ABSTRACT

The Necessary Hedonism of Disenchantment: Analysis of the Disenchantment of the
Universe with Particular Attention to Medicine and Theology

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Modern medicine claims to be something it is not: morally neutral. Thus
advancements made in the field of biotechnology are hailed and welcomed as the natural
order. They are refused questions of morality because the endeavor is understood as
amoral. Specific attention is paid to the advancements of physician-assisted suicide and
eugenics within the practice of medicine. Throughout this discourse I propose the
impossibility of any morally neutral practice, specifically medicine, following the
disenchantment of the world. Insofar as the materialist morality is one of hedonism,
medicine is directed toward the end of the uncensored elimination of suffering and the
expansion of autonomy. I seek to understand how a Christian ought faithfully engage in
the practice of medicine, given its secular end. Through this discourse I ultimately call
the Church to a richer understanding of her role in medicine, to her role in the life of
those suffering.

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THE NECESSARY HEDONSIM OF DISENCHANTMENT: ANALYSIS OF THE

DISENCHANTMENT OF THE UNIVERSE WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO

MEDICINE AND THEOLOGY

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CHAPTER ONE:

Introduction

"Reason is the pace; increase of science, the way; and the benefit of mankind, the end."
(Hobbes, 1994, p. 26).

It is not unfamiliar to begin a speaking engagement in story. It helps the listener ground the questions and considerations, providing a sense of urgency to the issues raised within the context of the narrative. Thus this discourse shall begin in similar fashion:

Jane's thick auburn hair fell gently over her shoulders as her husband firmly held her hands in his lap. The remains of the joy that had overcome their lives for the past 10 weeks were still visible in the upturned corners of her lips. However, as the conversation continued, the joy became more and more a remnant of the distant past, as dark shadows passed over both of their faces. Jane and her husband had been trying to get pregnant for over a year. Thus the joy upon hearing that they were pregnant was tangible. Like nearly every parent they knew, they received prenatal genetic screening. As they heard the results of the screen, the confusion and uncertainty descended upon the room like a thick velvet curtain closing softly after a production. The only difference was that the screaming that followed the descent of this curtain was one of silence. The genetic counselor explained to the couple that their daughter had Tay-Sachs disease, a rare disease that destroys nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. Most children with this disease barely make it past early childhood, and experience varying levels of seizures, paralysis, and intellectual disability. Jane and her husband did not know where or how to begin thinking of this. The silence in the room was deafening. The genetic counselor soon

began throwing options at the stunned couple. Peter Singer, professor, speaker, and moral philosopher has shaped much of the thought and practice in situations like this. His advice to the couple is as follows:

> The couple thinks it important to give their child the best possible start in life, and they do not believe that having Down's syndrome [or Tay-Sachs disease] is the best possible start in life. All that the parents need assume is that it would be better to have a child without Down's syndrome [or Tay-Sachs disease], or to have a child who can have a room of her own. In neither case are the parents choosing whether or not to have a child at all. They are choosing whether to have this child or another child that they can, with reasonable confidence, expect to have later, under more auspicious circumstances (Baird, 2009 p. 313).

Within modern dialogue, it is suggested that it would be morally indefensible for parents to knowingly invite their child into the presumed suffering present in this disease. It is considered better for the child if the parents tried again and gave the child a better life. The church that the couple attended had never spoken about what to do in a situation like this; however, they were embarrassed to ask. They felt guilty and shamed. They felt that it was their fault for giving their child this life. They both needed to work; thus they did not know how they would take care of a child with immense special needs. Given the status of the fetus as unborn, and given that human life is simply the collision of atoms, abortion seemed the best option to the geneticist. He recommended that *for the child's sake* they ought have an abortion. Jane and her husband left the clinic after scheduling an appointment for an abortion the following day. The refusal of suffering has taken the face of violence.

This haunting story serves to jostle the reader awake to the truth that medicine is not morally neutral. It is directed toward a very specific end. Every decision is girded and guided by a moral framework, by values and principles established by the practice and

the individual practicing. Medicine, however, claims to be morally neutral; in fact, science is celebrated because of its moral neutrality. Given this, advancements made in the field of science are hailed and welcomed as the natural order. The ability to perform prenatal genetic screening and abort a child in order to give them the "best life possible" is applauded as advancement in science. Such advancements are understood to be excluded from moral questioning because the endeavor is inherently amoral. Max Weber (1864-1920), German socialist and philosopher, in a speech to university students explained this very phenomenon:

> Whether life is worth while living and when – this question is not asked by medicine. Natural science gives us an answer to the question of what we must do if we wish to master life technically. It leaves quite aside, or assumes for its purposes, whether we should and do wish to master life technically and whether it ultimately makes sense to do so (Weber, 1918, p. 10).

Likewise President Obama has been celebrated for his commitment to "following the science" (interview with Bill Maher). Patrick Deneen, author and professor at Notre Dame, notes that "following the science," means never asking questions such as "should moral and ethical considerations guide decisions in the application of scientific research?" (2014). Deneen insightfully notes the following: "When we moderns speak of science, we are speaking of a specific kind of activity aimed at a specific end…We do 'follow the science' – the path laid down by the modern scientific project to master nature – down the path to ever-increasing human autonomy," (2014). Throughout this discourse I propose the impossibility of any practice being morally neutral; however, specifically science. In our modern age where science is the new religion, it is imperative to understand science and thus the handmaid of science, medicine, properly. As Ivan Illich in *Medical Nemesis* states, "The assertion of value-free cure and care is obviously

malignant non-sense" (1982). I propose that a materialist understanding of the universe is what renders science as religion, the way to truth. It is this materialist worldview that celebrates "following the science." However, as Deneen made clear, the pursuit of knowledge is not an end in itself. Rather the pursuit of scientific knowledge is done for a specific end, the moral imperative of this materialist worldview: the elimination of suffering through the mastery of nature. Medicine, in making herself the handmaid of science, finds herself directed to this very end. Herein lies much of the goal of this discourse, to understand how exactly medicine is refused moral neutrality within this modern worldview.

I will characterize the modern worldview as materialist. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), one of the most influential thinkers of the Early Modern Age, in *Leviathan,* summarizes the modern materialist worldview in an extraordinary way. He states:

> Reason is the pace; increase of science, the way; and the benefit of mankind, the end. (Hobbes, 1994, p. 26).

This excerpt offers incredible insight into modern society. Indeed, within the modern worldview, increase of science is the "way." Science has become the new religion. And the increase of science is pursued for a very specific end, 'the benefit of mankind," expressed in the elimination of suffering and expansion of autonomy. This is the unique materialist worldview, one that understands science as the key to omniscience, with the explicit goal of mastery of nature to allow the elimination of suffering. This is the unique imaginary moderns occupy today, in what Charles Taylor, eminent philosopher, terms the "Secular Age" (2007). And this is the social imaginary we will seek to understand further in order to understand medicine's role in it.

In his monumental work, *A Secular Age*, philosopher Charles Taylor guides his readers to understand that in order to have a rich and more complete understanding of the present age, they must understand where they came from and how they arrived to where they are today (Taylor, 2007, p. 28). James K.A. Smith, in reflection upon this monumental work of Taylor states, "While we have come to assume that this is just 'the way things are,' in fact what we take for granted is contingent and contestable. But before we can contest it, we need to further understand it," (2014, p. 46). Herein lie the goal and the urgency of this discourse. I propose that the way medicine operates within this materialist imaginary is not "just the way things are." My hope is to reveal to the reader that things have not always been as they are today. People have not always lacked a coherent morality with which to qualify actions as right or wrong. Man has not always understood himself to be free from any external force. Physicians have not always been expected to kill their patients in the name of generous compassion. The church in such great numbers has never declared that God wants his children to experience material prosperity. This paper, in technically asking, "Have things always been this way?" is allowing the reader to understand that *things have not always been this way*. Therefore, how did we get here?

The sustaining principle of this paper is Benjamin Wiker's, author and professor of ethics, Great Law of Uniformity. This principle states: "Every distinct view of the universe, every theory about nature, necessarily entails a view of morality; every distinct view of morality, every theory about human nature, necessarily entails a cosmology to support it" (Wiker, 2002, p. 22). Conflating Wiker's Great Law of Uniformity and Taylor's demand for a detour through the past, the first chapter will analyze the shifting

cosmologies that brought us to the modern materialist cosmology. The second chapter

will trace each of the moral frameworks implicit within each of the cosmologies. By the

end of chapter two, I will have established, by detour through the past, what the modern

day moral imperative is. Given that medicine practices within the modern cosmology, I

will use the third chapter to further explain how it is thus refused moral neutrality. Once

medicine aligns itself with the materialist cosmology, it acts from the materialist

morality. Chapter three will thus analyze the unique role medicine takes in modern

society in actualizing the modern moral imperative. The final chapter asks how the

Church ought practice and participate in medicine faithfully, given its participation in a

materialist cosmology and morality.

Through this paper I hope to direct the reader in understanding the ways that we

have fallen prey to the secular age – the ways that we have simply accepted different

principles and foundations of the secular age as truth. Through the presentation of a

historical analysis of how we came to where we are today, specifically pertaining to the

moral order, I do not propose a "going back" or an "undoing" of the secular age. As

Smith points out, "there's no undoing of the secular," (2014, p. 11). Instead, I hope to, in

guiding the reader to understand the secular age within which we live, hope to help the

reader in the "task of learning how (not) to live – and perhaps believe – in a secular age"

(Smith, 2014, p. 11). As Taylor so eloquently states, "Our understanding of ourselves

and where we stand is partly defined by our sense of having come to where we are, of

having overcome a previous condition," (2007, p. 28). Thus, in order to adequately

address the unique situation we find ourselves in today, as portrayed above, we will have

to take a long trip through the past, with the unadulterated hope of calling the Christian to

a richer understanding of suffering, and how to live faithfully despite the modern moral imperative begging to be actualized.

Before beginning, it must be noted that there are unlimited ways of telling a story. The way the story is told in the following discourse seems most fitting to me given my research and understanding of our modern climate. However, the main sources, Benjamin Wiker, Alasdiar MacIntyre, and Charles Taylor all tell the story differently, using slightly different language. In my presentation of the story, I do my best to unite these accounts into a coherent narrative that makes sense of the modern social imaginary. In abstracting the cosmology from the morality, by dividing it into two chapters, I realize that I am embarking on a perilous journey. We cannot abstract cosmology from morality in that one always motivates the other. However, I think the best way to undertake this discourse is in firstly depicting the cosmologic shift, followed by the moral shift. The goal of this discourse thus is to present a coherent narrative that allows the reader to make sense of the modern social imaginary, articulating the necessary shift in morality that followed the shift in cosmology. Ultimately, we will be analyzing the impact this modern social imaginary has on medicine and the Church, calling both medicine and the Church back to a true understanding of autonomy and suffering, and their role in each.

CHAPTER TWO:

Arrival at the Disenchanted World: Tracing of Cosmologies

Introduction

You look at trees and label them just so,
(for trees are 'trees', and growing is 'to grow');
you walk the earth and tread with solemn pace
one of the many minor globes of Space:
a star's a star, some matter in a ball
compelled to courses mathematical
amid the regimented, cold, inane,
where destined atoms are each moment slain.
J.R.R. Tolkien, "Mythopoeia"

At its most basic level, I will characterize the cosmologic shift that enabled the

modern social imaginary as the shift from enchantment to disenchantment. The time of

enchantment is typified as pre-Scientific Revolution, followed by the disenchantment of

post-Scientific Revolution. However, I warn the reader against being so naïve as to

believe that this shift happened in a clear pre-stage and post-stage. Though it can be

characterized broadly as such, countless shifts in thought had to take place during the

broadly defined enchantment period to make disenchantment believable and livable. And

the switch was not just flipped. Rather there was a lengthy period of transition. However,

broadly speaking we will characterize this shift that allowed for the creation of the

modern man, the fully autonomous self, to be the shift from enchantment to

disenchantment, which occurred central to the Scientific Revolution. Paramount to and

arguably the most important facet to a cosmology is the understood telos. Therefore, the

following discourse will track closely the shifts in man's understanding of his telos, as his

shifts in cosmology are tracked. I suggest in this discourse following the work of

MacIntyre that the removal of a telos necessitates disenchantment. Or it can be said with equal agreeability that disenchantment necessitates the removal of a telos. A purely materialist worldview (disenchanted worldview) mandates the removal of a greater end or ultimate aim, and thus is fundamental to the shift from enchantment to disenchantment. Given this, as we seek to understand the historical progression to modernity, we will pay close attention to the shifts in how man understands his telos.

Given the shift that is key to the formation of the modern cosmology is one from enchantment to disenchantment, it is imperative to understand what exactly is meant by these terms. Max Weber, German philosopher and sociologist, is typically credited for coining the Modern Age as "disenchanted." In 1918, whilst delivering a speech to university students in Germany, Weber said:

> The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization, and, above all, by the '*disenchantment of the world*'… The increasing intellectualization and rationalization do not, therefore, indicate an increased and general knowledge of the conditions under which one lives. It means something else, namely, the knowledge or belief that if one but wished one could learn it at any time. Hence, it means that principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted. (Weber, 1918, p. 7).

Disenchantment can be generally understood as the process of putting knowledge on the throne, of making knowledge god. As Weber explains, there is no room for mystery in the disenchanted world. The world is operated by strict rules of nature. In a disenchanted universe, the universe is reduced to material atoms. There is no room for divine intervention. Man understands himself as capable of controlling and knowing the universe, leading to the understanding of "absolute individual autonomy as the real essence of human being," (Shuman, 1999, p. 85). "The program of the Enlightenment

was the disenchantment of the world; the dissolution of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy" (Shuman, 1999, p. 25). Disenchantment was the throwing off of superstition and the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of utility, seen following the scientific revolution.

This chapter will provide an analysis of this very process of disenchantment, taking the reader from the enchanted Heroic Society, full of "superstition" and story, where man understood himself at the whims of Fate, and at the bidding of the gods, where birds carried omens and man was not in control, to the disenchanted modern age, or what Taylor calls the "Secular Age," where man is understood to be fully autonomous, a manipulator of life itself. This historical progression is what led modern man to see the universe as described by Tolkien:

> You look at trees and label them just so,
> (for trees are 'trees', and growing is 'to grow');
> you walk the earth and tread with solemn pace
> one of the many minor globes of Space:
> a star's a star, some matter in a ball
> compelled to courses mathematical
> amid the regimented, cold, inane,
> where destined atoms are each moment slain.
> J.R.R. Tolkien, "Mythopoeia"

This is a disenchanted reality: the once mystical nature, reduced to atoms, all "compelled to courses mathematical" (Tolkien).

Again, Taylor says, "Our understanding of ourselves and where we stand is partly defined by our sense of having come to where we are, of having overcome a previous condition," (2007, p.28). Thus the goal of this chapter is to understand more fully where we have come from. Insofar as we understand the disenchantment and subsequent reign of autonomy to be what renders suffering as abnormal, reformulating modern morality,

and refusing medicine moral neutrality, the question will be asked: How did we arrive in the modern disenchanted world? By the end of this discourse it will become clear that the disenchantment of this world forced man to understand himself as absolutely autonomous. Therefore, another way of asking the question "How did we arrive in the modern disenchanted world?" is by asking: "What happened to make the fully autonomous man believable and livable?"

The social imaginaries possessed in different societies that will be analyzed during the period of enchantment are: Heroic society, Athenian society, Medieval society, and Renaissance society. In order to properly understand that shift toward disenchantment we will look closely at the Enlightenment, which included the Scientific Revolution. The Renaissance, in functioning as the bridge between the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment, was crucial in laying much of the foundation that allowed the Enlightenment to become believable. We will pay close attention to key figures of the Enlightenment including: Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon, John Locke, and Thomas Hobbes in shaping Enlightenment ideals into the modern reality we see.

Shifting Cosmologies:

Now the time has begun to commence the story of social imaginary within the Heroic Society. The work of Homer will be the crux of how the social imaginary of the Heroic Society is understood. Homer is credited to have lived around 800 B.C.E. The individual of the heroic society looks unfamiliar to the autonomous agent of modernity. In the Heroic Age, a man was identified within his social position. The social position into which an individual was born, as son, brother, merchant, and/or father dictated the telos of the individual. "The self becomes what it is in heroic societies, only through its

role; it is a social creation, not an individual one," (MacIntyre, 2007, p.129). Everyone is born into a role, and the good of his life consists in fulfilling the role (MacIntyre, 2007, p.184). Man has a definitive telos according to his social role. Man also understands himself to be, to some extent, out of control of his life. He understands himself to be vulnerable to Fate. Homer's work, *The Odyssey*, depicts this facet clearly. The hero understands himself to have been given his role. It is not random chance that made Odysseus a warrior and Eumaeus a shepherd. The Heroic individual understands himself to be vulnerable to the whims of the gods. Odysseus utters:

> Of all that breathes and crawls across the earth, our mother earth breeds nothing feebler than a man. So long as the gods grant him power, spring his knees, he thinks he will never suffer affliction down the years. But then, *when the happy gods bring on the long hard times, bear them he must, against his will, and steel his heart.* Our lives, our mood and mind as we pass across the earth, turn as the days turn… (Homer, 2005, 18.150-157, p. 340, emphasis added).

Odysseus acknowledges humanity's vulnerability to the will of the gods. He affirms the gods' ability to bring good and bad, in addition to humanity's responsibility to bear it. This is an enchanted world. This is a world in which man understands his role on the basis of the community he is born in. His father was a shepherd; he too shall be a shepherd. His father is the king; he too shall rule. This is a world of mystery. The minds of the gods are unsearchable. None know how the gods will act, or what the gods will bring. Man understands his telos to be the fulfillment of the role given him by the gods (or Fate).

Shortly after the Heroic society, humanity witnessed the rise of the Athenian society (775 B.C.E. - 300 B.C.E.). Within Athenian society, though the individual is abstracted from a specific social role, he or she is located within a larger narrative of

humankind. MacIntyre expresses the placement of the individual within this larger

narrative as follows: "Human beings, like the members of all other species, have a

specific nature; and that nature is such that they have certain aims and goals, such that

they move by nature towards a specific telos," (2007, p. 148). Ancient Greek

philosophers had a fairly consistent account of the telos of man. There was an account of

the good and it was typically located within the narrative of the city-state. As Aristotle

says, "the relationship between being a good citizen and being a good man becomes

central," (MacIntyre, 2007, p.133). The citizen of the city-state is born with specific

obligations to the city-state. This Athenian world is still an enchanted account. In order

for man to acknowledge an ultimate good for himself, he must admit to something

greater. Though man might not see himself as completely at the whims of the gods, he

still sees himself as vulnerable to objective standards of what is good for him to live by.

Man cannot understand himself as an individual. Each individual is a social being who

finds his place in this world within the context of a citizen of the city-state (MacIntyre,

2007, p.135).

Following the Athenian city-state, humanity witnessed the rise of the Macedonian

Kingdom and establishment of the Roman Empire. And soon after that, humanity

witnessed the spread of Christianity, shaping entire societies through specifically the

Middle Ages. This later acceptance of New Testament tradition gave a narrative to

human life. The good, the telos, was established by the cosmic order, God. In Homeric

society, man was a creature of his role, with the warrior king epitomizing excellence. In

Greek society, man was a citizen, his purposes being outlined by the good of the city-

state. In Medieval thought, because of the strong Christian influence, man was on a

journey (MacIntyre, 2007, p.175). The good was something that had to be fought for on this earth. Man in medieval society was placed within the larger narrative, seeking to achieve his good as man on a journey within the cosmic order established by God. Man understood himself as created by God, with his ultimate end in God.

An enchanted cosmology mandates a telos of man. Insofar as an enchanted cosmology leaves room for mystery, leaving space for the "Transcendent" to intervene, there exists a space for a telos. A traditional telos is understood as an exterior standard, given by something greater, for which man ought live. Thus in many ways a telos mandates acceptance of an enchanted cosmology, to the same degree that an enchanted cosmology demands a telos. (It will later be likewise noted that the removal of a telos mandates a disenchanted cosmology to the same degree that a disenchanted cosmology demands a removal of a telos. However, we will then see the adoption of a strictly materialist telos). Thus one can characterize the age of enchantment (pre-Enlightenment) as one in which man was bound by a telos. The varying methods of attaining one's telos will be further analyzed in the second chapter as the varying moral frameworks are analyzed. However, for purposes of this chapter, the pre-Enlightenment societies, epitomized by Heroic, Greek, and Medieval periods, shared a common cosmology expressed by the acknowledgment of a telos.

Because the shift being studied is broadly characterized as a shift from enchantment to disenchantment, more time must be spent in understanding what characterizes this period of enchantment. When the word enchantment is used it can be helpful for the reader to think of the allowance of mystery. In the enchanted world, not everything is explainable nor does everything make sense. The age of enchantment

occurred before Newton's laws were put on paper and before an atom was known to exist. People credited much of the mysterious universe to a higher power. The world was accounted for within the context of a Transcendent Being. The acknowledgment that God was the Being that gave context to the mysterious sheds light on the rapid transition from enchantment to disenchantment as scientific explanation began filling the gaps previously occupied by God. As Duke scholar, Engelhardt insightfully notes: "With increasingly robust physical descriptions, God's direct involvement inversely diminishes," (2016).

One of the most important connections to make here is that prior to disenchantment, a fully autonomous individual would be effectively unthinkable. Firstly, a fully autonomous agent excludes the possibility of acceptance of a traditional telos of man. (We will see variation in the materialist telos rooted in god-like power, however). Understanding man as autonomous requires a mechanized universe, protected from external or transcendent threats. A fully autonomous agent can only operate within a disenchanted world. Insofar as autonomy is understood to be freedom from external forces, within an enchanted cosmology man cannot understand himself to be free from external forces. Within the Heroic Age man held himself to be vulnerable to the whims of the gods, who bring "long hard times…against his will," (Homer, 18.150-157, p.340). During the Athenian society it becomes a little more difficult to characterize cosmology; however, it is generally understood as open to the Transcendent, given the presence of Greeks gods. Within Medieval society, man understands this world to be God's world, and himself to be a sojourner within this temporary space, seeking ultimately to be with God at the coming of the new heaven and new earth. Man does not understand himself to be free from external force. God plays an intimate role in this earth, guiding His

followers in pursuit of Him. Humans understand themselves to be open and vulnerable to grace and the movement of God.

At this point in the discourse, it suffices to say that this transition is not as seamless as the narrative might sound. Though the generalized periods presented above can be broadly represented by the previous ideas and cosmologies, the seeds of disenchantment were sown in the time of enchantment. In fact, Epicurus (341 B.C.E. – 270 B.C.E) is considered by many to have laid the foundation of modernity: the disenchanted, mechanized, individualized, and atomized universe. As will be seen, Epicurean practice and Christian practice cannot coexist. Thus, following the rise and reign of Christianity through the 1500s, Epicureanism was effectively quenched. However, the seeds were deeply planted in 300 B.C.E. and began to grow as the Renaissance opened the doors to the greenhouse of ancient philosophy's rebirth.

Renaissance: Watering the Seeds of Materialism

In the narrative presented, the Renaissance (1300-1700) is depicted as the bridge between enchantment and disenchantment. The seeds planted in 300 B.C.E by Epicurus and his followers were watered in the Renaissance, allowed full bloom through the Enlightenment, and ultimately progressed to the growth of thick materialist trees, rooted in Epicurean ideas. Though Epicurus was not an atheist, the presence of God was superfluous in his philosophy. The essence of Epicurean thought is as follows: Epicurus claimed an eternal atom, a plurality of worlds, a self-contained universe, and no intrinsically evil deeds. Epicurus proposed an entirely materialistic universe. Though he still allowed the possibility of a God, God was superfluous and unnecessary in the materialist universe he proposed. In asserting an eternal atom, and thus an eternal

universe, it obviously had no need of an eternal being to create it. In asserting a self-contained universe, the gods became subordinate to nature, helpless to interfere (Wiker, 2002, p. 70). Benjamin Wiker, prominent Roman Catholic ethicist, notes the logical end of asserting an Epicurean universe: "One of the benefits of Epicurean materialism is that it allows its adherents to claim omniscience…Once we know what an atom is – and who could fail to grasp it, it is so simple – and we know how atoms move through the void, we know everything," (Wiker, 2002, p.70). Epicurus understood religion to be motivated by fear of the unknown, fear of death and the mystery of this world. He therefore proposed an entirely materialistic worldview to remove any fears man had of death or the unknown. Everything that was once complex and mysterious became reducible to mere atoms. Significance too was reduced to the physical realm. Man had no need to fear death or anything greater than the material. Because all that was the result of random chance and a collision of atoms, Epicurus could assert: "Death is nothing to us," (Wiker, 2002, p.72). As the reader can anticipate, this worldview is incompatible with a Christian worldview. The Christian understands man to be created, God to be in control, and one's end to be in friendship with God. Thus, though the seeds of materialism were laid by Epicurus around 300 B.C.E., with the rise of Christianity and effective reign of Christendom, it was not until the Renaissance that the seeds of materialism began to be watered.

The Renaissance was a time of re-birth, a time of uncovering works of antiquity. Therefore, it is no wonder that the work of Lucretius was brought forward in this time. Lucretius was a poet who recorded much of Epicurean thought. During this time, in line with Renaissance practice, much of the work of Epicurus was simply appreciated.

Lucretius was an incredible poet. His gift in written word may have contributed more to the initial presentation of materialism than we give credit. Thus much of the restoration of Epicureanism, without blatant advocacy, was done through a harmless appreciation of Lucretius as a renowned poet (Wiker, 2002, p.108). Even though Epicurean philosophy was appreciated as beautiful and antique, there were two major barriers to its full acceptance in the Renaissance: the supremacy of Christian thought and the lack of scientific understanding. Conquering the obstacle of the supremacy of Christian thought was accomplished significantly through the rise of nominalism. As is fitting of the Renaissance, as the work of Lucretius was brought forward, so was the work of Aristotle. Aristotle was understood as the pagan philosopher whose work was most compatible with Christianity. Therefore, Aristotle's teleological account of nature (in that nature always acts for an end) formed the foundation of the intellectual tradition within Christianity during this time (Wiker, 2002, p.101). However, many Christians began to view scholasticism as contaminating Christianity. Prominent Christians during the day set out to combat Aristotelianism within the church. In doing so, many turned to nominalism, which Wiker notes, "inadvertently paved the way for Epicureanism" (2002, p.101). In an attempt to push away from scholasticism, Christian leaders denied the power of reason, allowing only revelation to hold force. In order to do this, nominalists denied the existence of universals, asserting, "all nature is made of particular things, which are ultimately unrelated," (Wiker, 2002, p.104). Wiker articulates the intimacy in thought between nominalism and Epicureansim:

> By asserting that only particular things were real, and that universals or species names had no reality, nominalism was inadvertently siding with Epicurean materialism's denial of the reality or form or species distinctions. For Epicurean materialism, we recall, only individual atoms are real. (Wiker, 2002, p.105).

Thus, in combatting the scholasticism within the church through nominalism, the church paved the way for the conflation of materialism and Christian Truth.

The second barrier that prevented the acceptance of Epicurean practice when it was recovered in the Renaissance was the lack of scientific evidence. Epicurus affirmed an eternal atom, yet Dalton's Atomic Model was not presented until the 1800s. Epicurus affirmed a self-contained universe, yet Newton had not yet discovered laws of nature that could allow this. Until the scientific revolution, the acceptance of Epicurean materialism was mostly unbelievable. Thus during the scientific revolution (1500-1700), Epicurean materialism wore the garb of Newtoniansim. In other words, the scientific revolution gave the scientific evidence behind the claims of Epicurus, allowing his philosophy to be integrated rather seamlessly into life. A simple way of understanding the transition is as follows: Epicurus advocated for materialism; before the scientific revolution, there was no evidence for an acceptance of such a reductionist view of this world; the Galilean-Newtonian revolution allowed the victory of materialism. Wiker describes the Gaililean-Newtonian revolution as "the vindication of atomism through the victory of mathematics," (Wiker, 2002, p.111). "It was the (apparently) complete victory of Newtonian atomism that allowed – nay, demanded – that Epicureanism as an entire system, both theoretical and moral, be firmly planted in modern soil," (Wiker, 2002, p.113). Insofar as the scientific revolution demanded the acceptance of Epicureanism and the subsequent disenchantment of the world, redefining reality according to scientific materialism, we will stay at the scientific revolution for a while to understand some of the pivotal work of both Galileo and Newton, two of the most important scientists during this time.

Galileo's observations of the heavens had an immense role in disarming the enchanted world. Galileo took part in the initial stages of this universal reductionism. In his observations of the moon, Galileo reduced the mystical glory of the heavens to mere dirt, just like the earth. Science became the pursuit of the reduction of the world to the mathematical, geometric, atomic reality. The fundamentally reductionist goal of Galileo can be seen in his (Galileo's) following statement:

> Hence I think that tastes, odors, colors, and so on are no more than mere names so far as the object in which we place them is concerned, and that they reside only in the consciousness [of the perceiver]. Hence if the living creature were removed [who sense such qualities], all these qualities would be wiped away annihilated. (Wiker, 2002, p.122).

In his scientific observations, Galileo laid the foundation of reductionism. The heavens were reduced to physical objects like the earth, no longer mystical bodies. In his emphasis on the mathematical reality of the universe, he began the process of reducing reality to mathematical equations. Laying on the foundation of the scientific progress and the universal reductionism of Galileo, Newton established the laws that govern the universe. The effect of Newton's Laws ought not be understated. His work was praised as elevating man to godhead and transformed modern thought and practice. Newton uncovered mathematical principles by which the universe necessarily operated, ultimately excluding the need of divine intervention (Wiker, 2002, p. 126). Not only was there simply no need of divine intervention, but also there could be no divine intervention. René Descartes (1596-1650), in his work *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, articulates the impossibility of God's intervention in this newly disenchanted universe. He states:

> Even if God had created many worlds, there could never be one in which these laws failed to be observed (1999, p. 31-32). God will never perform any miracle in this new world and that intellects, or the rational souls that we may later suppose are present there, will never disturb the ordinary course of nature in any way (1999, p. 112).

Descartes understood God as subservient to the laws of nature, excluding the possibility of divine intervention. This is a radical shift from Homer's world where "the happy gods bring on the long hard times," (Homer, 2005, p. 340).

No longer was man left in awe, curious as to the movement of the earth in the universe, but rather man could now predict what necessarily had to exist in nature, given the immutable laws of nature. Adam and Leverreir predicted on the basis of mathematics alone that another planet, Neptune, must necessarily exist. It existed not as the result of the magnitude of God's creative power, but rather existed as the necessary result of the laws of nature (Wiker, 2002, p.129). These established mathematical principles were interpreted as superior to any divine power. Insofar as they governed the universe, God's role became superfluous. Again, Engelhardt's comment gains relevance within this context: "With increasingly robust physical descriptions, God's direct involvement inversely diminishes" (2016). Wiker notes the similarily of the limitations of the gods post-scientific revolution with the gods of Epicureanism, "utterly powerless to interfere with nature, for the inner laws of mathematics and geometry are eternal and unbreakable" (Wiker, 2002, p.123). In order to understand the immense influence of Newton during this time, note the following poem written about him:

The inmost places of the heavens,
Now gained,
Break into view,
No longer hidden is,
The force that turns the farthest orb…
All matters that once vexed the mind,
Now dispelled at last by science.
(Wiker, 2002, p.138).

Newton was celebrated as unlocking the door to the universe. By granting man

omniscience, Newton removed the need of a god. Descartes, also acknowledges the

omniscience claimed by humanity following the scientific revolution. He states:

All the things that can fall within the scope of human knowledge follow from
each other in a similar way, and that as long as one avoids accepting something as
true which is not so, and as long as one always observes the order required to
deduce them from each other, there cannot be anything so remote that it cannot
eventually be reached nor anything so hidden that it cannot be uncovered (1999,
p. 16).

Man claims omniscience in a materialist world, and "there cannot be anything so remote

that it cannot eventually be reached…" (Descartes, 1999, p. 16). When man is omniscient

and the universe is explained, God becomes superfluous, even powerless to intervene.

It should be noted here that Newton's work epitomized the famous god-of-the-

gaps dilemma, where every phenomena that Newton could not account for he attributed

to God. However, as advances were made in science that explained the unexplainable,

His role became smaller and smaller (Wiker, 2002, p. 126). The gaps in Newton's system

did not require God, but rather required more precise calculations and observations. Thus,

as time progressed, the gap where God dwelled became reducible to nothing. This

reductionism allowed Pierre-Simon Laplace, an influential French scholar in the late

1700's, in response to Napolean asking him where God was in his account of the

universe, to say: "Sire, I have no need of that hypothesis," (Wiker, 2002, p.128). In the

span of a few paragraphs, humanity went from an inability to deny the existence of God, to understanding the existence of God as superfluous and mere hypothesis! James K.A. Smith, renown Canadian philosopher, insightfully notes that this immense metaphysical shift effectively removed a telos from man's social imaginary:

> Part of the fallout of such a metaphysical shift is the loss of final causality, eclipsing any teleology for things / nature. Understanding something is no longer a matter of understanding its 'essence' and hence its telos (end). Instead we get the 'mechanistic' universe that we inhabit, in which efficient causality is the only causality and can only be discerned by empirical observation (Smith, 2014, p. 42).

It is this loss of telos that is characteristic and foundational to the disenchanted cosmology.

As has been stated before, this was not a seamless transition from an enchanted world to a disenchanted world. It was not a seamless transition taking man defined by his community with a defined telos, to a fully autonomous agent, abstracted from a traditional telos. Though a materialist account of the universe demands this shift, there were many contributing factors to this creation of the autonomous agent, responsible to no one but himself, charged with the manipulation of nature to his pleasure. In fact, the shift was more like a "perfect storm." In addition to the scientific revolution, the impact of the Protestant Reformation (1500's) on social imaginary cannot be overstated. One of the main emphases in the Protestant Reformation was the idea of "Coram Deo," emphasizing that each individual stands before God. This simple, yet fundamental idea laid the foundation for Protestants to understand their faith as personalized and individualized. One was not saved because of the Church; rather each individual must be justified before God. Man was encouraged to see himself as an individual standing before God rather than one member of the greater Church that stands before God (Luther, 2008).

This shift towards individuation of faith cannot be overlooked when considering the rise of autonomy, which accompanied the mechanization of disenchantment.

Even within the Catholic tradition, readers can see the rise of personalized and individualized thinking in the later 1500s, distinct from the Reformation yet a response to this disenchantment of the universe. Prior to the Enlightenment, many greater thinkers of the faith looked to the created order in seeking God. St. Augustine (354-430), one of the most influential early Christian theologians and philosophers, writes beautifully about seeking God within the created order:

> We look upon the heavens and the earth, and they cry aloud that they were made. For they change and vary. (If anything was not made and yet exists, there is nothing in it that was not there before: and it is the essence of change and variation that something should be made that was not there before). They cry aloud, too, that they did not make themselves. 'We exist, because we were made; but we did not exist before we existed to be able to give ourselves existence!' And their visible presence is itself the voice with which they speak. It was You, Lord, who made them: for You are beautiful, and they are beautiful: You are good, and they are good: You are, and they are. But they neither are beautiful nor are good nor simply are as You their Creator: compared with You they are not beautiful and not good and are not. These truths, thanks to You, we know; and our knowledge compared with Your knowledge is ignorance (Augustine, 2006, p. 237).

The natural order was understood to lead one in adoration of God. However, mystics specifically in the later 1500s, show an immense shift with their suggestion of looking *within themselves* to find God. As nature is no longer charged with enchantment, mystery, and the whispers of God, what remains? The person of faith now looks within themselves, their souls. St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), one of the most cherished devotional authors of the Catholic Church epitomizes this inward shift following the mechanization of the universe in her work, *Interior Castle*. In this work she guides her readers in reaching union with God through turning inward, entering deeper and deeper

into themselves, walking through the seven castles of their soul, ultimately reaching union with God in the seventh castle of their soul (Teresa, 2007). The individual has become the locus of meaning, even spiritually.

By way of timeline, the work of both Galileo and Newton was happening between 1564-1727. In other words, they were working at the end of the Renaissance and beginning of the Enlightenment. A century later, through the work of Charles Darwin, arose not a new system of thought but rather the completion of the materialist worldview. Charles Darwin's work in the late 1800's was not an entirely new system of thought. Instead, the "gaps" of explanation in the universe had been effectively reduced to nothing by this time, yet man had not yet fully given up on the idea of the divine. Following the work of Newton, countless scientists embarked on the search for knowledge through science. Therefore, by the time of Darwin, most of these gaps had been closed by further mathematical explanation. Though the gaps had been seemingly filled, one could still not make sense of the intricate detail and appearance of order. Thus, Darwin's work, allowing an infinite universe and unlimited amount of time, made room for apparent order without a divine being. Darwin's work can be thought of as the final push toward the actualization of a materialist worldview, the final push for man to take the step of faith in refusing a creator. Wiker further explains, "To those who already believed in the existence of eternal atoms moving through infinite space during an unlimited time according to purely natural laws of motion, it seemed, by sheer probability, that evolution must explain that apparent complexity of nature" (Wiker, 2002, p.132). Charles Darwin tied the bow on Epicurean materialism. Following this ability to affirm nature as mere collision of particles, existent without creator, man was even further abstracted from any

sort of traditional telos. Human nature was now understood as the result of chance, random atoms colliding during an unlimited time. There was no purpose for his creation. Thus man has no ultimate purpose. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), one of the most influential thinkers of the early modern age, says:

> Human action has no goal, for there is no such finis ultimus, utmost aim, nor summum bonun, greatest good, as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers. Because we have no natural end for our purposeless desire-driven motion, each individual has for his greatest desire only to 'assure for ever, the way of this future desire' (Hobbes, 1994, 1.11).

This is the modern disenchanted cosmology where reality is reduced to atoms. Nature is geometricized, governed by mathematics. Humans (and all that is seen) are the result of mere chance over an infinite amount of time. Hobbes' articulation of modernity is fitting. In a cosmology that affirms strict materialism, human action can have no goal. Man is effectively removed from a telos, in the traditional sense. (It should be noted, that I suggest in the third chapter that modern man adopts a materialist telos; however, its adoption is the result of this initial abstraction).

It becomes crucial here to press further into this modern disenchanted worldview and ask the question that Adam B. Seligman in *Modernity's Wager* answers. We must ask, "What is sacred any longer?" In the reductionist universe, where all is the result of chance and atoms, is anything sacred? The following excerpt is Seligman's response to this very question of what is sacred in modernity:

> Modern culture and politics…staked its all on the ability to construct an authoritative locus of sacrality on a foundation of transcendental rather than transcendent dictates. We have eschewed any idea of the revealed truth of a transcendent Being in favor of "self-evident" truths, thought to be as amenable to reason as the principles of Euclidian geometry…This *appeal to reason as the sacred* remains as the base of contemporary democratic and liberal ideas of citizenship, political order, and individual identities. (Seligman, 2000, p. 12)

Man's reason brought him to this place of "freedom from superstition." Man's reason led him to this disenchanted cosmology. Man's reason granted him omniscience, by which he considers himself god. Therefore, that which is sacred is his reason. As Thomas Hobbes was quoted earlier, within this modern cosmology, "reason is the pace; increase of science, the way; and the benefit of mankind, the end," (Hobbes, 1994, p. 26). As Hobbes makes clear, it is reason directed toward a specific end: the benefit (or desire) of mankind. Therefore, I propose that it is man's autonomy, rooted in his reason and ability to think and make decisions, which is sacred within the modern materialist world. In the modern cosmology, the world is impenetrable. Once the world is mechanized, no longer vulnerable to the forces of Fate, man became god. Man's reason and intellect, which led him to a state of omniscience, were rendered sacred. It was man's intellect that allowed him to arrive at this state of omniscience. In a materialist universe, man understands himself (and the world) to be no longer vulnerable to anything. Reason, utilized in the pursuit of knowledge in science, is what granted mankind their god-status. Humanity now controls all things. He is autonomous and free from external influence, just like the world. Man, as fully autonomous, now praises himself as god, seen in the poems of praise to Newton:

> Matters that vexed the minds of ancient seers,
> And for our learned doctors often led
> To loud and vain contention, now are seen
> In reason's light, the clouds of ignorance
> Dispelled at last by science
> But now, behold,
> Admitted to the banquets of the gods,
> We contemplate the polities of heaven;
> And spelling out the secrets of the earth,
> Discern the changeless order of the world
> And all the aeons of its history.
> Then ye who now on heavenly nectar fare,
> Come celebrate with me in song the name
> Of Newton, to the Muses dear; for he
> Unlocked the hidden treasuries of Truth:
> So richly through his mind had Pheobus cast
> The radiance of his own divinity.
> Nearer the gods no mortal may approach.
> (Wiker, 2002, p. 138)

Modern man saw this great intellectual revolution, this loss of superstition and tradition, as the achievement of proper autonomy, as Alasdair MacIntyre, prominent moral and political philosopher, states:

> What I have described in terms of a loss of traditional structure and content was seen by the most articulate of their philosophical spokesmen as the *achievement by the self of its proper autonomy*. The self had been liberated from all those outmoded forms of social organization which had imprisoned it simultaneously within a belief in a theistic and teleological world order and within those hierarchical structures which attempted to legitimate themselves as part of such a world order (2007, p. 60, emphasis added).

Man is enslaved to no one and no thing. No longer is man subject to the whims of the gods. No longer is man vulnerable to the actions of Divine. No longer is man held captive to the superstitions, rooted in tradition and mystery. Man's true nature had been actualized. He was fully autonomous, "free from external control or influence," (Oxford

Dictionary).   MacIntrye articulates the implications of man seeing himself as autonomous:

> This democratized self which has no necessary social content and no necessary social identity can then be anything, can assume any role or take any point of view, because it is in and for itself nothing (MacIntyre, 2007, p.32).

Man, a mere collision of atoms, a result of billions of years of evolution, is abstracted from any social role or narrative structure of life. As the entire world is atomized, so is man himself. He is atomized. The individual becomes the structural unit of society. And this "democratized self…is in and for itself nothing" (MacIntyre).

What must be understood through this discourse is that this abstraction of man from any telos, following the disenchantment of the universe, is understood by the modern man to be the achievement of proper autonomy. Charles Taylor comments on the impact of disenchantment on man's understanding of himself when he says, "With the demise of God and the meaningful cosmos, we are the only authorizing agency left," (Taylor, 2007, p.587-588). The modern cosmology understands the universe to be atomized, governed by the laws of nature, invincible to external interference. Modern man understands himself to be a result of chance within this mechanized world, effectively abstracting man from any greater end or ultimate aim. Thus modern man understands himself to be perfectly autonomous, able to make himself into whoever he desires to be. Man's autonomy is what makes him human – this is what is sacred. Insofar as the modern individual is free from any external force, she understands herself free and in many ways obligated to manipulate this world to her liking. Farr Curlin, physician and professor at Duke Divinity School, comments on man's reason:

Humans are, the conventional reasoning tells us, the only rational animals, and therefore human dignity (or personhood) inheres in our rational capacities. In other words, human dignity is developed with and dependent upon capacities that a mere human may or may not possess, and which each human organism must in some real sense demonstrate in order to make moral claims on the rest of us…One of the errors of modernity, MacIntyre explains, is to always set up the independent agent as the human norm. (2010, p. 14).

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has sought to understand the shift in social imaginary that made the fully autonomous man believable. In tracing the social imaginaries it became pertinent to understand man's cosmology in light of his telos. Did man understand himself within a greater narrative, allowing for a greater purpose or ultimate aim? When did the removal of telos occur that mandated man to understand himself as fully autonomous, invincible and free from any external force, omniscient and a manipulator of life itself? What cosmology, social imaginary, understanding of the universe, allows man to see himself as fully autonomous?

The social imaginaries of the Heroic Society, Athenian Society, and Medieval Society were all laid out. Though unique in particularities, each of these societies understood themselves to be inserted within a greater narrative. The individual of the Heroic age understood the universe to be vulnerable and open to the moving of the Transcendent. Mankind understood itself to be vulnerable to the whims of the gods, their role on earth bound by their social role. The universe was charged with meaning. Birds carried omens, gods actively intervened, and the earth spun on the whispers of Transcendence. The man of the Athenian age understood the universe to be vulnerable and open to Higher Powers. Man understood himself to be a citizen of the state, charged with the responsibility of acting as a virtuous citizen. He was a good man insofar as he

acted as a good citizen of the state. Man's religious life and political life were integrated with seeming ease. Man sacrificed to the gods, understanding much of the world and life to be at the bidding of the gods. By the Medieval age, Christianity had taken a hold of much of the Western world. Man understood the universe to be the creation of God. His role on earth was one of a journey, as he lived according to the standards of God, ultimately seeking to be with God in eternity.

Then the clouds of the perfect storm began to gather in the distance. Beginning with the Renaissance, Epicurean thought began to resurface. Epicurean philosophy, actualized in the writings of Lucretius, was read with growing devotion, in typical Renaissance fashion. Shifts in theological thought, through the rise of nominalism and the Reformation, paved the way for the establishment of materialist thought. These shifts in social imaginary culminated with the Galilean-Newtonian Revolution. Galileo de-mystified the heavens. Newton explained the universe. Laws were established by which the universe necessarily operated. Not only was the universe explained, but also man began to predict what necessarily had to exist. The universe was mechanized with the laws of mathematics. The universe was atomized and man finally understood himself for what he "truly" was: a random conglomeration of atoms that collided and evolved over an unlimited period of time. The role of a Transcendent Being became superfluous and outrageous. The universe operated on its own. Man and all that is seen was a result of atoms colliding. There is no ultimate aim or purpose in a universe of random chance, when it is not directed by a Transcendent being. Man thus understood himself as lacking in any telos. The necessary end of man understanding himself abstracted from any telos, in a world governed by mathematics and known by their omniscience, is the reign of

autonomy. Man is fully autonomous in a mechanized universe. Insofar as the universe was no longer vulnerable to the will of a Transcendent Power, man was no longer vulnerable to any external force. He alone controls his destiny. He alone determines what he wants to do or how he wants to do it. Where there is no conception of man as he ought be, all language of morality becomes meaningless. As he is a compilation of atoms, produced over an unlimited period of time, he is subjected to nothing. Thus, for the first time in all history, modern man understands himself as fully autonomous. In fact, modern man cannot understand himself as anything but fully autonomous; this is what makes him human. Man has become god. In the second chapter I will propose that modern man has realized his role as god to be his new materialist telos. However, the adoption of a telos as such was only made possible by the historical progression outlined in this chapter. Within this context, the next chapter will seek to understand what modern man does a cosmology that lacks any greater purpose. What motivates the modern man to act as he does? Insofar as cosmology informs morality, the next chapter will trace the moralities that accompanied the shifting cosmologies, leading to the modern moral framework, or lack thereof.

CHAPTER THREE

A Disenchanted Morality

Introduction

As stated before, the sustaining principle of this paper is as follows: 'Every distinct view of the universe, every theory about nature, necessarily entails a view of morality; every distinct view of morality, every theory about human nature, necessarily entails a cosmology to support it," (Wiker, 2002, p.22).   The object of this chapter is to trace the shifts in morality that accompanied the shifts in cosmology expressed in the previous chapter. The importance in the previous chapter of tracing how man understood his telos will become clear in this chapter. MacIntyre is so convinced of the importance of understanding teleology specifically in relation to morality that he claims: "Without a teleological framework the whole project of morality becomes unintelligible," (2007, p. 56). He explains this is so because "ethics is the science which is to enable men to understand how they make the transition from man-as-he-happens-to-be and man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature," (MacIntyre, 2007, p.52). In other words, one's moral framework is entirely dependent upon what one understands his or her ultimate aim to be. What is right is understood as that which will enable the individual to reach his or her telos, "man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essentail-nature." Thus one's morality is shaped and directed by what she understands her telos to be. To live in accordance to virtue will be to live a life that leads one to his or her telos. As seen in the last chapter, one's telos is informed by one's cosmology. As Taylor insightfully notes, "to articulate a framework is to explicate what makes sense of our moral responses,"

(Taylor, 1989, p.26). Thus in this chapter we will see how each of the cosmologies presented in the previous chapter are what actually make sense of man's moral responses and obligations.

The moral frameworks from within each of the following enchanted societies will be analyzed: Heroic society, Athenian society, Medieval society, and Renaissance society. The pivotal shift studied in cosmology, at the scientific revolution, will be the same pitvotal shift studied in morality. This is necessarily so, in line with Wiker's Law of Uniformity. Insofar as cosmology informs morality, and vice versa, one would expect the pivotal shift in cosmology to be the same pivotal shift in morality. The scientific revolution (1500-1700) and the Enlightenment (1700's) were times of intellectual revolution. In line with the scientific revolution, traditional ways of thought and practice were rejected. Humanity saw itself as throwing off the chains of tradition and superstition. God was mere hypothesis, humans were in control of their own destiny, and reason was supreme. MacIntyre articulates humanity's conception of herself in this period:

> What I have described in terms of a loss of traditional structure and content was seen by the most articulate of their philosophical spokesmen as the achievement by the self of its proper autonomy. The self had been liberated from all those outmoded forms of social organization which had imprisoned it simultaneously within a belief in a theistic and teleological world order and within those hierarchical structures which attempted to legitimate themselves as part of such a world order (MacIntyre, 2007, p.60).

The rejection of tradition and mechanization of the universe mandated the loss of any telos, as seen in the first chapter. As stated earlier, MacIntyre understands this loss of telos to have profound impact on man insofar as, "without a teleological framework the whole project of morality becomes unintelligible," (MacIntyre, 2007, p.56). This is why

particular attention was paid to the teleology within each cosmology. However, Enlightenment thinkers, though they were abstracted from a telos, were not so quick to give in to an unintelligible morality. Once it was realized that statements of morality lacked categorical weight in a world populated by fully autonomous individuals, many Enlightenment thinkers tried to ground morality in different ideals. The most influential of these thinkers are: Denis Diderot/David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and Søren Kierkegaard. These great philosophers tried, yet failed, to rescue morality from the unintelligible subjective realm by grounding it in some objective standard. However, any astute reader ought have predicted this failure. Every individual in a society cannot claim full autonomy, rooted in a refusal to submit to an objective end, and still claim an objective standard of morality. They exclude each other. That is why the Enlightenment project of justifying morality necessarily failed. Once the project failed to ground morality in objective standards, appeal to morality became appeal to preference, which is where MacIntyre argues modern man is (MacIntrye, 2007, p.62). Lacking any objective standard of the good, language of morality becomes meaningless. MacIntyre concludes his monumental work, *After Virtue*, expressing the following sentiments: "Our society cannot hope to achieve moral consensus…It is not that we live too much by a variety and multiplicity of fragmented concepts; it is that these are used at one and the same time to express rival and incompatible social ideals and policies and to furnish us with a pluaralist political rhetoric whose function is to conceal the depth of our conflicts," (MacIntyre, 2007, p.252-253). It is easy for the reader to end here and assume MacIntyre is suggesting a complete moral void, following the unintelligibility of moral language. However, I want to propose in this chapter that a complete moral void is impossible. Any

social imaginary, any way man understands the world, carries with it a certain moral framework. Thus, the modern disenchanted cosmology carries with it a modern disenchanted morality. I propose that modern man has adopted a materialist telos because man cannot operate for long in the absence of a telos. Thus, the progression I suggest is as follows: as displayed in the second chapter, following the disenchantment of the world, man was abstracted from any sort of traditional understanding of a telos. This rendered language of morality meaningless; thus we see the Enlightenment thinkers try to ground morality in some other standard. When they fail, modern man begins to realize that a materialist cosmology carves a place for man to regain a telos, a materialist telos. It is through the influence of Nicolo Machiavelli, Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, and later Charles Darwin that this modern telos becomes realized. Thus, the telos of man that these thinkers propose based upon the materialist cosmology shapes the unique modern morality we see today. Man has adopted a telos informed by his acknowledgement of a material world that is invincible to any interference. In the mechanized world, man is born into the role of god: manipulator and controller of life itself. Far gone are the days of man being born into the societal role of warrior or citizen. I propose that modern man, informed by a materialist cosmology, necessarily understands his role to be that of god. Thus, the fulfillment of this role, in expanding man's control over life and circumstances, is what is good for man. The morality that is implicit within this telos, as one can see, is one of hedonism: the pursuit of pleasure and removal of suffering. If man's role is one of god – he is charged with the responsibility and moral obligation of ordering the world to his liking. It will be seen later that when man can no longer order the world to his liking, his life is no longer worth living. This materialist

telos, that of being born into the role of god, charged with the moral obligation of manipulating nature to one's liking, is not realized immediately, but is realized through the work of the influential thinkers listed above. We have in fact become modern day Hedonists; it is the necessary conclusion of a materialist universe.

However, before we get too ahead of ourselves, as Charles Taylor encourages us, "our understanding of ourselves and where we stand is partly defined by our sense of having come to where we are, of having overcome a previous condition," (2007, p. 28). Thus, let us tell the narrative progression and evolution of man's moral framework in relation to his shifts in social imaginary, ultimately leading to his Hedonism.

Tracing of the Moralities thru the Renaissance

To refuse the risk of repetition, much of the cosmology of each of these societies will not be stated again. However, because they inform the distinct morality of each period, the reader is encouraged to reference back to the first chapter frequently, especially in respect to how man understood telos, as it directly informs his morality. The individual of the heroic society looks unfamiliar to the individual of the modern society. Ancient man is born into a role and must fulfill what the role requires; he is born with an end in mind (MacIntyre, 2007, p.184). Virtue in Homer's epics is understood as excellence. The epitome of excellence is seen in the warrior king, and honor is due him contingent upon his fulfillment of the role. Right and wrong are terms not employed in Heroic epics. Instead, "right and wrong" are determined on the basis of the duties encompassed in an individual's role. The inseparability of morality and telos can already be seen. The Heroic's moral framework is established on the basis of his or her social role. Virtue, how one ought live, is that which enables him or her to fulfill the role. For a

warrior, what was "right" or "good" were actions of courage, bravery, honor, and generosity. MacIntyre notes the distinct contrast between the Heroic individual and the modern individual:

> There is thus the sharpest of contrasts between the emotivist self of modernity and the self of the heroic age. The self of the heroic age lacks precisely that characteristic which we have already seen that some modern moral philsophers take to be an essential characteristic of human selfhood: the capacity to detach oneself from any particular standpoint or point of view, to step backwards, as it were, and view and judge that standpoint or point of view from the outside. In heroic society there is no outside except that of the stranger. A man who tried to withdraw from his given position in heroic society would be engaged in the enterprise of trying to make himself disappear (MacIntyre, 2007, p.126).

Within the Athenian society, though the individual is abstracted from a specific social role, he is placed within the narrative of humanity. It is understood, as stated in chapter one, that: "Human beings, like the members of all other species, have a specific nature; and that nature is such that they have certain aims and goals, such that they move by nature towards a specific telos," (MacIntyre, 2007, p.148). The virtues are that which enable one to move toward their telos. Though Greek philosophers varied on particular philosophies, there was an account of what was good for man, placed within the narrative of the city-state (MacIntyre, 2007, p.142). The virtues have their place within the social context of the city-state. To be a good man will be very similar to being a good citizen (MacIntyre, 2007, p.135).

During the Medieval period, Christianity formalized the notion of a divine order. This formalization and codification of a divine law was an implicit agreement to an established good, per cosmic order. This establishment of divine law shifted virtue from the social and geographic sphere to the universal sphere. MacIntyre notes the universality of this established order, unique to this age as he says, "Virtue is thus conformity to

cosmic law both in internal disposition and in external act. That law is one and the same for all rational beings; it has nothing to do with local particularity or circumstance," (MacIntyre, 2007, p.169). Within Christian thought and social imaginary, insofar as man understood himself on a journey, "the virtues are those qualities which enable the evils to be overcome, the task to be accomplished, the journey to be completed," (MacIntyre, 2007, p.175).

As the Renaissance is approached, it becomes much more difficult to categorize the moral framework. As was noted in the first chapter, the individual is a creation of the Renaissance, (though typically thought to be actualized in the Enlightenment). Up until this time in history, man did not, in fact, could not, understand himself as fully autonomous. Up until this time, man entered "a stage that he did not design, finds himself part of action that was not his own making," (MacIntyre, 2007, p.213). However, this began to change in the Renaissance as cosmology began to shift from enchantment to disenchantment. I will spend a significant amount of time in this section analyzing the role of the Protestant Reformation in the initial stages of disenchantment during the Renaissance, specifically in regards to the impact it had on morality. This paper does not boast on addressing this idea in full; however, it will seek to establish a basic framework within which to understand the role of the Reformation. The Reformation brought about what historians like to call the sanctity of ordinary life. In pre-Reformation times, there tended to be a division of labor. Living amidst the tension of eternal and temporal demands, followers of Christ found a division of labor necessary. The monks carried out the demands of the eternal (Smith, 2014, p.32). The ordinary citizen carried on with their normal life, trusting the eternal demands of their faith were fulfilled by those called to

live lives devoted to the faith. James Smith notes the shift in division of labor brought

about by the Reformation:

> What changes in modernity is that, instead of inhabiting this tension and trying to maintain an equilibrium between the demands of creaturely life and the expectations for eternal life, the modern age generates different strategies for resolving (eliminating) the tension…'you can stop being burdened by what eternity / salvation demands and simply frame ultimate flourishing within this world.' (Smith, 2014, p.33).

Grounded in the notion that "God is sanctifying us everywhere," (Taylor, 2007, p.79), the

Reformed thinkers began to emphasize the idea that the whole society must conform to

the higher standards of living lives of faith – the sanctifying of the ordinary (Smith, 2014,

p.37). The reader ought keep in mind that this does not imply that society miraculously

become more virtuous. Instead, two responses were seen: the Puritan movement and the

'60's (Smith, 2014, p.36-38). One response was living up to the high standards of

morality: Puritan movement. Another response was the removal of the weight of virtue:

the 1960s. The significance of this shift is found in the individuation of virtue. No longer

was a life of virtue understood within a communal sense, where the monks and saints had

good works that spilled over and covered the works of the laymen. Instead, the

Reformation emphasis on each individual giving an account before God, ("Corum Deo"),

forced each individual to subject himself to the standards of morality. This creation of the

individual in a spiritual sense characterizes a huge shift seen in the disenchanted world.

The Protestant rejection of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church, what

many refer to as the process of de-ritualization of religion, also played a role in the

narrative of disenchantment. Calvin rejected the "localization of grace in things and

rituals" (Smith, 2014, p.38-39), effectively promoting the elimination of that which is

considered sacred presence from this world (Smith, 2014, p.39). The significance of these

shifts cannot be understated. The individuation and disenchantment that occurred during

the Reformation had immense repercussions. The moral schema was reduced to the

individual. Smith comments on the impact of the individualization on habits of belief:

"Once individuals become the locus of meaning, the social atomism that results means

that disbelief no longer has social consequences…You're free to be a heretic…you're

free to be an atheist," (2014, p.31). Also, the disenchantment of this world, supported in

the de-ritualization of religion, limited both God's and man's purposes to the immanent –

to that which is right before us (Smith, 2014, p.49).

It ought be understood, however, that during this time, only the seeds were laid

for disenchanted thought. The individuation of morality and the effective disenchantment

of religion however, were the gathering storm clouds contributing to the perfect storm

actualized in the scientific revolution and Enlightenment. However, for the most part,

Renaissance thought was still characterized by a uniform understanding of the narrative

character of man's life, including an ultimate telos. Man understood himself as living

within the eternal cosmos. This general agreement to the narrative character of life and

ultimate purpose established by God enabled a more-or-less unified account of morality

to which each individual subjected himself. Again, within the framework of a telos,

morality is still intelligible.

Scientific Revolution: Abstraction from a Telos

The pivotal shift in cosmology that necessitated the pivotal shift in morality is

seen in the scientific revolution. As expressed in the first chapter, the Scientific

Revolution gave the scientific evidence behind the claims of Epicurus, allowing his

philosophy to be integrated rather seamlessly into life. In way of brief review, Epicurus

advocated a materialist understanding of the universe. Following the Galilean-Newtonian Revolution, a materialist understanding of the universe became not only conceivable, but livable. As the universe is increasingly atomized and geometricized, perfectly governed by the laws of mathematics, God's role becomes seemingly superfluous. "All matters that once vexed the mind, now dispelled at last by science," (Wiker, 2002, p.138). Man became omniscient. Causality is reduced to efficient causality. Significance is reduced to the temporal scheme, there is no need for Transcendence. When the universe is understood as a random conglomeration of atoms, there is no greater purpose outside the temporal. Significance is necessarily restricted to the temporal realm.

Again, the cosmology that modern man has accepted is the cosmology of Epicurus, allowed by the scientific revolution. It is intriguing to note that Epicurus understood that his cosmology carried within it a distinct morality. Thus, insofar as the modern cosmology is that of Epicurus, we can be fairly confident that the modern morality is that of Epicurus too. In this next section, therefore, we will analyze closely what Epicurus thought to be the materialist morality implicit within his materialist cosmology. Epicurus let his morality motivate his cosmology. He said: "Do not believe that there is any other goal to be achieved by the knowledge of meteorological phenomena…than freedom from disturbance and a secure conviction, just as with the rest [of physics]" (Wiker, 2002, p.32). His goal was to understand the universe in such a way that freed man from any disturbance. Epicurus wanted to assign all significance to this life. He wanted to free man from fear of something greater than man. In order to do so, he had to understand the world in a very specific way: a materialist cosmology, actualized by the Scientific Revolution. If man is understood in an absolute materialist sense, then it

seems obvious to reduce good and evil to physical pleasure and pain. If there is no

supernatural purpose for man, as he is mere atoms, then significance lies strictly in the

temporal: pleasure and pain. For Epicurus there were no actions that were intrinsically

evil. Insofar as there is no "man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature," there

is no place for good / evil, that which is supposed to bring us toward / away from the state

of our realized nature.

> For Epicurus, there were no intrinsically evil actions because nature itself is
> amoral. Since human beings are ultimately a random conglomeration of atoms,
> there is no intrinsic unity causing or defining 'human being' to which we can refer
> moral judgments. The locus of moral judgments therefore, must be the pleasure or
> pain any particular accidental unity, which we call a human being might feel. As a
> consequence, no sexual act is intrinsically evil, for as Epicurus himself said,
> 'every pleasure is a good thing.' Since only the individual can affirm or deny
> whether something gives him a pleasing sensation, then no other individual can
> deny the 'goodness' or what someone else finds pleasant. No one can be wrong
> about what happens to feel good (Wiker, 2002, p.86).

It is the logical progression of thought, of movement from cosmology to morality. Man

must necessarily understand good and evil as pleasure and pain, respectively, when he

understands himself as a fundamentally atomic reality. Good and evil become delegated

to the physical realm. Insofar as humans are reduced to "atomic billiard balls, then every

motion is reducible to such inert, billiard ball motions," (Wiker, 2002, p.135). Let not the

reader be deceived into assuming that people of the Scientific Revolution and

Enlightenment simply threw their hands in the air and assigned themselves to a hedonism

of sorts. The very opposite happened, in fact. MacIntyre asserts that the removal of an

agreed upon the narrative character of life, removed the ground for any chance of an

objective morality. This explains why the Enlightenment thinkers who sought to establish

an objective standard of morality, after the removal of a telos that occurred during the

Scientific Revolution, necessarily failed. (It was not until key thinkers like Bacon,

Descartes, and Hobbes that the materialist telos implicit within the materialist cosmology began to be realized). However, it will serve us well to not forget the second step.

Attempts to Ground Morality Without a Telos

After man was initially abstracted from any telos, influential philosophers tried desperately to ground morality in an objective standard. Key thinkers such as Denis Diderot, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and Søren Kierkegaard, all frightened by the prospective loss of moral objectivity, scrambled for a way to establish an objective standard, though necessarily failed given the abstraction of man from any telos. "For if you withdraw those background concepts of the narrative unity of human life and of a practice with goods internal to it from those areas in which human life is for the most part lived out, what is there left for the virtues to become?" (MacIntyre, 2002, p.228). Each thinker sought to establish a commonality among man by which moral judgments could be made. Diderot and Hume affirmed passions as the commonality. Hume thought that objectivity could not be established by reason, thus he resorted to man's passions and desires. Diderot determined that if man "pursues his desires with an enlightened eye to the long-run we shall see that the conservative moral rules are by and large the rules which the appeal to their basis in desire and passion will vindicate" (MacIntyre, 2007, p.47). However, this line of thinking did not become well established given the "rival and incompatible desires and rival and incompatible orderings of desire" (MacIntyre, 2007, p.48). The subjectivity and inconsistency of passions and desires led Kant to establish reason as the commonality upon which morality could be established. Kant sought to establish objective morality in a world abstracted from any Divine Transcendent Law. Kant saw rationality as employing no external presuppositions, thus the only legitimate

way of establishing an objective standard of morality. Kant claims thus that a rational morality will entail principles which all men, regardless of circumstance, will necessarily arrive at and act upon (MacIntrye, 2007, p.45). Kant however was unable to establish this rationality without establishing the following presupposition: "Always act so as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of others, as an end, and not as a means," (Kerstein, 2009, p.163). This obviously entails a very distinct view of man and the universe, one not characterized by the materialist understanding of man as a random conglomeration of atoms. Kant's attempt to objectively establish morality necessarily fails as well. Kierkegaard follows Hume and Kant, seeking to establish objectivity on fundamental choice. This appeal to choice is an effective surrender. In objectivity lying in choice, ethical principles are arbitrary and ultimately up to the individual. Each of these Enlightenment thinkers necessarily failed in establishing an objective standard of morality, given the removal of man from a greater narrative unity. "With the demise of God and the meaningful cosmos, we are the only authorizing agency left," (Taylor, 2007, p.587-588).

Realization of the Materialist Telos

However, the affect on morality does not end here. Though Epicurus understood the materialist universe as one without a telos, modern man has adopted a materialist telos that I believe was implicit within the writings and practice of Epicurus, even if not explicitly. Thus I find it inaccurate to assert that modern man is entirely abstracted from a telos. I do admit that following disenchantment, humanity was abstracted from a telos in the traditional understanding of the word, as an end given by an external source. However, the modern materialist finds herself inserted within a new role, and her telos is

in fulfilling this role. The Heroic individual was born into the role of a warrior. The Greek was born into the role of a citizen, and the Medieval as a Christian. The modern individual, however, finds herself born into the role of god – the manipulator of life itself. Thus her telos is one of the fulfillment of this role – fulfillment of her role as god.

In order to understand this more fully, we will look closely at the Early Modern thinkers who began realizing this telos and placing humanity within it. Nicolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) lived and wrote at the cusp of modernity. He was one of the first to understand man as not completely vulnerable to the whims of Fortuna (any Higher Power). He articulates one of the first understandings of man's materialist telos: fulfillment of his role as god. Machiavelli explains the following:

> It is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman; and it is necessary, if one wants to hold her down, to beat her and strike her down. And one sees that she lets herself be won more by the impetuous than by those who proceed coldly. And so always, like a woman, she is the friend of the young, because they are less cautious, more ferocious, and command her with more audacity (2014, p. 99)

Machiavelli put words to the notion that given a materialist universe, man ought control the laws of nature; manipulating life itself to get the end he wants. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) comes along a century later expressing very similar ideals, his following the Scientific Revolution, so grounded in a more modern cosmology. Bacon asserts the following:

> Let us hope…there may spring helps to man, and a line and race of inventions that may in some degree subdue and overcome the necessities and miseries of humanity (Bacon, 1905, p. 251)

Bacon begins here to formulate more clearly what is referred to as the technological imperative, which is rooted in how modern man understands his telos. Insofar as man is fully autonomous, no longer vulnerable to the whims of fate, he can, in fact, he ought, do

all that he can to manipulate nature to his liking. As established in the first chapter, the scientific revolution rendered man as omniscient, as god. Thus his end is to fulfill his role as god, conforming nature to his desires. Bacon is one of the earliest thinkers to articulate this end of man. He uses science for his utility; it is directed to the end of the expansion of his control. Technological advancements are applauded as good if they help establish man as god, if they allow him to shape the world in promotion of pleasure and removal of suffering.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) adds a unique facet to this materialist moral framework. He acknowledges the lack of any external stand of what is good for man; however, he also acknowledges man's (seemingly ontological) right to exercise his power in conformity to his desires. Again, this reinstates man's telos as fulfillment of his power as manipulator of life. That which is good for man is that which is in line with expansion of power. He writes:

> These words of good and evil…are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: there being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common rule of good and evil to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves…Human action has no goal, for there is no such finis ultimus, utmost aim, nor summon bonun, greatest good as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers…The right of nature…is the liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life; and consequently, of doing anything, which in his own judgment, and reason, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto (Hobbes, 1994, p. 28-29).

Hobbes, in his creation of the modern natural right, built the bridge between freedom and autonomy. Freedom is now understood as the "absence of external impediments," (Wiker, 2002, p.165), or autonomy. Man's autonomy is now formalized and legalized; it has now become a right of his to be free from any "external

impediments." Man has the *right* now to actuate the Baconian project of subduing and overcoming the necessities and miseries of humanity. Man has the *right* to become god.

René Descartes (1596-1650), French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist, also was enormously influential in realizing the materialist telos of man, setting in motion the therapeutic motivation in the pursuit of science. Descartes wrote a monumental work titled, *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and of Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, in 1637. In this work he outlines what he understands to be the motivation behind the pursuit of science. The following excerpt is taken from the *Discourse*:

> For they made me see that it is possible to achieve knowledge which would be very useful for life and that, in place of the speculative philosophy that is taught in the Schools, it is possible to find a practical philosophy by which…we would be able to use them in the same way for all the application for which they are appropriate, and thereby make ourselves, as it were, the lord and masters of nature (Descartes, 1999, p. 44).

Descartes strongly articulates the motivation behind the pursuit of truth: to become "lord and masters of nature." Insofar as man understands himself as fulfilling the role of god in this mechanized universe, where the presence of a supernatural deity is simply superfluous, it is fitting that the end of science is ordered to the expansion of the control of man over life.

In the 1800's with the work of Charles Darwin, the full extent of this role is realized. Darwin writes extensively on the new morality of materialism. Darwin's proposal of evolution was the final missing puzzle piece to explain the apparent complexity of nature within the materialistic universe. It allowed an unlimited amount of time for the atoms to randomly combine into the "random order" seen today. However, Darwin understood that this was not mere cosmology. He understood the immense

implications this understanding of the universe would have on morality. Not only did

Darwin understand that a universe created by mere chance mandated a morality of mere

chance – and thus evolution produces many different moralities, assigning humans as

incapable of determining one standard of morality as better than another, given they are

all simply along a spectrum of evolved moralities, but he also understood the positive

moral imperative of a materialist universe. Darwin understood that human nature had

been created by chance, by natural selection. However, Darwin did not suggest that

humans simply let chance run its course. Below Darwin speaks for himself in the *On the*

Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection:

> When a race of plants is once pretty well established, the seed-raisers do not pick
> out the best plants, but merely go over their seed-beds, and pull up the 'rogues,' as
> they call the plants that deviate from the proper standard. With animals this kind
> of selection is, in fact, likewise followed; for hardly any one is so careless as to
> breed from his worst animals (Darwin, 1859, p. 32-33).

And later in the *Descent*, Darwin notes:

> Man, like every other animal, has no doubt advanced to his present high condition
> through a struggle for existence consequent on his rapid multiplication; and if he
> is to advance still higher he must remain subject to a severe struggle…Otherwise
> he would soon sink into indolence, and the more highly-gifted men would not be
> more successful in the battle of life than the less gifted. Hence our natural rate of
> increase, though leading to many and obvious evils, must not be greatly
> diminished by any means. There should be open competition for all men; and the
> most able should not be prevented by laws or customs from succeeding best and
> rearing the largest number of offspring (Erickson, 2013, p. 61).

Darwin is the father of eugenics. Darwin understood that a materialist understanding of

the universe necessitated a taking of nature into one's own hands, to control the natural

selection. Man ought eliminate the lower races, the "rogues" and promote the powerful.

Hopefully the modern reader can now make sense of the state of modern morality:

hedonism.

Conclusion

In summary, Epicureanism, though envisioned by Epicurus to be ascetic, quickly and necessarily embraced hedonism. Much of this is due to the adoption of a materialist telos as seen in the work of Machiavelli, Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, and Darwin. After abstraction from a telos, language of morality became meaningless. Many Enlightenment thinkers tried grounding morality without an agreed upon telos, and necessarily failed. Then the materialist telos began to be realized through many of the influential people about. Insofar as man understood himself to be omniscient, he was born into the role of god. His telos was in fulfilling this role, expanding his power and manipulating nature in accordance to his desires. In other words, humanity's moral framework became one of hedonism: a moral obligation to control life in line with promotion of pleasure and elimination of suffering. The elimination of suffering aspect of this modern moral imperative takes on a unique role especially within the context of medicine.

Medicine, given its intimacy with suffering and science, is understood in a unique way in the modern world. It finds itself morally obligated to eliminate suffering. Therefore, before starting the third chapter where I analyze the impact on medicine, we must understand a bit more about the motivation for the elimination of suffering. When man understands himself as fully autonomous, of god status, that which infringes upon his autonomy or is out of his control, is understood as dehumanizing and thus in need of elimination, even violent elimination. One suffers *from* something. The very definition of the verb, "to suffer," implies an external force that one does not have control over. One suffers insofar as his or her autonomy is being threatened. Eric Cassel, professor and clinician of medicine, explains that "suffering occurs when an impending destruction of

the person is perceived…and continues until the integrity of the person can be restored in some other manner," (1982, p.640). He later defines suffering as "the state of severe distress associated with events that threaten the intactness of the person," (Cassel, 1982, p.640). Given these statements about suffering, it is no wonder that modern man understands suffering to be abnormal and in need of elimination. Cassel's definition of suffering is grounded in the presupposition of the invincible and independent agent as the standard. When man suffers he is no longer a fully independent agent, something has happened to him that he would not have chosen or something is happening to him that he does not want. Thus man understands suffering to be dehumanizing; the events threaten "the intactness of the person." Thus if autonomy means freedom from external forces, the instance of one suffering from something is the antithesis of autonomy – it is a threat to man's role as god – thus it is bad insofar as it is preventing us from fulfilling that role. He who once saw himself as fully autonomous sees his humanity compromised when he suffers. Hedonism thus takes on a unique aspect within the materialist context. Not only is there a negative role in the avoidance of pain, but there is a positive role in the elimination of suffering. Insofar as suffering is understood to be a threat to autonomy it becomes a dehumanizing force. Thus, modern man seeks to eliminate suffering at all costs. Thus the moral framework implicit within the materialist cosmology is aimed toward the expansion of man's power over nature in conformity with his desires. As will be seen in the fourth chapter, many times the morality expresses itself as the uncontested elimination of suffering. At the outset of this discourse, I articulated the goal of showing the impossibility of medicine as a morally neutral practice. Through the delineation of the modern materialist telos, fulfillment of man's role as god, hopefully it has become clear

that medicine, insofar as it practices within this cosmology is refused the possibility of being morally neutral.

Hopefully this dialogue has given the reader a new lens with which to think about and understand the modern social imaginary. If the reader is anything like me, characteristics of modernity began to make sense in light of the above dialogue. The rise in physician-assisted suicide makes sense. Suffering is dehumanizing and must be eliminated. An individual suffering, insofar as they are not their "real selves" can decide when they want to end their lives; they have lost full autonomy in their suffering and thus can end their lives when they want. They are no longer able to fulfill their telos of godhead, thus life is not worth living. This generation, more passionate about social justice than any other generation, makes sense. Suffering threatens a person's integrity and humanity, insofar as they understand themselves as invincible. Thus, modern man feels an urgent obligation to help those who are suffering. The rise in negative eugenics makes sense. Genetic screening of the fetus reveals that the child will have profound disabilities and never be able to walk. Their autonomy will be compromised and they will be born into suffering, therefore, it is better to abort that child than bring them into this world to merely "suffer." Many churches rarely partake in the Eucharist, insofar as it expresses belief and solidarity with the God who entered suffering. Churches proclaiming that God wants them to be happy, healthy, and wealthy are rapidly increasing, insofar as modern man assumes this moral imperative to be in line with the God they have created in modern Christianity. These effects will be discussed in great detail in the following sections; however, it suffices to say that the modern hedonist has adopted the moral imperative of the uncensored elimination of suffering. It is uncensored insofar as man is

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unable to make statements of categorical weight when comparing pleasure and pain,

insofar as it is subjective and restricted to preference. Humanity is unabashedly pursuing

their telos: the fulfillment of their role as god, finding themselves masters of nature.

CHAPTER FOUR

Is Medicine Morally Neutral?

Introduction

"You must always remember your foremost role as physician: to alleviate suffering." I glanced around the room as this goal, laced with compassion was read, to see the nodding and smiling of the approximate 200 other first year medical students in the room. I was recently at an orientation for first year medical students where the keynote speaker stood up and deliberately repeated this phrase multiple times. Do not get me wrong. I too was persuaded by this goal. What a high and noble calling! We were entering a profession that was motivated by a rich compassion and concern for humanity, making it our obligation to eliminate the suffering of our brothers and sisters. However, it was at this moment that I began to understand the immense shift in humanity's understanding of medicine. Our society looks to medicine for the actualization of the materialist moral imperative established in the second chapter of the elimination of suffering and expansion of our control. As Gerald McKenny, endowed professor and writer of Christian ethics and the ethics of biotechnology says,

> This combination of technological control over nature (including the human body) and a moral commitment to relieve suffering by preventing the harms and eliminating all the conditions and limitations that threaten bodily life accounts for a large part of the nature and task of medicine in the modern era (1998, p.312).

I warn the reader that when the role of the physician becomes one of the uncontested elimination of suffering, rooted in man's understanding of himself as god the boundaries of the physician's role become blurred. Physicians find themselves demanded

to perform abortions, implicitly engaged in negative eugenics, and asked to kill their patients in the name of compassion. As stated at the outset of this discourse, the goal of this chapter is to show exactly how medicine is not morally neutral, to show how medicine actually is looked at to actualize the modern materialist morality. Thus part of this chapter will include a discussion of recent developments within medicine that shock many, such as physician-assisted suicide and eugenics, yet ought not be a surprise once one understands that medicine indeed is not morally neutral. The first part of this chapter however will function in analyzing how medicine came to be acknowledged as that which actualizes the modern moral imperative.

Much of the goal of this chapter is to show that when a society agrees to a cosmology, and when institutions practice from that cosmology, they must necessarily act from the implicit moral framework within that cosmology. There is no abstraction of the two. Thus, medicine cannot be amoral. Medicine, in aligning itself with a materialist cosmology is now necessarily motivated by a materialist morality. I will show that many of the earliest advocates of a materialist cosmology understood the morality implicit within their cosmology. They understood the actions allowed, even mandated, by their cosmology. Thus, the secularization of medicine followed readily upon this. Once aligned with the cosmology, it must agree to the morality. The first section of this paper will thus proceed to analyze how and why medicine is aligned with a materialist cosmology. In this section I will pay particular attention to the sense in which medicine is understood as the handmaid of science. I will also pay particular attention to the ways in which medicine is understood as a competing theodicy. The later part of this chapter will include a discussion of recent developments within medicine, which many hail as "good"

insofar as they are in line with the materialist framework. In other words, these technologies are hailed as good insofar as they expand human control over nature and engage in the elimination of suffering.

Developments that Led to Medicine's Alignment with Modern Morality

Ivan Illich, renowned philosopher and Roman Catholic priest, boldly claims, "The assertion of value-free cure and care is obviously malignant nonsense," (1982). In this section I propose just that. Based upon the Great Law of Uniformity, medicine by accepting a materialist cosmology is implicitly practicing from a materialist morality, and is actually looked at to actualize the moral imperative of modern society, that of the elimination of suffering and complementary expansion of autonomy. As stated before, two specific developments (though not exclusively) have lent themselves to medicine's actualization of the modern moral imperative: medicine as the handmaid of science and medicine as a competing theodicy.

Firstly, medicine is looked at to actualize the modern moral imperative given medicine's status as the handmaid of science. It ought be noted that medicine has not always understood herself as solely scientific. Following the mechanization of the universe as outlined in the first and second chapters, science became the arbiter of truth. Insofar as humans exist within a space of questions, the pursuit of science became the method to answer these questions. Rene Descartes (1596-1650), French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist during the pivotal period of disenchantment, understood science as such. He wrote prolifically about the superior power of reason in the pursuit of truth. He even published a work titled *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and of Seeking Truth in the Sciences*. The title alone indicates to the reader

the immense shift that happened during the 17th century. Prior to this time, questions about the universe, man's role in it, and how things functioned were left to the Transcendent Being who knew all things. However, following the Scientific Revolution, man learned that he could, by his own power, learn truth. As spoken of in the previous chapters, man had ambitions of being omniscient. In the *Discourse,* Descartes emphasizes this newfound power of seeking truth in the sciences when he says:

> All the things that can fall within the scope of human knowledge follow from each other in a similar way, and that as long as one avoids accepting something as true which is not so, and as long as one always observes the order required to deduce them from each other, there cannot be anything so remote that it cannot eventually be reached nor anything so hidden that it cannot be uncovered (Descartes, 1999, p.16).

Descartes articulates the modern idea that there is nothing man cannot know, and thus as we will see, nothing man cannot ultimately control. The pursuit of science during this time became the method to truth and ultimately omniscience.

The great thinkers of the Scientific Revolution, including Descartes, did not understand the pursuit of knowledge to be an end in itself. As depicted in the second chapter, truth in science is not pursued for the end of the knowledge itself, but rather the benefit and utility of humanity. As Max Weber, in *Science as a Vocation*, says, "Scientific work is chained to the course of progress" (1918, p. 6). Inherent within the work of science is the advancement of technology, the moving forward, the making better, the progress. In this paper I will refer to science and technology as nearly synonymous terms. Within this context, technology can be understood as the product of scientific advancement. To what end is the pursuit of science? The earliest thinkers and scientists of the modern disenchanted world understood the end of science to be one of utility, one

of the expansion of control of man over nature. They understood their scientific view of the world to carry with it immense moral weight.

Much of the end of science was described in the second chapter as the writings of Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, and Darwin were analyzed. However, we will analyze a little further the moral motivation of science in allowing man to fulfill his role as god. Francis Bacon (1561-1626), English philosopher, scientist, orator, and author understood the end of science to be as follows:

> Let us hope…there may spring helps to man, and a line and race of inventions that may in some degree subdue and overcome the necessities and miseries of humanity (Bacon, 1905, p. 251).

Knowledge, specifically in science, is pursued with the ultimate end of overcoming "the necessities and miseries of humanity." Technology is sought after with the ultimate aim of expanding man's power over nature. Descartes too understood the end of science to not simply be knowledge itself. In the *Discourse* he emphasizes that various classical intellectual pursuits are incomplete insofar as the have no "real use," (Descartes, 1999, p. 9). He concludes:

> That is why, as soon as I was old enough to leave the control of my teachers, I gave up completely the study of the humanities and, resolving not to search for any other science apart from what could be found in myself or in the great book of the world, I spent the remainder of my youth travelling, visiting courts and armies, meeting people of different temperaments and rank, acquiring different experiences, testing myself in meetings that came my way by chance, and everywhere reflecting on the things I observed *so as to derive some benefit from them*" (emphasis mine: Descartes, 1999, p. 10).

Knowledge was useful to Descartes, insofar as man benefited from it.

Margaret Sanger (1879-1966), one of the most celebrated female scientists throughout history, praised for her creation of the birth control pill, also understood that

knowledge of the natural order was to be pursued in order to further subject nature to

human desire. She says:

> I look, therefore, into a Future when men and women will not dissipate their
> energy in the vain and fruitless search for content [sic] outside of themselves, in
> far-away places of people. Perfect masters of themselves with pliancy and
> intelligence to the milieu in which the find themselves, they will unafraid enjoy
> life to the utmost…Insterest in the vague sentimental fantasies of extramundane
> existence, in pathological or hysterical flights from the realities of our earthliness,
> will have through atrophy disappeared, for in that dawn men and women will
> have come to the realization, already suggested, that there close at hand is our
> paradise, our everlasting abode, our Heaven and our eternity. Not by leaving it
> and our essential humanity behind us, nor by sighing to be anything but what we
> are, shall we ever become ennobled or immortal. Nor for woman only, but for all
> of humanity is this the field where we must seek the secret of eternal life (Sanger,
> 2001, p. 407).

Descartes, Bacon, and Sanger all articulate the modern end of science and role of

technology. Truth in science is not pursued for the end of the knowledge itself, but rather

the benefit of humankind. This is fitting in a materialist cosmology where man

understands his telos to be one of fulfilling his role as god. The role of technology is one

of allowing humans to be "perfect masters of themselves…unafraid to enjoy life to the

utmost" (Bacon, 1905, p. 251). Advances or developments in technology are understood

as good insofar as they subject nature and eliminate suffering. Technology is reduced to

utility: the aims of individual desires, that which expands choice of the autonomous

individual. Medicine, from the outset of the scientific revolution, found itself conflated

with the status of the scientific community. Medicine combined the materialist

cosmology, which saw science as the mediator of truth, and the materialist morality, the

elimination of suffering (given the immense suffering inherent within illness). One can

see in the writing of Descartes, from the very beginning of the Scientific Revolution, the

new emphasis on the role of medicine within the world as that which can actualize the

materialist moral imperative. I have included a rather long excerpt from Descarte's

Discourse, in order to clearly show the new standing medicine took following the

Scientific Revolution.

> For they made me see that it is possible to achieve knowledge which would be very useful for life and that, in place of the speculative philosophy that is taught in the Schools, it is possible to find a practical philosophy by which, knowing the force and actions of fire, water, air, and the stars, the heavens and all the other bodies that surround us, as distinctly as we know the various crafts of our artisans, we would be able to use them in the same way for all the applications for which they are appropriate, and thereby make ourselves, as it were, the lords and masters of nature. This is desirable not only for the discovery of an infinite number of devises that would enable us to enjoy, without any effort, the fruits of the earth and all the goods we find there, but also, especially, for the preservation of health which is undoubtedly the foremost good and foundation for all the other goods of this life. For even the mind depends so much on the temperament and the disposition of one's bodily organs that, if it is possible to find a way to make people generally more wise and more skillful than they have been in the past, I believe that we should look for it in medicine. It is true that medicine as it is currently practiced contains little of much use; but without wishing to disparage it, I am certain that there is no one, even among those who practice medicine, who does not concede that everything known about it is almost nothing in comparison with what remains to be discovered, and that we could avoid many infirmities, both of mind and body, and perhaps even also the decline of old age, if we had enough knowledge of their causes and of all the remedies that nature has provided for us. Since I planned to devote all my life to searching for such indispensable scientific knowledge, and since I found a path that seemed to be such that, by following it, I would infallibly find such knowledge, if one were not impeded either by the brevity of life or by a lack of experiences, I thought that there was no better remedy for these two impediments that to communicate truthfully to the public what little I had found, and to encourage good minds to try to make further progress by contributing – each according to their inclination and ability – to the experiments that would have to be done, and also by communicating to the public all the things they learn. Thus, if later people begin at the point that their predecessors had reached and thereby join together the lives and labours of many, we would make much more progress together than each person could ever make on their own (Descartes, 1999, p. 44-45).

This extensive passage illustrates the elevated role of medicine following the scientific

revolution. It illustrates how medicine finds itself uniquely at the crossroads of the

materialist cosmology and the materialist morality. It finds itself scientific. And it finds

itself extending the promise of control over nature and elimination of suffering. In pursuit

of scientific knowledge, we begin to eliminate suffering of illness as cures are developed.

Medicine offers modern man the fulfillment of his role as god, in extending his control

over nature (illness). Thus medicine becomes a hugely important endeavor following the

scientific revolution, as illustrated by Descartes' writing. Dennis Sansom, professor of

philosophy and writer on the ethical aspects of medicine, reflects on the assumed end of

medicine within modern society and says:

> The autonomous adult who freely chooses her own moral principles and who
> produces effectively in our free market economy is the pinnacle of our society.
> We are committed to removing as many obstacles as possible to achieving this
> autonomous, self-made personhood. We accept only those restrictions of our own
> choosing. Ill-health is obviously a restriction, and if in our society we are
> primarily committed to establishing conditions in which we can live, move, and
> work according to our own choosing, then we pressure the health industry to
> restore our autonomy. We expect the industry to take away health obstacles, and
> the greatest of these obstacles is death. Certainly, no one thinks that medical
> science can make us immortal, but nonetheless we act in a practical sense as
> though medical science can keep extending our lives indefinitely. We insist that
> medical science keep finding cures for all fatal diseases and genetic maladies, and
> we keep utilizing as many life-prolonging technologies as possible until the only
> time we choose to die is when we artificially are kept alive beyond our own sense
> of dignity (n.d., p. 263).

The end of medicine is one of the expansion of the power of the individual,

typically expressing itself as the elimination of suffering. As can be seen, medicine is

looked at to actualize the modern moral imperative of the elimination of suffering and

expansion of autonomy of the individual. Physicians, in being students of science and in

working with patients who are experiencing immense suffering, are taking part in the

actualization of this moral imperative, many times without even realizing. Joel Shuman,

in his work *Body of Compassion*, calls light to this phenomena:

Physicians…have taken part in this progress – and ostensibly may continue to do so – by being 'above all students of natural science…those who, with the scalpel, the microscope and the test tube did [and do] their utmost to wrest her secrets from nature in order to win control over nature, in order to burst the fetters that hamper us, so that man can become free to fulfill his mission (1999, p. 12).

Technology is hailed as good insofar as it advances humankind's power. As said in the second chapter, to suffer from something is to experience something out of your control. Suffering threatens one's understanding of themselves as autonomous agents. Thus a new technology must prove itself by its ability to relieve suffering (McKenny, 1998, p. 311). However, within this context, no boundaries can be placed around technology. Advancements are good insofar as they expand control over nature. This necessarily carries with it a moral force. McKenny brings the reader's attention to the sole obligation to the relief of suffering, refusing questions of boundaries in technology:

In the modern discourse, moral convictions about the place of illness and health in a morally worthy life are replaced by moral convictions about the relief of suffering and the expansion of choice, concepts of nature as ordered by a telos or governed by providence are replaced by concepts of nature as a neutral instrument that is brought into the realm of human ends by technology, and the body, as object of practices of technological control…The deepest moral commitments of modernity are: the commitments to eliminate suffering and expand the range of human choices. Modern technology is infused by a certain kind of moral purpose (McKenny, 1998, p. 313).

The implications of this "technological imperative," will be analyzed more thoroughly in the developments such as physician-assisted suicide and eugenics.

Before going further, it must be emphasized that the body was not exempt from the mechanization and manipulation of nature in disenchantment. As part of nature, the body too was mechanized and atomized, taken apart and understood as a machine, subject to the natural laws. As more was discovered about the body, it could be manipulated and controlled, in accordance to the individual's desires. In fact, the body, as

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the root of much suffering in the form of illness for the autonomous individual, became one of the most prized areas of scientific knowledge. Disease is a threat to the man who thinks he is god. Therefore, at all costs, humanity desires control over their own body in order to subject it to their own desires.

Death is the unavoidable end of every human. It is seemingly one of the few things out of humanity's control. However, a recent podcast, "When Death Becomes Optional," suggests that it might not be out of our control for much longer (Kraft, 2016). I will suggest later that much of this desire for control motivates the expansion of the legalization of physician-assisted suicide. If we cannot stop death, then we want to control it. We want to decide when it will happen and where it will happen. Many great scientists of the day are working on manipulating the genome to extend life indefinitely. Without commenting on the possibility or morality of such advancement, I will simply state that this discussion indicates the immense motivation for the expansion of control within modern medicine. It must be understood that the body, as part of nature, has been mechanized and subjected to science. Pursuit of knowledge of the body is done within the framework of the materialist morality. They cannot be abstracted. Thus pursuit of knowledge of the body is done to further enhance control over the body for the patient. Medicine is a moral practice.

Mind / Body Dualism

`   Before moving to a discussion of the recent developments within medicine, I want to analyze the distinct affect of mind / body dualism on the modern practice of medicine. Implicit within the mechanization of the universe was the introduction of a scientifically applauded form of dualism. In fact, Descartes wrote decisively on the mandatory

distinction of body and mind. When Descartes established the first principle of all knowledge as "cogito, ergo sum" [I think, therefore I am], man's understanding of himself was fundamentally reordered. When man understands himself primarily as a mind, his autonomy becomes the fundamental characteristic of humanity. His freedom to choose what he wants and eliminate what he does not want becomes paramount in a dualist understanding of the world. This if fitting given the rise of autonomy we analyzed in disenchantment. In his *Discourse*, Descartes says:

> I knew from this that I was a substance, the whole essence or nature of which was to think and which, in order to exist, has no need of nay place and does not depend on anything material. Thus this self – that is, the soul by which I am what I am – is completely distinct from the body and is even easier to know than it, and even if the body did not exist the soul would still be everything that it is (1999, p. 25).

In a mere few sentences, Descartes rips the soul from the body, forever influencing the way modern man understands the body, soul, and what it means to be human. This dualist understanding of the body allows man to understand his ability to reason, choose, and think for himself to be paramount, while allowing him to understand his body as something to be manipulated to his pleasing. Bodies are understood to be mere objects subject to natural laws. In fact, Descartes says to think of bodies like "machines" that were well created (1999, p. 40). Humans are minds, accidentally in bodies. Therefore, bodies, like nature, ought be subjected to the desires of man, and medicine finds herself asked to do just that. "Indeed, in a scientific age, where illness becomes the most ubiquitous label for deviance, medicine emerges as a crucial agent in the application of the scientific creed to a variety of problems," (Branson, n.d., p. 14).

Gerald McKenny again provides an insightful analysis and summary of the dilemma spoken about above:

> In the absence of such a framework, the commitment to eliminate suffering combined with an imperative to realize one's uniqueness leads to cultural expectations that medicine should eliminate whatever anyone might consider to be a burden of finitude or to provide whatever anyone might require for one's natural fulfillment…Modern moral discourse provides no vocabulary with which to deliberate about what makes some such conceptions better or worse than others," (313). "One reason is that our obsession with bodily perfection occurs under a moral imperative that originated with the rise of modern technology and that, in the writings of Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes, looks to medicine for its actualization. Modern medicine, with its immense capacities to intervene into and reorder the body, continually holds out the promise of fulfilling this imperative. The imperative is to eliminate suffering and to expand the realm of human choice – in short, to relieve that human condition of subjection to the whims of fortune or the bonds of natural necessity…First, while relief of suffering and expansion of choice are laudable goals, standard bioethics provides no moral framework within which to determine what kinds of suffering should be eliminated and which choices are best. Medicine is therefore called upon to eliminate whatever anyone might consider a burden of finitude (1998, p. 309).

Medicine as a Competing Theodicy

> I understand, of course, what an upheaval of the universe it will be when everything in heaven and earth blends in one hymn of praise and everything that lives and has lived cries aloud: 'Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed.' When the mother embraces the fiend who threw her child to the dogs, and all three cry aloud with tears, 'Thou are just, O Lord!' then, of course, the crown of knowledge will be reached and all will be made clear. But what pulls me up here is that I can't accept that harmony…I renounce the higher harmony altogether. It's not worth the tears of that one tortured child who beat itself on the breast with its little fist and prayed in its stinking outhouse, with its unexpiated tears to 'dear, kind God' (Dostoyevsky, 2008, p. 244-245).

The reality of suffering begs to be dealt with. As we wade through the cesspool of seemingly senseless injustice, pain, and suffering, we wonder if we can affirm a loving and just God. The brutal honesty articulated by Dostoevsky through his character, Ivan, in *The Brother's Karamazov*, resounds deeply with many caught in the chilling grips of suffering. The idea of God offering a reason as to why He allowed suffering sounds

morally disgusting. In the midst of overwhelming pain and suffering, we pray to God. But when God is silent, medicine speaks loudly.

Illness, especially inexplicable childhood illness, stops us. Something about it shakes us to the core, causing us to question the nature of justice and goodness in this life. For most of history, illness was understood within a spiritual context. Not only were religious leaders the majority of the doctors, but also spiritual explanations were given in response to disease. For example, in John 9:2, when Jesus and his disciples were passing a man blind from birth, his disciples asked: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (New International Version). Though one could argue medicine was scientific, for example, in thinking of the body as a balance of the four humors, in practice illness was understood within the context of the spiritual. When the Black Death struck Europe in the 14th century, there was no scientific explanation. There was no public health knowledge to track the spread of the plague. Germ theory had not yet been established. Some attributed it to divine punishment, some to mere chance. However, there was no logical explanation for it. Now medicine can explain why some people are struck ill and die. Medical knowledge soothes are deepest fears of the incontrollable power of illness. Even if we cannot cure it, at least we can explain it.

When your three-year-old daughter fails to develop and grow, when she is in pain and constantly weary, your heart begins to tremble. When she is diagnosed with a rare cancer that is ravaging her little body, your worst fears are confirmed. When her quiet spirit and tiny body fight courageously as the chemotherapy wrecks her body, you pray boldly. When she succumbs to the disease, you ask: "Why?" As you plead with a God you profess is loving and just, there seems to be silence on the other side. The omnipotent

and all-loving Father, who gives only good gifts, seems to look more and more like the devil we fear with each passing day. And when God does not seem to explain this horrendous death, medicine begs to explain it for you. In fact, as the disease was ravaging her body and your prayers for healing were not working, medicine begged to help you heal her body. Medicine boldly calls out over God's apparent silence, offering cure and explanation. In the silence of God, medicine speaks. Medicine has become a competing theodicy. In the face of seemingly ineffective prayers, medicine holds out hope to the patient of healing. In the face of a seemingly inexplicable illness, medicine explains what biologically went wrong with one's body. God does not explain why her body was destroyed, but medicine does: cells mutated and reproduced uncontrollably. With knowledge, medicine promises the hope of cure, while God sits still. At least medicine offers an explanation for what is going wrong, while God is silent. Stanley Hauerwas, renowned professor and theologian at Duke University, articulates this idea of medicine as a competing theodicy. He says:

> It is the world of science that teaches us to explain illness and suffering as the result of physical processes that have gone wrong. All that is required to make our world right is the increasing development of our intelligence and knowledge. In the name of that development we are now ready to offer up our children to the priests of this new hope, believing as we do that finally a 'cure' will be found (Hauerwas, 1994, p. 36).

If God is not great enough, strong enough, nor good enough to save your daughter, then medicine will be that god. Illness becomes absurd because it is something we cannot control. It "threatens our autonomy as individuals" (Hauerwas, 1994, p. 60). Thus, when illness is absurd we mandate an explanation, one that God is seemingly silent on, yet medicine boldly offers to explain. This unique role of medicine helps explain how and why medicine is looked at to actualize this modern moral imperative of the elimination of

suffering: because that is what medicine claims to do, especially when it appears our loving and just God will not.

Part of understanding medicine as a competing theodicy is in understanding the rise of what I will call the Healthy Living Movement. In addition to the mechanization of the body, illness begs to be explained. And as discussed immediately prior to this, when God is silent, medicine speaks. The Healthy Living Movement can be understood as an extension of the control that modern medicine promises to offer humanity.

The healthy living movement offers humanity some level of explanation and thus control. If an individual does not exercise and eat well, the patient understands why he or she gets diabetes. The Healthy Living Movement extends to the patient the hope that by decisions he makes in eating healthier and exercising, he can regain control of his health. His cure is no longer dependent upon the mercies of the gods, but rather upon his own decisions. Oh how the modern man rejoices! (Dworkin, 2000).

There is, however, more supporting the Healthy Living Movement than just the desire for control. As expressed in this section on understanding medicine as a competing theodicy, it offers a rationale and gives illness a greater narrative when the patient is denied a theological narrative. This healthy living movement thus can also be understood as an attempt to explain that which is seemingly inexplicable, especially as the role of the spiritual becomes obsolete. When a spiritual explanation is excluded from the realm of possibilities, which would typically lend itself to giving the patient a greater purpose amidst suffering, the patient is left feeling helpless and a victim of the workings of nature. Modern man prizes himself on being the manipulator of nature, yet finds himself a victim of that nature when he is lost to an illness. Thus the Healthy Living Movement

steps in, offering a rational explanation for the illness, so man no longer feels as victimized. When their suffering is explained and rationalized in the context of the Healthy Living Movement, it gives patients the type of hope that religion once offered them. It extends to them a sense of control. One is sick because of bodily processes that went wrong. However, one can avoid sickness by making healthy choices and living a healthy life-style. This movement gives the purpose and optimism that religion once gave (Dworkin, 2000, p. 78).

> The healthy life-style movement starts with the idea that sickness is avoidable…yet mixed with the movement's accusatory tone is a hope and a promise, that with proper attention to life-style habits, a person's health can be regained (Dworkin, 2000, p. 78).

This movement is rooted in the modern understanding of sickness as avoidable, because humans are masters of nature. Thus, there is nothing outside of their control. When disease comes knocking, it begs to assert itself as in control and the human as powerless. However, the Healthy Living Movement offers the patient hope when they feel hopeless. It tells them that by taking control, and making different life-style decisions, they can regain control of their health.

The dramatic rise of this movement should make it clear to the reader how modern man is lacking a coherent narrative with which to make sense of suffering. Dworkin comments on the power behind this movement:

> The Health Life-Style Movement is designed not merely to save lives but to put the entire human condition in perspective so as to give psychological support to the healthy. Healthy people are encouraged to believe that health does not turn on the power of God or fate but on the things under their own control like character, conscience, and will power (Dworkin, 2000, p. 81).

To the modern man, suffering is abnormal. It should not exist. So when it does, we lack a narrative with which to understand it. In addition to the lack of a narrative, we are formed to believe that we are in control. Thus, when disease comes, we are desperate to cling to anything that leaves us back in control: enter the healthy living movement.

Medicine speaks when God is silent. Medicine offers hope, when God seems uninterested. The Healthy Living Movement extends the hope that man is still in control, and that cure is not in the hands of an absent God. Medicine is speaking louder and louder.

Medicine's Intimacy with Suffering

In this section, before proceeding to discuss various developments within the field of medicine, I want to dive deeper into the modern understanding of illness. Throughout the previous sections, it was mentioned in passing that illness has not always been understood as it is today, especially with the modern absence of a theological imagination. Therefore, this section will provide a more complete analysis of modern man's understanding of illness, how he interprets it, ultimately offering an even richer understanding of why medicine has assumed the role of the elimination of suffering. I begin with a quote from Hauerwas as he reflects on the unique nature of sickness once we are no longer able to place the existence of sickness within a theological narrative.

Once we no longer believe in the God of creation, there is no god that such disasters [natural disasters] call into question. But sickness is quite another matter. Sickness should not exist because we think of it as something in which we can intervene and which we can ultimately eliminate. Sickness challenges our most cherished presumption that we are or at least can be in control of our existence. Sickness creates the problem of 'anthropodicy' because it challenges our most precious and profound belief that humanity has in fact become god. Against the backdrop of such a belief, we conclude that sickness should not exist (Hauerwas, 1994, p. 62).

Illness is one of almost unlimited forms of suffering. However, as Hauerwas hints at, illness is unique given the loss of a theological framework. Prior to the loss of a theological or teleological framework, suffering was inserted within the narrative of life with much more ease. As mentioned before, much suffering was interpreted as from the gods. Illness was many times interpreted as a sign of punishment for sin. Natural disasters and even horrendous crimes were inserted within a larger narrative. What might God be teaching me? Are the gods angry, what can I do differently? A theological and teleological framework typically gave a sense of purpose to suffering.

Within a materialist world, with the rejection of a theological and traditional teleological framework, explanation of suffering looks immensely different. Shifting of the tectonic plates can explain natural disasters. Selfish decisions of others, combined with mere chance, can explain why the drunk driver killed the man. Illness, however, is different. As Hauerwas says, "sickness challenges our most cherished presumption that we are or at least can be in control of our existence" (1994, p. 62). In a mechanized world, where our bodies are understood as machines, we ought be able to control illness. Illness challenges our humanity insofar as we understand ourselves to be autonomous agents, set up to be gods. Illness whispers to us powerful reminders that we are not in control. Illness goes against "the assumption that we must control our existence by

acquiring the power to eradicate from our lives anything that threatens our autonomy as individuals," (Hauerwas, 1994, p. 60).

Medicine steps in as that which can save us from what is threatening our humanity. Medicine offers the hope to humanity that they can remain in control, that sickness will not have the final word. Hopefully this discourse has allowed the reader to understand on a deeper level why society forces physicians to tell their first-year medical students: "The goal of medicine is the elimination of suffering." The effects of this understanding of medicine are immense, and I will now look specifically at the institutions of physician-assisted suicide and eugenics.

Developments within Medicine Mandated by the Secular End of Medicine

"The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at bottom no design, no purpose, no evil and good, nothing but pointless indifference." Richard Dawkins

What is seen being legalized in the world today ("the universe we observe") is precisely what we should expect "if there is at bottom no design, no purpose, no evil and good, nothing but pointless indifference," (Wiker, 2002, p. 296). The world with no design, no purpose, no evil and good is the materialist world. Therefore, as Dawkins points out, the developments we see today, in some sense, ought not surprise us. The goal of this section is to look at two developments within modern medicine: physician-assisted suicide and eugenics, and to show how they are exactly what we expect in a world with "no design, no purpose, no evil and good, nothing but pointless indifference." I will not analyze the morality of these developments in this chapter, but rather will show how they are allowed, even mandated, by the materialist cosmology and morality that modern society has adopted.

Max Weber writes:

Whether life is worth while living and when – this question is not asked by medicine. Natural science gives us an answer to the question of what we must do if we wish to master life technically. It leaves quite aside, or assumes for its purposes, whether we should and do wish to master life technically and whether it ultimately makes sense to do so (Weber, 1918, p. 10).

In analyzing both physician-assisted suicide and eugenics, we will see just that. We will see medicine's inability to ask questions of value, but rather simply assume the mastery of life.

Physician-Assisted Suicide

"I'm choosing choice
So are my girls and boys
Choice is king, there's no denyin'
Cut my choice, and I'll start cryin'"
Assisted Suicide: The Musical

The above excerpt is taken from a musical now playing in London. Liz Carr, a disability rights activist, is the producer of this musical (Ahmari, 2017). She is a leading opponent to the assisted suicide movement in the UK, speaking before the UK Parliament and from many other platforms in opposition to this development. The chosen excerpt of lyrics from the musical highlights the role of choice in the development of technology within medicine. Technological advancements are hailed as good and fitting insofar as they expand human control. When "we are committed to removing as many obstacles as possible to achieving this autonomous, self-made personhood" (Sansom, n.d., p. 263), there seems to be no limit to the expansion of technology within medicine. When choice is king and man is god, I propose that it seems physician-assisted suicide cannot be opposed. (In the fifth chapter I will suggest ways in which the Christian community can bear witness in opposition to this development. However, this chapter will function in

showing how the development of physician-assisted suicide logically follows from a materialist cosmology and morality).

In order to adequately address the topic of physician-assisted suicide, I will first provide a brief overview of the development of physician-assisted suicide, conveying its alignment with the newly oriented end of medicine. Then I will provide a brief history of the legislation supporting it.

The physician-assisted suicide movement is termed the "Death with Dignity" movement. The motivation behind this movement is expanding patient autonomy. The patient has the right to choose when she wants to die. If she has the right to life, she must have the right to death. If the patient owns her body, which is a simple collision of atoms, she can do as they wish to it. Standing upon a platform of compassion, supporters of the Death with Dignity movement argue that we are inhumane to wish suffering upon any human that is involved in an extended and uncertain death. Autonomous agents ought be entitled to control their death if they presume to be able to control their life. Most typically, people are in favor of legalizing physicians to give a lethal dose of drugs to patients who are suffering from a terminal illness and have less than six months to live. We kill dogs that are unbearably suffering, how could we not have the same compassion on humans?

The following excerpt is from the National Council on Disability, regarding its position on physician-assisted suicide for those suffering from terminal conditions:

The benefits of permitting physician-assisted suicide are substantial and should not be discounted; they include respect for individual autonomy, liberty, and the right to make one's own choices about matters concerning one's intimate personal welfare; affording the dignity of control and choice for a patient who otherwise has little control of her or his situation; allowing the patient to select the time and circumstances of death rather than being totally at the mercy of the terminal medical condition; safeguarding the doctor/patient relationship in making this final medical decision; giving the patient the option of dying in an alert condition rather than in a medicated haze during the last hours of life; and, most importantly, giving the patient the ability to avoid severe pain and suffering (Baird, 2009, p. 218).

One can hear the echoes of the desperate desires of the autonomous individual to be in control over his or her life. The desire for control is laced throughout the excerpt, and in a society guided by that desire, within a practice understood to actualize just that, it makes sense as to why this development would be celebrated. In fact, the above excerpt strikes a chord of compassion within most readers, making them sympathetic to the cause.

In form of a brief summary of the movement of the Death with Dignity Act, it seems necessary to start with the Hippocratic Oath. Within the Hippocratic Oath, the physician swears: "I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect" (Hippocratic Oath, p. 107). However, in 2002, the Netherlands became the first country to legalize euthanasia. Prior to that, Oregon in 1997 approved a Death with Dignity Act, allowing terminally ill patients to receive lethal medications to die, if approved by two physicians. As within Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, there are many "safeguards," or what Liz Carr in her speech to the Parliament would call "criteria." The patient must be considered "capable to make and communicate health care decisions," must have an "incurable and irreversible

disease…and will produce death within 6 months," and the physician must determine that the patient is suffering (Death with Dignity Act, n.d.).

From a non-theological perspective, Carr warns about these so-called safeguards. She is concerned in how easily expanded choice becomes expectation, thus turning safeguards into criteria. Daniel Callahan insightfully notes the seamless transition from choice to mandate in his article "Science: Limits and Prohibitions." In it he states:

> Specified choices – usually in the name of a 'responsible' use of freedom – quickly make the new options mandatory, either by law, economic force or social custom. When horses were still available, the automobile was introduced as an optional, alternative mode of transportation; that choice is now gone. Genetic counseling was originally hailed as a means of giving people the freedom to choose the avoidance of a defective child, if they wanted to avail themselves of that option. But signs are already present that they will in the future be considered socially irresponsible if they do not make use of their 'free' choice to choose against bearing defective children. The repetition of the historical pattern which sees free choices quickly become mandatory suggests a modest wisdom: assume, in trying to judge the benefits and harms of any new technology, that its use will eventually become a socially enforced requirement (Callahan, n.d., p. 284-285).

Liz Carr warns that these safeguards are criteria insofar as the choice is becoming mandate. Once physician-assisted suicide becomes accepted and expected, a person who meets the "criteria" will be expected to request death, simply because they "qualify". Again, without addressing the morality of physician-assisted suicide, this is a hesitation that many have toward the establishment of this law.

In 2014, Belgium became the first country to remove the age restrictions on euthanasia. If an adult can choose to end their life, why should a child not be able to do so? In the Netherlands, a child must be twelve years of age to request death (McDonald-Gibson, 2014). Currently with the U.S., Death with Dignity laws have been passed in five states and the District of Columbia. Montana allows the court to decide different cases. And twenty-five different states are all considering Death with Dignity laws this year.

Thus far, the laws passed have legalized physician-assisted suicide for patients who are terminally ill. However, in October of 2016, the Dutch government announced their plans to legalize physician-assisted suicide for people who are not terminally ill, but rather feel that they have "completed life" ("Netherlands May Extend", 2016). Though shocking, I hope that this progression makes sense to the reader. Insofar as medicine is oriented toward the elimination of suffering and complementary expansion of autonomy, the right to request one's death cannot be limited to merely certain people that qualify. The subjectivity of suffering, placed within a society lacking a language with which to speak coherently about what is good or bad, reduces all to mere preference. The patient alone can determine when they want to end their life, considering they own their body and have the right to make any decision concerning themselves. Given the end of medicine, it surprises me that more countries have not legalized physician-assisted suicide for those who feel they have "completed life."

Thus presented is the modern trend of the legalization of physician-assisted suicide. One of the most fundamental aspects of this trend, however, is that the original materialists (Epicureans) understood that their cosmology mandated acceptance of physician-assisted suicide. Though Hippocrates (400 BC) spoke out against physician-assisted suicide, Epicureans from around 300 BC, including Cicero, understood that their materialist cosmology allowed, and might even mandate, physician-assisted suicide. Therefore, throughout the next few paragraphs, I will use primary sources in showing the awareness of many early materialists of the implications of their cosmology.

Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC), an Epicurean himself, in his work, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, states,

> We [Epicureans] are masters of moderate pains, so that if they're tolerable, we bear them; if not, with a calm soul we exit from life, as if from the theater, when life isn't pleasing to us…[Therefore, an Epicurean] doesn't hesitate, if it would be better, to depart from life (quoted in Wiker, 2002, p. 93).

When life is understood as inherently amoral, when the body is a random conglomeration of atoms, when there is not a supernatural end for humanity, it is only logical for man to make a peaceful exit when he desires. When "life isn't pleasing to us…" we can depart, just as the proposed law in the Netherlands is suggesting. The Epicureans, as early as 100 B.C., understood that their cosmology and implicit morality allowed them, if not mandated them, to exit from this life when they desired.

Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), close acquaintance and admirer of Darwin, and thus foremost advocate of a materialist cosmology, also asserted the logical end of a materialist cosmology being one of exit of this life whenever it becomes too difficult. In his work *Wonders of Life*, Haeckel says the following:

> If, then, the circumstances of life come to press too hard on the poor being who has thus developed, without any fault of his, from the fertilized ovum – if, instead of the hoped-for good, there come only care and need, sickness and misery of every kind –he has the unquestionable right to put an end to his sufferings by death…The voluntary death by which a man puts an end to intolerable suffering is really an act of redemption…No feeling man who has any real "Christian love of his neighbor" will grudge his suffering brother the eternal rest and the freedom from pain which he has obtained by his self-redemption (quoted in Wiker, 2002, p. 262).

As seen in Haeckel's excerpt, physician-assisted suicide is clothed in the garb of compassion. In fact, one would be arguably morally disgusting to refuse a man enter "eternal rest and the freedom from pain." Thus, once again, we see that this expansion of choice soon becomes mandate, insofar as one would be acting immorally in refusing another death. It becomes necessary to allow one to exit their amoral and accidental life,

if it becomes unbearable. The same garb of compassion was used to justify the Nazi euthanasia program. In fact, Haeckel's writings were extensively referenced in many of Hitler's works. Under the garb of compassion, as Wiker points out, the Aktion T-4 program was accepted, in which approximately 275,000 persons with disabilities were executed. It was not cruel officers who killed these people, but rather well-meaning physicians, acting in the name of compassion (Wiker, 2002, p. 263).

These excerpts have hopefully functioned in allowing the reader to understand that these many "advancements" in medicine are celebrated, and in a sense, mandated, by a materialist cosmology. As said countless times before, every cosmology carries with it a morality. Thus, when medicine agrees to a distinct cosmology, it necessarily acts in accordance with the implicit morality. When medicine has agreed to the materialist cosmology, it practices from the foundation of a materialist morality. It practices from and is motivated by an imaginary that sees man as god, and is driven by the elimination of suffering and promotion of pleasure, a morality guided by desire. Medicine is refused moral neutrality.

Eugenics

Iceland has not seen the birth of a baby with Down syndrome for five years! The modern man rejoices! Look at the lack of children "suffering" with Down syndrome! Iceland must be genetically favored. No. Rather, genetic screening is mandatory in Iceland and 100% of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted. In Britain, 90% of babies with Down syndrome are aborted. Denmark has already begun to celebrate the year 2030: their predicted year of being Down syndrome free. Peter McParland, a practicing physician in Ireland, presented these statistics to the Citizens Assembly in January of 2017. This is negative eugenics at work. Margaret Sanger would have

celebrated this day of "hope" of a Down syndrome free age. Sanger understood the morality implicit within the materialist cosmology she had adopted. As a fierce supporter of Darwin, she understood and acted upon the logical conclusions of this cosmology. She states: "There is but one practical and feasible program in handling the great problem of the feeble-minded. That is, as the best authorities are agreed, to prevent the birth of those who would transmit imbecility to their descendants" (Wiker, 2002, p. 266). Sanger has been in long expectation for Denmark's celebration in 2030.

Just as in the section on physician-assisted suicide, this section will seek to show how eugenics logically follows from a materialist cosmology and morality. Given the variety of understandings of eugenics, and the emotional stigma it carries following the work of Adolf Hitler, I will establish a definition of eugenics that I will base my analysis from. According to the website of the Personal Genetics Education Project (https://pged.org), eugenics is the "philosophy and social movement that argues it is possible to improve the human race and society by encouraging reproduction by people or populations with 'desirable' traits (termed 'positive' eugenics) and discouraging reproduction by people with 'undesirable' qualities (termed 'negative' eugenics)" (*What is eugenics?*, n.d.). Part of this movement is genetic screening and subsequent abortions based upon 'undesirable' qualities within the child. Thus, Iceland has been engaging in mandatory negative eugenics for the past five years.

This chapter functions in showing how a materialist cosmology allows and even mandates eugenics. When the aim of science is shifted to expanding humanity's control over life, eugenics must be celebrated. I will spend a significant portion of this chapter revealing how many of the earliest and foremost advocates of a modern materialist

worldview understood what their cosmology demanded of them, specifically in relation to eugenics. Charles Darwin (1809-1882), as expressed in the first and second chapters, was one of the first to draw together all the sources of modern cosmology and piece together the implications of the modern social imaginary. After standing firmly upon a materialist cosmology, he became the first advocate of eugenics. He was a logical man. It only made sense to make that conclusion, given his premises. Note his thought process from his work the *Origin of Species*:

> When a race of plants is once pretty well established, the seed-raisers do not pick out the best plants, but merely go over their seed-beds, and pull up the 'rogues,' as they call the plants that deviate from the proper standard. With animals this kind of selection is, in fact, likewise followed; for hardly any one is so careless as to breed from his worst animals (quoted in Wiker, 2002, p. 252).

Darwin acknowledges that those who deviate from the "proper standard" (e.g., those with a disability) ought be eliminated. They are the rogues. It would be careless to let them continue to breed in this amoral world. Darwin later takes this idea of eugenics a step further, blatantly extending it to humanity, in his work *Descent of Man*:

> Man scans with scrupulous care the character and pedigree of his horses, cattle, and dogs before he matches them; but when he comes to his own marriage he rarely, or never, takes such care…Both sexes ought to refrain from marriage if in any marked degree inferior in body or mind; but such hopes are Utopian and will never be even partially realized until the laws of inheritance are thoroughly known…All do good service he aid towards this end (quoted in Wiker, 2002, p. 215-260).

These quotes shock many readers. These quotes suggest that Darwin was much more than the scientist who articulated the ideas of evolution. These quotes go to support the Great Law of Uniformity, that one cannot adopt a cosmology without adopting the implicit morality. Darwin understood this. He understood the implications of his cosmology,

taking his scientific claims to their logical moral and practical conclusions. He took his

theory of evolution and natural selection to the practice implicit within it: eugenics.

Darwin's close followers and admirers also knew that they could not accept his

scientific theories without accepting his moral framework. Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919)

was a German zoologist and great advocate of Darwin's theory. Darwin and Haeckel

were close acquaintances and admired each other greatly (Wiker, 2002, p. 256-257).

Haeckel celebrated Darwinism insofar as he believed it was the final evidence that led to

the conclusion that Christianity was all a myth (Wiker, 2002, p. 258). Haeckel is brutally

honest with his views of humanity. Hitler referenced his ideas on eugenics extensively in

his push for the purity of humanity (Wiker, 2002, p. 261). Below is an excerpt from

History of Creation by Haeckel concerning eugenics.

> What good does it do to humanity to maintain artificially and rear the thousands
> of cripples, deaf-mutes, idiots, etc., who are born every year with an hereditary
> burden of incurable disease?...In the same way as by careful rooting out of weeds,
> light, air, and ground is gained for good and useful plants, in like manner, by the
> indiscriminate destruction of all incorrigible criminals, not only would the
> struggle for life among the better portion of mankind be made easier, but also an
> advantageous artificial process of selection would be set in practice, since the
> possibility of transmitting their injurious qualities by inheritance would be taken
> from those degenerate outcasts (quoted in Wiker, 2002, p. 260-261).

Though unsettling, given the moral motivation of medicine, the medical field cannot help

but celebrate the rise of eugenics. The expansion of control and elimination of suffering

that eugenics offers forces medical practitioners and patients to celebrate its arrival.

Eugenics offers the expansion of control to the god-man. With eugenics, humans

can refuse life or create life, in accordance to desire. While science is understood as a

morally neutral practice, we see the clear motivation behind the aggressive dive into

nature to discover the natural order. It is not for mere pleasure of knowledge, but rather,

as Bacon, Descartes, and Sanger all affirm, for power. Knowledge in the sciences is sought in order to allow humanity to better control life, to refuse the whims of Fortune and allow what they want and refuse what they do not want. Science is sought to allow man to become a manipulator of life, and this goal is seen clearly in the rise of eugenics.

McKenny notes that if an institution wants to gain standing, it has to prove itself on the basis of its ability to remove suffering (McKenny, 1998, p. 311). A technological advancement is good insofar as it empowers man in giving him control or eliminates suffering. In order to gain standing within a society motivated by the eradication of suffering, the technology must promise to eliminate suffering. Eugenics does all of these things. In a world where autonomy reigns, and the patient simply wants the right to choose, eugenics is welcomed. Genetic screening and the ability to abort a child with undesirable characteristics increase choice and power. The patient can choose what she wants. Eugenics also contains within it the promise of a better world. Hitler held out these promises during World War II. In fact, the death and killing of the millions of people was in the name of compassion, in the name of creating a better future for their children. The Jews, the mentally handicapped, the sickly all possessed undesirable traits. Therefore, they had to be eliminated to create a better future.

Now eugenics promises to do the same, however, before birth. Those in support of eugenics are incredibly careful in the way the present it. In order to distinguish their practice of eugenics with the eugenics of the past, they emphasize that they are doing the child they abort an immense favor. It would be inhumane to allow an innocent child to be born into so much suffering, so they claim. In other words, it now becomes morally disgusting for a parent to know that their child will be born with x or y disability, and still

allow them to be born. Negative eugenics and the abortion of the "abnormal" child is

done for the child in the name of compassion. Here is another instance that evokes

Callahan's warning of how quickly choice becomes expectation (Callahan, n.d.). Though

this development is hailed as good insofar it is an expansion of choice, this choice soon

becomes required. If man understands his moral imperative to be one of the elimination

of suffering, insofar as he has a choice *to* eliminate suffering, and does not, he is acting

immorally. Questions of, "Which suffering? What is suffering? What is suffering?"

become unintelligible, given the lack of a coherent moral language with which to make

value-based reasoning. Questions pertaining to suffering quickly become reduced to mere

choice and personal preference. Thus, the life of a child is placed in the hands of the

preference of another.

> To see the body as nothing more than a 'defective or potentially defective machine' is to see it as 'singular, solitary, and displaced, without love, solace, or pleasure,' a view that implies than an individual body can become and remain perfectly healthy in a less-than-healthy environment, such as a 'disintegrated family or community or in a destroyed or poisoned ecosystem (Shuman, 1999, p. 20).

When the body is understood as a machine, if it is defective, it is fixed. If it

cannot be fixed, it is eliminated. The body of the patient is understood outside of the story

of the patient. This becomes scary when it affects the decision of life or death for another

human being.

Conclusion

I hope through the examples, stories, and explanations it has become clear that

medicine truly is refused moral neutrality. I hope Ivan Illich's statement that "the

assertion of value-free cure and care is obviously malignant non-sense," has become

much clearer. Medicine, in aligning itself with science, accepts the moral imperatives of science. Medicine, in being practiced by and upon humans that are understood within a materialist cosmology, is motivated by a materialist morality. As the Great Principle of Uniformity sustained the first two chapters, so it sustains this chapter. In agreeing to a materialist cosmology and asserting itself as the handmaid of science, medicine has agreed to the materialist morality: one of the elimination of suffering and expansion of control, fitting only for man who thinks he is god. By understanding the moral imperative that is actualized by medicine, one can make sense of the rise of physician-assisted suicide and eugenics. Medicine, indeed, is not morally neutral, and thus the Christian is left asking how to faithfully engage in the practice of medicine, both as physician and as patient.

CHAPTER FIVE

Faithful Practice of Medicine: A Community that Receives

Introduction

Christians, by virtue of their membership in the body of Christ, ought to be sick and care for the sick in their midst in ways determined by that membership. There are, in other words, theologically virtuous ways of being ill, of dying, and of caring for the ill and dying, ways that faithfully display to the world the reality of the Word made flesh. (Shuman, 1999, p. 115).

In the third chapter it was established that medicine is refused moral neutrality. Modern medicine is ordered to the end of the uncensored elimination of suffering. This presents Christians with the obvious question: How ought Christians faithfully practice medicine? If Shuman is right and there are "theologically virtuous ways of being ill, of dying, and of caring for the ill and dying," then we must seek them out. And that is the ultimate goal of this chapter: to establish the theologically virtuous ways of being ill, of dying, and of caring for the ill and dying. However, in order to adequately establish the ways of faithfully engaging in medicine, as both patient and physician, we will have to take a few detours.

I find it necessary to begin this chapter by establishing the claim that the Church was created to be a "community capable of absorbing grief" (Hauerwas, 1994, p. xi). I will suggest that we have refused this role as the Church more often than naught as of late; however, I also suggest that regardless of our willingness to comply, to be a community capable of absorbing grief is one of the functions of the Church. In this chapter I hope to provide a rich counter-narrative to the powerful isolation of suffering based mainly on the works of Stanley Hauerwas, William Cavanaugh, and Jean Vanier,

calling the Church back to her role as a community capable of absorbing grief. I borrow

the term "community capable of absorbing grief" from Stanley Hauerwas' work *God,*

Medicine, and Suffering (1994). The context within which he uses this term is as

follows: "We cannot afford to give ourselves explanations for evil when what is required

is a community capable of absorbing our grief" (Hauerwas, 1994, p. xi). Throughout this

chapter, that is what I hope to show. In fact, I propose that the Church offers one of the

greatest answers to the presence of suffering in the way she lives out her communal life.

Accordingly Joel Shuman, author and ophthalmologist, says:

> The example of the Christian communal life was probably more persuasive to
> unbelievers than the proclamation of the Christian message. It is impossible to
> resist the conclusion that at one level the Church grew rapidly because its
> communal life acted as a magnet attracting people than because the Christians
> were effective in their pubic speaking (Shuman, 2006, p. 68).

Thus, the goal of this chapter is to call Christians back to the winsome communal life of

the Church, a community that provides a rich counter-narrative to the isolation of illness.

I also establish as fundamental to the movement of this chapter the claim that the

Church has surrendered her role in medicine and her care for the suffering. As established

in the third chapter, medicine has become the handmaid of science. As such it is typically

agreed upon that the Church has surrendered her traditional role in care of the sick.

When was the last time your church community gathered around the hospital bed of a

dying member? When was the last time you spent the night at the hospital to let the

family members in your community get rest? When was the last time you saw a person

with disability play an active role in your church community?

I propose there are two reasons for the Church's surrender of the art of medicine.

Firstly, it seems the Church responded to Cartesian dualism with a confinement to the

soul and a flee from the body. Secondly, it seems the Church has fallen prey to the tempting secular ideals of autonomy and control. I propose that many of us within the Church believe that we are in control. We would rather be surrounded by those that are healthy because the weak and sick remind us of our vulnerabilities and our ultimate dependence. We might even take our affinity for autonomy and control a step further and adopt the prosperity gospel. As part of this chapter I will provide a brief analysis of the prosperity gospel, offering a warning to the Church of the ease with each the secular goals of expansion of autonomy and elimination of suffering are sprinkled with holy water.

Given the church's surrender of her role in medicine and her often refusal to be present in the life of the sufferer, those that are suffering are overwhelmed and isolated in their suffering. We wonder why countless Christians are raising questions of theodicy, refusing to believe in a Good God that allows such injustice. Might it be that the Church was created to be one of the most profound answers to the question of suffering and yet we are refusing that role? We see a rise of "giving in" to physician-assisted suicide, because the isolation of suffering near the end of one's life is too great to bear. We see a rise in families choosing to abort their child that will be born with disability, because they believe they cannot give adequate care for the child on their own. Where is the Church? Where is the community capable of absorbing our grief? Where is the community that refuses the isolation of suffering and stands in solidarity with the sufferer, refusing to let him or her give in to the demands of suffering?

I do not seek to offer an answer to the questions of theodicy; however, I do propose that the Church, in uniting with the sufferer, is a profound and powerful witness

to the threat of suffering, and must reclaim her role in medicine and care for the sick. The urgency of this chapter follows in many ways from the reality of the fourth chapter. In the fourth chapter it was established and shown that medicine is not morally neutral. Medicine is directed toward the elimination of suffering and expansion of control of the modern god-man, engaged in practices such as physician-assisted suicide and negative eugenics. Thus how ought a Christian faithfully engage in the practice of medicine? How ought a Christian both receive care and give care? How ought Christians practice in a profession that offers to be god to its followers? Therefore, the urgency of this chapter also lies in a call to the Church to once again lay claim on her role in care of the sick, because as I will suggest in this discourse, that is what she was created to do.

I will first analyze the Church's surrender of her role in medicine, spending a significant amount of time understanding the ways churches might be adopting materialism and sprinkling it with holy water. Much attention will be paid to the prosperity gospel. However, we will also bear in mind the refusal of many within orthodox traditions to be a community capable of absorbing our grief. Given that cosmology informs morality and vice versa, I will then provide a brief presentation of the Christian cosmology and inherent morality, paying close attention to how the Christian understands suffering and autonomy. This will provide a language with which the Christian can understand her role in medicine. On the basis of this cosmology, I will present how Christians ought think about physician-assisted suicide and negative eugenics. Upon this foundation, I will finally move to the focus of this chapter: a re-imagination of the winsome witness of a Christian community that stands in solidarity, opposing the isolating power of illness. In this section I will first utilize the work of

Stanley Hauerwas and Joel Shuman in answering the initial questions of why exactly medicine needs the Church and why, I propose, the Church indeed needs medicine. I will then move to present a richer understanding of the Eucharist in providing a counter-narrative to the isolation of illness, based on William Cavanaugh's work *Torture and Eucharist*. I will end this section hoping to stir the imagination as to what a community that stands in solidarity looks like, based on the examples of Jean Vanier's L'Arche communities.

Prosperity Gospel

As stated above, I will begin this chapter by analyzing the ways in which our churches have adopted the tenets of materialism and specifically the materialist imperative of the elimination of suffering and expansion of control, epitomized in the growth of the prosperity gospel. The prosperity gospel operates from a spiritualized materialism. Within a spiritualized materialism, God too is thought to understand suffering as abnormal and dehumanizing. Thus the materialist moral imperative of the elimination of suffering is conflated with God's imperative. In a materialist social imaginary, humanity's ability to control nature is paramount. In the spiritualized materialism God too sees man's ability to control nature as paramount. The adoption of this spiritualized materialism has vast effects. We see this spiritualized materialism in the prosperity gospel movement and also in many of the undertones of Christian churches today. In this section I will analyze how the startling spread of the Prosperity Gospel gives evidence to the adoption by many "Christians" of the materialist morality.

Kate Bowler, theologian and professor at Duke Divinity School, has published an insightful and expansive book on her study of the American prosperity gospel titled,

Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel. I will reference her work extensively in the following paragraphs as I hope to establish more concretely much of the thought and practice within the American prosperity gospel. Bowler performed extensive interviews and surveys as she conducted her study. The following statistics ought shock the reader: 17% of Christians identify as part of the prosperity gospel movement, 31% of Christians believe that God increases the riches of those who give, 66% of Christians believe God wants people to prosper, 43% of Christians agreed that the faithful receive health and wealth, and lastly, 75% of Latinos agreed with the following statement: "God will grant financial success and good health to all believers who have enough faith" (Bowler, 2013, p. 6).

I will begin with Bowler's definition of the prosperity gospel. It is "a wildly popular Christian message of spiritual, physical, and financial mastery that dominates not only much of the American religious scene but some of the largest churches around the globe" (Bowler, 2013, p. 3). In the following few paragraphs we will analyze how the prosperity gospel seeks to actualize the two main tenets of materialism: a) man's highest good is his autonomy and expansion of control b) suffering is abnormal and ought be eliminated. This analysis will hopefully cause the reader to see the desperate need of our churches to think faithfully about suffering.

Firstly, the prosperity gospel operates on the assumption that man is a fully autonomous agent and ought work to expand his autonomy in the manipulation of nature. We note the word "mastery" in Bowler's definition of the prosperity gospel. This ought sound like the Baconian project. In the modern mind, humanity has the right to do as he pleases and gain mastery over every area of his life. The very definition of the prosperity

gospel claims spiritual, physical, and financial *mastery* as its goal. The reader can already see the allegiance of the prosperity gospel to secular ideals of control. Bowler also emphasizes that this gospel focuses on the power of the individual (Bowler, 2013, p. 11). In a world where reason, choice, and autonomy reign, it only makes sense that this gospel would focus specifically on the power of the mind. If you are sick, you must believe more. It is up to you to believe hard enough and not doubt if you want to be healed. Bowler comments that "Christians often sought to compel the supernatural to produce their desired results. Many hope to command (critics would say manipulate) the physical and spiritual planes through the interior world of thought, imagination, meditation, and prayer" (Bowler, 2013, p. 12). Again, the allegiance of the prosperity gospel to the gods of control ring true.

Walter Vinson Grant Jr., televangelist based out of Dallas, TX, has adopted the slogan: "He shall have whatsoever he saith" (Bowler, 2013, p. 43). In the prosperity gospel, the materialist thirst for dominion and power is spiritualized. *In God* we shall have whatever we say. *In God* we control everything. Interestingly enough, the prosperity gospel's thirst for power extends even over God Himself. The follower manipulates God to get what he or she wants. God gives power, and is manipulated by that very power. In 1952, *The Power of Positive Thinking* became a New York Times bestseller for three years, selling a million copies. This book was written by American minister, Norman Vincent Peale, in which he taught Christians how to harness God's power in order to control life's circumstances (Bowler, 2013, p. 57). Bowler reflects, "The movement's culture of god-men and conquerors rang true to a nation that embraced the mythology of righteous individuals bending circumstances to their vision of the good

life" (Bowler, 2013, p. 226). In the secular imagination, where man is understood as god, the prosperity gospel rings true. God becomes that which can be used to further individual control over life. Hunt emphasizes this shocking tenet of the prosperity gospel as he explains that the music is specifically set up and played to create "an atmosphere in which God is expected to act" (Hunt, 78). In becoming manipulators of life itself, within a spiritual context, followers become manipulators of God himself. Nothing is out of the human's control, even God. Keep in mind, humans are the real gods in materialism. Thus they perform the music just right, have just enough faith, and pray just the right prayer, following which, God is required to act (Hunt, 2000, p. 78).

In addition to operating along the secular appeal to absolute control, the prosperity gospel operates along the moral imperative of the elimination of suffering. Any form of suffering is understood as from Satan (Bowler, 2013, p. 139). Though this statement is not unorthodox, insofar as suffering, pain, and illness entered this earth after the Fall, it takes an unorthodox spin within this gospel. In the prosperity gospel, it is assumed that God will eliminate all suffering on earth if the follower believes enough. Thus, a sick member of the community must be lacking in faith. It is believed that God wants them to be happy, healthy, and prosperous. As Lee Stokes, pastor of Destiny church in Greensboro, North Carolina, says, "We should be the happiest people on earth! We're the freest! The richest! The healthiest!" (Bowler, 2013, p. 193). In this gospel, God has given health and wealth to all his followers. Suffering is never something God has for his followers. Even suffering of the physical body in aging is understood as evil. A. A. Allen (1911-1970), healing minister, wrote a book titled *How to Renew Your Youth* (1953). In it, he coins the term "unlimited life," expressing that "you and God can make

the choice together about where and when you lay your body down," (Bowler, 2013, p. 173). Within this context, death is something that a person can manipulate and control. The believer and God will make a joint decision about their death. A better way of phrasing this idea is that the believer can tell God his or her expectations for their death.

A common personal confession within the prosperity gospel conveys the basic claims of this movement, showing just how far many in the church have fallen prey to the sweet promises of materialism:

> I am under Divine Decree of Increase. God has spoken Increase to me. I am destined to Increase, my anointing is Increasing, my wisdom is Increasing, my health is improving – EVERY DAY is a day of Increase for me and my family (Bowler, 2013, p. 131).

Modern hedonism is spiritualized within the prosperity gospel. God is the genie ready to fulfill your desires. Give his pot a little rub, and God will do whatever you desire. Bowler explains that as these churches take communion, a common phrase to say is: "By Your broken body, I am healed" (Bowler, 2013, p. 148-149). However, this is not simply a spiritual healing, but rather a physical healing: "As I partake of this bread, heal my body. As I partake of this wine, heal my body. Make my body whole" (Bowler, 2013, p. 149). Rather than becoming part of the suffering body of Christ in communion, the followers overcome suffering in the broken body of Christ. There is a seeming elevation of the followers above the Savior in this rite. Pastor Stokes claims:

> The whole purpose of communion is to bring healing to your body…This is one of the biggest secrets of the Kingdom to combat the aging process! To combat sickness and decay! (Bowler, 2013, p. 149).

Within the secular narrative of humanity's craving for control and mastery over nature, combined with the refusal to accept suffering, one can make sense of the rise of

the Prosperity Gospel. If one has accepted the materialist first principles, faith becomes

the *means* to actualize these principles. The presuppositions of the prosperity gospel are

something as follows:

- I can make myself into whoever I want to be.

- I have the right to choose what my life will be.

- I am mandated to manipulate and control nature to my liking.

- Suffering is that which threatens my ability to be all who I want to be, therefore, it is not good.

These presuppositions are conflated with God's principles. Thus, we see the

spiritualization of materialism. Faith becomes the means to actualize the presuppositions

listed above concerning the expansion of autonomy and avoidance of suffering. The

prosperity gospel gives these people the tools to fulfill their desires. This might be

imagined as a spiritualization of hedonism. Faith becomes power by which you can

expand your control (Hunt, 2000, p. 75).

The rise of the prosperity gospel ought warn the reader of the ease with which the

modern morality is adopted and spiritualized. Faith has become a means of expansion of

our control. God has become another object that we control in the pursuit of our desires. I

hope this section has functioned in calling the reader to attention of the urgency of

understanding the Church's proper role in a world of suffering. Not only is this belief

about God unorthodox, but also, this faith leaves her followers helpless and isolated in

the face of suffering. The sufferer is left feeling even isolated from their Heavenly Father,

uncertain of God's Presence amongst the bad and the good. The sufferer is ashamed to

ask church members for support insofar as she typically will feel guilty for not being

well.

In addition to the spread of the prosperity gospel, we should be warned that many

members of orthodox traditions have adopted these secular ideals of control and

elimination of suffering, many times without realizing it. The subconscious (or

conscious) adoption of a worldview that cherishes control, autonomy, and the elimination

of suffering, might explain the church's surrender of her role in medicine. Medicine has

always been a religious art. For a long time hospitals were opened and operated by those

of various religious traditions, specifically nuns within the Catholic Church. However,

churches are playing a minimal role in medicine today. How often do Christians welcome

the sufferer? When was the last time believers stayed at the hospital with a church

member who was ill? When was the last time the congregation surrounded an elderly

man as he faced death? Though we might not go as far as the prosperity gospel, the

Church might have dangerously surrendered its hold on medicine. Yet in surrendering

our hold on medicine, we have also surrendered our hold on the person suffering as well.

As members of the Church we have grown fond of the idea of control, thus we fear

associating with the sick insofar as they remind us of our inherent inability to be in

control (Dworkin, 2000, p. 85). In addition to our refusal to associate with the ill because

they remind us of our own vulnerabilities, I suggest many within the Church have fallen

for a Cartesian dualism. The materialist cosmology that demands a division of body and

soul has resulted in many churches retreating to the soul and giving the body to medicine.

As Joel Shuman says,

> The church has for the most part accepted unquestionably the role given it by a
> Cartesian modernity, which says that religion is rightly concerned with the
> immaterial soul and not with the material body – and with the life to come, rather
> than this life (Shuman, 1999, p. 80-81).

In the concluding section on this paper, where I suggest how the Church ought engage with the sufferer and engage in medicine, this topic will be further elaborated upon. However, this brief description will suffice at this moment as a means of revealing to the reader just how easy it is to sprinkle the tenets of materialism with holy water. Once those within the Church begin to adopt the tenets of materialism, we see a rise in the prosperity gospel and/or we see a gradual surrender of the Church's role in the life of the sufferer, insofar as presence in suffering is counter to the secular ideals of control, autonomy, and pleasure.

Christian Cosmology and Morality

Insofar as cosmology carries an implicit morality and vice versa, it is necessary to briefly establish the Christian cosmology and morality, as it will give us a language for talking about how the Church understands her role in medicine and more broadly her role in the life of the sufferer. Given the materialist emphasis on autonomy and suffering, particular attention will be paid to how the Christian understands autonomy and suffering within his or her distinct social imaginary. Instead of rewording what has been established through years of theological work, I will turn to the Apostle's Creed. It is as follows:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of
Heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ,
His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by
the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered
under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into Hell; the third day He
arose again from the dead; He ascended into
Heaven and is seated at the right hand of God
the Father Almighty, from thence He shall come
to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion
of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection
of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

At the most fundamental level, Christians understand life as gift. As stated in the

Apostle's Creed, the Christian affirms a Creator. Thus, insofar as humans are created,

their life is gift given by their Creator. In the acknowledgement of a Creator, there is the

affirmation of a telos. The Christian affirms that she was created *for* something. The

Reformed tradition would affirm that the chief end of man is to "glorify God, and enjoy

Him forever" (Westminster Shorter Catechism). Aquinas asserts, "Ultimate and perfect

happiness can only be in the vision of the divine essence" (Summa Theologica). Though

Christian faith traditions have slight variations on expression of the telos of man, the

important aspect to note is that the telos of man is understood to be in God. In the first

chapter it was established that language of morality becomes meaningless following the

abstraction of man from a telos. Therefore, Christians have a distinct morality in

accordance to the commands of God, established by their telos in God. Christians believe

that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They affirm that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus, the Son of God, took on flesh. Insofar as very life is

gift and Jesus became incarnate, "the body, according to the Christian tradition, is not a

cage to be escaped through death. Rather, it is the very locus of God's saving activity and

the means by which divine grace is communicated to the human person" (Shuman, 1999, p. 87). Within the Christian tradition the body has immense significance and cannot be separated from the soul as in Cartesian dualism.

The prologue to the Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly states how distinctly the Christian understands her life in comparison to the modern man:

> God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life.

The Christian has a distinctly teleological way of understanding life, thus life is ordered to that end. Given the ultimate end of man is in God, physical health is always understood subordinate to the ultimate end. However, it ought be clear that health is understood as a good, insofar as it enables man to fulfill his ultimate end in God.

Given that very life is gift, the Christian does not view himself or herself as fully autonomous. Rather the Christian is first and foremost utterly dependent upon God. However, the Christian understands himself or herself as interdependent as well. And in fact, "we suffer because we are inherently creatures of need" (Hauerwas, 1986, p. 170). We refuse the assertion that we are fully autonomous agents, though many of us live as such. The Christian understands that God created man to live in community (Genesis 2). Shuman goes so far as to say, "Christianity knows nothing of the isolated individual" (1999, p. 89). As God is three-in-one, relational in His being, so is His creation. Thus, we are fundamentally relational beings, dependent upon God and others.

Christians also affirm their separation from God as a result of sin. However, they believe in the forgiveness of sins made possible through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Suffering is understood as a result of sin. The pain, illness, loneliness, hurt, injustice, and oppression that we face on this earth are a result of sin. As stated before, this brief section is not an attempt at a theodicy. I do not dare propose an answer to the seemingly senseless suffering around us. However, I do state that Christians affirm the existence of such suffering. The *Salvific Doloris* written by Pope John Paul II in 1984 offers incredible insight into orthodox understanding of suffering and the Cross, as follows:

> Man suffers on account of evil, which is a certain lack, limitation or distortion of good. (Paul, 1984, Section 7). The mission of the only-begotten Son consists in conquering sin and death. (Paul, 1984, Section 14). As a result of Christ's salvific work, man exists on earth with the hope of eternal life and holiness. And even though the victory over sin and death achieved by Christ in his Cross and Resurrection does not abolish temporal suffering from human life, nor free from suffering the whole historical dimension of human existence, it nevertheless throws a new light upon this dimension and upon every suffering: the light of salvation. (Paul, 1984, Section 15). Christ drew close above all to the world of human suffering through the fact of having taken this suffering upon his very self. (Paul, 1984, Section 16).

The Christian also asserts her obligation to suffer with those suffering. 1 Corinthians 12:26 says, "if one member suffers, all suffer together with it." Jesus as he stood in the temple courts proclaimed, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18). Thus, the Christian understands her relation with the sufferer to be similar to her Savior's, one of taking care of those who are suffering.

Though the materialist would assert that "the modern body is the genuinely private property of the autonomous agent, who is free to do with it what she will so long as that doing does not interfere with the freedom of others" (Shuman, 1999, p. 85), the Christian would say nearly the opposite. Our bodies are not our own. The real essence of human being lies in being created *by* God and *for* God. Our lives are not our own. Given this teleological account of humanity, created by God and for God, the Christian can affirm that: "When this body is gravely ill, totally incapacitated, and the person is almost incapable of living and acting, all the more do interior maturity and spiritual greatness become evident, constituting a touching lesson to those who are healthy and normal" (Paul, 1984).

Though a brief summary of Christian social imaginary, it provides the language with which to begin talking about how the Christian ought think about medicine and the Church's role in it. Given the presentation of a Christian cosmology and morality, I will proceed to offer insight as to how a Christian ought faithfully think about physician-assisted suicide and negative eugenics within the Christian narrative.

Physician-Assisted Suicide

The benefits of permitting physician-assisted suicide are substantial and should not be discounted; they include respect for individual autonomy, liberty, and the right to make one's own choices about matters concerning one's intimate personal welfare; affording the dignity of control and choice for a patient who otherwise has little control of her or his situation; allowing the patient to select the time and circumstances of death rather than being totally at the mercy of the terminal medical condition; safeguarding the doctor/patient relationship in making this final medical decision; giving the patient the option of dying in an alert condition rather than in a medicated haze during the last hours of life; and, most importantly, giving the patient the ability to avoid severe pain and suffering (Baird, 2009, p. 218).

The above excerpt is taken from the National Council on Disability's official statement about physician-assisted suicide and functions in reminding the reader of much of the rationale behind this movement. Also, Cicero states clearly why physician-assisted suicide is to be expected in a materialist worldview:

> We [Epicureans] are masters of moderate pains, so that if they're tolerable, we bear them; if not, with a calm soul we exit from life, as if from the theater, when life isn't pleasing to us…[Therefore, an Epicurean] doesn't hesitate, if it would be better, to depart from life (Wiker, 2002, p. 93).

It is probably clear to the reader that the Christian must necessarily have an opposing view on physician-assisted suicide. I ought mention here that different traditions within the Christian faith have various and conflicting opinions about physician-assisted suicide and negative eugenics. However, I will present in this discourse what I understand to be most consistent with Christian worship and practice. To state it most simply, once it is affirmed that life is gift, the Christian has no right to take his or her own life. If life is given, then it is not any individual's to take away. A Christian understands God to be in control of her life and her death; therefore, any sense of manipulation or of choosing when she would prefer to die is unacceptable in Christian thought. John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* summarizes the Catholic Church's opinion on this matter:

> In old age, how should one face the inevitable decline of life? How should one act in the face of death? The believer knows that his life is in the hands of God: 'You, O Lord, hold my lot' (cf. Ps 16:5), and he accepts from God the need to die: 'This is the decree from the Lord for all flesh, and how can you reject the good pleasure of the Most High?' (Sir 41:3-4). Man is not the master of life, nor is he the master of death. In life and in death, he has to entrust himself completely to the 'good pleasure of the Most High', to his loving plan (Paul, 1995).

This view of death does not mean that the Christian must try to extend life until the very end, using artificial means of staying alive. In fact, it tends to mean the opposite. The

Christian affirms and trusts that his/her life and his/her death is in the hands of God. Thus, there is no desperation to extend life artificially. Instead, one lives each day with dignity, and when the time comes, dies with dignity.

What if the elderly family member is an incredible burden on the family and they can no longer take care of him? My brief response is: Are not we all burdens to each other? It is unreasonable to cast any man or woman as completely independent. We all require each other. As Christians we affirm the absolute gift of every moment. Suffering is acknowledged as part of life. And it is possible that toward the end of one's life there will be immense suffering. However, as will be proposed in the final section of this chapter, as the Church we are commanded to share in the suffering of each other (1 Cor 12:26). Just as Christ entered our suffering, enabling us to share in His suffering, so we share in the suffering of others. Hopefully my proposal for how the Church ought interact with the sufferer in the final section of this paper will provide further practical guidance in navigating the difficultly of end-of-life care.

Though this is a lengthy quote from Hauerwas, it summarizes how Christians ought think about suicide and the role of the church in being a counter-narrative to the narrative of the unbearable suffering present when one considers suicide:

> The language of gift does not presuppose we have a 'natural desire to live,' but rather that our living is an obligation…For our creaturely status is but a reminder that our existence is not secured by our own power, but rather requires the constant care of, and trust in, others. Our willingness to live in the face of suffering, pain, and sheer boredom of life is morally a service to one another as it is a sign that life can be endured and moreover our living can be done with joy and exuberance…For to face the reality of a death by suicide is a reminder of how often our community fails to offer the trust necessary to sustain our lives in health and illness…we have failed to embody as a community the commitment not to abandon one another. We fear being a burden for others, but even more to ourselves (Hauerwas, 1986, p. 106).

Negative Eugenics:

The Church adamantly affirms the value of every human life, regardless of ability.

Pope John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* asserts:

> Man is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God. The loftiness of this supernatural vocation reveals the greatness and the inestimable value of human life even in its temporal phase (Paul, 1995).

Christians affirm value not in ability, or rationality, or efficiency, but rather in being created *by* God and *for* God. Insofar as all created beings are created for friendship with God, that is where their value is rooted. Thus, to deny anyone participation in the life of the Church or in this very world (as negative eugenics would suggest) is a sin against God and man. Again, in the final section of this paper, when I present my proposal for how the Church ought understand the sufferer and their role in medicine, it should become clearer how the Church ought think about and integrate those with disabilities.

We cannot expect the members of our Church communities to engage in the practice of medicine faithfully, to bear suffering well, and to refuse physician-assisted suicide and negative eugenics, unless the Church begins to act as the Church again, living as a community capable of absorbing our grief. The power of suffering lies in the power of isolation. Therefore, we cannot expect our brothers and sisters to suffer well, unless we become the Church that bears suffering with and refuses the isolation of illness and/or disability.

"The example of the Christian community life was probably more persuasive to unbelievers than the proclamation of the Christian message. It is impossible to resist the conclusion that at one level the Church great rapidly because it common life acted as a magnet attracting people than because the Christians were effective in their public speaking." (Shuman, 2006, p. 68).

This is what this section hopes to offer: a re-imagination of the winsome witness of Christian community, specifically in the lives of those suffering. It is through Hauerwas' understanding of medicine's need of the church, Cavanaugh's rich interpretation of the Eucharist, and Vanier's practical theology lived out in L'Arche communities that I will provide a counter-narrative for how Christians ought engage in the world of medicine and suffering. I do not seek to offer an explanation for illness; nor do I attempt at providing a theodicy. Rather, my hope is to provide a counter-narrative. My hope is to cast a vision for how, as a Church, we ought see our relation to the sufferer and thus necessarily reorient the Church's idea of her role in medicine.

I hope to call the Church to reimagine her role in the life of the sufferer, thus reclaiming her role in medicine. The Church's surrender of medicine to science might have more profound consequences than we are willing to admit. The patient turns to medicine as god when the God of Scripture is silent. As physicians engage in the art that has become the savior to so many, they must lead their patients to think about medicine and suffering rightly, to prevent replacing the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for the god of modern medicine. Others suffering choose to believe in a God that will be manipulated according to their desires. Believing this forces them to believe that they are responsible for healing themselves, insofar as if they believe enough, they will be healed. This more oft than naught leaves the sufferer isolated and profoundly discouraged in the face of suffering that will not go away. Others wading through an infinite cesspool of

suffering find the Good God who only gives Good gifts beginning to look more and more like the devil they fear with each passing day. Thus they refuse to believe in a God like this.

Why Medicine Needs the Church and Why the Church Needs Medicine

Though this has been discussed in passing throughout this chapter, I will first establish why medicine needs the church and why the church needs medicine. Only then can I explain the vision for the involvement of medicine and the Church in the lives of their members. Much of this section will come from the work of Hauerwas and Shuman. This section also includes general calls of Christ from Scripture to be present to those suffering. The goal of this section is to reestablish within the mind of the reader the call of the Church to be present and take an active role in those suffering.

I first answer why medicine needs the church. Stanley Hauerwas writes a tremendous essay titled "Salvation and Health: Why Medicine Needs the Church" (taken from *Suffering Presence*, 1986). His vision for the Church as the provider of the long-term care and presence required by those suffering is what sustains this section. Joel Shuman also provides insight into why medicine needs the church in his work, *The Body of Compassion*. Illness is a powerful force. It isolates the victim. I propose that one of the greatest challenges of medicine is the isolation that results from illness. Medicine, though tempted to address only the physical aspect, cannot refuse to address the emotional and spiritual components at play in illness. Any form of suffering suggests a level of unshareability. Pain, though someone can be aware that we are in pain, cannot be shared. There is an isolation that happens when we suffer. Not only are we isolated from the community that is not suffering, but we are isolated from ourselves. This is not how the

patient envisioned his or her life, this cancer is not who he or she is (Hauerwas, 1986, p. 79). Day in and day out, physicians are called to be present to those that are suffering. As Hauerwas says, "Physicians, nurses, chaplains, and many others are present to the ill as none of the rest of us are. They are the bridge between the world of the ill and the healthy" (Hauerwas, 1986, p. 80). Hauerwas understands the demands put on those in medicine to be high and unsustainable. Therefore, he asserts that, "more fundamental than questions of religion and morality is the question of the kind of community necessary to sustain the long-term care of the ill" (Hauerwas, 1986, p. 78). He explains how those in the medical field need examples of presence with those that are suffering; they need "a people who have so learned to embody such a presence in their lives that it has become the marrow of their habits. The church at least claims to be such a community, as it is a group of people called out by a God who, we believe, is always present to us, both in our sin and our faithfulness" (Hauerwas, 1986, p. 81).

If Hauerwas is right and those that practice the art of medicine are the bridge between the world of the healthy and the world of the ill, physicians face a high calling. Insofar as suffering is isolating and thus the physician must work to integrate patients back into the fabric of society, medicine needs the church. Medicine needs a community very much like the church that is founded upon the principles of unity and of care for those suffering. Without the church, patients express in their isolation that they would rather die than continue to suffer. Without the church, parents fear they will be unable to take care of a child with profound disabilities, so they opt for an abortion. Medicine needs the church because it deals with those who are suffering. Medicine needs the church because it is intimate with those who are isolated. Medicine needs the church

because it currently promises what it cannot provide: freedom from the contingencies of nature. Especially as Christians, if we expect members to not give in to the demands of suffering, then we must be a community capable of sharing that suffering, because illness cannot be borne alone.

Those involved in delivery of care to the sick need the Church just as much as those receiving care. Insofar as those delivering care are the bridge between the world of the ill and the healthy, if the church does not welcome the ill into their community, the caregivers too will become isolated. "For unless there is a body of people who have learned the skills of presence, the world of the ill cannot help but become a separate world both for the ill and / or those who care for them. Only a community that is pledged not to fear the stranger – and illness always makes us a stranger to ourselves and others – can welcome the continued presence of the ill in our midst" (Hauerwas, 1986, p. 81). Hauerwas further comments: "It is the burden of those who care for the suffering to know how to teach the suffering that they are not thereby excluded from the human community. In this sense medicine's primary role is to bind the suffering and the nonsuffering into the same community. Unfortunately, medicine is used too often to guard us from those who suffer" (Hauerwas, 1986, p. 26). When medicine's role is understood as that which binds the suffering and the nonsuffering together into the same community, we begin to see the desperate need of medicine for the church. Medicine cannot do that, especially modern medicine which is aimed at the nearly opposite end, the elimination of suffering and sufferer if needed. It requires a community that has learned to practice of presence and understands the fundamental nature of unity.

When the end of medicine is the elimination of suffering, she finds her patients attempting to quantify how much suffering is bearable until death is preferable (Hauerwas, 1986). Thus we see the rise of physician-assisted suicide and negative eugenics. In both of these cases the suffering expected is measured to be too great, and death to be preferred. As Christians this is unacceptable insofar as the entirety of life is directed toward a telos in God. The Church must teach her people that together the suffering is borne, and no one walks alone. The community that stands in solidarity with the sufferer must counteract the threat of isolation. Thus medicine needs the church to sustain the long-term commitment of care to those who are suffering.

We will now look at why the Church needs medicine, or put differently, why the Church needs to reclaim its hold on medicine. In the thirty-sixth chapter of the Rule of St. Benedict, St. Benedict establishes the role of the community of believers in the lives of the sick. He says:

> Before others and above all, special care must be taken of the ill so they may be looked after, as Christ, 'I was sick, and you visited Me'; and 'What you did for one of these, My least brothers, you did for Me' (Mt 25:36, 40). The sick must remember they are being taken care of for the honor of God. They must not distress the brothers who care for them with unreasonable demands. Nevertheless, these demands should be suffered patiently, since a greater reward is obtained from them (Chapter XXXVI, Rule of St. Benedict).

Throughout history, the Church has understood herself to have an integral role in care for the sick. As established in Scripture, the Christian is called to care for the weak, sick, and oppressed. As articulated in the Rule of St. Benedict, in Matthew 25, Jesus commands His followers to visit the sick and care for them, as if they are caring for Jesus. Jesus' ministry of physical healing and welcoming those from the fringes of society is

understood to be prescriptive to Christians. The Catholic Church has published a *Pastoral Statement on the Handicapped* where they state:

> The central meaning of Jesus' ministry is bound up with the fact that He sought the company of people who, for one reason or another, were forced to live on the fringe of society (U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1978).

Christians understand this as prescriptive. As Jesus did, so we ought do. Insofar as those who are ill are isolated in a society that prizes autonomy and control above all else, the Church sees as her calling from God to bring those on the outside into community, just as Jesus did. 1 Corinthians 12:26 says, "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it." We are not isolated individuals. This verse ought offer a significant challenge to the way many Christians understand how they interact with those who suffer. In Galatians 6:2, Christians are commanded to "carry each others' burdens." In Luke 4:18, Jesus stands in the Temple courts and proclaims: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Jesus' earthly mission was one of care for those on the fringes of society. The Church is called to do likewise.

Lastly, rooted in the character of God, Christians find themselves called to solidarity with the sick and suffering. The message of the Gospel is that God remains faithful amidst our sin and our faithlessness. God remains present to us, regardless of our condition. Thus, how dare we not be faithful to our fellow brothers and sisters as God has been faithful to us? As Hauerwas says, "Thus our willingness to be ill and to ask for help, as well as our willingness to be present with the ill is not special or extraordinary activity, but a form of the Christian obligation to be present to one another in and out of pain"

(1986, p. 80). This is not a special call upon some within the Christian tradition, but rather a way of life for the Christian, based upon the character of God. The following section on the Eucharist will go in more detail about what it means to be the Body of Christ and the obligations that carries with it. However, for the purposes of this section, let it suffice to say that the Church also needs medicine, given that the Church is called to care for those who are suffering. The Church cannot abandon her hold on medicine or her care for those that are suffering, because to do so would be to go against God's design for the Church.

Eucharistic Liturgy

Upon the foundation of the revealed need of the church in medicine and medicine in the church, I will present a re-imagination of the Church's role in the life of the sufferer through a renewed understanding of the Eucharist. This section is taken from an analysis of William Cavanaugh's text, *Torture and Eucharist*. In light of the horrendous torture experienced by the people of Chile under the Pinochet regime, Cavanaugh calls the Church to stand in unity against the atomization and isolation that happens in torture through a rich understanding of the Eucharist as liturgy. I draw parallels between the effects of torture and the effects of illness, thus applying Cavanaugh's suggestion of the role of the Eucharist in establishing unity amidst the atomization and isolation of disease.

Cavanaugh is writing in response to the horrendous torture experienced by the people of Chile under the Pinochet regime. He speaks to the atomization of society that results from this torture. He calls on the Church to stand in unity against the isolation that happens in torture. In his work he references programs such as the "Vicariate of Solidarity," in which the church "provided a space in which organization could take place

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and social fragmentation could be resisted" (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 264). The Church

learned that resistance to the politics of torture meant solidarity with each other, founded

upon the unity of the Church offered in the Body of Christ (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 266).

Cavanaugh calls the Church to understand her role as both a temporal and spiritual

power, emphasizing that the "Eucharistic imagination is a vision of what is really real, the

Kingdom of God, as it disrupts the imagination of violence" (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 206-

207). He clearly states that his goal through this work is to see the church "recover itself

as a disciplined body in opposition to the state" (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 221). Cavanaugh

asserts, "the Eucharist is the key to Christian resistance to torture" (1998, p. 279).

Though the following excerpt is long, Cavanaugh paints a beautiful picture of

what the Church in Chile does in opposition to the atomization of torture.

> The church in Chile resisted this strategy precisely by knitting people back
> together, connecting them as members of one another. The church thereby
> undertakes the fundamentally Eucharistic task described above as building up the
> true body of Christ, a counter-discipline to the discipline of the state. The
> practices of the Vicaría are best understood as based on an account of unity which
> is only found in the Eucharist. The work of the Vicaría is Eucharistic because it is
> not just any body which the church realizes, but the body of Christ. Christ's true
> body is enacted here by the incarnation of the church in the bodies of the poor.
> The true body of Christ is the suffering body, the destitute body, the body which
> is tortured and sacrificed. The church is the body of Christ because it performs an
> anamnesis of Christ's sacrifice, suffering in its own flesh the afflictions taken on
> by Christ. In the church's communities of solidarity, the poor are fed by Christ
> but, insofar as they become Christ's body, they also become food for others
> (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 267).

The Eucharist has taken many different forms over the past century within the

Protestant tradition. I can speak from experience on this generalization, and maybe some

of my observations will make it clear to the reader what different forms I am suggesting.

During the first two years of my undergraduate education, I was a committed member at

an evangelical Baptist church. Throughout the two years of my attendance, we shared in the celebration of the Lord's Supper one time. We partook of the Lord's Supper individually, each walking to the back "when we felt led," and reading the classic passage from Luke 22 to ourselves. Though once every two years is (hopefully) a rare statistic, it might need to serve as a warning sign to churches today. More often then naught, within evangelical Protestant traditions the Lord's Supper is celebrated one time per month. Growing up in a Bible Church, this was how often we took the Lord's Supper. Even when it is taken, it tends to be highly individualized, as members have their own plastic cup full of grape juice with a wafer attached to the juice cup in efficient packaging. I want to suggest that this is far cry from the original practice of the Lord's Supper. Might this transformation of, and in many cases rejection of, the Eucharist be a looming sign that we might be abandoning one of the chief functions of the Church: to be the unified Body of Christ.

The Eucharist as a liturgy has significant meaning as it is an enactment of a group of individuals becoming something corporately that they were not as a mere collection of individuals (taken from Schmemann's definition of liturgy, Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 12). Insofar as Christ's life, death, and resurrection change everything, everything must now be interpreted through the lens of community. The Eucharist is a foundational practice of the Church whereby the Church proclaims unity with Christ and unity within the Body of Christ. All is interpreted through the lens of community. Shuman emphasizes this point as he says:

> Everything about being Christian – including being ill as a Christian or caring as a Christian for someone who is ill – has to do with being connected together (1999, p. 95).

In Christ we are refused the option of considering anything individually. The way we think about everything now ought be through the lens of community, because we have "been crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20) and now "[we] are the body of Christ, and each one of [us] is a part of it" (1 Cor 12:27). However, as I have suggested before, many Christians act as if they are fully autonomous and in control. Therefore, we are calling on a faithful practice of the Eucharist to understand the role of the Church as a unified community capable of absorbing grief.

Analogy of Torture and Illness

I propose an analogy between the mechanism of torture and of illness. Drawing on Cavanaugh's understanding of the Eucharist as the key to Christian resistance to the isolation of torture, I thus propose the Eucharist as the key to Christian resistance to the isolation of illness. Every analogy breaks down at some point. Thus, I realize that in attempting to draw parallels between Cavanaugh's reflections upon torture and these reflections upon illness, there will be some breakdown. It is not a perfect analogy. However, I believe that there is much to be learned and applied from Cavanaugh's rich understanding of the power of the Eucharistic liturgy. I must note that Cavanaugh warns the reader against the expansion of torture to include any kind of suffering. He explicitly says, "the use of the term 'torture' to designate any kind of suffering, physical or mental, threatens to thin out the term to meaninglessness," (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 21). However, I am not attempting to call illness torture. Rather I am proposing that the same mechanism that works within torture is at work within illness: the isolation of individuals. Thus, I believe the Church can learn rich truths from his account.

Cavanaugh suggests that, "torture is not merely an attack on, but the creation of, individuals" (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 3). Later he says, "the strategy of torture and disappearance attacks all intermediary organizations between the individual and the state by isolating individuals from one another" (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 267). And even later he says, "Torture is so useful for isolating individuals in a society from one another in large part because of the inability of people to share pain. Pain is incommunicable beyond the limits of the body, and the sufferer must suffer alone," (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 279). The mechanism of torture in creating the individual, through the incommunicability of pain, is a very similar mechanism that is work within illness. The excruciating pain experienced as one's body fights disease, or the weakness experienced by the body as it is facing chemotherapy, is isolating. Illness threatens our identity and our presuppositions that we are self-sufficient. Illness isolates us from others and from ourselves. In the inexpressibility of pain experienced in illness we become isolated. In the unsharability of the suffering and emotional distress within illness, we become isolated. Thus illness works as torture, its power lying in isolation. As Hauerwas states, "Pain itself does not create a shared experience; only pain of a particular kind and sort. Moreover the very commonality thus created separates the ill from the healthy in a decisive way. Pain not only isolates us from one another, but even from ourselves" (1986, p. 77). Thus in drawing the parallel between the mechanisms of torture and illness, we can now move forward in establishing the counter-narrative of the Eucharist amidst the isolating power of illness.

Unity of the Eucharist in Becoming the Body of Christ

Both torture and illness are understood as isolating forces insofar as there is an inability to share the pain and the suffering experienced. There is truth in the inability to share pain and suffering. Only the victim knows the pain he or she is experiencing. Only the victim knows the suffering he or she is going through, and it is immensely difficult to put into words and express exactly what one is experiencing. However, in Christ, everything changes. For the first time in all of history, man is invited to share in the suffering of another. Jesus, the God-Man, takes man's suffering upon Himself. Now in the Eucharist, Christ invites us to share in His sufferings, granting redemption to mankind. In uniting in His suffering, we become the Body of Christ, the Body of the Church. For the first time in all of history, in Jesus, suffering becomes shareable. When we receive His suffering, we become His Body, His Church. Cavanaugh notes this transformative power: "Christ's Eucharistic body is both res et sacramentum, sign and reality…We become Christ's body in the Eucharist" (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 14). Cavanaugh suggests that if we understand the command "Do this in remembrance of me" properly, then "the Eucharist is much more than a ritual repetition of the past. It is rather a literal re-membering of Christ's body, a knitting together of the body of Christ by the participation of many in His sacrifice" (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 229). Christ invites us to share in His sacrifice as we celebrate the Eucharist. As we share in His sacrifice, we are united to Him (Galatians 2:20, Romans 6:8, Romans 6:3-5). Thus, we must understand the Eucharist as much more than remembering what Christ did. Rather, in the Eucharist we celebrate Jesus offering Himself to us, inviting us to share in His suffering. Pope John Paul II emphasizes this point as he says, "If one becomes a sharer in the sufferings of Christ, this happens because Christ has opened his suffering to man" (Paul, 1984).

Christ's suffering is what allows for our redemption; thus, He opens His suffering to man, inviting us to share in it for the forgiveness of sin. In the Eucharist we are demonstrating Jesus making us members of His Body through His life, death, and resurrection.

The Eucharist both creates unity and demands unity (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 235). Christ, in uniting us to Himself, creates unity. He makes us members of His Body. However, this also demands unity. As members of one Body, now when "one member suffers, all suffer together with it," (1 Cor 12:26). Thus in creating unity, the Eucharist also demands it. This necessarily changes the way Christians understand the entirety of life. As Shuman states, "Everything about being Christian – including being ill as a Christian or caring as a Christian for someone who is ill – has to do with being connected together" (Shuman, 1999, p. 95). The Eucharist demands unity of those united already in the Body of Christ.

In understanding that we become the Body of Christ we tend to think of the Body of Christ in relatively passive terms. We think of our unique gifts, all contributing to the greater good of the body. We forget that the body of Christ was broken and poured out as an offering for all. As St. Augustine says:

> You are the Body of Christ; this is to say, in you and through you the method and work of the incarnation must go forward. You are to be taken, you are to be consecrated, broken and distributed, that you may become the means of grace and vehicles of eternal charity (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 92)

No longer is becoming the Body of Christ viewed with such passivity. Rather, just as the body of Christ took up the suffering of us all, so we, as the Body of Christ take up the suffering of others. Christ offered his body as gift for us; thus, those united in His body must too offer their bodies as gift for others (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 232).

More ought be mentioned on the Eucharistic demand of unity. In Matthew 5, Jesus reminds his followers that they must be reconciled to their brother before they offer a gift at the altar. Christ emphasizes the importance of unity in all things. The unity demanded by the Eucharist looks a lot like solidarity. In fact Cavanaugh says, "the Eucharist reveals the true meaning of solidarity" (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 267-268). Once united as the Body of Christ, the members of the body are dependent upon each other. The alienation and isolation produced by illness can only be overcome by the solidarity found in the Body of Christ. "The church becomes visible, obeying the Eucharistic demand that true unity be achieved, that people overcome alienation from each other and become reconciled, caring for each other, especially the weak, in community and solidarity" (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 268). The mechanism of torture and illness is isolation. However, this isolation is overcome in the unity and sharing of pain accomplished through the unity within the Body of Christ (Cavanaugh, 1998, p. 277). As Christ invites us to share in His suffering, we become the Body of Christ. As we are the Body of Christ, we are unified and can share in the suffering of each other, as members of the same body. Thus the Church must realize its role as the Body of Christ, unified, and sharing in the suffering of others.

The Church, through a renewed understanding of what it means to be made part of the Body of Christ in the Eucharist, can now provide a counter-narrative to the isolation that threatens each member in illness. Bearing the marks of the cross, each member bears the suffering of the other. The Church is called by Christ to be unified in Him. I believe that the witness of the Church is being a community capable of absorbing grief, capable of sharing in suffering, refusing the isolation of illness and pain. This is not

a call for some members of the Church but rather the call for all Christians, insofar as we are all members of the Body of Christ.

Shuman paints a beautiful picture of what it means to live as the Body of Christ:

If a person who is sick or who has an injury and is unable to get out of bed would say, 'Because I am not well and able to care for myself, I am not an important part of the body,' that would not make her any less a part of the community. And if a person who is sick and unable to work would say, 'Because I cannot pay my bills and fend for myself I am not part of this body,' that would not make her any less a part of the community. And if a person who is too sick to care for her children would say, 'Because I am unable to take care of my kids I am not really a significant part of this body,' that would not make her any less a part of the community. After all, if we were all absolutely self-sufficient and independent and able to pay for professionals and institutions to handle things for us whenever something went wrong, what would be the need for a community at all? How would the world ever understand anything about what it means to be a Christian? And why would God have made us part of a body? The point is that God has made us members of one body, and part of what that means is that when we are sick and need help, we should not be ashamed to receive that help from the body. I know this is not easy to do and that it violates our pride and our sense of independence, but we must learn to do it for sake of our witness. We are, after all really a body (Shuman, 1999, p. 133).

One sees that in receiving the gift of God, one is then free to receive the gift of the other. Once we are unified with Christ, as a member of His Body, we are unified with the other. There is no distinction between rich or poor, sick or healthy, able-bodied or disabled, there is unity that is created and demanded within the Body of Christ. I will spend the next section further looking at this concept of receiving the other, specifically in the work of Jean Vanier and his L'Arche communities.

Solidarity with Others as Seen in L'Arche Communities

Once we have received God, being unified with Him in the sharing in His suffering, we are only then able to receive the other. Once we share together in the Body and suffering of Christ, we can share in each other's suffering. The practical theology of

this section is based on Jean Vanier's L'Arche communities. Vanier is the founder of

L'Arche communities, communities for people with and without intellectual disabilities

to live together. In my research and study of the practical theology of living in solidarity

within the Body of Christ, I found no other example quite like the L'Arche communities.

Therefore, I will use L'Arche communites as a way of stirring the imagination as to what

it looks like to live in solidarity, being a Church community that refuses the mechanism

of isolation.

> Vanier summarizes the mission of L'Arche communities as follows:
>
> L'Arche is special, in the sense that we are trying to live in community with people who are mentally handicapped. Certainly we want to help them grow and reach the greatest independence possible. But before 'doing for them,' we want to 'be with them.' The particular suffering of the person who is mentally handicapped, as of all marginal people, is a feeling of being excluded, worthless and unloved. It is through everyday life in community and the love that must be incarnate in this, that handicapped people can begin to discover that they have a value, that they are loved and so lovable (Shuman, 1999, p. 144).
>
> Firstly, it must be noted that this solidarity with the other is rooted in solidarity

with Christ. Also, it should be noted that the very language I am employing is inaccurate.

The reference to another person as "the other" already indicates an inaccuracy in thought

and practice. Within the Body of Christ, there is no "other," only "brother." Those who

have been incorporated into the Body of Christ are refused the option of remaining

desensitized to the suffering of the other members of the Body (Cavanaugh, 1998, p.

231). For example, as a body, if my toe hurts, I cannot refuse bearing the pain of it. It is

part of me. This is likewise true within the Body of Christ. Vanier understands that to be

human is to have weakness. In denying our weakness, we deny part of ourselves.

"Weakness, recognized, accepted, and offered, is at the heart of belonging, so it is at the

heart of communion with another" (Vanier, 2008, p. 40). In understanding humans as

fundamentally dependent, care for the sick and / or disabled is not an extra burden, but part of the richness of life.

However, this solidarity with the "weaker" members of the body is never done because the weaker members *need* us. Rather it is done in full awareness that they are integral members of our community (Hauerwas, 1986, p. 178). In the Catholic Church's *Pastoral Statement on Handicap*, it is affirmed that those seemingly weaker members of the body are integral parts of the community, with gifts that we need to learn from. It affirms:

> It is not enough merely to affirm the rights of people with disabilities. We must actively work to make them real in the fabric of modern society. Recognizing that individuals with disabilities have a claim to our respect because they are persons, because they share in the one redemption of Christ, and because they contribute to our society by their activity within it, the Church must become an advocate for and with them (U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1978).

If I woke up one day and was missing my arms and my legs, my body would be lacking. Just as so, when we refuse to welcome the sick, weak, less-able, and oppressed members of our body, we are not our complete selves. Only when we integrate every member of our body do we become our true selves. As the U.S. Catholic Bishops assert, "The Church finds its true identity when it fully integrates itself with these marginal people, including those who suffer from physical and psychological disabilities" (U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1978).

Only once we receive the gift of God can we receive the gift of the other. And only then, I propose, can we potentially receive the true gift of ourselves. Only in becoming united in Christ, sharing in His suffering, can we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters suffering. And only as we learn to help bear the weakness of others,

might we learn about the true state of our own weakness. I am going to suggest that very few of us have accepted the gift of ourselves. I say this because I believe that this can only be done if we accept our true selves: vulnerable and dependent. Only in standing with others might we learn our true dependence on others. Only once we know our true dependence on God and others do we know our true selves. Therefore, maybe at the end of all this, we can learn to receive ourselves as we are: broken, vulnerable, and in desperate need of love and acceptance. Might we be a community that acknowledges our call to bear the suffering of others, as we are invited to share in the suffering of our God? Might we be a community that washes each other's feet, and even allows our own feet to be washed?

Conclusion

I am not so bold as to assert that this dialogue explains the existence of cruel and many times meaningless suffering. I acknowledge the fact that casting a vision of a community seems like a cop-out when wading through what seems to be infinite cesspools of injustice, oppression, and pain that makes one's heart scream and demand an explanation. However, what must be remembered is that God has not remained distant to our suffering. Rather, God entered our suffering. He took our suffering upon Himself. In His suffering, He invites us to share life with Him (Hauerwas, 1986, p. 179). I want to suggest that our lives might look similarly. Until we can learn to open and share our suffering with others, we cannot be in true friendship with them. Until we can learn to open and receive the suffering of others, we cannot be in true friendship with them. Suffering opened the way for relationship with God. In our lives too, I suggest that

insofar as to be human is to suffer, we must learn to receive our own suffering and let it

be shared, and receive another's suffering, in order to truly be human.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

How did we move from a philosophical analysis on cosmology to a call to become a people that have reimagined their role in the life of the sufferer? We made such a move because of the real presence of suffering in our lives. This discourse was born from suffering that begged to be dealt with. In more precise terms, this discourse was born through curiosity. I saw my friends outraged at the injustice around the world. I saw my friends possess a passionate and beautifully deep concern for those suffering. However, at the same time, I saw their refusal to make any claims about "right/wrong" or "good/bad." I was unsure of how justice or injustice was thought of in terms absent of right/wrong. How did we get here?

I also saw "advancements" within the profession I was pursuing that outraged me. I remember the first time I read Peter Singer's argument in favor of negative eugenics and weeping. I found myself weeping in anger and desperation. What was medicine being ordered to? How did we get here?

Thus began my intellectual journey. In reading Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Benjamin Wiker, I learned the importance of understanding one's past to fully engage in the present. I learned that cosmology mandates a specific morality. Thus I traced it. In tracing it I learned that the world is operating exactly as it ought within a materialist cosmology. I learned that within a materialist cosmology, man understands

himself as an autonomous agent, as god-man, with the moral imperative of the elimination of suffering.

As I studied the modern developments within science I noticed that we look to medicine to actualize this modern moral imperative. Gerald McKenny wrote insightful articles on this idea, teaching me much. Lastly, the suffering I saw overwhelmed me. As a Christian I wondered how I ought respond to the suffering and also engage in the practice of medicine. The reality of what I saw around me guided my intellectual journey.

I want to be very clear. I am not calling for the abandonment of medicine. In fact, I am actually calling for a higher Church involvement in medicine; I am proposing that she must stop surrendering her claims on the body to science. Nor am I suggesting that the elimination of suffering is wrong. In fact I commend the elimination of *unnecessary* suffering as a good thing. In fact, that ought be one of the ends of medicine. However, only within a tradition where man is ordered to a telos, can judgments be made about what suffering ought be eliminated. My concern lies in the fact that modern man lacks the language of morality with which to ask and answer those questions.

I want to conclude with an excerpt from Nicholas Wolterstorff's *Lament for a Son*. The Christian does not simply accept suffering with a twinkle in her eye and continue skipping through life. Rather, the Christian mourns. The Christian cries out for justice. Yet the Christian cries out in her suffering from within a community that is bearing her suffering with her. And she cries out to a God who entered that suffering.

> 'Blessed are those who mourn.' What can it mean? One can understand why Jesus hails those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, why he hails the merciful, why he hails the pure in heart, why he hails the peacemakers, why he hails those who endure under persecution. These are qualities of character which belong to the life of the kingdom. But why does he hail the mourners of the world? Why

cheer tears? It must be that mourning is also a quality of character that belongs to the life of his realm.

Who then are the mourners? The mourners are those who have caught a glimpse of God's new day, who ache with all their being for that day's coming, and who break out into tears when confronted with its absence. They are the ones who realize that in God's realm of peace there is no one blind and who ache whenever they see someone unseeing. They are the ones who realize that in God's realm there is no one hungry and who ache whenever they see someone starving. They are the ones who realize that in God's realm there is no one falsely accused and who ache whenever they see someone imprisoned unjustly. They are the ones who realize that in God's realm there is no one who fails to see God and who ache whenever they see someone unbelieving. They are the ones who realize that in God's realm there is no one who suffers oppression and who ache whenever they see someone beat down. They are the ones who realize that in God's realm there is no one without dignity and who ache whenever they see someone treated with indignity. They are the ones who realize that in God's realm of peace there is neither death nor tears and who ache whenever they see someone crying tears over death. The mourners are aching visionaries. (Wolterstorff, n.d., pp. 196-197).

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