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A Christian Science

Searching for the Common Good and the Public Good

1.1 Deism, Neoplatonism and the Light of Reason

Someone like Robert Boyle would emphasize that the Christian world is premised upon the action and presence of God through grace, light and, indeed, mystery in the very divine contrivance of the material world, that is, the 'argument of design'.[1] Hence, in late seventeenth-century England, orthodox Christian thought did not entail an anxious effort to relate the particular to the universal but an industrious effort to obtain a glimpse of the unknown. In a review for the publisher of J. G. A. Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment*, Donald Weinstein remarked that the account in it of 'medieval thought was unduly Augustinian'.[2] I want to further qualify Weinstein's statement on what Pocock described as a definition of Christianity in the opening chapters of his masterpiece, which, in his view, accordingly shaped the sixteenth-century understanding of politics.[3] Pocock's narrative on the painful efforts of scholastic Christians to refer knowledge of particular and contingent historical events to categories unbounded by time and space was certainly representative of *some strands* of Christian theology. Nevertheless, Pocock's recurrent distinction between a divine eternal order and the contingent – in effect, a dual world entailing history and transcendence – was characteristic of Neoplatonic thought rather than of Christian thought more generally. Pocock went so far as to argue that the story of Florentine political thought was the history of its 'striking but partial emancipation' of that

[1] Scott Mandelbrote, 'The Uses of Natural Theology in Seventeenth-Century England', 20 *Science in Context* (2007), pp. 451–480; Wragge-Morley, *Aesthetic Science*.

[2] See in Richard Whatmore, 'Introduction to the New Princeton Classics Edition', in J. G. A. Pocock (ed.), *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), p. xix.

[3] Among a wealth of examples: 'Within the limits of that framework, the individual employed reason, which disclosed to him the eternal hierarchies of unchanging nature and enjoined him to maintain the cosmic order by maintaining his place in that social and spiritual category to which his individual nature assigned him' Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 49.

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mould of thought.[4] He was certainly right to highlight the existence of this type of dualist thinking, for Neoplatonism had a great impact on aspects of Christian and, in particular, Arabic philosophy from at least the Middle Ages onwards.[5] The question now, of course, is: What does it matter? Why is it relevant, in a study of seventeenth-century English natural law, to distinguish between Christian theology generally and a particular Neoplatonic strand of Christian theology? This book argues that *that* distinction changes everything. First, the premise of my analysis is that the original Christian thought transcends dualities. Moreover, the struggles of several natural philosophers dealt with in the chapters that follow – in particular Robert Boyle and John Locke – to grasp the essence and unity of a Christian cosmology offer an important proof of my claim. In the words of John Dunn, Locke's voluntarism and rationalism were 'yoked by violence together' – through the force of faith more than by philosophical persuasion.[6] It is of the utmost importance, however, to witness Locke's certainty that dualism was not workable.[7]

I propose to seek an insight into the perspectives of modern natural lawyers by studying these struggles to unify thought in a philosophy of natural law – including its subsequent transformations – as framed by the influence of Neoplatonic thought, rather than in the light of Ockhamite nominalist traditions or the voluntarist traditions often employed during the twentieth century.[8] Several of the English philosophers discussed in this book sought to overcome the dualist conception of the world they

[4] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 50.

[5] Pasquale Porro, 'The University of Paris in the Thirteenth Century: Proclus and The *Liber de causis*', in Stephen Gersh (ed.), *Interpreting Proclus: From Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 264; Dragos Calma, 'Du neoplatonisme au realisme et retour, parcours latins du *Liber de causis* aux XIII–XVI siecles, 54 *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* (2012); Dragos Calma, 'The Exegetical Tradition of Medieval Neoplatonism. Considerations on a Recently Discovered *Corpus* of Texts', in Dragos Calma (ed.), *Neoplatonism in the Middle Ages, I: New Commentaries on Liber de causis (ca. 1250–1350)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016).

[6] Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke*, p. 195.

[7] Locke's assertion that God is, in fact, everywhere, but *without being nature* (as Spinoza had it), is interesting in this regard. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, with an Introduction by Peter H. Nidditch (ed.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), II. 17. §20. 222, and generally ch. 13–17. Arguing that unlike for Spinoza, for Locke God is not nature, but that through the latter's emphasis of God's omnipresence, God's immensity and eternity almost corresponds with infinite space and infinite duration, see generally Geoffrey Gorham, 'Locke on Space, Time and God', 7 *Ergo* (2020).

[8] Famously so by Michel Villey, 'Les origines de la notion du droit subjectif', in *Leçons d'histoire de la philosophie du droit* (Paris: Dalloz, 1962), 240–241; and generally, Michel Villey, 'La genèse du droit subjectif chez Guillaume d'Occam', 9 *Archives de Philosophie*

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had inherited directly from Descartes and indirectly from Proclus and Avicenna. Deism – the establishment of religion on the basis of nature not revelation – was one of the outcomes of Neoplatonism.[9] In his examination of 'Descartes's Proof of a God from the Idea of a Necessary Existence', John Locke rejected the theological deficiency of Deism:

> The idea of the Theists' eternal Being is, that it is a knowing immaterial substance, that made and still keeps all the beings of the universe in that order in which they are preserved. The idea of Atheists' eternal Being is senseless matter. The question between them then is, which of these really is that eternal Being that has always been. Now I say, whoever will use the idea of necessary existence to prove a God, i.e. an immaterial eternal knowing spirit, will have no more to say for it from the idea of necessary existence, than an Atheist has for his eternal, all-doing, senseless matter.[10]

This passage evidences Locke's dissatisfaction with the dualist or Neoplatonic implications of the theory, since, for the devout philosopher, very little could be said about a Neoplatonic God. But after the publication of *An Essay*, according to John W. Yolton's review and M. A. Stewart's analysis of Edward Stillingfleet's critique, charges that Locke was a Deist

du Droit, Le droit subjectif en question (1964), p. 97. Despite his critique to Villey, Brian Tierney framed his discussion on rights as a response to nominalism in *The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law, and Church Law 1150–1625* (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK: William B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 2001); James Tully, 'Governing Conduct: Locke on the Reform of Thought and Behaviour', in James Tully (ed.), *An Approach to Political Philosophy: Locke in Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 193; Peter R. Anstey, *The Philosophy of Robert Boyle* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000). More generally, dissociating medieval skepticism from an exclusive link with Ockham's nominalism, Martin Pickavé, 'Skeptical Arguments in the Later Middle Ages', in G. Anthony Bruno and A. C. Rutherford (eds.), *Skepticism: Historical and Contemporary Inquiries* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

[9] M. A. Stewart notes that it 'is not always clear in seventeenth-century writers where the boundaries lie between the influences of Cartesianism, Cambridge Platonism, the views of Lord Herbert, and even traditional Scholasticism'. M. A. Stewart 'Stillingfleet and the Way of Ideas', in M. A. Stewart (ed.), *English Philosophy in the Age of Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 256. The use and misuse of Neoplatonism in England in the refutation of Socinianism, in Sarah Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution: The Challenge of Socinianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 147.

[10] Locke later qualifies his view: 'I answer: The idea of God, as far as the name God stands for the first eternal cause, includes necessary existence'. In John Locke, 'Deus-Descartes's Proof of a God from the Idea of a Necessary Existence, Examined', in Peter King (ed.), *The Life of John Locke with Extracts from His Correspondence, Journals, and Common-Place Books*, vol. II (London: Bentley, 1830), pp. 134–6. A similar idea than the quote in the text in John Locke, 'Remarks upon Some of Mr. Norris's Books. Wherein He Asserts P. Malebranche's Opinion of Our Seeing All Things in God' (1693) in *The Works of John Locke in Ten Volumes*, X (London: Thomas Tegg and Co., 1823), p. 255.

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multiplied, albeit not altogether justly, since he believed in Revelation.[11] Deism, it is true, developed out of the changing conceptions of nature in theology and philosophy, which is one of the main themes of this book, but it was also the product of a personal choice of faith. With the adoption of Neoplatonic thought in late thirteenth-century theology and in some strands of fifteenth-century humanist philosophy, materialism crept up. In Neoplatonism, the intellectual and the material world are markedly distinguished. That very dualism would become the foundation of mechanistic philosophy. However, during the English Scientific Revolution, importantly in Boyle's case, as we will see, the suspicion began to arise that dualist philosophies were preventing knowledge.

As with any realist philosophy, the defining feature of Neoplatonism is that knowledge starts with a particular thing or individual – in it the material world is often understood in atomic terms. In turn, what differentiates materialist epistemology of Neoplatonism from other forms of realism is its scepticism, obscurity of reason or of will (a 'blind will'), the existence of an extramental giver of forms for human understanding, denial of innate principles or – however the idea is expressed – of the absence of an active unity of body and spirit, will and reason. The theological expression of that dualism is that God is not involved in the actual speculative and practical reasoning of human beings. Thus, Christian sceptics neglect the scriptural doctrine that the kingdom of God is within us.[12] The interpretation of that verse has been varied in the tradition: from Origen's Christological understanding of the *autobasileia*, by which Christ *is* himself the Kingdom, to the mystical reading that views the Kingdom as a place located in the interiority of human beings, and the ecclesiastical that more diffusedly sees the relationship of Christ and

[11] As appears from John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, with an Introduction and Notes by John C. Higgins-Biddle (ed.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); John W. Yolton, *Locke and the Way of Ideas* (Bristol: Thomes Press, 1993), p. 169; Stewart 'Stillingfleet and the Way of Ideas'; Jeffrey R. Collins, *In the Shadow of Leviathan: John Locke and the Politics of Conscience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 333.

[12] 'Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, 'The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, "Here it is", or "There it is", because the kingdom of God is in within you' (*neque dicent ecce hic aut ecce illic ecce enim regnum Dei intra vos est*). Luke 17.20–21; 'According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust' 2 Peter 1.3–4, *King James Version Bible Translation*.

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the human beings building the Church.[13] At any rate, all of them express the real presence of the divine in the materiality of the world, even within human beings' bodies. Famously, Aristotle expressed a pre-Christian version of that scriptural doctrine in *De anima*, defining a divine element in the human mind and, since his view was convergent with Scripture, Christian theologians – particularly Albert the Great and later Thomas Aquinas – followed suit.[14] Briefly, these thinkers had described the peculiar manner in which human beings perceive and live in the world, grasping, together with God, the divine in the world and in themselves: created in the image of God as such; by means of the general principles of natural law through the divine light; or through God living within themselves and helping them to act well – that is, the Kingdom that Luke mentioned in his Gospel.[15] How scepticism shattered these epistemological and ontological principles and the evolving understanding of the light of reason in seventeenth-century England are discussed later in Chapter 5.

In the philosophical vacuum created during the long Reformation, Thomas Hobbes is usually considered the first English natural lawyer to have offered a convincing frame of thought that suited the sceptical temper of the period.[16] Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), it is true, was also constantly

[13] These three interpretations in Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, Adrian J. Walker trans. (New York and London: Doubleday, 2007), p. 49.

[14] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 430a10–25 in R. M. Polansky, *Aristotle's De Anima: A Critical Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 460; about the impact of these lines, see K. V. Wilkes noting that until this passage, Aristotle was 'every physicalist's ideal role model', but after it 'he seems to put himself resoundingly in the dualists' camp', K. V. Wilkes, 'Psuchē versus the Mind', in Martha C. Nussbaum, and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's de Anima* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 125; Albertus Magnus, *Ethica*, ed. Borgnet, vol. VII (Paris: Louis Vivès, 1891), Liber I, t. 7, c. 5; Paul Dominikus Hellmeier, *Anima et intellectus. Albertus Magnus und Thomas von Aquin über Seele und Intellekt des Menschen* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2011); *Aristotle's De Anima with the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas*; René Gauthier, 'Introduction' to Aquinas, *Sententia Libri De Anima*, vol. 45, I (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1984).

[15] See, previous note and Timothy C. Potts, *Conscience in Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 45; Tobias Hoffmann, 'Conscience and Synderesis', in Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Mónica García-Salmones Rovira, 'Natural Rights in Albert the Great: Beyond Objective and Subjective Divides', in Paolo Amorosa, Mónica García-Salmones Rovira and Martti Koskenniemi (eds.), *International Law and Religion: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[16] Henry G. van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought: 1630–1690* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963); Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 1–43; 174–218. Discussions on the

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referred to in England, but there were other interesting native experiments. Eminent Cambridge Platonists such as Henry More (1614–1687) and Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688) attempted to establish the Neoplatonist tradition in England in the midst of the crisis in epistemology that led to British empiricism. In the context of empiricism, knowledge would be inferred from the accumulation of empirical data, and ideas about natural law and morality would be transformed through novel mechanistic and naturalist principles. By contrast, Cudworth's key principle concerned the elementary capacity to ascertain the divine order of the world and how this ability preserved responsibility and human freedom. By his own account, Cudworth wrote his main work, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678), to confute prevalent ideas of necessity and to reinstate liberty to the centre of debate concerning moral philosophy. His was a discourse about liberty, 'against the fatal necessity of all actions'.[17]

Cudworth derived the force of his ideas also from Neoplatonic sources and built on Cartesian dualism – exactly the dualism that, as we will see in this study, Boyle and Locke were trying to defeat in order to develop a new theory of knowledge. Furthermore, Cudworth's Neoplatonic defence of religion against atheism was heterodox and often received with misgivings.[18] In his recent study of Cudworth as a critic of Hobbes's radical voluntarism, Stewart Duncan shows how, in another text on morality, Cudworth – interestingly, for a Cambridge Platonist – viewed things in matter and things in morality as possessing a similar type of constituency, a sort of 'nature' that was common to such qualities as, for example,

idea of a Long Reformation in England in Jeremy Gregory 'The Making of a Protestant Nation: "Success" and "Failure" in England's Long Reformation', in Nicholas Tyache (ed.), *England's Long Reformation* (London: University College Press, 1998).

[17] This is explained in the 'Preface': 'some Theists supposing God, both to decree and doe all things in us …; or that he hath nothing of morality in his nature, he being only arbitrary will omnipotent …, or by his immediate influence to determinate all actions, and so make them alike necessary to us. Again there being other Divine fatalists, who acknowledge such a Deity, as both suffers other things, besides itself, to act, and hath an essential goodness and justice in its nature, and consequently, that there are things, just and unjust to us naturally, and not by law and arbitrary constitution only; and yet nevertheless take away from men all such liberty as might make them capable of praise and dispraise, rewards and punishments, and objects of distributive justice; they conceiving necessity to be intrinsical to the nature of every thing, in the actings of it, and nothing of contingency to be found any where.' Ralph Cudworth, 'The True Intellectual System of the Universe', in Thomas Birch (ed.), *The Works of Ralph Cudworth*, vol. I (Oxford: D.A. Talboys, 1829), p. 44.

[18] Sarah Hutton, 'Philosophy, Religion and Heterodoxy in the Philosophy of Henry More, Ralph Cudworth and Anne Conway', 100 *Church History and Religious Culture* (2020), pp. 158–159.

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'whiteness', 'evilness' or 'goodness'.[19] Cudworth's point was to assert that things are what they are (material or moral) not by divine, arbitrary institution, but *by nature*.[20] Remarkably, Cudworth almost reified the conception of 'nature' and thus adopted a position opposite to that of Hobbes, and indeed Boyle. Against voluntarists' wild arbitrariness, both in their conception of morality and in their view of human society, Cudworth described natural order as the outcome of a just and rational God. Civil society and civil sovereignty were also expressions of that natural order. The political absolutism lurking in the sceptical and voluntarist position led him to emphasize an almost ontological public good and public conscience. With regard to Hobbes, Cudworth condemned in his main published work the atheist politics and ethics of the new natural lawyers:

> Here therefore these atheistic politicians, as they first of all slander human nature, and make a villain of it; so do they, in the next place, reproach justice and civil sovereignty also, making it to be nothing but an ignoble and bastardly brat of fear; or else a lesser evil, submitted to merely out of necessity, for the avoiding of a greater evil, that of war with every one, by reason of men's natural imbecility.[21]

It was a vain endeavour, Cudworth thought, to attempt to craft justice artificially when there was none by nature. The passage from art to force and unrestrained power would be unavoidable in that situation.[22] Artificial sovereignty of 'bodies politic' was an impossibility. Instead, there must be 'some natural bond or vinculum' that held groups of subjects together and led them to obey the lawful commands of sovereigns. In turn, sovereigns sought to secure the welfare of their subjects through their commands. Thus, the natural bond could not be other than 'natural justice'; hence, there existed 'something of a common and public, of a cementing

[19] Stewart Duncan, 'Cudworth as a Critic of Hobbes', in Marcus Adams (ed.), *A Companion to Hobbes* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2021). Benjamin Carter also sees Cudworth refuting Calvinist voluntarism, see Benjamin Carter, 'Ralph Cudworth and the Theological Origins of Consciousness', 23 *History of the Human Sciences* (2010), p. 31.

[20] 'It is a Thing which we shall very easily demonstrate, that *Moral Good and Evil, Just and Unjust, Honest and Dishonest* (if they be not meer Names without any Signification, or Names nor nothing else, but *Willed* and *Commanded*, but have a Reality in Respect of the Persons obliged to do and avoid them) *cannot possibly be Arbitrary things, made by Will without Nature*; because it is Universally true, That things are what they are, not by *Will* but by *Nature*.' Ralph Cudworth, *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*, with a Preface by Edward, Bishop of Durham (London: Printed for James and John Knapton, 1731), p. 13.

[21] Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, vol. IV, p. 198.

[22] Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, vol. IV, p. 205.

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and conglutinating nature, in all rational beings'. Its origins were from 'the Deity', whose own right and authority was also founded in justice. Thus, civil sovereignty was nothing other than 'a certain participation' in that justice. Therefore, sovereignty was neither artificial, nor natural, neither regal nor popular, but 'hath a stamp of Divinity upon it'.[23] The error, Cudworth argued, was that atheists acknowledged 'nothing in nature of a public or common good, nothing of duty or obligation'. Instead, atheists made private apetite the only measure of good and transformed justice into 'utility'. Public conscience on the part of atheists was a contradiction in terms, for they argued that 'Conscience is Private Judgment of Good and Evil'. When they invoked conscience, they were only asserting rebellion, violence and fanaticism.[24] Cudworth's own view was that 'conscience also is, in itself, not of a private and partial, but of a public and common nature'. One ought to put first divine laws, justice and the common good ('the good of the whole') when they clashed with 'our own selfish good, and private utility'. This statement constitutes the core of what Cudworth saw as the only means to unite society and the body politic.[25] However, Cudworth also thought that individuals made a judgment in conscience for themselves 'a public conscience being nonsense and ridiculous'. In that sense, they could err. And yet, the rule by which such judgments in conscience were made was not 'private'. Instead, divine laws and justice and the revealed will of God – 'things more public than the civil laws' – made one responsible for one's judgment.[26] Simply put, publicness involved responsibility, also in terms of natural justice. Liberty, and not necessity, was the rule of human actions. Cudworth was adamant in his philosophical project as to the existence of the capacity to ascertain the common good among subjects, in the form of a kind of 'conglutinating nature', and the capacity to know the morality that a just God had determined.[27]

A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality was published posthumously in 1731.[28] His grandson Francis Cudworth Masham (1686–1731) – the son of Damaris (Cudworth) Masham (1658–1708), Cudworth's

[23] Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, vol. IV, p. 206.
[24] Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, vol. IV, p. 211.
[25] 'This is the only thing that can naturally consociate mankind together, lay a foundation for bodies politic, and take away that private will and judgment, according to men's appetite and utility which is inconsistent with the same.' … 'that which is of a common and public nature, unites; but that, which is of a private, segregates and dissociates'. Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, v. IV, p. 212.
[26] Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, v. IV, p. 212.
[27] Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, v. IV, p. 206.
[28] Cudworth, *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*.

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daughter – to whom John Locke had left practically half his estate, found it among his grandfather's papers and made it available for publication.[29] The gist of its moral philosophy is that morality was *within human minds* and was not the command of the sovereign.[30] Neither the Sovereign God nor the political sovereign generated a duty to obey. Moral and political obligation arose not from a command, but from 'the Intellectual Nature of him that is commanded'. If there were no intellectual natures – presumably he meant human beings and angels – there would be no morality.[31] Cudworth envisaged metaphysics as the Neoplatonic 'scale of beings', with an archetype and different degrees of imitation in the ectype ideas – that is, 'an imprint or copy of an archetype'.[32] He rejected Descartes' argument that natures could not be eternal because (as Descartes reasoned) God would then depend on them and not the other way around. Furthermore, Cudworth asserted that the only genuine philosophy was the ancient atomistic philosophy with a Neoplatonic twist:

> Wherefore the proper and genuine Result of this old *Atomical* Philosophy, which is the Triumph of Reason over Sense, is nothing else but this, that Sense alone is not the *Criterion* or Judge of what does Really and Absolutely exist without us, but that there is a Higher and Superior intellectual Faculty in us that judges of our Sense, which discovers what is Fallacious and Fantastical in them, and pronounces what Absolutely is and is not.[33]

Cudworth considered human intellect a vital force that framed conceptions of things wherever it found something that could be understood. The

[29] 'Preface' in Cudworth, *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*. A description of Damaris by Locke to his correspondent on theology P. van Limborch in, 'Locke to P. van Limborch, on the 13th of March 1691' Letter 1375, in E. S. de Beer (ed.), *The Correspondence of John Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976–82), vol. IV, p. 237; on her husband see Mark Knights, 'Sir Francis Masham, 3rd Bt. (c. 1646–1723), of Otes, High Laver, Essex' in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690–1715*, ed. D. W Hayton, Eveline Cruickshanks, Stuart Handley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); see also John W. Yolton, *Locke. An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 8. Peter Laslett described Francis Masham as one of the five members in the House of Commons of 'the Lockeian group in the Parliaments'. Peter Laslett, 'John Locke, the Great Recoinage, and the Origins of the Board of trade: 1695–1698', 14 *The William and Mary Quarterly* (1957), p. 381.

[30] See linking this thesis with the 'moral sense' school of English ethical theory founded by Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), W. M. Spellman, *John Locke and the Problem of Depravity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 184.

[31] Cudworth, *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*, p. 27.

[32] Cudworth, *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*, p. 36; Cornelis de Waal, 'Locke's Criterion for the Reality of Ideas: Unambiguous but Untenable', 28 *The Locke's Newsletter* (1997), p. 35

[33] Cudworth, *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*, p. 72.

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human intellect worked analogically to what he termed 'the Spermatick or Plastick Power' of Stoic and Augustinian inspiration, which generated forms in all animals 'framing an Eye here and an Ear there'.[34] He put forward two principles in relation to the question of knowledge of morality relevant here. First, that the human mind has the capacity to order the world around us, also in moral terms. Second, his adoption of an epistemology that definitively broke with the classical understanding of the light of reason. We shall see in Chapter 5 the many doubts that existed in the minds of natural lawyers and theologians of the day concerning the existence of a divine light of nature with the capacity to discriminate between good and evil. The numerous arguments they put forward as to the obscurity and weakness of this approach suffice to demonstrate the uncertainties and even despair surrounding the continuing validity of the classical natural law notion of the light of nature and sometimes even of conscience in the 17th English political context.[35] Locke was not impervious to that feeling.[36] Together with the rise of scepticism in Europe, the peculiar religious controversies of the time were certainly factors that contributed to confusion as to the idea of the world being illuminated from within by human beings' *light*. Conceptions of individual moral agency were thus entangled with notions of religious and political independence and enthusiasm. It is instructive to read that the philosopher Damaris Masham discovered in the work of John Smith, another Cambridge Platonist, the possibility of a higher principle than reason, which reason could activate. She defended that idea in her correspondence with Locke, albeit that the latter dismissed it as a species of 'enthusiasm'.[37] As late as 1701, John Edwards (1637–1716), the Cambridge divine, championed an apology for article 18 of the 39 articles of the Anglican Church, the articles dealing with the 'accursing' of those who thought that by the law of their sect and the light of nature could be saved. He criticized Locke's Deism in the same chapter, on the

[34] Cudworth, *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*, p. 135.

[35] See Margaret Sampson, 'Laxity and Liberty in Seventeenth-century English Political Thought', in Edmund Leites (ed.), *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe*' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Robert A. Greene, 'Synderesis, the Spark of Conscience, in the English Renaissance' 52 *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1991); Tymothy Stanton, 'Freedom of Conscience, Political Liberty and the Foundations of Liberalism', in Quentin Skinner and Martin van Gelderen (eds.), *Freedom and the Construction of Europe*. vol. I, *Religious Freedom and Civil Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[36] See Chapter 9 below.

[37] This story in Sarah Hutton, 'Lady Damaris Masham', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2020/entries/lady-masham/>.

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ground that Locke had – in Edwards' view – denied natural conscience.[38] Clearly, Edwards approved neither of the affirmation of the independent light of reason of the enthusiasts, which ought to be contained, nor of the denial of natural light in moral action, which obscured what was traditionally described as the voice of God in human beings. In the mostly ignored *Natural History of Superstition* (1709), by the Deist John Trenchard, 'the inward light' was equated to a hallucinatory experience.[39] The opposite attitude was displayed by the Catholic Church at the time. In 1726 it canonized the mystic John of the Cross (1542–1591) who popularized a type of rational mysticism through his works. He frequently described how God would at will communicate directly with the intellect of human beings in grace, and that was what the classic theologians had termed fruition or enjoyment: that is, to see God already in this world.[40]

Cudworth's neat adoption of Neoplatonist dualism sets itself against that classic notion of the light of reason. His Neoplatonism might be described as a type of moderate scepticism. What human intellect discovered was (ectypal) ideas modelled after the divine archetype. In other words, there was no light of nature, but human intellect *contained* the just moral and metaphysical order instituted eternally by God. Cudworth's influential work on consciousness has gained increasing attention.[41] He understood consciousness, at a higher intellectual level, as a 'return to oneself'. Udo Thiel writes that he was not employing a classical notion of conscience in

[38] 'They are to be had accursed who presume to say, Every Man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professes (be it what it will) so he frame his Life according to that Law and the Light of Nature 18th Article.' John Edwards, *Discourse Concerning Truth and Error. Especially in Matters of Religion* (London: Printed for Jonathan Robinson, 1701), pp. 403; 423. An extreme case was that of Quakers, see Stefano Villani, 'Conscience and Convention: The Young Furly and the Hat Controversy', in Sara Hutton (ed.), *Benjamin Furly 1646–1714: A Quaker Merchant and His Milieu* (Firenzi: Olschki, 2007).

[39] See John F. Sena, 'Melancholic Madness and the Puritans', 66 *The Harvard Theological Review* (1973), p. 304.

[40] San Juan de la Cruz, 'Cántico Espiritual. Códice A.' en *San Juan de la Cruz. Obras Completas* (*Ebook Clásicos*, 2015) Canción 13 y 14. On the notion of 'fruition' see Severin Valentinov Kitanov, *Beatific Enjoyment in Scholastic Theology and Philosophy: 1240–1335* (Doctoral Diss, Helsinki, 2006); Arthur Stephen McGrade, 'Enjoyment at Oxford after Ockham: Philosophy, Psychology, and the Love of God', in Anne Hudson, and Michael Wilks (eds.), *From Ockham to Wyclif* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp. 63–88; Servais Pinckaers, 'The Place of Philosophy in Moral Theology', John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus (eds.), *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

[41] Udo Thiel, 'Cudworth and Seventeenth-Century Theories of Consciousness', in Stephan Gaukroger (ed.), *The Uses of Antiquity* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991); Carter, 'Ralph Cudworth and the Theological Origins of Consciousness'.

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terms of a 'perception or knowledge of something that one shares with someone else'.[42] Like other Neoplatonists before him, and, indeed, strictly following Pocock's model, described above, in which particularity is located in universality, Cudworth understood the judgment of conscience as the natural recognition of a metaphysical just order with which one ought to compare one's moral or political decisions. In Hobbes's radical sceptic epistemology, which Cudworth sought to neutralize, good and evil were moral categories that a human being could not discern naturally. Instead, whether useful or not, pleasant or painful would be the substitutes for the *morality inside* type of thinking. As triggers of knowledge, the 'pleasant' or 'painful' nature of sensations became building blocks for the new naturalist natural law. The complexity of John Locke's work, dealt with in Chapters 8 to 12, evidences that he took seriously Cudworth's critique of hedonistic morality and its corrosive consequences for the social order.

As the analysis will show, the rejection of innate ideas did not imply the absence of moral psychology, which is also one of the findings of Lisa T. Sarasohn's *Gassendi's Ethics*.[43] Gassendi's doctrine of pleasure and pain, for instance, functioned as an internally constituted moral psychology. He did not consider the classical laws of nature to be necessary in order to pursue what he thought an individual and a culture was 'instinctually' and rationally equipped for.[44] In her path-breaking study on the topic, Sorana Corneanu has described the specific solution adopted by the English *virtuosi*, the leading English figures in early modern science.[45] Cultivation of reason through science and industriousness would become, for them, one of the main tools for practising righteous moral actions. They adopted this stance on the strength of their insight that the European crisis of knowledge had massive implications for morality. Ian Harris has shown how, in relation to matters of religion, English natural lawyers of the new science opted for tolerance.[46] Their writings also evidence a process through which Cudworth's ideas connecting private reason to public conscience are refined. In a moment of generalized awe towards *Leviathan*, Cudworth stood for a return to ideas concerning the existence recognizable by

[42] Thiel, 'Cudworth and Seventeenth-Century Theories of Consciousness', pp. 81–82; 90.
[43] Lisa T. Sarasohn, *Gassendi's Ethics. Freedom in a Mechanistic Universe* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996). She devotes Chapter 8 to arguing about Gassendi's influence in Locke.
[44] Sarasohn, *Gassendi's Ethics*, p. 178.
[45] Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind.*
[46] Ian Harris, *The Mind of John Locke. A Study of Political Theory in Its Intellectual Setting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

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everyone of a public and common good. As mentioned above, strong echoes of this awareness may be found in the work of John Locke. The pragmatic expression that public good took in Locke's work and politics, in terms of theorizing a natural law that would make England and her economy strong and care for everyone's necessities, is the main topic of Chapters 11 and 12. At the same time, and notwithstanding an accurate perception of the dangers of individualism, the critiques of Hobbes's project levelled by Cudworth and many others were not always fair, as they represented Hobbes as being less interested in the public good than he was in reality, as I will argue in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.2 Scepticism and Moral Righteousness

Creativity in scientific and monetary matters marked the era under discussion. However, moral and religious ideas framed the directions of the new imagination. As wealth for the nation seemed nearer at hand through economic growth, the new economic and scientific activities were experienced with increasing anxiety, and philosophers looking for the right way in which to carry out economic policies came up with ingenious scientific solutions. The hope was that the new ideas would be also morally acceptable. My view on the existence of a theological framework for the new thinking reflects the perspective that this period should be regarded as the long Reformation, rather than as marking the beginning of Enlightenment.[47] This stance is justified by the fact that religious themes permeated all the issues and every text discussed here during the entire period. Moreover, the elite of Reformers that Charles Webster popularized in the 1970s, dealt with in Chapter 4, aimed to reform science, economy and faith in one stroke.[48] By contrast, the next generation of authors, dating from roughly after the beginning of the Restoration (1660), shows a certain weariness with a cultural system that guaranteed the reproduction of controversies on religious grounds. On political principle they obviously desired a united but not uniform society. However, in order to understand the gist of Robert Boyle's or John Locke's scientific and economic projects, it is not necessary to pinpoint the 'secularist' ideas in them. In fact, their scientific and societal project would be meaningless if observed as a dechristianized enterprise. The

[47] Gregory 'The Making of a Protestant Nation: "Success" and "Failure" in England's Long Reformation'; David Loewenstein and Alison Shell, 'Early Modern Literature and England's Long Reformation' in 24 *Reformation* (2019).

[48] Webster, *The Great Instauration.*

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fact that Locke, at least, fought 'priestcraft' did not make him secular.[49] The naiveté of devout Whiggery was therefore not behind their commitment to producing a robust moral discourse through the sciences, that is to say, in their contribution through their scientific work to guiding the lifelong Christian effort in the choice of 'the proper object of *Desire*'.[50] It would have been a simple-minded view if they had thought, in acting out the role of scientist as priest (as they did), that real theologians and priests were redundant.[51] However, while incontrovertible evidence on that point is inaccessible to us now, there are in fact, as discussed below, ample biographical and textual indications that this was not their standpoint and that instead they were soberly attentive to what priests and theologians had to say.[52]

An alternative way to describe the history of natural law discussed in the chapters that follow would be to adopt the tradition of C. B. MacPherson, Leo Strauss and Neal Woods, by which I mean situating it in the history of Western materialism.[53] After all, Karl Marx did not borrow substantially from John Locke's ideas on money for *The Capital* on a mere whim, while also giving them an Aristotelian philosophical twist about the 'form of commodity'.[54] However, I hope to show that identifying the new thinking as the philosophers' attempt to *materialize* Christianity offers a more accurate analysis of what happened in the second half of seventeenth-century England. In other words, their efforts were directed towards embedding Christian thinking in the business of prudential government,

[49] Mark Goldie, 'Priestcraft and the Birth of Whiggism', in Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Collins, *In the Shadow of Leviathan*, p. 339.

[50] On 'the proper object of *Desire*' see Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II. 21.§43, p. 259. (emphasis Locke).

[51] On the scientist as a priest, see Robert Boyle, 'Of the Study of the Booke of Nature', in Michael Hunter and Edward B. Davis (eds.), *Works of Robert Boyle*, vol. 13 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000), p. 151; Harold Fisch, 'The Scientist as Priest: A Note on Robert Boyle's Natural Theology' in 44 *Isis* (1953); Michael Hunter, *Boyle: Between God and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[52] The obvious example is the situation of Robert Boyle's doubts of conscience, see for this Michael Hunter, 'The Conscience of Robert Boyle: Functionalism, 'Dysfunctionalism' and the Task of Historical Understanding', in Michael Hunter (ed.), *Robert Boyle (1627–1691) Scrupulosity and Science* (The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2000).

[53] MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*; Strauss, *Natural Right and History*; Wood, *John Locke and Agrarian Capitalism*. And see also John W. Yolton, *Thinking Matter: Materialism in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

[54] Karl Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol I., Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling trans. and Frederick Engels ed. (Progress Publisher, Moscow, USSR, undated [from the First English ed. 1887]) ch. 1–3.

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empirical science and the capitalist economy that was well under way in Europe by that time; so confident were they in the power of Christian faith to speed economic growth and contain greed and indignity. As the diasporic Huguenot Jean Barbeyrac (1674–1744) had it in his uneven *History and Critical Account of the Science of Morality* (1728), the new philosophy sought to develop ethics and politics in a manner 'better proportion'd and adapted to the Constitution of humane Affairs'. However, in the process of achieving this, *certain* Christian moral and religious ideas had to be sifted. In that text written as an 'Introduction' to the main text on natural law by Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694), Barbeyrac noted on at least five occasions that putting money to interest was a licit activity.[55] The single-mindedness with which the traditional moral condemnation of usury was attacked over a century evidences that making the lending of money at interest socially acceptable was considered of paramount importance for European economic and political development. The particular scientific solution to the problem of usury that Locke devised is explored in Chapter 11 in the context of the period and of his larger philosophical project.

Natural law thinking was also deeply enriched by a strand of moral theory influenced by medical notions. It is worth to consider the fact that medical notions seemed to be immune to scepticism and to lie beyond religion strife. Morality was shaped in particular during the seventeenth century by the utilitarian goals of health and the survival of the human body. The much read *The Anatomy of Melancholy* by Robert Burton (1577–1640), the librarian of Christ Church (Locke's college), exemplifies a new type of medical literature. It is largely a medical text aimed at producing a species of curative reading, combining cases and learned description of a disease that at the time appeared to be reaching epidemic proportions, especially among men.[56] Strikingly, Mary

[55] Which might explain his notorious harangue against the backwardness and lack of holiness of the Fathers of the Church whose testimony went against the practice of usury, Jean Barbeyrac, 'An Historical Account of the Science of Morality, and the Progress It Has Made in the World from the Earliest Times Down to the Publication of This Work' in Samuel Pufendorf, *Of the Law of Nature and Nations*, Basil Kennett trans. (London: Printed for J. and J. Knapton et al., 1728), pp. 21; 22; 23; 26; 55. Steven Shapin discusses the high value of testimony during the earliest period of the Scientific Revolution, which might explain the efforts of Barbeyrac to invalidate the prized testimony of the Fathers, see Steven Shapin, *A Social History of truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth Century England* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 211.

[56] On *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, and its combination of theological doctrines for curing I follow Mary Ann Lund, *Melancholy, Medicine and Religion in Early Modern England: Reading 'The Anatomy of Melancholy'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For an explanation of why the perception at the period of a mark increased in cases of melancholy, see Angus Gowland, 'The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy' 191 *Past & Present* (2006).

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Ann Lund remarks that despite all the medical analysis, Burton identified 'want of charity' as the root of all melancholy.[57] In considering the individual's cure, in *Anatomy*, Burton prudently avoided both theological controversy and he also integrated theological doctrines. Setting aside Calvinist ideas of predestination and of the 'captivity of the human will', the text instead highlighted agency in terms of self-improvement and self-cure and hope in the mercy of God was stressed in cases of sinners' despair.[58] On the other hand, 'enthusiasm' was after the mid-seventeenth century often medically classified as madness, and thus directly disqualified from religious validity.[59]

Still, in a pre-Scientific Revolution moment, the well-known scholar John Selden (1584–1654), a savant, jurist, natural lawyer and author of rabbinical works, who held a sceptic position following Carneades, took the view that the guiding principle of the law of nature was an anti-universalist utility. Selden accordingly considered that even when lawyers, philosophers or doctors decided to take an approach based on utility their decisions were in fact very much influenced by local customs and tastes, rather than by objective (*ex natura sui*) attributes of medicines or foods. One found in the commonality of peoples not the 'simplicity' of natural law but the utility of here and now.[60] Selden's prestige in England was immense, thus his utilitarian ideas were very influential.[61] But the new science and theology both demanded universalism. Hence, Selden's theory of natural law would soon be superseded and the solution to the scepticism of reason he proposed did not take root in the crude, though erudite form in which he presented it.[62]

Still, there are at least four important matters that are shown through Selden's study on moral reason or, as he repeatedly put it, his analysis of how to tell good from evil, honourable from dishonourable, licit from illicit, and whether that was at all possible. First, it is clear how urgent the need was at the time to find a solution to this issue of moral knowledge from the immense effort Selden put into seeking to do so. Second, his work undisputedly shows that utilitarian principles were already common among

[57] Lund, *Melancholy, Medicine and Religion in Early Modern England*, p. 174.
[58] This point in Lund, *Melancholy, Medicine and Religion in Early Modern England*, p. 181.
[59] Sena, 'Melancholic Madness and the Puritans'.
[60] Joannis Seldeni, *De Jure Naturali et Gentium Juxta Disciplinam Ebraeorum*, (Bibl. Noribergensium, 1665), p. 80.
[61] Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories*, p. 162.
[62] Ofir Haivry writes that Selden's ideas and style were soon superseded 'in the new "age of reason"'. Ofir Haivry, *John Selden and the Western Political Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 2.

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English scholars at the start of the Civil War.[63] Third, his analysis shows the manner in which metaphysical conceptions of order have evolved, and that a dualist cosmology was well established. This is clear from the fact that Selden did not understand Aquinas's notion of the light of the agent intellect as the participation of human reason in God's order. Instead of a light that *is* the divine Being, the English natural lawyer explained it as a light that 'commands'.[64] Quentin Skinner has recently suggested the existence of a thread between vocabularies as to the health of the body of the state – present in particular in the work of Jean Bodin – and the abstract notion of a state that Hobbes made famous in *Leviathan*.[65] Thus medical notions were not unknown in political theory. However, Selden's approach also made it clear that medicine was not yet a theoretical tool for natural lawyers, not at least for the most knowledgeable Englishman of the time.[66]

My suggestion is also that the rise of the type of combination of Christian theology with medical morality as natural law studied in this book may be traced to the revival of Neoplatonism and the utilitarian moral philosophy that characterizes it. Moreover, as we will see in Chapter 9, it was a utilitarianism that, unlike Selden's contextual approach, could be operated as guided by universal principles. Furthermore, *moderni* theologians, Neoplatonism and Orientalism were in vogue in old Oxford, the place of study of most of the protagonists that feature in this book. In Thomas Wood's contemporary history of Oxonian scholars during the seventeenth century, we find that Thomas Lushington (1589–1661) wrote a treatise, unpublished but extensively circulated, entitled *Theology of Proclus*.[67]

[63] Utilitarian ideas are common already in theologians a century early, e.g. in Francisco de Vitoria see, Mónica García-Salmones Rovira, 'The Disorder of Economy: The First *Relectio de Indis* in a Theological Perspective', in Stefan Kadelbach, Thomas Kleinlein and David Roth-Isigkeit (eds.), *System, Order and International Law: The Early History of International Legal Thought from Machiavelli to Hegel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Norbert Campagna, *Francisco de Vitoria: Leben und Werk. Zur Kompetenz der Theologie in politischen und juridischen Fragen* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2010), p. 75.

[64] 'adeoque quae naturaliter Bona sint, quae Mala, an ejusmodi illuminatio divina Rationi ac Intellectui humano ritè disposito per Indicationem cum Imperio insinuari.' Seldeni, *De Jure Naturali et Gentium Juxta Disciplinam Ebraeorum*, p. 114.

[65] Quentin Skinner, *From Humanism to Hobbes. Studies in Rhetoric and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 345.

[66] For the fame of Selden's knowledge, see Haivry, *John Selden and the Western Political Tradition*.

[67] The relevance of this fact may be inferred from Dragos Calma's study of the fortunes of Neoplatonist texts and Proclus's *Elements of Theology* in particular in Europe during the previous centuries; its employment and translation is considered rather the exception than the rule. Calma, 'Du neoplatonisme au realisme et retour'.

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Sometimes suspected of being a Socinian, Lushington was a contemporary of Robert Sanderson. He coincided with Sanderson at Lincoln College and later became a fellow at Pembroke College. It is apparent from his use of sources that the latter was knowledgeable about the *moderni* Parisian theologians Duns Scotus (1266–1308) and Durand de Saint Pourçain (1275–1334).[68] The metaphysics of necessity introduced in Chapters 2 and 3 flourished in Europe and also in England with the revival of Orientalism. Bishop Laud's encouragement of 'Orientalist languages' started in the 1630s by his sending John Greaves (1602–1652) to the East to bring him books; Greaves himself became an expert in the Persian language. The savant Henry Jacobs (1608–1652), who was fluent both in 'Arabick' and in Hebrew benefited also from Laud's patronage with the renewal after a hundred years being inactive of the *Socius Grammaticalis*, or Reader in Philology to the Juniors in Merton College. Both linguists were collaborators of Selden that, as Thomas Wood noted, 'Hugh Grotius' praised as 'the glory of the English Nation'.[69] Henry Stubbe (1632–1676), the radical polemicist and scholar, and good friend of both Hobbes and Locke, who wrote the *Originall and Progress of Mahometanism* (1672), fiercely defended in 1670 the contribution of ancient oriental philosophy to physics.[70] The object of his critique was a reduction of contemporary knowledge to the 'fecundity of the Cartesian Principles'. It was, Stubbe considered, first the 'Arabians' that had used chemistry in an eminent manner to help medicine, and it was they who, through their 'sectarian' use of ancient philosophy, had 'improved Chymical Pharmacy very much'. Finally, it had been 'the Aristotelian' Averroes, and 'the Galenist' Avicenna who had transmitted a divided science to Europe:

> From these two great men amongst the *Moors*, as the knowledge of Physick and Philosophy, happened to be imparted to the *barbarous Christians* of the *West*, so was there a feud propagated betwixt the *Philosophers and the Physicians*.[71]

[68] A study of the metaphysics of Scotus in light of his approval of Avicenna's metaphysics of existence in, Etienne Gilson, 'Avicenne et le point de depart de Duns Scot' 2 *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age* (1927), p. 92.

[69] This information is all from the second volume of Thomas Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses an exact history of all the writers and bishops who have had their education in the most ancient and famous University of Oxford*, (…) (London: Printed for Tho. Bennnet at the Half-Moon in S. Pauls Churchyard, 1692). Vol. II; TCP; Early English Books Online; quote in p. 173.

[70] *Henry Stubbe and the Beginnings of Islam. The Originall and Progress of Mahometanism*, ed. Introduction by Nabil Matar (ed.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

[71] Henry Stubbe, *A specimen of some animadversions upon a book entitled, Plus ultra, or Modern Improvements of useful knowledge written by Mr. Joseph Glanvill, a member of the Royal Society* (London, 1670) TCP; Early English Books Online, pp. 53; 61; 91.

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Since, for Stubbe, the 'Mahometans' were a 'sect of Christians', this praise was not necessarily understood as irreverent in relation to Christianism, however radical he himself would later become.[72] Instead, with polemical intent – perhaps as a nod to Hobbes who was fighting some battles in that direction – he declared how grave and prejudicial to knowledge was the ignorance of thinking that science in Europe had started with Descartes, Gassendi and the Royal Society.[73]

1.3 Hobbes and Locke versus Filmer on Political Economy

Heated debate arose in England over whether consent was natural or artificial in the formation of political societies – i.e. over how political obligation originates – once Aristotelianism was displaced from the centre of political discourse.[74] It is a well-known fact of intellectual history that Robert Filmer and Thomas Hobbes set the tone of the discussion, providing opposing solutions to the question, albeit with a similar preference for a strong sovereign power.[75] Filmer's notorious but original theological argument of natural obligation founded on Adam's hereditary kingdom was, of course, explosive after the end of the Civil Wars. The divine Edward Gee (1613–1660) was one of the main writers that engaged with Filmer's early series of publications during the Commonwealth period. Gee discussed Filmer's patriarchalism seriously in 1658, but ultimately

[72] Indeed, Stubbe radicalized completely this position, and inverted the terms, making of Islam the pristine Christianity, see Justin A. I. Champion, 'Legislators, Impostors and the Politic Origins of Religion: English Theories of Imposture from Stubbe to Toland', in Silvia Berti, Françoise Charles-Daubert and Richard H. Popkin (eds.), *Heterodoxy, Spinozism and Freethought* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1996) p. 342.

[73] Stubbe, *A Specimen of Some Animadversions*; for Hobbes and his feud with the Royal Society see, Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump. Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life*, with a translation of Thomas Hobbes *Dialogus Physicus de Natura Aeris* by Simon Schaffer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[74] Sophie Smith argues convincingly that Aristotelian politics were more fundamental than hitherto thought in sixteenth-century England, and that Hobbes's endeavour amounted to their transformation, Sophie Smith, 'The Language of "Political Science" in Early Modern Europe' 80 *Journal of the History of Ideas* (2019). Among the reasons for the decay of Aristotelianism in the last 30 years of the seventeenth century in Germany H. Dreizel pointed out 'the growing importance of the natural sciences', which, as we will see in Chapters 4 and 7 certainly played an important role a number of decades earlier in England, H. Dreitzel, 'Reason of State and the Crisis of Political Aristotelianism: An Essay on the Development of seventeenth century Political Philosophy' in 28 *History of European Ideas* (2002), p. 181.

[75] See Peter Laslett, 'Introduction', in Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Political Works*, Peter Laslett (ed.) (New Jersey: Transaction Publishing, 2009 (1949)), p. 40.

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dismissed it as ridiculous and absurd.[76] Gee had initially defended the parliamentary cause but opposed Independence, inciting to civil disobedience.[77] He later fell under suspicion of having participated in a conspiracy with Charles II and the Scots to a sufficient extent as to be imprisoned in 1651.[78] In 1658, England was for Gee a 'Nation' that was 'naturally addicted to Lawes and Liberties'.[79] In *Patriarcha* (not yet published in the 1650s), Filmer had noted that 'because the Scripture is not favourable to the liberty of the people therefore many fly to the authority of reason and to the authority of Aristotle'.[80] And so did Gee. He situated the basis of government 'upon a bottom of conscience', that is 'the light of nature' with its dual foundation of rightful law and being the expression of the will of God.[81] However, as noted above, the light of nature and the flexibility and freedom that it entails had but a dim glow in seventeenth-century English theological thinking. Following the latest Protestant line, the jurist John Selden had but cemented that general scepticism. Sceptical thought was so pervasive in the middle of the century that everyone rejected Hobbes's atheism, but the philosophical principles of necessity examined in this book were tacitly accepted as the new space for relevant discussion on politics, even by Filmer himself. Hence, decrying the *atomization* of monarchy denoted by the requirement of individual consent, Filmer considered that it was also materially impossible: 'the truth is, that amongst all them that plead the necessity of the consent of the people, none of them hath ever touched upon these so necessary doctrines'.[82]

[76] Edward Gee, *The Divine Right and Original of the Civill Magistrate from God, (as it is drawn by the Apostle S. Paul in those words, Rom 13.1). There Is No Power but of God: The Powers That Be Are Ordained by God* (London: Prin. for George Eversden, 1658) pp. 144–159. Edward Gee as the discussant of Filmer in the 1650's in Laslett, 'Introduction' in Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha*; mentioning approvingly Filmer's ideas are John Hall in 1657 and Henry Stubbe in 1659 noted in Johann P. Sommerville 'Introduction', in Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, Johann P. Sommerville (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) xiv.

[77] 'Independence' refers here to the radical group of revolutionaries of the English Interregnum who also defended the most anticlericalist position. A helpful overview in Jeffrey R Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

[78] S. Guscott (2004, September 23), 'Edward Gee, (bap. 1612, d. 1660), Church of England clergyman and writer.' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. On Gee as an enemy of the Rump Parliament, see Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 199.

[79] Gee, *The Divine Right*, 'Preface'.

[80] Sir Robert Filmer, 'Patriarcha', in *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, p. 13.

[81] Gee, *The Divine Right and Original of the Civill Magistrate from God*, 'Preface' and p. 141.

[82] See Robert Filmer, 'Observations Upon Aristotles Politiques Touching Forms of Government with Directions for Obedience to Governours in Dangerous and Doubtfull Times' in Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Political Works*, p. 174.

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Evidently, there was little room for dialogue between Filmer's empirical method and Hobbes's philosophical abstraction.[83]

Peter Laslett showed years ago that Sir Robert Filmer was not the retired reactionary that critiques have made of him. Rather, together with his very large family and circle of friends, he was present in London and Westminster and involved in most of the commercial, political and intellectual undertakings of the day, notably those concerning Virginia. In the next centuries practically all the families that enjoyed political influence in colonial America would be related to the Filmers.[84] Filmer's materialist ideas on government were published in the influential 'Observations Upon Aristotles Politiques Touching Forms of Government'.[85] His few published writings established 'dominion and property' as the basis of government, insisting on the latter repeatedly, rather than on the former, and making property the grounds and main principle of government and justice.[86] Gee, who distinguished between natural and moral power – the latter being 'property or dominion' either over inanimate things or understood as authority – had noted in his preface to *The Divine Right and Original of the Civill Magistrate from God* that dissensions about civil matters could be about 'laws, property, liberty and magistratical prerogative'. However, it is illustrative of the temper of the times that he also concluded that by examining 'the nature of the thing' the most controvertible was that of 'humane interest', and only after a long discussion of issues of property did he mention the desire to rule.[87] Intriguingly, Gee commented on the 5th divine commandment (*Honour your father and mother*) in the Preface exclusively in terms of property.[88] Undoubtedly, private property was much more central to the notions of the common good at the time than had been the case during the Middle Ages.[89]

[83] On the method of Hobbes's theorizing on political representation, see Skinner, *From Humanism to Hobbes*, ch. 9.

[84] Laslett, 'Introduction' in Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Political Works*, p. viii; Peter Laslett, 'Sir Robert Filmer: The Man versus the Whig Myth' 5 *William and Mary Quarterly* (1948).

[85] Filmer, 'Observations upon Aristotles Politiques Touching Forms of Government'.

[86] See generally, Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Political Works*.

[87] Gee, *The Divine Right and Original of the Civill Magistrate from God*, p. 15.

[88] Gee, *The Divine Right and Original of the Civill Magistrate from God*, 'Preface'.

[89] M. S. Kempshall, *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Noting the relationship between property and common good later in Locke, see Gordon Schochet 'Guards and Fences': Property and Obligation in Locke's Political Thought' in 21 *History of Political Thought* (2000).

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The imperative to expand the economy held sway. The chapters that follow argue that seventeenth-century English political philosophers and natural lawyers attempted to tame, rather than foster the materialism of the period. Thus, Hobbes and Locke's idea, it is contended, was to imbue politics with less pragmatic principles than those held by Filmer and others and to recover a basic normative sense of equality and freedom in the context of political obligation. In this regard, as suggested before, I have been persuaded by Annabel Brett's naturalist exposition of Hobbes and by John Dunn and Timothy Stanton's Neotestamentarian reading of John Locke, and not by other materialist interpretations.[90] However, there is a sense in which the MacPhersonian tradition of 'possessive individualism' captured an important element that is addressed in the work of Norman L. Jones, Craig Muldrew and Carl Wennerlind.[91] The sociopolitical context in which modern English natural lawyers started to remake philosophy was marked by scepticism and permeated by an ideology of wealth-seeking through credit that makes itself felt in their writings, and shaped their understanding of natural law.

'Observations', Filmer's last political tract, is a surprisingly rich commentary on Aristotelian political forms published in 1652, written either that or the previous year.[92] Peter Laslett considered that Locke and other critiques of Filmer made extensive use of the piece.[93] A royalist who had survived the Civil Wars, Filmer presented his ideas on the relevance of property for the success of the Commonwealth as being in fact beneficial for all sides – it is astonishing how quickly he

[90] Brett, *Liberty, Right and Nature*; Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke*; Timothy Stanton, 'Authority and Freedom in the Interpretation of Locke's Political Theory' 39 *Political Theory* (2011); Timothy Stanton, 'John Locke and the Fable of Liberalism' 61 *Historical Journal* (2018).

[91] Norman L. Jones, *God and the Moneylenders: Usury and Law in Early Modern England* (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1989); Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation. The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press, 1998); Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit*.

[92] Since Filmer is clearly aware of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, few other possibilities remain for its date of writing. That it was probably the last political text that he wrote, apart from a tract on witches, in Peter Laslett's 'Introduction' and Brief Introduction to Robert Filmer, 'Observations Upon Aristotles Politiques', p. xxvii, and p. 133.

[93] Laslett, 'Brief Introduction' to Robert Filmer, 'Observations upon Aristotles Politiques, p. 135. See e.g. John Locke *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. with an Introduction by Peter Laslett (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 [1967]): 'But, that I might omit no care to inform my self in our A. full Sense, I consulted his *Observations on Aristotle, Hobs*, etc.', I. §14, p. 150.

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reacted to the political sea change that had taken place.[94] Therefore, in the 1650s Filmer operated as an ideologue of materialist politics and not as the manufactured persona of Whig and Tory opposition that he would become in the 1680s. Political obligation, Filmer argued, sprang from inherited property, which was inherited first from God. This tract on Aristotelian forms of government demonstrates that Filmer knew Aristotle as well, if not better, than he knew the Scripture – which is not to say, however, that he knew either of them well, as Locke's exuberant critique in the *First Treatise* makes clear with regard to Biblical commentary.[95] The tract on Aristotle comprises first a short summary of scriptural principles that Filmer extracted from *Patriarcha*, together with its fundamental argument. He combined the theological doctrine of the dominion over the inferior creatures (Genesis 1.26–28) and enriched it with Aristotelian ideas of a house or an *oikos*, rejecting Aristotle's distinction between the household and the *polis*.[96] In *Patriarcha* published only in 1680, Francisco Suárez was the main object of criticism due to his statement that Adam had 'complete economical power', though 'only economical power, but not political'. For, affirmed the English royalist, 'economical and political societies' did not differ.[97] Filmer decided that what happened within Adam's household was in fact the first political union, a set of natural family relationships involving economic relationships between masters, servants and slaves. The first household, Adam's, was thus a kingdom, and any kingdom was an immense household. In Filmer's work, and, also in 'Observations', however, the divine rights of kings took on a notoriously possessive hue:

> Adam was the Father, King and Lord over his family: a son, a subject and a servant or a slave, were one and the same thing at first; the Father had power to dispose, or sell his children or servants; whence we find, that at the first reckoning up of goods in scripture, the manservant, and the maidservant are numbered among the possessions and substance of the owner, as other goods were.[98]

[94] See on this also Cesare Cuttica, 'Sir Robert Filmer (1588–1653) and the Condescension of Posterity: Historiographical Interpretations' in 21 *Intellectual History Review* (2011).

[95] Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, pp. 141–263; Jeremy Waldron, *God, Locke, and Equality: Christian Foundations in Locke's Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 188–194.

[96] Tully, *A Discourse on Property*, p. 56; Sommerville 'Introduction', in Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, p. xxi.

[97] Filmer quotes from Suárez *De legibus*, in Filmer, 'Patriarcha', p 15; p. 17; p. 19.

[98] Filmer, 'Observations upon Aristotles Politiques', p. 136.

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What Filmer described in these terms in 1652 was not merely a set of ideas concerning the fictionalized origins of government but a portrayal of the present. That was the shocking reality of Barbados and other plantations, known by everyone who cared to find out, where, in shipments to the islands, servants and slaves appeared listed as commodities.[99] Filmer revealed it to his readership in artful narrative. But to reckon with what was happening in practice in the wilderness of the commercial relations, was in a Christian commonwealth, or for that matter, in any commonwealth, very different to a philosophical, let alone theological sanctioning of it. Machiavellian notions of self-preservation were common, but Filmer's pragmatic ideas of inequality went against any minimal notion of natural law thinking.[100] However, as Peter Laslett and recently Anne Becker have argued, they realistically reflected a contemporary phenomenon, in the form of the rise of the patriarchal household experienced during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which reached its climax with Jean Bodin's, *Five Books of the Republic* (1576).[101] In the extreme form proposed by Filmer, the ideology of patriarchalism justified social inequality,

[99] 'The Commodities these Ships bring to this Island are, Servants and Slaves, both men and women; Horses, Cattle, Assinigoes, Camells, Utensills for boyling Sugar, as, Coppers, Taches, Goudges, and Sockets; all manner of working tooles for Trades-men, as, Carpenters, Joyners, Smiths, Masons, Mill-wrights, Wheel-wrights, Tinkers, Coopers, & c. Iron, Steel, Lead, Brasse, Pewter, Cloth of all kings, both Linnen and Wollen; Sutffs, Hatts, Hose, Shoos, Gloves, Swords, knives, Locks, Keys, & C Victualls of all kinds, that will endure the Sea, in so long a voyage. Olives, Capers, Anchoves, salted Flesh and Fish, pickled Maquerells and Herrings, Wine of all sorts and the boon Beer, d'Angleterre.' Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1657), p. 40. More on Ligon's narrative, in the last section of chapter 6.

[100] On Machiavelli at the time, Marco Barducci 'Order, Conflict and Liberty: Machiavellianism in English Political Thought, 1649–1660', in Alessandro Arienzo and Alessandra Petrina (eds.), *Machiavellian Encounters in Tudor and Stuart England: Literary and Political Influences from the Reformation to the Restoration* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

[101] 'The modern reader is only familiar with the patriarchal household in such contexts as the Court of Hamlet, King of Denmark, and it is this archaism which makes Filmer's work so anachronistic. It is worth pointing out, however, that the descendants of the Virginian planters, who became the slaveowners of the Southern States, where the heads of a classic type of patriarchal household, so that it survived until the middle of the nineteenth century even in such a rationalistic and egalitarian society as the U.S.A.' Laslett, 'Introduction', in Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha* p. xxxiii. This picture, though not denied, appears to have been more complex, with a household or *oikos* that accommodated aristocratic planters and artisanal proprietorship; but it was truly more patriarchal and not less with the time, of whose increase slavery seemed to have been a causing factor. See for this, Christopher Tomlins, *Freedom Bound. Law, Labor, and Civic Identity in Colonizing English America, 1580–1865*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 383–400. And on the political and intellectual changes that favoured in the seventeenth century the rise of patriarchalism in Europe,

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the subjection of women in the family, the domination by a rich minority of the majority, slavery – and, above all, the elevation of property as the institution around which all other legal and political principles must revolve. Filmer placed property with notions of hierarchy and absolutism as being divinely ordered. In *Patriarcha*, apparently written in the late 1630s, Filmer warned that popular government was the cause of all sorts of vices in society. In 1652, his central argument in 'Observations upon Aristotle Politiques' was that a popular commonwealth was irreligious, poor and disrupted by dissensions and controversy – worst of all, it would not last long. Therefore, in his view, the idea then 'in fashion' – that original power lay by nature with the people – put forward by 'the modern politicians' in the early 1650s - was self-defeating.[102] The gist of Filmer's argument as to the hopelessness of popular government was again centred on property:

> Men that boast so much of natural freedom, are not willing to consider how contradictory and destructive the power of a major part is to the natural liberty of the whole people; the two grand favourites, liberty, and property (for which most men pretend to strive) are as contrary as fire to water and cannot stand together.[103]

In the context of a nation in conflict and engaged in empire-building, Filmer's standpoint concerning the impossibility of achieving wealth in a republic of free citizens was a *provocation*. The sharpness of the royalist Filmer was certainly dangerous at the dawn of a commercial empire. These frightful ideas about the disease of poverty attached to popular government and the origins of all government in the principles of property saw the light almost three decades before *Patriarcha* appeared in published in 1680. As mentioned before, they showed Filmer less a Machiavellian author than someone moved by the pragmatic spirit of the times and with vested interests in the continuation and expansion of the international economic and political system.[104] Perhaps given these motives, Filmer was effective in setting the tone of political discourse over the following decades. The

Anne Becker, *Gendering the Renaissance Commonwealth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); about Bodin's text in Filmer, see Constance I. Smith, 'Filmer, and the Knolles Translation of Bodin' 13 *The Philosophical Quarterly* (1963) and Peter Laslett, note in Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, p. 181.

[102] Filmer, 'Observations upon Aristotles Politiques', p. 150.

[103] Filmer, 'Observations upon Aristotles Politiques', p. 173.

[104] See Tully's, almost tongue in cheek, classic conclusion that Macpherson was in effect criticizing Filmer, as ideologue of private property, rather than Locke, Tully, *A Discourse on Property*, p. 79; also hinting at the fact that Macpherson's attack on Locke missed the real culprit, that is Filmer, Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke*, p. 66.

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political thinkers that came after Filmer had to respond to his very pragmatic approach. Moreover, his short but shrewd arguments were not easy to undo.[105] In his discussion of Hobbes's thesis that political obligation arose from consent, Filmer almost succeeded in proving that popular government as conceived by his contemporaries had an undemocratic character, on the grounds that the majority ended up oppressing the minority, and that the consent of each and every person could never be obtained. It is difficult not to agree with Peter Laslett that the second *Treatise on Government*, and not only the *First*, was Locke's response to the ideological line that held that popular government was synonymous with deprivation and dissent, as Filmer argued in 'Observations' more explicitly than in *Patriarcha*.[106] After the Civil Wars, Filmer had astutely noted Puritan beliefs as to care for the poor and horror of poverty, and accordingly pointed again to property, and not liberty, as the essence of any government.[107]

1.4 The New *Oeconomies*: Household – State – Nature

Understandings of *oeconomy* in seventeenth-century England are presented in Chapters 9 and 10, from around the time that Filmer had rudimentarily integrated the household into the political notion of a kingdom. Filmer's political principle suited English mid-seventeenth century sociolegal relations well. He was knowledgeable about the common law and the radical voluntarism evident in his conception of law and of customary law in *Patriarcha* was similar to Hobbes's.[108] However, historiography on Filmer evidences that he was an embarrassment.[109] His thin philosophical

[105] See also Tully, *A Discourse on Property*, p. 55.

[106] Laslett, 'Introduction', in Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Political Works*, p. xlvii.

[107] See, among many others, e.g. the regicide John Cooke's, *Unum necessarium: or, The poore mans case: being an expedient to make provision of all poore people in the Kingdome*, (London: pr. for Matthew Walbancke at Grayes Inne Gate. 1648).

[108] 'When kings were either busied with wars or distracted with public cares, so that every private man could not have access to their persons to learn their wills and pleasure, then of necessity were laws invented'; 'Customs at first became lawful only by some superior power which did either command or consent unto their beginning.' Filmer, 'Patriarcha', p. 41; p. 45.

[109] A review of historiography on Filmer with that approach in Cuttica, 'Sir Robert Filmer (1588–1653) and the Condescension of Posterity'; a good example is Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke*, ch. 6; Peter Laslett's following remark tells everything one needs to know about his view on Filmer: 'Filmer's patriarchal mystique of kingship could almost be said to have provided for the Stuart monarchs the sort of political mythology which the doctrine of the 'Volk' provided for the Nazi dictatorship of Germany'. Laslett, 'Introduction' in Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Political Works*, p. xxxvii; a more sober appraisal appears in the last edition of Filmer's work in Sommerville, 'Introduction'.

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reasoning, lack of system and obscure theology and his always suspect ideas on royalist absolutism, which became unpalatable after the Civil Wars, made him unsuited for representing anything close to a viable political philosophy. One would be inclined to think, moreover, that the type of patriarchalism Sir Robert Filmer became famous for, was rather the effect of postlapsarian history and not previous to it.[110] Locke's triumph was then his ability to develop a natural law theory that both responded to Filmer's misgivings and, being founded on scientific principles, was compatible with the new *oeconomy*.[111] Fittingly, for one of the core initiators of the Scientific Revolution, the very earth would be for Robert Boyle the new *oeconomy* – a rational system in which science and empire in tandem were thought to assert the utility of knowledge. The English political philosopher *par excellence*, Thomas Hobbes, remained in spite of everything, uninterested in the new *oeconomy* and thus it is unsurprising that he was the less committed of the three philosophers to the production of theories with useful results. Philosophy was Hobbes's great love, and despite his wit and his many friends, apparently the only one, as the solitude in the anthropological theory underlining *De Cive* intimates.[112]

Many seventeenth-century English natural lawyers were natural scientists. They responded to the scepticism by having recourse to heterodox Neoplatonic sources in their search for robust philosophical foundations. However, they were also reacting to the demands imposed by economic growth in the country. The dangers posed to one's soul and virtue by greedy desire for money and other material goods could be understood via an ethical approach that conceived of the light of reason acting in each human being. In the *Summa theologiae* as a whole, Aquinas developed possibly the best theology to that point concerning the way in which material goods had been created for human beings to help them on their way to God. At the same time, following the Aristotelian and a Christian millennial tradition, the Dominican warned against the dangers of becoming too attracted to them, thus losing sight of spiritual values. In that work, Aquinas managed to maintain the almost impossible equilibrium of loving and fearing the material world, not on the grounds of its evilness, but due to the

[110] On how Jean Bodin bent Roman law in order to include a husband's conyugal power nonexistent in Roman *patria potestas* see Becker, *Gendering the Renaissance Commonwealth*, p. 195 and generally ch. 5.

[111] On Locke responding to Filmer on property, see Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke*, p. 66.

[112] Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke*, p. 260.

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postlapsarian weakness of human beings. Again, all the protagonists that feature in the chapters that follow worked in the shadow of Aquinas's conviction that, somehow, *some* light of reason was able to illuminate moral behaviour. My argument operates in a manner akin to a reduced version of Alasdair MacIntyre's thesis that the morality of virtues was displaced by fragmentation of concepts in the social history of modern philosophy.[113] It seems that notions such as the light of nature or the agent intellect had disappeared or become almost completely blurred by the mid-seventeenth century.[114] Moreover, the Neoplatonic dualism prevalent in metaphysics made attaining the light of reason practically impossible or, indeed, made it inaccessible. Natural lawyers were thus compelled to articulate a theory of knowledge attuned to the new natural philosophy. Chapters 4, 6 and 7 show that seventeenth-century English thinkers fascinated by the beauty and goodness of nature – in fact, its divine artistry – also naturalized economy. That is to say that they were the first to make a natural science – albeit not yet a virtuous one – of economics. This was done by employing concepts of natural sciences and medicine such as 'system' or 'necessities' and by disintegrating what they considered to be problematic aspects of moral theology in relation to economic growth.[115] The natural economy, as we will see, was understood to satisfy both the necessities of individuals and of the nation. The domain of natural law enlarged.

Opinions as to the origins of theories of capitalism must not distract from the fact that Locke was a thinker who focused on the public sphere and that he was interested in articulating a theory of the state.[116] Locke's paradoxical concern with public interest and the novelty of his theory as to individual natural rights in relation to property is analysed in detail in Chapter 12. His distrust of merchants and traders as looking out only for their own private interest, and the naturalist and complex way in which his political theory is founded in relation to private property, makes any straightforward characterization of his work as being that of

[113] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

[114] On the agent intellect see ch. 5.

[115] On the centrality of justice for Adam Smith's project in the economy of the following century, see Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, 'Needs and Justice in the Wealth of Nations: An Introductory Essay' in Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff eds. *Wealth and Virtue. The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[116] David Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 125.

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an early capitalist – or for that matter materialist – either unconvincing or based on the argument that our notions of capitalism have evolved in isolation from political theories dealing with the form of the modern state. Nothing could be further from the truth. Pocock's commentary (again!) on James Harrington's *Oceana* (1656) helps to ascertain the importance of Harrington's attempt – which was powerful, though ultimately unsuccessful – to reformulate the English constitution. In Pocock's view, Harrington's thinking was stuck in the feudal era. Harrington was so close to feudalism that he was unable to analyse it properly, and still described a Machiavellian state in which citizens were called upon to be soldiers. But what Harrington did in his spectacularly innovative 'Preliminaries' part in *Oceana* was to uncover the importance of the distributional aspect of land ownership to the political stability of a national constitution.[117] Interestingly, he did that by means of a scientific method that incorporated traditional medical notions concerning balance in his theory of the new English State.[118] It is not implausible to see Harrington's *Oceana* as a good lesson for Locke. In positive terms, it showed what was important for a revolutionary politician. As James Tully writes, Locke's natural right of property is designed to ground his idea that 'the world belongs to all men in the same manner'.[119] In a negative sense, the text was a warning against a conception in which – unlike that adhered to by the neighbouring Dutch – the economy of the state was thought of solely in terms of land ownership, overwhelmingly important though this was.[120] The techniques of money and commerce must become matters of state.[121] In the spirit of a good civil servant and statesman, the philosopher must make compromises. Locke argued in his *Two Treatises of Government* that material equality was normative by natural law and material inequality was by consent accepted and good. Some 12 years earlier he had written

[117] See this argument and the comment on Harrington's *Oceana* in J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century. A Reissue with a Retrospect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) ch. 6.

[118] James Harrington, *The Oceana and Other Works of James Harrington, with an Account of His Life by John Toland* (London: Becket and Cadell, 1771) pp. 35–73.

[119] Tully, *A Discourse on Property*, p. 95.

[120] 'But the *chief matter of Property* being now not the Fruits of the Earth, and the Beasts that subsist on it, but the *Earth it self*; as that which takes in and carries with it all the rest', Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, §32, p. 290.

[121] Istvant Hont, 'Free Trade and the Economic Limits to National Politics: Neo-Machiavellian Political Economy Reconsidered', in *The Economic Limits to Modern Politics*, John Dunn (ed.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

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that abundant cash money was needed to keep the wheels of the economy moving, the land rents paid, manufacturers working and internal trade functioning. Money was thus viewed as the lifeblood of the economy, and in a country that lacked mines, the acquisition money and bullion (gold and silver in bulk) depended on the balance of trade. Locke's papers on money from the 1690s evidence continuation with these early ideas rather than change.[122] Money is therefore the most exciting and disrupting element in John Locke's philosophical project. Naturally endowed with an intrinsic value that was paradoxically consensual, money linked *raison d'état* and natural law and, as I will conclude, was the stumbling block in Locke's attempt to transform Christian morality into an empirical science.

It is essential to add that my critique to the disruption of the morality of usury in Chapter 10 is not merely a topic for antiquarians. If anything, whether to charge interest for money lending or not will be a topic for the future. In the Conclusions, I will briefly discuss two arguments put forward by John Maynard Keynes that help to substantiate this idea. In a nutshell, Keynes thought that despite the fact that the love of money had triumphed in modern Europe, it remained to be ousted by future generations.

[122] See John Locke, 'Some Considerations of the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest, and Raising the Value of Money', in Patrick Hyde Kelly (ed.), *Locke on Money* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), vol. I.

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