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Artificial Respiration
What does God *really* do in the beginning?

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Genesis 1 and Genesis 2

In the chapters that describe the founding of the world, what role does God play that is essential to the Bible's[1] being the founding document of the way of thinking that from a theological angle is labelled 'monotheism'? Is there any truth in the position that the Bible, qua charter of this new way, advances in regard to God's activity at the start?

The biblical narrative, as every reader knows, contains two accounts of primordial generative activity, one in Genesis 1, the other in Genesis 2. In these textual terms, the thesis to be worked out and defended can be capsuled as follows. One: God's *cosmogonic* role in Genesis 1 is dispensable from the standpoint of the Bible's monotheistic commitments. Two: God's *anthropogenic* role in Genesis 2 is indispensable from this same standpoint; it, in fact, is the very heart of monotheism. Three: the Genesis 2 role enfolds an important truth about the reality of men and women, a truth that contemporary debate in philosophical anthropology has lost sight of.

As a claim about the text, the claim about God's cosmogonic dispensability will, I am sure, furrow the reader's brow. So let me repeat: the claim is expressly made from the standpoint of the biblical commitment to monotheism. (Is any other standpoint occupied in Genesis? To this key question the short answer is 'No.' As I see it, monotheism influences the whole of the Torah. If God had been said to cook an egg in Genesis, that would not have only incidentally been the act of the deity of whom the 'Hear, O Israel' is declaimed. How this affects what I referred to as 'God's cosmogonic role in Genesis 1' I shall allow to emerge from the argument. Within Genesis there is,

[1] 'Bible' refers throughout to the Hebrew Scriptures. 'Torah' is (therefore) a synonym. Unless otherwise indicated, I quote throughout from the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV].

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I might add, a symbolic signpost of another standpoint, though a standpoint that is never taken up in the Torah, viz., the treatment of the raven in the story of Noah. At the very end of the present voyage, I will do what Noah declines to do. I will let the raven back into our ark.) The other claim, that there is truth in what the Bible says about God's anthropogenic role, will I imagine come over as downright fantastic, not to say a worrisome reversion to outmoded ways of thinking that we are well quit of. That, obviously, is not how I see it. And, I must add, I see it as I see it not because of antecedent creedal commitments, of which I have none anyway. It's a matter, rather, of coming with the help of the thinking that informs the Bible to a better understanding of what the distinctive reality of men and women is all about.

Qualifications

Compatibly with the truth of the claim about God's cosmogonic superfluity from the standpoint of monotheism, there are two options for the Bible. Moderate: indifference as to how the world as described in Genesis 1 came about. Radical: rejection of the views that God plays a creative role in this regard. Since the text of Genesis 1 assigns to God *some* generative activity '[i]n the beginning' (1:1), the choice of the moderate option seems to be indicated. This option enables the chooser to go easier on the text, which, *ceteris paribus*, is certainly to be desired. Nonetheless, the Bible has as I see it a stake in God's being *excluded*. Leaving God in the generative loop jeopardises the biblical view in respect of which God plays the indispensable role.

The world-creative role that is ascribed in Genesis 1 to God is, I just now stated, a role that God does not play from the standpoint of the truths that make the Bible the distinctive testament that it is. This suggests (though it does not more strictly imply) that from that standpoint the text of Genesis 1 is in need of reconstruction. That is indeed my view. It turns out, though, that the reconstructive effort does not shake the text up all that much. There are two reasons why this is so. A lot that readers of Genesis 1 invariably take to assert God's cosmogonic activity *doesn't* assert this. It only appears to. The text is in effect seen through the distorting lenses of long-standing interpretive habits and theological infusions. Needed here is more sensitive interpretation, not reconstruction. That is the first of the reasons. As for the portion of the presentation in Genesis 1 that does require the red pencil, the biblical position is, I believe, anchored in a weak piece of explanatory reasoning having to do with a feature, the feature of *systematic integration*, that is (correctly) ascribed in this chapter to the physical world. To be sure, those behind the Bible are not aware of how flimsy the abduction is. If they had

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been aware of it, they would have written differently. Nonetheless, they are, as I read the text, unhappy with the explanation, unhappy because the resulting attribution to God of creativity with respect to the world whose coming-into-being is described in Genesis 1 grates against *other* things to which they are bound—bound much more firmly it turns out.[2] It is not very difficult to appreciate that under the circumstances a feeling of unease would grip them. At the back of their minds reposes the hope that their *explanans* could somehow be finessed. Might not hopefulness in this regard affect how they express themselves in the portion of the text (Genesis 1) that makes use of the explanation? It might. So here too there is quite possibly a basis within the text for doing the reconstructing.

In stating the thesis in terms of the chapters into which the early part of the Torah is divided, I said that from the standpoint of the Bible's status as the manifesto of monotheism God's role in Genesis 1 is superfluous. I also said that God's role in Genesis 2, the indispensable role from the same standpoint, has to do with the human world. But doesn't God brings 'humankind' (1:26) into existence in Genesis 1? There only seems to be an inconsistency here. What the character called 'God' does in bringing humankind into existence in Genesis 1 differs from what the character referred to as 'the Lord God' does in Genesis 2 in forming '[the] man' (2:7). The latter, not the former, is the generative activity that concerns (what I call) the *specifically* human. It is true, though, that the two chapters of Genesis do not separate the activities as sharply as they have to be separated. A reason for this is that the writers of Genesis 1 know that Genesis 2 is coming. They do not completely disable that foreknowledge. (We shall see below that they are quite deliberate about this.) Disentangling what belongs to Genesis 1 in respect of the emergence of men and women (the dispensable role) from what belongs to Genesis 2 (the indispensable role) is a central analytic task for me. I should add that if the disentangling cannot effectively be done, i.e., if what Genesis 2 teaches in regard to men and women ultimately reduces to what Genesis 1 teaches, monotheism is probably in trouble.

These qualifications dull the sharp statement of the thesis with which I began. Here, from a different angle, is a second shot at sharpness.

The creative activity of God that is distinctive to Genesis 1 is accessible to the pagan (hence non-monotheistic) way of thinking. The creative activity of God in Genesis 2 is by contrast inaccessible

[2] The other commitments are the anthropogenic commitments found in Genesis 2. By 'writers' and 'those behind the text' I mean the men and women who put the whole together. Though I do not make a direct case here for the proposition that the text has a unitary meaning, the fact that I supply a reading on which Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 cooperate works against the view that the text is a set of elements lacking thematic integrity.

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to the pagan gods. This is the proprietary activity of the deity of monotheism, the god (as the phrase has it) of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and it is the activity that is, I believe, genuinely revealing about the reality of men and women.

The thesis in symbolic form

It will streamline discussion to express the thesis in symbolic form. Let 'W' stand for the entire world, 'WH,' for the *specifically* human sector of W. The thesis is that the Bible's concern insofar as God's generative efforts are in question and are pertinent to the truths to which it is non-negotiably committed, is with WH, not with the surplus of W over WH—hereafter: 'WP.' (I cannot forbear repeating that WP does not exclude men and women; it excludes the characteristic of human reality that is exclusive to Genesis 2.) This is not to say that the Bible is indifferent to WP. In fact, in WP it has an intense interest; and, we shall see, a sophisticated understanding for its time. Vital from the biblical perspective is that WP exemplify a structural feature, the feature of systematic integration (SI). Vital, that is, is that WP be a whole whose parts are reciprocally adjusted: a system. This is vital because of what the Bible has to say about WH: WH runs afoul of SI. *Pace* the thinkers behind the Bible, SI does not however require God's creative ministrations. (SI features many accounts of WP, including accounts theologically incompatible with the central creedal injunction of the Bible: 'I am the Lord your God . . . ; you shall have no other gods before me' [Exodus 20:2–3, Deuteronomy 5:6–7].) By contrast, the role that God, the monotheistic deity, plays is essential to what Genesis 2 teaches about WH. Incompatible theological accounts cannot capture what the Bible captures. On the assumption that what the Bible captures has to be captured, such accounts are therefore either incomplete (for not capturing it) or inconsistent (for claiming to capture it, or thinking that they capture it, when they do not).

Rashi and the logic of Genesis 1

That the world comes into being, or that some part of the world comes into being, does not mean that God is creatively responsible. This, needless to belabour, is the position taken by many secular people who hold that the universe had a start. At the time of the publication of his well-known book *A Brief History of Time*, 1988, Stephen Hawking agreed that the Big Bang theory, to which he subscribes, leaves the original event unexplained. More recently—*The Grand Design*, 2010—he has stamped 'Approved' on the proposition that the laws of physics are sufficient unto the Big Bang: no

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extra-natural principle is needed, hence *a fortiori* God is not needed, to account for the universe's existence.[3] But I am saying that even on the Bible's own account, understood aright, God's creative activities are not catholic. God creates some things but not others.

A point that the great scriptural commentator Rashi makes about Genesis 1 is worth reading into the record. Though Rashi is pursuing a different issue, what he says establishes that at least one powerful scholar sees no problem in assigning to the text the logical structure that I assign to it.

In the very first comment in his commentary on the Torah, Rashi addresses a question posed by a certain Rabbi Isaac.[4] Shouldn't the Torah have begun not with Genesis 1 but with Exodus 12:2? 'This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you' (2). For the Torah *is* the founding document of the Israelites, and 12:2 legislates the first commandment upon them. In instituting Tishrei as the start of the year, God is not a Pope Gregory, promulgating a calendar for all peoples. 'It shall be the first month,' God is saying to the Israelites, '*for you*. It shall be the beginning *for you*. Others may sing *Auld Lang Syne* in January if they wish.'

Rashi responds as follows. Had the Bible not commenced with Genesis 1, the other nations would have scoffed when the people of the Book cited the Book to back their territorial claims. 'The world came into being independently of the deity who chose you. Your Scripture, at any rate, does not say otherwise, and it would have said so had it been the case. So your occupancy of the Promised Land is illegitimate. You control by conquest.' But (concludes Rashi) since, as the Book says, the world as a whole God's product, it is God's prerogative to partition and apportion.

Rashi is intent on defending God's hegemony over WP not because he feels that God's unrestricted sovereignty would otherwise be compromised, but because of a desire to ensure the availability of backing for later claims that (some) men and women (some of them men and women who figure in the biblical narrative) make. In the manner in which Rashi discusses Rabbi Isaac's question/proposal, he more or less concedes that the earlier is written as the story of God's creating WP in order to supply a justification for things that happen in WH. The logic here—what is earlier in the narrative is adjusted to what is later—requires that the later be prior in the logical order. And this is precisely my point. The Bible's center is not the physical

[3] In the decades between the two dates Hawking has come to a different understanding of the laws of physics. Either Hawking now sees implications that he missed before, or else the laws, as he now sees them, are not the same.

[4] Rashi's comment on Genesis 1:1, translated into English, can be found at: http://www.bible-researcher.com/rashi.html.

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world and its emergence. The center lies in the realm of men and women, a realm that comes later.[5] To this center I will come in due course. The prior task is to explain why the Bible isn't clearer on what is clearly an important matter.

God and WP

Rabbi Isaac would have the Bible begin with Exodus 12. I am pitching Genesis 2's primacy; primacy from the standpoint of what God did. The story of the creation in Genesis 1 is essential to the Bible's teachings not because it represents God as bringing W into being but because of a specific thing that it says about WP—says about WP *as distinct from* WH. What it says about WP elicits massive protest from the secular side (both the scientific side, and the philosophical side). This is ironic. For once the mentioned error is repaired, it turns out that what Genesis 1 says corresponds pretty well with what knowledgeable secular people hold. What it says is this: WP is an integrated system.

The writers formulate the primordial situation as one in which God creates WP for a reason that still compels many today. The reason is this: WP satisfies SI. The writers cannot understand how a whole that has the unity not just of a hodgepodge could not come into being otherwise than by the implementation of an anterior design. That being so, they introduce a designer. This they do however precisely by way of securing the truth of the proposition that WP is SI. If WP's being SI can be explained without enlisting a designer, they could reformulate accordingly.

Let the point here be clear. The Bible is concerned with WP's being SI. It is not concerned to explain the existence of WP.

Textual evidence that this is so is supplied in the first verses of the Bible. Here, in the NRSV translation, is Genesis 1:1 and, after the comma, the beginning of Genesis 1:2.

> In the beginning when God created the heavens and earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep . . .

The Authorized Version differs.

> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

[5] I will show in any case that Rashi can find what he needs in Genesis 2, although Genesis 2 certainly does not tell a story of WP's emergence ex nihilo. I might just mention here that God, in the Book of Job, takes (in effect) Rabbi Isaac's part, though with respect to the whole of humankind, not just the Israelite sector: 'Where were you,' God thunders at Job, 'when I laid the foundations of the world?' (38:4) That is: the world was not made with you in mind.

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'When' is absent from the latter's rendering of verse 1. The first part is therefore elevated from dependent clause to self-contained sentence. Accordingly, what follows in the Authorized Version is presented after a full stop.

The NRSV's adverb has a basis in the Hebrew.[6] The point for present purposes is that the NRSV conveys the idea that God did not create WP. Rather: 'in the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, what there was was a formless void &c.' Or, more perspicuously: 'in the beginning of God's activity, there was a formless void. God at that time created the heavens and the earth.' God differentiated a pre-existent chaotic whole into distinct sectors or parts. God, if so, is introduced because of the differentiation of the initially undifferentiated WP. He is introduced because WP, as we know it, satisfies SI.

The writers of the Bible have a perfectly serviceable knowledge of what a system is. Pre-analytically, who doesn't? Artifacts such as houses, whose parts are adjusted to one another, are paradigmatic. In fact, the Bible tells the story of the creation of the WP on the model of the construction of a house. The initial chaos is the uninhabitable building site. It is a mess, lacking discernible order. Then we get the preparation of the ground, followed by the erection of the crude structural frame: heavens = roof; earth = floor; middle region = walls. The finished structure is a system.[7]

Accounting for SI

What counts for the Bible, so far as Genesis 1 goes, is the idea that WP is a whole that is SI: a place for everything and everything in its place. Among adjacent cultures that are as wide in their coverage as the Bible, this idea is also found. It is for instance the idea of the world packaged in comparable Greek myth and thought as 'kosmos.'

[6] The situation is grist for the mills of minute scholarship. Rashi observes that the opening prepositional phrase—'be–reshith'—means 'in the beginning of,' and that the opening sentence does not supply an object for 'of,' so that the sentence as it stands is ungrammatical. The self-contained prepositional phrase 'in the beginning' requires, in Hebrew, 'ba-' rather than 'be-.'

[7] In discussions of Genesis, the sages of the Talmud and the Midrash frequently advert to the model of a house. 'How,' the Hillelites press the Shammai-ites, 'could it be that God created the heavens and only then the earth? Isn't this like constructing a roof before construction the foundation?' To which the Shammai-ites respond in kind. 'What sense it would make to construct a footstool before constructing a chair?' All this, as I shall explain, is very much to see Genesis 1 through the (different) optic of Genesis 2. If there were no South America, no one would be asking why North America is called 'North.'

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Yet in those cultures it is not claimed that the whole is the product of design.[8]

Did the writers of the Bible have access to extra-biblical accounts that represented WP as an integrated whole? If in the adjacent cultures of Greece or of Babylon the view of WP to which the Bible-writers could have had access is that it is disorderly, that would be an additional, quite different, reason why Genesis 1 is written as it is. It would also show that in respect of their thinking about the physical world the Bible-writers are more advanced than Greek or Babylonian coevals, whose thinking has yet to break free of myth. Since my approach is fairly abstract, I must defer here to those whose dealings with the past are more concrete. But my general sense of the lie of the land, e.g., from Homer's *Iliad*, is that so-called polytheistic positions do see the world as something of an intractable mess. The disorder on high is reflected in the disorder down low.[9]

The concept *integrated system* has a wider range than the concept *artifact*.[10] The creation story in Genesis 1 is adjusted to the fact that WP is an integrated system. The story is misleading because the background image that guides the presentation is that of an artifact, and artifacts are (by definition) products of design. In effect: a system is an integrated whole; integration is a sign of design; ergo, any system (WP, for instance) is the product of design.

The Bible is frequently used for target practice from the side of science. It is singled out precisely because the idea of design is part of the fabric of its cosmogony. If I am right, the marksmen are setting their sights on a dispensable feature of the Bible. Design is present in the narrative because the models readily available to the writers when they think of systems are products of design.[11] They

[8] How might WP *not* satisfy SI? If WP were totally chaotic, it would not. Steven Weinberg, in his book *The First Three Minutes* (New York: Basic Books, 1988, updated edition), makes the following claim (p. 88). 'There are . . . hundreds of so-called elementary particles on the list published every six months by the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. Are we going to have to specify [in specifying the ingredients of the early universe] the amounts of each one of these types of particle? . . . In this case we might decide that the universe is too complicated and too arbitrary to be worth understanding.' Aristotelian 'wonder' would, if so, give way to terminal confusion.

[9] This suggests that a reduction in the size of the pantheons to a single deity (= the sense of disorder is overcome) would effectively give us a version of monotheism, the Bible's theological position. This is utterly mistaken. If Zeus were the only deity on Olympus, Olympian religion would not be monotheistic. Some have, entirely mistakenly, identified Plato as a Greek Moses. (Augustine does this.) Plato is a monist; not a crypto-monotheist.

[10] An artifact does not have to be integrated. Think of a Jackson Pollock spattering. But we lose nothing by taking artifacts to be SI-satisfiers.

[11] It may seem odd that they do not use the model of sexual reproduction. Here, we get an organised entity (a newborn), where the creators (the parents) do not proceed by planning and implementing.

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do not have any defensible idea of how the natural world came into being; they do not even have a ground (aside from the purely general, and contestable, ground that physical existence is incompatible with eternality backwards in time) for thinking that it came into being. But because WP is seen by them as a system, they tell the story of its coming into being as the story of design-implementation. It is primarily for that reason that God (the only deity they are prepared to appeal to if they are going to appeal to a deity) is part of this part of the story of the beginning.

Similar remarks apply to philosophers, many of whom on their more reflective plane challenge the idea that the natural world must be the product of design. The leading challenger from the annals of the discipline is David Hume. But Hume, though an astute critic of *natural religion*, does not deny that the natural world is a system. Hume himself has no idea what principle lies behind the emergence of such a system from a condition of chaos or disorder. He conjectures that matter itself contains, internally, such a principle.[12] If what I have said is credible, it follows that the writers of the Bible could have done the same. In fact, as we shall see, the Bible can even plausibly be read as accepting the principle that Hume conjectures. My claim that God is not creative with respect to WP is the claim that the Bible does not teach natural religion. It renders unto science what is science's.

Only a Pollyanna would expect this reading of Genesis 1 to be greeted with an ovation. I certainly don't expect a Brooklyn cheer. 'The story of the creation of WP is told as the implementation of a design by a designer because the Bible-writers believe that WP is such a product.' Undeniably, this unhappy response has some grounding in the text. Nonetheless, the position about what the Bible is saying is not all that solid. Several sections hence I will explore a few telltale obscurities in Genesis 1. Before doing that, I will, drawing on Genesis 2, make a more oblique point, a point that strengthens what I've stated about Genesis 1 in the preceding paragraphs.

The view from the garden

The dispute just now described concerns Genesis 1. Moving to Genesis 2 we find God's creative energy being applied in the first instance to making a man, and then to making a garden, which last is certainly the product of design. These products are fairly explicitly contrasted with WP. As I observed, the use of the model of the construction of a characteristically human habitation in Genesis 1 makes the constituents of the botanical and the zoological realms look like house

[12] Hume is speaking of living things. But the point extends to the inorganic.

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plants and barnyard animals; makes the realms themselves look like a farm and a garden. But as soon as we dip into Genesis 2 we see that this cannot be the considered biblical position. It is in Genesis 2, inside the (designed) garden, that we (first) get cultivated plants (the results of the 'tilling and keeping') and domestic animals (in the first instance, the man and the woman themselves). In giving us Genesis 2, the Bible-writers are indicating that the world of Genesis 1, WP¸ is *not* designed for men and women. Obviously, the differences between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are significant to them. And the distinction beneath the differences is a distinction between the product of the clear implementation of a design, on the one hand, and something that exists without benefit of planning, on the other. (In the narrative, the garden is the product of design. Gardens, we all know, do not come spontaneously into existence. We know this because we are the gardeners.) I will explain, as we move along, why this, which is unlikely to be true if taken as stylised anthropogenesis, since men and women, or their hominid antecedents, did at some point live outside a cultivated place, is defensible if understood aright.[13] The Bible is not denying *à la* Velikovsky that men and women emerged in and from nature. After all, Genesis 1 has men and women emerging along with the rest. The Bible is saying that just as a garden, hacked out of nature, does not count as part of it in the way that the part which is hacked does, so men and women are, in an important sense, extra-natural too.[14] If the latter emerge from the former, they do not emerge on the strength of a principle that applies to the extra-human.

The force of the point should be plain. Genesis 2 expressly has men and women emerging in an un-natural way. In the case of the first man the *modus operandi* is that of a worker in clay throwing a pot; in the case of the first woman, of a gardener creating a separate organism by taking a cutting and potting it. Genesis 2 conscripts the figure called 'God' to capture this fact. It is only therefore to be expected that Genesis 1 will have men and women coming to be in a natural way.[15] Which suggests that God's role in Genesis 1 is

[13] I say 'unlikely to be true' rather than 'obviously not true' because it is not easy to decide whether the environment in which human beings are found is ever entirely wild. We carry the garden with us. Or, to put it theologically: God, so far as men and women go, is a constant gardener.

[14] Prior to the production of designer plants in the laboratory and greenhouse and the manufacture of items like benches and fountains in the workshop and factory, gardens will have been made by thinning a wild or uncultivated area of some of its flora, doing a bit of shovelling and tamping, moving stones, etc.

[15] It is not easy to have the first woman emerging sexually. For there is no female parent. But I think that the Bible is more than happy to represent the emergence as un-natural. (Sexual reproduction, since it applies to animals, is natural.) Eve says of her firstborn, Cain: 'I have produced a man with the help of the Lord' (4:1). The phrase 'with the help of the Lord' is not just an expression of thanks for the issue. (The Hebrew verb

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problematic, both in itself and as a matter of how the text should be taken. It suggests that God is portrayed as active in Genesis 1 for some ulterior reason. Otherwise, the contrast that is intended would be lost. The suggestion here weakens the *prima facie* persuasive point that the Bible-writers are only too happy to have God creating WP because that enlarges the basis for devotion. Given the content of Genesis 2, the writers should be soft-pedalling God's generative activity in respect of WP. The effect of beating the kettle drums and blowing the trumpets for the Almighty is to drown out the very distinction that needs to be heard. And this again implies that the writers express themselves as they do about God in Genesis 1 not out of independent conviction but because they are in some kind of bind. I have explained what that bind is: they see SI as requiring a designer.

All this points to where we should look for God's activity: Genesis 2. Prior to looking there, by way of shoring up the assertion that God's generative role in Genesis 1 is dispensable, I want however to put a magnifying glass to the chapter.

Genesis 1: a fishy logic?

In respect of extra-human reality, the Genesis 1 narrative is not a story of creation. For the system-nature of the whole is such that it would make no difference if God had not been active. If we look for a shift in Genesis 1, we find one in verse 26, where humankind's emergence is narrated. But the matter is by no means straightforward. For verse 26 seems to be anticipated by verse 21, which describes the emergence of fish in the same terms.

Genesis 1 is, for the most part, quite logical. It reads like a recipe for baking a cake. The dream-consistency of myth is absent from it. To be sure, a lot is needed to fill out the account. (Science is a valuable resource in this regard.) But as a sketch it is orderly and rational. Here are the coals to Newcastle.

The story moves from lesser to greater differentiation, i.e., from more to less chaotic. First, and most enigmatically, we get the emergence of light (3), followed by a differentiation into day and night (4). Then, quite comprehensibly, the largest sectors or regions of WP are differentiated: heavens or upper region (where are gathered the upper waters that fall as precipitation) from earth or lower region, the two

'produce,' cognate with 'Cain,' has however to do with the latter's calling.) Similarly, in the genealogy of Genesis 5 (which mixes elements of Genesis 1 with elements of Genesis 2), it is no accident that Adam is said to have become 'the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image' (3) immediately after the same language is used to describe God's creation of humankind.

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separated by the firmament or sky (6–8). The lower waters are then collected into specific areas and, concurrently, the dry land appears (9–10). Then is described the emergence, for each of the differentiated regions, of their constituents or inhabitants. The first stage is in verses 11–12: plants for the dry regions of the earth, beginning with the grasses, followed by the more complex botanical forms such as fruit-bearing trees; the luminaries—sun, moon, stars—for the heavens (14–18). Next is described the emergence of the inhabitants of the lower waters, the sea creatures (20–21a), followed by the winged ones for the skies (21b). After that, along the lines of the emergence of the grasses and plants we are told of the emergence of animals for the dry land (24–25). Finally, humankind is brought into being (26).

It is, I say, a logical story. It is the (kind of) story that a person who eschews myth would in all likelihood tell from the depths of the armchair. But there are a few slippery patches. Perhaps the most treacherous for the reader is the following.

The text contains a number of instances of the following pair: God vocalises 'Let there be X,' and then the text states 'and God made X.' How do the members of the pair relate to each other? The quick response would be that God, having vocalised, then proceeds to implement. But if this were so, a question would arise. 'Why should God do the speaking? Why should the text not simply describe God as making? What is added to the making by the saying?' My answer is this: in formulating as it does, the Bible is saying that the result comes about without God's active intervention. It occurs in accordance with some independent principle of operation. The text is going out of its way to tell us that God does not do the making. What he does is the saying.

Let a specific case be examined. In verse 6, God says 'Let a firmament come to be in the watery whole to separate the upper and lower waters.' Here is what follows in verse 7: 'and God made the firmament which separated &c.' As I read it, the latter sentence amounts to the following. 'And so, God brought it about that the firmament &c.' This isn't a description of God actively doing or making, any more than Abraham's arranging water for the messengers at Mamre results from (i.e., can categorically be said to result from) his drawing and carrying. 'Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet' (18:4). When the water arrives, the messengers might quite correctly say: 'Abraham made the water to appear. He brought it about that we were able to drink and to wash.' That would not be to say that Abraham fetched the water from the well. How the water got to the messengers is a genuine issue. The point is only that the text does not resolve the issue.[16] As I said a moment ago, the

[16] The text does tell us how the bread gets to the visitors. But even here there is a gap. It could be said that in saying 'Let a little water be brought' Abraham is downplaying

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differentiation of upper and lower waters occurs in accordance with, we may therefore assume, a principle that is at work in the whole, like the principle that matter congeals from energy as the temperature falls below a certain threshold, which fall itself occurs as the region that the energy occupies expands.[17] And similarly for the other cases in which 'Let there be' is vocalised.

'What about the very first case, viz., the description of the differentiation of light from dark? Here we have "Let there be" without "and God made."'

When seen from the standpoint of the more 'normal' pattern, e.g., the separation of wet and dry, the incompleteness here attests, arguably, to (greater) puzzlement on the part of the formulators about what internal principle could be at work. Perhaps we can, humbly, lend a hand.

It is not hard to think of wet and dry emerging from moist. Imagine a saturated sponge being wrung over an empty glass. From what prior thing however do light and dark emerge? What in the case of light and dark corresponds to moist qua chaotic mess of wet and dry? Motoring in a mist, you switch on the headlights. Under the misty conditions the beams avail you nothing: the outward illumination is scattered by the particles of moisture. You are confronted by a homogeneous mixture of light and dark: a milky soup. For the headlights to help, the particles need to coagulate and conglomerate. That will result in a separation of light from darkness. Just so, perhaps, the initial response to God's 'Let there be light' stands in need further differentiation.

So far as the emergence of plants goes, the case is clearer still. The implicit explanandum is a barren field—a 'waste and void,' in the language of the Authorized Version—that without any active intervention begins to sprout grasses and shrubs and trees. The field does not, we know, spontaneously 'bring forth' the vegetation. Seeds that are present but not observed germinate, or else, parachuted on

his own role, i.e., being super-polite. But immediately after, he says 'Let me bring a little bread' (5). Water/Bread. Natural/Manufactured. It's like Genesis 1/Genesis 2. There is a further subtlety in the text. The messengers are, we understand, angels. How do they get to Abraham? The Bible is trying hard not to have us say 'by magic.' For the point of the episode is not to describe a theophany. The point is to impart to the reader some sense of how the spirit of the text regards the patriarch's progress. So far as the story taken at face value is concerned, God is part of the explanation. For the messengers are doing God's bidding: 'Let Abraham be visited.' But the messengers get to Abraham, so far as the story goes, in a natural way, on foot. They emerge from the heat haze. So again we have, in the background, a combination of 'God is behind it' and 'God does not do it.' Compare also the very start of the Genesis 2 account: '. . . the Lord God has not caused it to rain upon the earth . . . ; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground' (5–6). This comes close to saying that the rising up of the stream occurs without God (directly) causing it.

[17] So, as I said, the Bible can accept what Hawking says about the coming-into-being of WP. WP can come into being without the hacking that gardens require.

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the wind, touch down and take root. The natural world will develop along these lines if left on its own. In these instances, it is therefore clear that God does not step up and 'make.' No doubt is left, as doubt is left in the earlier cases where one can say either that the firmament separates or that God makes the firmament separate &c.

As the case may be, we see the emergence of a whole that satisfies SI: a place for everything, and everything in its place. In the memorable words of Archie Bunker, 'birds gotta fly, fish gotta fry.'

The story of Genesis 1, then, is a logical story. But now we come to the features that seem to go against the logic. Verse 20 follows the pattern. The waters bring forth sea creatures.[18] But then, in verse 21, God is said to 'create' them. The verb is the same as the verb used in verse 26 for humankind; and it is the verb that appears at the start of Genesis, the verb which is translated as 'created' in the Authorized Version. This is *prima facie* disruptive of the harmony, because in the creation of men and women something is said that seems to take us out of the natural realm. Men and women are said to be made 'in [God's] image, according to [his] likeness' (ibid.).

Executive verbs

In the preceding section, I make a lot of the verb 'create.' Let's take a closer look at the executive lexicon of Genesis.

We have in Genesis 1 several different verbs of coming-to-be: 'make,' 'fashion,' 'create.'[19] In a very informal spirit (I am using a low-powered magnifying glass, not a high-powered microscope), let me suggest how the three are to be (differentially) interpreted. MAKING: this is a generic verb. When it is said that God makes something, or that something is made, it is as yet open as to what sort of productive activity is involved. Frequently, as I explained, what we get is an outcome that results from the independent activity—churning, say—of nature. In some such cases, the text uses a form known as 'the cognate accusative.' For instance, what the NRSV renders as 'Let the earth put forth vegetation' (11) might be rendered, closer to the original, as 'Let the grass grass.' (This is clearly a case in which the generative principle is internal.) Similarly, in the same verse, we have words that invite forms like 'the seeds seed' and 'the fruit trees fructify,' etc. Given what we know, we can say that the earth churns (quakes, volcanoes, tectonic movements) and thrusts up mountains. FASHION: this is the process of bringing a separate entity

[18] A plastic version of what the language of 'bringing forth' purports is one of those remarkable M. C. Escher drawings in which disorder on the left slowly resolves into order on the right. The point is that what comes to be is part of a wider churning.

[19] The Hebrew roots are: [BRA, YTzR, ASE] ברא יצר עשה.

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into existence. A sculptor would, for instance, be said to FASHION a statue. A statue is not understood to be part of a whole consisting of statue-and-X. CREATE: this is the idea of starting something in some (fairly) absolute sense.

Now the paradigm of creation, however the verb is read, would be said by most readers to be the creation of the world. I am maintaining that so far as WP is concerned, this isn't the case. We can see the opening words of Genesis 1 as a cognate accusative. The beginning begins. If so, then the world comes to be without intervention.[20] And I have offered some support. The opening verse should be read: 'when God created, the world was chaotic.' This leaves open what the act of creation is. And, I say, that act does not come until quite a bit later. So the verse means: 'when God did his first creative work, which was done with respect to men and women, the world was thus-and-so.' So we do not get creation (at least) until verse 26. That (ostensibly) is the first act.

But *is* it the first act? At the end of the previous section I mentioned the most salient mark of distinction: men and women, and only men and women, are said to be made 'in [God's] image, according to [his] likeness' (26). This may seem to decide in the affirmative. It is in fact one ground for thinking that a shift occurs in verse 26. But there are reasons for taking it slow.

The 'image-and-likeness'-claim (henceforth: 'the likeness-claim') is closely followed by the 'Let them have dominion'-claim (hereafter: 'the dominion-claim.') If, as seems entirely reasonable, we take the two to be internally linked, then the dominion-claim is the claim that the species to which men and women belong stands atop the natural realm. 'How does this make them God-like?' It does, in that God is above and beyond the whole of W. (In Latin, 'God' is 'Dominus.' To be like God is to have the dominating characteristic.) Unquestionably, this captures part of what the Bible has in mind.

That God is, qua non-natural, outside of W is interesting from the standpoint of ontology. Distinctions between realms of being are at the center of ontology. Accordingly, the characterisation of God as having dominion is loaded with ontological interest. But the characterisation, as applied to men and women, is not synonymous. Qua dominators, men and women are not sharply distinct from the rest of WP. For they are internal to WP, not external. We can say that they stand atop the food chain. We can say that they are the most complex of animals. Even apart from reading Genesis, we do, at least informally, say these things. Neither is a foolish thing to say. Being the height of complexity is still however being within. So is

[20] One is reminded of the old whipping horse of analytic philosophers, Heidegger's 'nothing noths.' The idea, that Rudolf Carnap mercilessly mocks, is developed with trademark ingenuity by Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*.

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being on top. Dubai's Burj Khalifa has a highest storey. Even the tallest tower of which the Bible speaks, were it to have gone up, would have had '[a] top' (11:4), albeit 'in the heavens' (ibid.). Any finite chain must have a last link. Any finite number of things must have some thing (or things) than which no other is more complex. So ontological interest is absent. What is said of men and women can be said without mentioning God. Men and women could just as well have attributed dominion to themselves. The attribution did not have to have a theological content.[21]

Nonetheless, the Bible does make the point in terms of God. The Bible, one senses, is struggling with a sense of sameness-and-difference. My claim is that this struggle has to do with what Genesis 2 contains. It is forward looking. Genesis 2 is dominated in the narrative by Genesis 1. But, just as Jacob, the second-born, is given the blessing over Esau, so Genesis 2 has conceptual or logical dominance over Genesis 1.

Blessings

The Bible supplies a key to the significance of the verb 'create.' It does this by inserting a puzzle into the story of Genesis 1. The puzzle has to do with blessings.

In Genesis 1, blessings are given three times: to the fish (22); to men and women (28); to the sabbath (2:3). Why the fish? As noted, the verb used to describe the coming-into-being of the denizens of the deep is 'create' (21). And then one observes that the verb is also used of men and women (27). So we have a textual linkage of two things: for *created* things, a blessing is suitable.

What does all this mean? Between men and women, on the one hand, and fish, on the other, no real similarity obtains, and the Bible is not suggesting otherwise. The Bible is not doing theology on ichthyology.[22] There are however analogies and rough points of connection. These the Bible is exploiting. That is, the formulators are making their point obliquely. It's more, though, than a matter of

[21] Recall Rashi's point about the other nations and the Promised Land. Whatever men and women are saying when they attribute dominion to themselves, no sub-human animal is going to rise up and assert that the attribution is illegitimate because it is not God-given! Many ecologists say that it is illegitimate. They would have an easy time making their case if the self-styled dominators always appealed to theology to justify themselves.

[22] Contrast Isak Dinesen, *Out of Africa* (New York: Random House, 1937), p. 19: 'The Natives have, far less than the white people, the sense of risks in life. Sometimes on a Safari, or on the farm, in a moment of extreme tension, I have met the eyes of my Native companions, and have felt that we were at a great distance from one another, and that they were wondering at my apprehension of our risk. It made me reflect that perhaps they were, in life itself, within their own element, such as we can never be, like fishes in deep water which for the life of them cannot understand our fear of drowning.'

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authorial subtlety or the exercise of wit and literary skill. They cannot make the point directly. Something restrains them from doing that.

The first point to make is that the sea creatures are the first animals of which we hear in the narrative. The Bible will soon assign to one group of animals, the humans, very regal status. So it is appropriate that the emergence of the kingdom be marked with some ceremony.[23] And that emergence is further marked by the fact that 'be fruitful and multiply' is said of the first animals to appear, as it is said, later, of men and women. The second point is that the land animals are described (verse 24) as emerging along the same lines as the plants, though they are (biologically, anatomically) more like men and women than are the fish. Nor are the land animals given the blessing. This indicates that the fish are singled out because of their firstness. It indicates that while indicating that they are not being singled out for their own sake.

Then there is the blessing itself. It is also given to the sabbath (2:7). Here, no obvious way is available to make sense of 'be fruitful and multiply.' We must therefore decide whether the blessing of the men and women is to be coupled with that of the sea creatures, or with that of the sabbath, or with neither. We can, I believe, split the difference between the first and the second. Part of the point is that there is an unknown. And a blessing is needed when there is an unknown. For things may not go well. A bit of luck is welcome. But the lack of knowledge may just be subjective. There is, for the Bible, an ontological grade of lack of knowledge.[24]

Observe, too, that in the case of the fish and the humans the blessing is linked to the idea of reproduction; of increasing the numbers. This also is significant. For, in the human case, the biblical position sees the generative activity as very special indeed. What happens generatively in the human case is (as I shall explain below) nothing like what happens in the sub-human realm, whether of plants or of animals. In offering a benediction to the fish, the Bible is telegraphing a point that gets developed properly, i.e., conceptually, only in Genesis 2. That is: in giving a blessing to the fish, the text is forcing us to ask what the point of blessings is. And by getting us to ask that, it is forcing us to focus on the things to which blessings are given. What is it about them that makes the blessings appropriate?

[23] That 'dominion' is asserted for humankind only over the animals confirms this reading.

[24] The reader would be right to observe that by so quickly abandoning the search for something comparable in the case of the sabbath, I am betraying the imagination that I try to use in these pages. I bow to the criticism. In fact, I think that comparable (analogical) sense can be made, by pressing on the idea of the sabbath marking a sharp ending/beginning. But I'll leave the development of the thought for some other time.

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About the fish I will say only one thing more; about the feature of similarity between fish and men and women that the Bible has in mind. Recur to the luminaries. They move in regular orbits. The sun could stand still in the sky. There is no logical impossibility in the idea of a stationary sol. But that requires a fairly drastic alteration to the natural order. The Bible has God performing a miracle at Gibeon. By contrast with the luminaries, fish, phenomenologically, lack regular ways. In the region of the world that is their world, they move up and down, left and right, back and forth, diagonally too. Often, they even remain motionless. (Birds aloft cannot do this. If *they* cease to flap their wings, they plummet to the ground. That is why swimmers are used in the Bible rather than, or prior to, flyers.) It is this that the Bible is trying to focus our attention on. Why are plants not given a blessing? We now have the explanation. They are by nature rooted. It is of course equally true (as the reader will interject) that a migratory animal belongs to the whole region of its migration as a plant does to the place where it is rooted. It is a straight error to say of the arctic tern that its home is the Arctic, where it breeds in the northern summer, rather than the Antarctic, around which it flies in the southern summer. Its home can be viewed as a very extensive portion of the globe that comprises both. However, as I said, the Bible is operating in terms of analogies.

The Bible's point is that men and women lack set ways. (Another way of saying this, since we are not talking about randomness, is that men and women are real initiators.) But the Bible cannot make the point straightforwardly at this juncture. For the world of Genesis 1 is natural; and natural is linked to SI. So it says these things in terms of *fruits de mer*, of which it is analogically, not literally, the case.

The human sector does not fit in. That is the point. In the later narrative, the idea is compacted in the injunction to Abraham to leave his native land and his father's house. Men and women are not native to anywhere. Which is a biographical/geopolitical way of saying that men and women are not natural. In the natural realm, they are oddities, misfits.

The Bible cannot make the point it makes with blessings more directly. For the main thrust of Genesis 1 is the locating men and women within the natural realm. But the writers knows where they are going. So they cannot afford to make men and women natural full stop. This is an excellent reason for exploiting a species that certainly is just part of WP but whose members, in their externals, call to mind certain characteristics distinctive of men and women.

As I said at the start: the Bible does not want God operating cosmogonically. It is however prevented from satisfying the want categorically. So, having released the fish from the maws of the natural, it quickly hooks them again.

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Genesis 2: Monotheism and Misbehaviourism

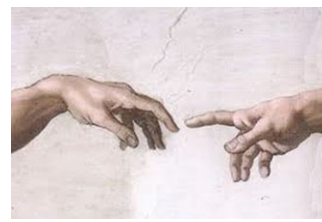
At the end of Genesis 1, after all the coming-into-being is done, God affixes a mezuzah (the parchment reads 'טוב מאד' [1:31]) on the door.[25] The door, it turns out, is not the door of the completed structure, the structure of Genesis 1. It is the door into the world of Genesis 2. Through the door and into that world, the real Wanderland, we now pass.

Happily, I do not need to devote as much space to Genesis 2 as I did to Genesis 1. The basic points are readily made. My thesis, again, is that God is necessary for WH. God's role in Genesis 2 is therefore essential.

I've mentioned the likeness-claim. Genesis 2 has its corresponding claim. It is the breath of life-claim. This is the one that makes everything else fall into place.

The two claims may seem to be similar. Men and women are said when either claim is made to have a special link to God. But the similarity is deceptive. Nothing in the likeness-claim requires that men and women not be part of WP. WP satisfies SI. It is quite compatible with a whole's being a system that it have what can be called a topmost member. (When it comes to WP, this, if we include the macro and the micro, can be misleading. But in the Bible's optic WP consists only of the largest geographical features and the plants and animals with which men and women come into unaided perceptual contact.) Even if God were a satisfier of SI (e.g., if the deities constituted a pantheon), likeness would continue to hold. But the breath-of-life claim is different. This is the claim not about the species, but about particular men and women.

A picture is worth a thousand words. Let me formulate the point in terms of one of the world's best-known Western works of art.



In Michelangelo's plastic representation of the biblical panel in which God breathes life into the first man, the first man is, obviously, alive. Does the picture depict the instant *before* the digits

[25] 'Tov Me-od.' There is an internal ground for accepting this imaginative idea. Genesis 1 is dominated by the adjective 'good.' There is no 'bad.' The latter first appears in Genesis 2. But 'very good' (that is what the Hebrew means) implies that 'good' comes in degrees. If so, there is more and less good. 'Less good' approaches 'bad.'

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make contact or the instant *after*? My view is that the former is correct. The figure is already alive, in the biological sense. But the constituent of WP has not yet become 'the man.' For that to happen, the organism must be differentiated from the system which enfolds it. It must become *autonomous*, not just *distinguishable* within the system. It must turn into a particular. The biblical view is that this particularity/autonomy/separateness is unavailable in natural terms. Genesis 1 lacks the wherewithal to explain or to account for it. The kinds of differentiation of Genesis 1 are of a chaos (a whole that does not satisfy SI) into a system (a whole that does); and then of the system into sub–systems. From the standpoint of Genesis 1, particularity is, to use Kantian jargon, 'original.' God, in the Bible, is the principle of particularity. Monotheism is the view that men and women are particulars, and that nothing else is.

That animals auto–locomote can easily foster a misapprehension here. A tree is part of its system. It is rooted. An animal is mobile, and so—one might think—has liberated itself from the system. The Bible wants to distinguish Genesis 1 from Genesis 2. But men and women are—humankind is—part of Genesis 1. The claim that they are fish-like is the claim that prior to particularisation men and women are like the entity pictured on the Sistine Ceiling before the digital contact. The Bible's panel about fish is, then, like Michelangelo's mural, as I understand it. The Bible is straddling the line between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2.

Close reading (not minutely close, either, so the fact that it is missed needs to be diagnosed, and my diagnosis appeals to the fact that Genesis 1 is not set apart sharply enough from Genesis 2) reveals that the treatment of Genesis 1 is always plural. Of Genesis 2, singular. If the reader looks at the NRSV, he or she will see that this feature is missed. The same goes for the Authorized Version. It is vital, when translating the text, not to make the pronouns uniform. For Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are saying different things. These mistranslations explain why the present discussion does not fill a much needed gap in the literature, not in this matter anyway.

Monotheism, then, appears in Genesis 2. That is the Bible's major contribution, conceptually. It does not appear in Genesis 1, even though a single god, God, is active.[26] What we have in Genesis 1 is better called 'monism.' This, again, is the view of WP as a (unified) system. The Bible, as a monotheistic tract, is advancing the ontological view that nature cannot accommodate particulars. Like God, and unlike pagan (plural) godS, men and women are in some sense outside of nature. They are not parts of the system. Just so, the story of Genesis 2 is a story of *misbehaviourism* among men and women.

[26] I have been arguing that God is dispensable from Genesis 1. I am just putting it here in the most natural way.

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The philosopher Descartes writes in the *Meditations* of a clock that does not tell time properly. The clock is not of course misbehaving or transgressing. As Descartes observes, it is operating entirely in accordance with the laws of nature, no less and no more than does the clock at Greenwich. But this is just what is not true of men and women. You might be distressed if a person tells you the wrong time. But there is no point looking for the defect in the informant as one might look for the chipped tooth in one of the clock's gears. Perfectly well-functioning men and women do on occasion lead one astray, sometimes deliberately.

We now see with even greater clarity that Genesis 2 is more central than Genesis 1. The view of human particularity and the peculiarities of human behaviour are what motivates the Bible-writers. From these they move backwards: to the generative account of Genesis 2, which anchors the particularity ontologically in the God who is one; and then backwards further to the account of the natural world. The thought is found in the following claim of King Solomon—a counterweight to the famous claim about the engenderment of philosophy that Aristotle enunciates.

Thus sayeth the Proverbist (Proverbs 30:18–19):

> Three things are too wonderful for me;
> four I do not understand:
> the way of an eagle in the sky,
> the way of a snake on a rock,
> the way of a ship on the high seas,
> and the way of a man with a girl.

In the world of Genesis 1, even as including humankind (the species), SI holds. So morality as we understand it does not apply.[27] The world of Genesis 1 is a whole satisfying SI. In such a world, the exchanges and interrelations are in the nature of cycling and recycling. There is no 'one' and there are no 'others' of which it could be said: 'Do not do unto others &c.'

Final refinements

And another conceptual gain: why death? Why does death have dominion over the Bible? Not because, or not only because, death is such a profound human preoccupation. The more basic reason is ontological: only particulars die.[28]

[27] What happens if Genesis 1 is moralised? See the Tower of Babel! '[T]he whole earth [sc., the whole of humankind] had one language and the same words' (11:1). Observe that the plural forms of Genesis 1 are duplicated in the presentation of the Tower episode.

[28] Not that this is logically necessary. But why attribute science fiction views to the Bible's writers? See Peter Loptson, 'The Antinomy of Death,' in *Death and Philosophy*, Jeff Malpas and Robert C. Solomon, eds. (London: Routledge, 1998).

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Transgression and death come as a package. Death is not a punishment for transgression. To transgress, i.e., not to be part of the system, is to be a particular. And particulars (as opposed to the system) are subject to beginnings and endings. 'In the day that you eat of the tree of knowledge of good and bad, in that day you die.'

The Talmud (Tractate Sanhedrin) says that one who saves a single life saves the world entire. This is not from the biblical perspective a piece of rhetoric. The life of a person, unlike that of a fish, or of a tree, is the life of a particular. It has a beginning and an end. Augustine said it well: '*Ut initium esset, homo creatus est*.'[29] The end of a tree is recycling. Only the sentimental pine. The end of a person is death. We mourn for the seven days of creation. So there is no commandment 'Thou shalt not chop down trees,' which is not to say that clear-cutting is a sound policy.

I close with a much more philosophical point, about what can be labelled the 'telltale Kantianism' of Genesis.

It is not impossible to argue that the Bible-writers are aware of the difference between WP and WH, and nonetheless deny that the difference is as sharp as it seems on the grounds that WP depends on WH. (It is usual to argue that WH ultimately depends on WP, indeed, reduces to WP.) The claim here, to supply a preliminary signpost, is that Genesis 2, in which a partition is made to WP, is prior to Genesis 1. This would amount to saying that the writers are proto-Kantians. In terms of my formulation, it means that SI is guaranteed in WP because of WH. (Compare Kant's idealist view that space and time are forms of sensibility, causality and substance categories of understanding.)

The Bible, as I read it, tries to be suggestive on this matter. It does so in having the raven disappear over the horizon when the floodwaters abate, i.e., in the revivification of the world. The point here is that the raven really is apart. It represents Genesis 1. The other animals in Genesis are 'named.' The Hebrew word 'raven' is cognate with 'twilight.' Just so, the raven is an emblem of the pre-differentiated whole.[30]

In making nature a 'thing in itself,' the Bible is essentially saying that Genesis 1, sc., the nature of Genesis 1, is not real nature. It is human relativised nature. It is phenomenal, not noumenal. All readers

[29] 'Unless a man had been created, there would have been no beginning in the world.' Or: 'God created a man in order that the world should contain beginnings.' *The City of God*, Book XII, chapter 20. It follows, if so, that the creation of the natural world doesn't really count as a beginning, which is what I said above. It follows that Genesis 1 is not the core biblical story.

[30] For a development of the Kantian parallel, see 'Transcendental Idealism: What Jerusalem has to say to Königsberg,' *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* XLIX 2010, pp. 25–51.

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will I am sure agree on a bit of reflection that the writers of the Torah never evince a naturalist's interest in (extra-human) nature. Nature, in the Torah, is always a locale for distinctively human affairs, or an instrument that God uses to reward, discipline, and punish. Given what we now know about the number of stars, it is more likely to inspire nausea than joy to be told that our descendents will be equinumerous with them.

This explains why I said that Rashi could find what he needs in Genesis 2. For, if this is right, Genesis 1 is not independent of Genesis 2. Although this doesn't give Rashi quite what he wants, it does imply that starting with Genesis 1 is not conceptually different than starting with Genesis 2.

***

Bereshith Rabba talks about the Bible's beginning with the letter ב. The midrash goes as follows.[31] א, the first letter, was upset at being usurped by ב, the second letter. א was conciliated by being informed that it would begin the Decalogue. I have a variation on this imaginative reading. Genesis 1 begins with the second letter because Genesis 2 has priority. Genesis 2, you may confirm, begins with א.

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[31] The relevent entry is at http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/mhl/mhl05.htm, the fourth paragraph.

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