be provided a grounding by authority of reason alone.

Leahy’s task in the main chapters of *Novitas Mundi* is to trace the history of the interdiction of Sacred Doctrine and to show, for each of the thinkers to which the work attends, how, while the very possibility of the thinking in each case is provided ultimately by articulations first made available by Sacred Doctrine, still, faith and Deity are held under the interdict. A place for faith and Deity is put back in, as it were, by hand and for purposes specified by the requirements of thinking in each case; but any intellectual transparency of Being to God is completely obscured.

At the end of modernity, however (that is to say, during the course of the twentieth century), a series of inversions and reversals in thinking occurs, such that the very rationale for the interdiction of faith unravels. Today, and for some time now, owing both to developments within philosophic thinking and advances within the natural sciences, the question of the *essence of existence* has become an inescapable *preoccupation* for serious thought. This preoccupation does not command a return to any previous way of thinking or an acceptance of Sacred Doctrine in any of its prior forms.

The Thinking Now Occurring accepts, rather, the extreme objectification of existence that is *science's* preoccupation. It embraces the enormous wealth of detail, for instance, with which science has been able to specify the nature of material reality; it finds no difficulty in situating human sentience within the provenance of the material world; it allows experience, perception, conceptual activity, logic, mathematics, language, all to appear on the same footing as matter, and it allows all to appear within the unfolding of a completely external historicity. But in the midst of all this, faith finds itself no longer on the other side of a barrier, excluded from serious participation in the preoccupations of thinking. The very inclusive character of existence itself forces the questioning of the essence of existence, and in this questioning, the matter of faith can no longer be seriously left aside. Suddenly it appears that the very direction of thinking that led to this inclusive character of existence was there, not “all along,” but precisely since the advent of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* and the appearance of the transcendental essence of existence in revelation and Sacred Doctrine. Now “for the first time in history,” the sense of that revelation can be truly seen by the eye of faith and, at the same time, the pertinence of faith as providing the missing element for the comprehension of existence as a whole comes to appearance. The two truths of faith and reason are no longer held apart from one another, and the ancient promise is fulfilled.

Existence Itself

It is a commonplace of the cultural historiography of the West to see a massive reorientation of spiritual attention occurring at about the time of the European Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Whereas the Middle Ages valorized the eternal, the other-worldly, the incorporeal, with the Renaissance, conscientious thought and cultural production begins increasingly to lavish attention on the this-worldly, the historical, the radically particular and concrete character of experience, objects, and events.

Leahy's Incarnationist ontology attributes the very possibility of an orientation towards the historical, the material, the radically particular, to a transformation of and within Being that is the extension, elongation, and progressive fulfillment of the

Incarnation event. The work of the Incarnation does not occur all at once. It develops historically through a series of phases that can be traced in the thinking of the major Western philosophers, in particular, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Leibnitz, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Peirce, James, Dewey, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Derrida, McDermot, Altizer...Leahy. The Thinking Now Occurring is the current installment in this series. Its content involves an assertion that the resistance to Sacred Doctrine that seems to infect the substance of philosophy since Descartes has been once and for all overcome by the Christ's so fully entering into existence, that whatever in fact exists is now His Body, and that this is so with such thoroughness that the oppositions that animate all previous thinking: matter/spirit; thought/reality; mathematics/physics; perception/thought; imagination/matter and so forth are one and all dissolved into the single overwhelming fact of the Incarnation qua existence.

Again, so thorough is this leveling of all categorical distinctions, that faith need no longer concern itself with the particular form of the Christian narrative that has been handed down in the tradition. Faith is constituted by the single recognition of the overwhelmingly sacred character of existence itself without reference to that which transcends or stands outside it. Each individual person becomes the Creator of existence itself, while existence is sustained in and by our experience. The Creator has transferred His own creative capacity to each of us, and we ourselves wield this power in every moment, and this is so willy-nilly and whether or not we are cognizant of it. It is asserted that this power has been transferred to us on the level of fact in such a manner that it is not particularly relevant whether we believe that this has occurred or not: faith is utterly distinct from what in the old dispensation would be understood as belief. We are not asked to assent to a set of propositions which are claimed to be adequate to a reality exterior to our thinking them, since reality itself has become intrinsic to our own act of taking thought, our own perception, our own imagination. Rather, we are asked to respond to the power that has been transferred to us—by wielding it! Further, since there is no separate reality to which our cognitions might be adequate, no set of beliefs any longer qualify as acts of faith, but we each are the initiators of any ontology we might, in an earlier view, profess, and our thinking and our acting, each understood as aspects of the other, are thoroughly responsible to and for the world we severally and in the

aggregate create. This constitutes not a new ontology—a new view of how things are—but a *poly-ontology*ⁱⁱⁱ: there are as many ontologies, not only as there are individuals, but as there are acts of thought, and even of acts in general. The entire of existence is constituted new in every moment through, by, and as each of us.

Again, this creation of existence is not an internal affair of private souls, isolated by an interior depth from each other and from the world that they create: creation is rather utterly external, and the old interiority is understood in retrospect as the habitat of a self that is the correlate of a self-consciousness that has now been entirely released, overcome, abandoned. There is no longer a self to be conscious of itself, though there is indeed awareness, which, even when it attends to its own somatic condition, does so in a matter of attention not different from that paid to the external world.

The Thinking Now Occurring and its Enemies

The Incarnation announces the radical particularity of each individual and the radical particularity of the things in the world, and that the metaphysical cause of that condition of things is the birth and death and resurrection of Christ who, while being the universal God, took it upon himself to become a radical particular. This fact instigates, progressively, our transformation from being mere copies of eternal paradigms to being fully existent identities. Radical particularity applies universally: it delivers to *all* particulars their status as particulars; it imparts to each thing the condition of its identity, granting to it what in the past it only had as it were on loan from its eternal original. And yet the Incarnation is able to become a universal cause by becoming a particular fact. What for Platonic thought, for instance, belonged to a realm of atemporal forms or ideas, has entered history. The forms are in the world as the schemata for the things of the world, fully existing only *as* those things.

As existence itself is sustained in each moment by the creative act of each individual, individual existence is radically transitory. It is not simply that each objectively present moment and its contents vanish as they arise (as in traditional occasionalist thought), but that the acts of thought that create the vanishing moments are themselves vanishing. And yet the course of this evanescence is not reduced to a

featureless flux: the identity of the individual “Creator” is sustained, but only through the changing events of her creation. Identity exists, but identity is change itself—the changing character of existence that includes both Creation and Creator.

The Thinking Now Occurring thus finds itself vigilant to denounce any appeal to Platonic forms or atemporal archetypes as sustaining the identity of persons or things in existence. It views the influence of Platonism on early Christian thought through Plotinus and other Neoplatonic thinkers (particularly upon Augustine) with some aggression as impenitent resistance to the Incarnation event. Insofar as this influence persists through the Middle Ages and into modernity (insofar, that is, as all philosophy seems to be but a “footnote to Plato,” as Alfred North Whitehead once quipped), that persistence too is viewed as resistance and as entirely deleterious. The Thinking Now Occurring is resolutely in opposition to any contemplative reference to an inner world of eternal forms, or any access to timeless intuition, or any sense of interior depth that seeks to find the historical world resonant with crepuscular, enigmatic, intriguing structures or entities. The Thinking Now Occurring expounds and celebrates the richness and brilliance of a complex surface, where the utterly transitory shimmers with an utterly present creative power.

Similarly, TNO finds itself distant from, if not utterly inimical to any form of contemplative practice that aims to merge the individual with, dissolve her into, or subsume her by a supervenient or subliminal spiritual continuum. It would in this manner distinguish itself from various moments of both Christian mysticism and the enlightenment traditions of the East, at least insofar as these traditions proffer such an image of the individual’s merger with a godhead or some other transcendent substance. But how then can a multiplicity of ontological centers combine to create anything like a world we hold in common? Existence in TNO is neither a multiplicity of internally separate, privately held universes, nor a merged totality to which each unit simply contributes a separate part, but rather a hyperdimensional multiplicity whose nature is a “discontinuous continuum,” each point of which—each individual—is distinct from each other, each one creating a particular version of the whole. But the whole does not exist in isolation somehow from the multiple acts of its creation. Leahy’s image for this is a circle formed by distinct, separated points.

The Thinking Now Occurring also experiences the subtle recuperation of Platonic thought in Derrida and the post-structuralists as unacceptable as Platonism proper. The former is neither to be valorized in its inscrutability nor decoded by the application of semiotic analyses. The rational promises that the post-structuralists find shot through with unconscious obscurities are abrogated at the root: no such promises are any longer in effect. The rationality that now pervades existence is utterly transparent and unexceptionable. The entire congeries of quasi-metaphysical entities called into appearance by the self-referential structures in previous representational and finally self-representational discourse are, to borrow a phrase from Zen, abolished with a single blow. There is no re-presentation anywhere, no gap between thought and its object, no ontological difference between signifier and signified, between code and codified. The last barrier between the phenomenology of existence and existence itself, the last impediments to Sacred Doctrine, have fallen away; and with the unexceptionable nature of the sacred reappearing as a new possibility for thought, the sacred character of immediate existence and our own act as the production of it are given with the self-evidence that a Descartes once required of sense and thought to render the world and thought perspicuous. Again, The Promise fulfilled.

Part II

Demurrers, Animadversions, Caveats, Cavils

Leahy presents the continuing construction of the edifice of The Thinking Now Occurring in *Novitas Mundi, Foundation: Matter the Body Itself*,^{iv} *Faith and Philosophy*, several texts available on Leahy's website, and privately circulated transcriptions and hand-outs from his classes. These constitute a formidable and intricately worked out, ongoing project. It is, I would imagine, quite impossible to study this work in a thoroughly detached and academic matter. These texts do not readily yield their contents without a certain participation on the part of the very being of the reader. Their discourse is as dense and both as welcoming and forbidding as any in the history of Western thought,

Hegel or the most difficult texts of Heidegger not excepted. One must give oneself to the text in order to pass materially through its page-long sentences, its complex recapitulations, its reworking of its own developing idiolect and its elaborately wrought formulations. Faith, in accordance with a text from Augustine that Leahy comments upon in *Faith and Philosophy*, can be understood as a positive response to the Word; faith, in this sense, animates the reading of any text whatsoever in that one must trust the concourse of an utterance to follow it to its end. Faith would thus seem to be more a category of momentary understanding than settled belief, for whether or not each of us creates the entire of existence in every moment, as we do according to TNO, it is undeniable that we create our understanding of the text we read moment by moment as we read it. But as one's understanding accumulates, difficult texts and their tortuous readings will yield, parallel to one's assent to them and understanding of them, demurrers, animadversions, caveats, and cavils.

The exposition of TNO in the previous sections of this essay does, in one sense, little justice to Leahy's thought, attempting to render it perspicuous without requiring that the reader undergo it. Still, my own engagement with these texts, on and off for over ten years now, has excited and tested my own faith in the above sense continuously, and I would be doing an injustice to my experience of them, and in a sense to the work of *The Thinking Now Occurring* itself, if I withheld a report on the philosophical and spiritual difficulties I have encountered in this process. The rest of this essay spells out some of those difficulties.

Heidegger, Ontology, Historicity^v

Leahy's tour through the history of Western thought taken as a history of Being itself has its precedents in Hegel and Heidegger, and Leahy is careful to separate his own procedure from his two predecessors. His readings in *Novitas Mundi* of Kierkegaard, Husserl, and Heidegger, and in *Foundation* of Marx and Pierce, focus on their being only partly successful antithetical responses to Hegel; and Leahy himself devoted a course under the auspices of his New York Philosophy Corporation to Heidegger. Since I take it that it is Heidegger who opens and attempts to keep open the question of Being and

Being qua existence for thinking in our time, and Heidegger who also sees the history of ontology as tracing the history of Being itself, I wish to make certain remarks regarding Leahy's reading of Heidegger and its pertinence to the matter of polyontology.

The turn toward the radically particular that is supposed to achieve a certain denouement in *The Thinking Now Occurring* is also a determination of the nature of history. In fact "history" functions in TNO as a general term for the turn to the radically particular, and the possibility of history in precisely this sense is the event of the Incarnation. But the commitment to the Incarnation amounts to an ontological decision at a particular level of the inquiry into the nature of Being that Heidegger opened, and therefore, there is an inevitable tussle between Leahy and Heidegger: Does History, fixed ontologically as Incarnation, determine the history of Being—a history that in turn allows Heidegger's question to emerge? or is Incarnationism to be understood within a more general history of Being, itself but one of the ways Being is given a specific form and content? Heidegger views Christian revelation as a fully determined ontology that closes out the kind of inquiry into the nature of Being that his work's own form of piety professes.^{vi} Leahy in turn views Heidegger's philosophy of Being, though a step on the path to *The Thinking Now Occurring*, finally as the pretense of "Being for its own purposes" and as the work of "the last impenitent."

Leahy in fact is somewhat careless with Heideggerian terminology in a way that he would not tolerate in regard to his own. He renders, for instance, "Sein und Seiendes" as "Being and Existence" rather than "Being and beings;" and he collapses, for his own purposes, the notions of existence, the universe, and the world. But Heidegger's "existence" (his *Existenz*) is that to which Dasein relates "in one way or another" and is specifically not to be conceived as "the universe." Again, the "world"—in Heidegger a highly specific term developed in *Being and Time*— does not render any sense of "the universe" that today would be legible. Also, Heidegger means by "the oblivion of Being" the oblivion into which the question of the meaning of Being is cast by its various determinations in the philosophic tradition. Though *What is Metaphysics* does power up around a reflection on "Nothing," *Being and Time*, the earlier and certainly more fundamental work, begins with a conceptual circle in which the question of the meaning of Being emerges from a going back and forth between an understanding of Dasein as

that being for whom Being is of concern in his Being, and the question of Being itself. “Nothing” is not the absence of beings but the ontological morass into which we are thrown when our “world” disintegrates.

The Heideggerian enterprise, as I see it, is a performative action undertaken to hold open a space of ontological inquiry, not the determination of one last ontology. This performativity remains effective even where Heidegger himself stalls or closes out or closes down. If it appears, as it occasionally does, that Heidegger is declaring, indeed, a final ontology, the possibility of holding the question of Being open in spite of Heidegger’s own views remains an important concern. To me anyway. That is to say, the historical effect of Heidegger, or one of them, has been to open the question of Being (and, incidentally, to open it in such a way that even thinkers outside of the Western Tradition have been able to join in the questioning). So the question for me is this: does the Thinking Now Occurring, in its characterization of Heidegger as “the last impenitent,” intend to hold open the question of Being against even Heidegger’s occasional lapses and apparent tendency to close it down, or does TNO itself claim to register the closing down of that question once and for all? I think that Leahy’s answer would be that the kind of ontological questioning with which Heidegger was concerned HAS been closed down indeed by the advance that is The Thinking Now Occurring. According to TNO we are no longer at a time in history at which such questioning is any longer pertinent. Heidegger’s opening of the ontological path was one of the final steps toward the Thinking Now Occurring, but it has been overtaken by a decision that makes each individual the agent of an ontological originarity. This might include Heideggerian openness but without the dark and uncanny quality that Heidegger’s engagement with “The Nothing” tinctures such inquiry. In any case, “inquiry” would no longer seem to be the appropriate mode for engagement with Being. One must, to use a favorite image of Leahy’s, “step through the door” and Create! But I must observe that this means that a particular form of history, a particular ontological determination of the Being of history, is being asserted. And the possibility of an inquiring openness to whether such a determination of the Being of history is possible at all, is completely foreclosed—and that, by Faith in “The Thinking Now Occurring.” For me, a thinking that forecloses questioning is hardly recognizable as a “thinking” at all.

Some detail regarding what I mean by levels of ontological inquiry:

The question of Being, in Heidegger's later formulations, is articulated on three levels: questions about beings, questions about the *Being of beings*, and the question of the *Being of Being*. At the first level, we would have mere lists of beings and being types. Analytical philosophy calls such lists "ontologies." No covering concept establishes their nature in general, and the question of the nature of Being itself is not on the horizon.

At the second level, the "Being of beings" tells us not so much *what* entities there are but *how* they are. It gives a covering notion that determines their range and character. Traditional Christianity determines Being as Creation. Each thing that exists is given its positive determination by the prior fact that all of existence is created by God. In the early years of Christianity, the determination of Being as Creation invited the interpolation of Platonic ontology, where the Being of beings is given by the forms, and the forms themselves could be assimilated to a region outside of the material world, but a region also understood by Christian theology as God's Creation. Again, each early Greek thinker determined the Being of beings metonymically: for each thinker respectively everything was water, or fire, or earth, or flux, or numerical ratio, or the unbounded, etc, until Parmenides arrived at the non-metonymical vision of Being itself. With Parmenides, ontological inquiry potentially shifts to a level where one is no longer asking about the general character of the things that are but entering into an inquiring relation to Being itself; though, as it has rarely been observed, subsequent metaphysics rarely sustains Parmenides' level of inquiry. Heidegger repeatedly attempts to orient us to the unthought matter in Parmenidean thinking.

The Being of Being is the subtlest and most recondite level, most worthy of continuing inquiry: it concerns the nature (sic) of Being itself, and it would be at this level that the possibility of polyontology might open, because surely the possibility of a multiplicity of ontologies would derive from Being's Being being such that the Being of beings would not be unique. There could be a multiplicity of ways that beings as a totality might be disclosed. How each of these ontologies proceeds to dispose of the question of the Being of beings would have to be open.

Now I ask, at what level are ontological issues in general disposed by The Thinking Now Occurring? At what level are the ontologies opened by Leahy's poly-

ontology? Does each individual in each moment create a fresh sense of the Being of beings, or, rather, does each produce the existent entities materially, and can these be distinguished in TNO? And finally, does the very nature of Being itself depend on moment-to-moment determinations by humans? But if each of us were free to enter into the disposition of the question of the Being of Being, that would mean that certainly the question of the Being of History would remain suspended and would have to be determined by each of us as an aspect of our own ontological originarity. So we would be involved in a logical conundrum, a kind of truth-teller's paradox! For the very term under which our ontological freedom were given to us would be in fact open to the exercise of that freedom! I am not sure if that is quite what Leahy envisions. For the various positions mentioned above which are anathema to The Thinking Now Occurring, including not-yet-imagined uses for Platonic thought, for contemplation, for depth, for enigmas and inscrutabilities—would surely remain within the horizon of inquiry requisite for determining the Being of History, let alone the Being of Being.

But in TNO there is no distinction between the act of thought and the fact of existence, so the distinction between these levels collapses. If there is no difference between the thought of the Being of beings and the beings themselves, there certainly can be no inquiry into the Being of Being. THAT question does seem utterly closed off by the historical character of the “Thinking Now Occurring for the first time in History.” Being itself is collapsed into existence, and its nature, quite as it is in traditional Christianity, is disposed utterly by the master narrative of Incarnation. Any vital inquiry into the ultimate nature of Being is not part of the Thinking Now Occurring. But then either TNO is itself only one possible reading of the history of Being, in which case it is not uniquely “the thinking now occurring,” or it really does claim to express the closing down of ontological inquiry and its polyontology is greatly circumscribed.

Mircea Eliade

A view of human experience as it is supposed to have been prior to the Incarnation of Christ as Jesus of Nazareth and as it exists in non-Incarnationist thinking in general is articulated by an aspect of Leahy's thought that is essentially derived, it would appear, through Thomas J.J. Altizer, from Mircea Eliade, as expressed most thoroughly in the latter's *Cosmos and History*.^{vii}

Leahy, leaning on anthropological erudition, Eliade views what he calls "archaic humanity" as dwelling in the shadow of eternal forms—not articulated conceptually as in Plato, but expressed in myth and ritual process. The origins of the great patterns of nature and the determinants of human action lie in an ontological yonder that provides the very terms by which archaic humanity understands existence. The realm of myth is "*in illo tempore*"—"in that time"—a time discontinuous with the time of actual existence. The mythical narratives enacted "there" constitute a superior and more fully actual reality, providing the paradigms for quotidian occurrences. What happens *here* is rendered intelligible by having its exemplar *there*. Nothing new can happen in what for us is the real world. Concrete, particular, unmediated existence is barely existence at all. Only when matched with its archetype *in illo tempore* is reality bestowed upon it. Through the new sense of history that the Old Testament brings to bear and which the Incarnation brings to fruition (this is Altizer now, reading Eliade into his "Death of God Theology") humanity experiences an enormous ontological transition in the direction of concrete, actual, empirical, material reality: what is real is now the particular, the directly experienced, the situationally laden process of history, and not the paradigms that render them intelligible. Whereas archaic or contemporary tribal man sees daily events as instantiations of archetypes whose being holds sway in another ontic zone, modern post-incarnationally-motivated Western humanity experiences history as the site of the real. What actually occurs is reality, not the types and archetypes of myth or intellect which they exemplify.

Leahy in effect extends this picture. He reads the history of philosophy as a progressive transformation of archaic habits of thought into a thoroughly modern historicism. Even where concept replaces myth in philosophy proper, concepts themselves repeat the structure of archetypal myth: concepts *represent* events and objects in accordance with categories and types, eventually applying representational

consciousness to the individual person himself in the form of self-consciousness. Thus the philosophical tradition retains a sense of reality that it inherits from myth, for in conceptual thinking too, individual thing and particular event are subsumed under the greater reality of the general idea or the universal notion, until thinkers such as Marx, Pierce, Dewey, and others reinstate the primacy of the concrete against the concept. In all this Leahy sees the further work of the Incarnation, culminating in a radical break with the “elsewhere” of myth, representational thought, and self-consciousness. Thought itself is now treated as concrete event, and concrete event is felt as fully imbued with its own conceptual identity.

I do not quarrel with the desirability of this concretism, but with the Eliade-Altizer-Leahy account of the history that determines it.

A critique, or at least a thorough-going questioning of Eliade’s dichotomy between archaic and modern humanity and the generalizations pertaining to them are in order. I only suggest here the directions such a critique might take.

Any reader familiar with Claude Levi-Strauss’s structural anthropology (and the post-structuralist critique of Levi-Strauss does not change this) will not recognize the “savage” mind in Eliade’s forlorn, archaic victim of William Blake’s “same dull round.”^{viii} Levi-Strauss understands the application of structural constants as something quite distinct from this inevitable repetitiveness. Tribal humanity’s “bricoleur” is ever-responsive to the incursion of contingencies with a spirit of improvisation and delight that is rarely encountered among the highly civilized. His mythic categories, far from determining a limiting ontology, sacrificing the immediate to a more potent reality off somewhere, render vital and available the present moment in all its richness and spontaneous variety. The “savage mind” has recourse, in fact, to what Levi-Strauss refers to as a “science of the concrete.”^{ix}

Marshall Sahlins^x in an other vein, challenges the myth that pre-agricultural humanity (which constitutes 99% of human history, if we abandon the convenient fiction that “history” began with literacy) lived lives that were, in Hobbe’s much quoted phrase, “nasty, brutish, and short,” but on the contrary, in the words of Peter Lamborn Wilson, involved “a process of maximizing autonomy and pleasure for the whole group....[T]he

hunter/gatherer economy—even in ecologically disadvantaged areas like deserts, rain forests and the Arctic—is based on abundance and leisure.”^{xi}

It is by now no longer unexceptionable to see the progressive rise of modern man as culminating grandly in a humanity deriving from the events of early Christianity and the aftermath of Greek philosophy. We are beginning to know far too much about our so-called “pre-history” to countenance such wildly foreshortened pictures of our past without embarrassment. We can read the genetic code back to an Africa of over one hundred thousand years ago; our sense of the specificity of Neolithic and even earlier man grows constantly with archaeological exploration, and though, of course, we cannot provide ourselves with narrative detail regarding significant events in early humanity’s history, the idea that humanity rises from its primate ancestry in two phases, one archaic, one civilized, is no longer credible. But with the fall of this picture, the two-beat rhythm leading to *The Thinking Now Occurring* seems an inadequate picture of history as well.

Again, in Greek myth and theophanic narrative—as registered in a rich literature that the Western tradition has routinely mined for evidences of the “archaic” mind and, therefore, in which one might expect to find Eliade’s paradigms most clearly articulated—the advent of the Divine typically takes the form of an *incursion* into natural and social order. Though on one level, mythological narrative and ritual practice derive clearly from seasonal and cosmic patterns and recurrences, still, when a Greek god acts in human affairs it does so precisely by *disrupting* human expectations. Even without being conceptualized as linear history, human event and its commerce with the Divine are already most vivid and intense where they are most particular. Gods erupt on the human scene to bestow being or to disrupt being—and they do indeed erupt—in oracles, dreams, prodigies, trances, visions, the lives of heroes, the migrations of peoples, the songs of poets. They do not simply stay aloof *in illo tempore* to provide the ideal patterns of quotidian existence. But if for the Greeks, many centuries before Christ, myths depict the breaking of repetitive patterns as much as the articulation of patterns themselves, though Plato sought to elevate form to a higher site in the real than singular events, the divine character of the particular was already envisioned long before the Incarnation began the process of correcting “the same dull round” of eternal recurrence.

Radical Particularity Outside of the West

Humanity did not have to wait for the Christian epoch to attend and appreciate particular existence, however the course of Western thought appears, at least in one major stream of its history, to have been determined by the need to shake off the Platonic hypostatization of a realm of ideal forms supervenient upon concrete experience. Zen Buddhism, the Taoist tradition deriving from Chuang Tzu, the Dzogchen tradition in Tibetan Buddhism, and countless examples from animist peoples all give ample evidence of an anchoring of Being in the radically particular that, in terms of precise practice, far exceeds anything propounded in this regard in the West. From the perspective of these practices as spiritual perspectives, the radical particularism of the Thinking Now Occurring appears a bit like too little too late.

These traditions offer many and varied forms of practice geared to explore what there is every reason to view as ontological possibilities unknown in the West. (Much of Buddhist thought, of course, abrogates ontological speculation as such. In general, it does not seek to deny or affirm the existence of objects or the truth of concepts but seeks rather to transform our relation to that ground in our sentience from which ontological concern arises. But that does not imply the irrelevance of Buddhist experience and practice to *our* ontological concerns.) The cartoon version of Buddhist, Taoist, and Hindu traditions as involving the subsumption of the individual by a supra- or sub-venient continuum, begs the question of the value and nature of the ontological territory these practices open. One does not know what the Buddhist means by his nirvana without undergoing the initiation that reveals it. Gautama Buddha, for instance, refused to answer questions which to us would be essentially ontological ones, including whether there exists an individual entity that survives from birth to birth and which undergoes enlightenment—presumably because he understood that the nature of existence as experienced once the enlightenment process has been undergone is no longer what it was experienced to be prior to this. We need to be as wise as a Buddha in this respect and not exclude from our polyontology the ontological perspectives that these practices quite plausibly might open. Many of the essential practices the Buddhist practitioner masters involve a radical attention to the minute particulars of sensory and mental experience, so

that experiential regions which for the Western thinker are matters of speculation, for the Buddhist are open in depth to empirical exploration. In this regard, the attention to the concrete, and in that sense the historical, is far more advanced in the East than it is in the West in spite of the fact that Buddhism does not take a full-blown interest in what we call history. What we think of as history in the sense of a running narrative of the concrete appears to the Buddhist as the run-away elaboration of mental construction.

Mathematics

The Thinking Now Occurring discovers an entirely new system of numeration oriented by a symbolic understanding of certain numerical proportions and relations. But it is not clear how TNO stands in relation to the mathematics that the West has so elaborately developed (or discovered) and continues to elaborate (and discover). The Thinking Now Occurring calls to witness the probable technological future as evidence for its own vision, but technology is thoroughly dependent on the continued expansion of mathematical theory and the continued search for new practical applications of mathematical thought. The great foundational questions regarding the ontological status of mathematics that dominated mathematical thinking at the end of the nineteenth century and continued to do so through the first decades of the twentieth—questions that affected philosophy substantially outside of mathematics proper—are simply ignored in The Thinking Now Occurring. Foundational mathematical thinking asked and continues to ask, What IS mathematics? Is it the realm of Platonic forms? Are mathematical structures historically mediated constructions or socially determined conventions? Are they projections of the structure of the human mind or brain? Foundational studies remain unresolved around these issues, yet the application of mathematics to technology and scientific theory remains standard practice. There is a profound ontological hesitancy at the heart of post-modern thought that can be attributed in part to the unresolvedness of these questions. The Thinking Now Occurring declares that post-modern hesitation has been surpassed decisively by its own gestures. But it seems, in regard to mathematics, we need to know just how it has accomplished this. I doubt that in fact it has. The picture of

what TNO calls Logic opens a gap so vast between its own inventions and the still living questions within modern philosophy of mathematics, that I in any case, have thus far not been able to bridge it.

As an example of a topic within mainstream mathematics that it would seem that The Thinking Now Occurring might see it interesting to address is the realm of Georg Cantor's transfinite numbers and their development in the century or so since their advent. Much in modern mathematics follows from the experience of Georg Cantor that in order to fully rationalize the arithmetical continuum, a science of the infinite had to be invented. Cantor himself was not insensitive to the theological pertinence of his discoveries and sought to calm the turbulence he thought he was stirring up by declaring a distinction between the transfinite numbers he had succeeded in investigating and the Absolute Infinite—an infinite which involved contradictory properties and that remained comprehensible to God alone. Few mathematicians were interested in his theological anxieties or his attempts to quell them, and several of them have proceeded to investigate the “inconsistent multiplicity” that Cantor thought was exclusively God's prerogative. But in a theological context such as The Thinking Now Occurring, one would expect that a serious encounter with Cantor would be inescapable.

Creatio ex nihilo

It is not clear at all, from contemporary philosophy, how the question of the origin of “existence,” taken as our material cosmos, is to be understood, nor is it any longer possible to say that the concept of existence is rendered perspicuous by a doctrine that says that this universe came into being out of nothing either at the edge of time or at a particular point in time. The coming into its own of scientific cosmology with the articulation of the theory of the Big Bang, which seemed at first to confirm *creatio ex nihilo*, today confirms nothing of the kind. Various interpretations of the Big Bang construction exist, and the very rigor and seriousness with which these variations are entertained portends ill for any clarification of the notion of existence in the near future. For with the specification of the physical laws which this universe obeys, many

metaphysical questions arise regarding how “existence” is to be understood. Surely these laws “exist,” but is their existence on the same ontological footing as the material universe they specify? In TNO, no doubt, this distinction is moot. The laws that specify Creation are interior to Creation, now understood to be the prerogative of each of us. But cosmologists today speculate quite conscientiously on the possible existence of other universes both with the same or different laws; on whether other universes exist in some way parallel to our own or anterior in some transcending time; on whether time itself, and in what sense, came into existence with the Big Bang; on whether a hyper-dimensional manifold wraps this universe up within itself so that time, as one of its dimensions, does not “pass” at all. That “existence” might include the mathematical and logical laws that determine how universes emerge and endure renders the question of “existence” quite unclear and susceptible of only arbitrary arbitration. If existence itself is the body of Christ, does that mean that the Christ includes the range of all possible sets of laws for specifying the existent cosmologies? Does He include the mathematics that allows the specification of those laws? And what of the ontological status of mathematics? For mathematics goes far beyond the specification of any particular model of any universe. Do these possibilities define the polyontology of TNO? Or are they themselves together but one possibility within TNO? Does the uniqueness of the historicity of the Incarnation tell us whether physical laws or mathematical systems themselves are historically generated or historically unique? Does polyontology mean that each of us is free to establish these laws, create our own mathematics? Does the “whole of existence” that each of us is in each moment responsible for include the existence of other universes in principle out of communicative range with ours? No doubt, TNO can provide determinations for some of these questions; but it should be clear that the question of existence as a whole that the advent of *creatio ex nihilo* made possible no longer possesses the sharp edge that it might once have had.

Time and...

The Thinking Now Occurring’s understanding of radical particularity and the valorization of the radically concrete as the sloughing off of self-consciousness is of a

piece with its disclosure of the sacred character of existence itself as embedded in time and yet possessing a transcendental essence. There is no eternal reference that authorizes or guarantees the sacrality of concrete existence in detail, no Platonic scaffolding consisting of sacred types of which the concrete things are instances or examples. The things themselves, we ourselves, in our immediacy and materiality, are the sacred. The mantle of divinity has been passed all the way over to us, and to that which is here and that which is coming into being precisely now through our creative auspices. The transcendental essence of existence as the Christ has entered the world. Existence itself is its own “schema.” No timeless paradigm outrides as residue in some atemporal a cosmic station. TNO asserts this much, and the consequence of accepting or even entertaining it can be experienced. But one might demur as to whether it can be *thought*. TNO’s Answer: the nature of thought itself has been radically changed so that this question loses its sense. If the transcendental essence of existence has entered the world, thought no longer separates itself from that of which it is the thought. The impossibility of maintaining the separation of thought and world (that modern philosophy slowly discovered and that post-modern philosophy roundly proclaims) is exploded by TNO as a cause for agonizing and is demonstrated to be the new condition for faith. Faith thinks the transcendental essence of existence as inseparable from existence itself. Christ as the world. But, of this “an and yet and yet and yet.”^{xii} Why, except by virtue of personal history, would one find this transcendental essence in and as the Christ? Why not the Dharmakaya, Unqualified Brahm, or the Tao—terms from the East which for several thousand years had already found the transcendental essence of existence (in the form, for instance, of such formulas as “nirvana and samsara are one”) inseparable from existence itself? Differences in detail between these systems and TNO need to be weighed reflectively as appropriate for any thinking responsive to present-day intellectual conditions, and this reflection cannot be honestly dismissed by remarking that the nature of thought has been altered by the Thinking Now Occurring. Maybe. But those worlds of thought, as much as TNO, require participation to be understood authentically. If participation in The Thinking Now Occurring is a matter of “walking through the door,” and if we are to have polyontology, we must have many doors!

It is surely possible to ask whether the rejected Platonic alternative to the concrete character of sacred existence characterizes uniquely the mystery of atemporality as experienced, say, in Eastern religions, where there is clearly an atemporal experience, but not one based on a set of timeless paradigms to which concrete things and experiences are subordinate and to which they gain their sacred character by conforming. To the contrary. Just as in TNO, the displacing of immediacy by any form of representational thought is precisely what leads to the impasse of modern self-consciousness, so in Eastern contexts, particularly Madhyamika Buddhism, assignation of identity to external and internal objects and finally to one's self are what constitute the obscurations that prevent the immediate realization of precisely the atemporal character of one's actual being. Constructions of determinate atemporal realities are obscurations, but that which shines forth when these obscurations are removed is not something ensconced in time. In fact it is the Now, stripped of representational content, that radiates, in its immediacy, an atemporal archetype: that Now itself is an eternal Now, and if this nowness is the correlate of our being the Creators of existence, then it seems that that creativity is *also* happening in a Now that is not in time.

This indeed was something like the view inherited by Augustine from Plotinus and passed on through Christian tradition to Kierkegaard and beyond. It embraces an essential paradox that interrupts any fully rational ontology, and it isn't at all clear how the consistent rejection of this paradox (as articulated in Kierkegaard, for instance) in favor of the univocally concrete character of the present world (at the expense of any atemporal element) achieves anything but the refusal to expose oneself to an essential ontological mystery. If the concrete present is sacred in its particular content and this is so in every case and at every moment, it is hard to see how or why the Now itself loses its creative and novational quality by being in each instant the instantiation not of some archetypal or paradigmatic *content*, but of that eternal Now itself—a now-character that stands outside of time and imparts itself to each transitory moment precisely insofar as it is occurring in and as its Now. To deny this seems to be to throw the sacred baby out with the Platonic bath water, whereas to embrace the eternal present as archetype of the historical Now seems to be to embrace the uniqueness of the historical itself. It does not require accepting any sort of paradigmatic other-where or other-when or other-form

determining the character of the present; to the contrary, it requires only engaging a self-evident paradox: that though the content of every moment is radically new, the now-quanow does not alter with its content. Further, each moment occurs in such a manner that its own “schema” is coincident with its own event, its identity identical with its own changing occurrence, as in TNO. But of course such an engagement would come at too great a cost for the Thinking Now Occurring, for it would mean that the novational character of the radically particular and the anchoring of ethical life in the present would be a possibility for any time whatsoever and not the consequence of the radical incursion of the Incarnation event, whereas TNO traces the emergence of this possibility as occurring through the unique, Christian, history of the West. TNO must shunt aside any suggestion that human experience outside of the West and without the contribution of what TNO takes to be not only the history of Western thought but of Being itself might have come upon the wealth of the radically particular and the sacred character of creative being in the now.

The abrogation of the mystery of time/eternity is coherent in TNO with a certain noon-day quality to its vision of renovated existence. To quote Wallace Stevens again, in TNO “there are no shadows anywhere.”^{xiii} All ambiguity, all resonant depth, all layered and textured play of presence and absence has been, in its opinion, “transcended.” The entire sphere of depth-spirituality—and not only the dark caverns and moody grimnesses of the Romantic and the modern West; and not only as in the spirituality subsequent to the interdiction of Sacred Doctrine—the entire sphere of depth-spirituality is excluded from the sensibility tolerated by TNO. No place in polyontology for the spirituality of the Kabbalah and its intricate and resonant theosophy of layers, coverings, veilings and unveilings that Leahy’s some-time colleague Elliot R. Wolfson details in his many works or for the intricate and sophisticated theosophy of time that Wolfson magisterially teases out of Kabbalistic texts.^{xiv}

Finally, there seems little room for what Geoge Quasha and I have been writing of as a *poetics of thinking*^{xv}—a view of thought itself as a truly open, configurative^{xvi} making. Precisely because what philosophical thought has been since its inception in Ancient Greece seems to have reached a radical denouement, it need no longer manifest exclusively as an ever-renewed stage for a competitive drama ever-postponing but ever-

longing for the last word. We suggest a practice of a general poetics (obviously by no means limited to prosody) which would in fact find Leahy's *Thinking Now Occurring* and its ongoing texts a salient and exemplary witness.^{xvii} All of these difficulties notwithstanding, the greatest difficulty for me is that TNO itself, with its powerful capacity to draw me into an intellectual terrain in which all of existence scintillates with the radiance of its own transcendental essence, seems very much to have a place among the great visionary and indeed poetic works of human history. TNO's truest term is the Creative, and it is among the great acts of the imagination of Being (subjective and objective genitive intended) that this uncategorizable *poetic* work belongs.

ⁱ The title for this section is taken from *Faith and Philosophy: The Historical Impact*, D.G. Leahy, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003

ⁱⁱ *Novitas Mundi: Perception of the History of Being*, D.G. Leahy, State University of New York Press, 1994

ⁱⁱⁱ see, for instance, *Beyond Sovereignty: A New Global Ethics*, page xiii **[I don't know how to refer to this since I only have a downloaded copy.]** Though I am not aware of any extensive discussion of polyontology in D.G. Leahy's writings to date, it was discussed and used extensively in a course of his that I attended under the auspices of The New York Philosophy Corporation.

^{iv} *Foundation: Matter the Body Itself*, D.G. Leahy, State University of New York Press,

^v A full scale examination of the relation between TNO and Heidegger's thinking is far beyond the scope of this essay. It would require a prolonged reading of Leahy's published remarks on Heidegger as well as a working through of the transcripts of his course on Heidegger under the auspices of The New York Philosophy Corporation, together with a study of Heidegger's writings and recorded remarks on the relationship between his thinking and theology. But a starting point must be the fact that Heidegger emphasized that the distance between Christian theology generally and his thought must be heightened in order for a fruitful dialogue between the two to be possible, whereas in TNO the very distinction between philosophy and theology has disappeared. In TNO it seems to be the case that this collapse of difference is neither a subsumption of philosophical thought under theological systematics, nor the recovery of theology within a philosophical frame, but a genuine overcoming of the very distance that Heidegger insists must be maintained between faith and philosophy. But just this "overcoming" deserves a careful and prolonged examination along several fronts, some of the terms of which I try to suggest in this section.

^{vi} See *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*, edited by James G. Hart and John C. Maraldo, (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976), in particular "Appendix: Conversation with Martin Heidegger, Recorded by Hermann Noack."

^{vii} There is No Natural Religion in The Collected Prose and Poetry of William Blake, Edited by David V. Erdmann, (:), page 1

^{viii}

^{ix} Chapter One, “The Science of the Concrete” in *The Savage Mind*, Claude Levi-Strauss, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966).

^x *Stone Age Economics*, Marshall Sahlins (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1972).

^{xi} “The Shamanic Trace” in *Escape from the Nineteenth Century and Other Essays*, Peter Lamborn Wilson, (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1998), page 73.

^{xii} from section I of “An Ordinary Evening in New Haven” by Wallace Stevens in *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*, (New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, 1982) page 465.

^{xiii} from section V of “The Man With The Blue Guitar” by Wallace Stevens in *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*, (New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, 1982) page 167.

^{xiv} see particularly *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination*, Elliot R. Wolfson, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005) and *Alef, Mem, Tau: Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth, and Death*, Elliot R. Wolfson, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006).

^{xv} See our *An Art of Limina: Gary Hill’s Works and Writings, George Quasha and Charles Stein*, Foreword by Lynne Cooke (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2009.) Though this book concerns the work of Gary Hill, it is in fact an extended meditation on the nature of poesis.

^{xvi} See my *Persephone Unveiled*, (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2006), particularly, “Afterword: Configuring History,” pages 189, 190.”

^{xvii} It would be an essential task to develop in detail the notion of poetics that would welcome The Thinking Now Occurring as an act under its provenance. Let me here, briefly sketch some of the features of Leahy’s textual practice and suggest how these features might render a treatment of TNO as a poetic practice likely and appropriate (even in the more limited sense of transformative language).

The Thinking Now Occurring is “projective” in a sense that can be developed from the American poet Charles Olson’s concept of *projective verse*; that is, the form of the language both projects and is a projection of the dynamic and formal characteristics of that of which it speaks, to the point of effecting a sensation that no separation exists between form and content. In the phrase borrowed from Robert Creeley in Olson’s seminal essay, “Projective Verse” (in *Collected Prose: Charles Olson*, edited by Donald Allen and Benjamin Friedlander [Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997] pages 239-250) “Form is never more than an extension of content.” That which is to be said projects a form appropriate to what is to be said, and, as a form, extends it.

The language of The Thinking Now Occurring is fashioned in such a way as to create in the reader’s experience the precise sense of ever-beginning existence that is at the heart of its doctrine. Passage after passage in each of Leahy’s major texts proceeds by articulating a series of declarative sentences in the present indicative, most commonly constructed around the copula “is.” The distinctive “style” or “sound” of Leahy’s texts is

dominated by cascades of passages of such sentences. The overwhelming sense is that the thought in a given sentence is indeed amplified by its successor sentence; nevertheless, the successor sentence begins from the beginning anew. There is no supervenient textuality that accumulates or assembles meaning into a cognitive space constructed above or parallel to the actual sentences of which a given swatch of text is composed. But there is a rhythm created by the iteration of similar sentence forms and by the linked repetition of other rhetorical features. And yet it is as if the entire force of the Thinking Now Occurring in its most essential aspect is projected in this manner—that the coming into existence of existence itself is occurring in each moment—as if the entire force of The Thinking Now occurring were concentrated in each sentential utterance. As the new thinking steps forth from the husk of self-referential intellectual and textual practice that constitutes an essence of modernity—a self-referentiality born of self-consciousness and functioning as its now-to-be recognized-as-hellish means—there is no room in the new textual practice for self-reference or self-reflection. Sentence follows sentence with such intimate density of utterance that there is no room for speech to step back or step away. It is not that there are no summative gestures within the text; it is just that each such gesture records itself as replete with the burden of existence that it carries. It does not, as I say, supervene upon the rest of the text, or establish a hierarchy of topoi such that one aspect of the text reflects upon the text itself, positioning it from a meta-level.

Here, almost arbitrarily, is a swatch of *Beyond Sovereignty*. I have broken up the typography to show the serial character of the sequence of declarative utterances:

The distance between creature and Creator is transcended in essence:

for the first time relation is the absolute actuality of the world itself:

as never before the relation creature and Creator is an absolutely unconditioned intimacy in existence.

As never before the Creator shares itself
with the creature.

For the first time history is existence *with the other* absolute.

For the first time the transcendental is essentially transcendence: beginning in time the foundation of the reality of time: time founding itself in beginning.

(Beyond Sovereignty, pages 5,6)

The iterations of the declarative sentences are counterpointed by a rhythm of repetitive introductory phrases. The rhetorical form is powerful, not to say hypnotic, The passage, I repeat, is not exceptional. Such passages abound everywhere in Leahy's work. Its movement is an energetic forward thrust of thought. In my view, its rhetorical means and its relation to the matter being articulated fall entirely under the provenance of poetics.