

Temporal Diremption and the Novelty of Genuine Repetition

Elliot R. Wolfson

University of California, Santa Barbara

A thinker is not beholden to a thinker—rather, when he is thinking, he holds on to what is to be thought, to Being. Only insofar as he holds on to Being can he be open to the influx of thoughts which thinkers before him have thought. —Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*

In this essay, I focus on the temporal underpinnings of D. G. Leahy’s signature notion of *thinking now occurring for the first time*. Let me state unequivocally at the outset that I subscribe to Leahy’s conviction that the new path of thinking is one in which there is “an absolutely transcendent coincidence of thought itself with existence itself” without the one being reducible to or derived from the other (F 112). It is plausible, as Heidegger observed in *Sein und Zeit*, to mark the launch of Western philosophy by the Parmenidean aphorism that being and thinking are one and the same¹—a metaphysical precept that implies, as Hegel astutely observed in the first book of the *Wissenschaft der Logik*, published in 1812, that “thinking and the determination of thinking are not something alien to the subject matters, but are rather their essence, or that the *things* and the *thinking* of them agree in and for themselves

(also our language expresses a kinship between them); that thinking in its immanent determinations, and the true nature of things, are one and the same content.”² In the thinking now occurring, “for the first time in history, the appearance of the transcendental essence of existence itself is understood to be the *transcendent essence of the conversion of thought itself* from being something essentially conceived to exist as an absolute form (self-conception in essence) to being essentially existence itself in the form of thought identifying itself wholly with its object” (NM 323-24). The identity of thought and being is considered from a post-Derridean vantagepoint:

To hear the word sounding being itself the absolute, this absolute discrimination of the species of perception, as being newly articulate, this absolutely historically existent liberation of the essence of thought from the *necessity of itself to be distinguished from its own necessity* is personality transcendent. From this necessity thought in essence before now is liberated by the absolutely unconditioned violation of articulation which is *la différance*, which essentially renders the dictum of Parmenides (‘one should both say and think that being is’) *one should neither say nor think that difference is, one must write difference*, a torturing of the truth out of the saying of Parmenides, dictated by the fact that before now it became essentially necessary to say and to think *that being was not being*, that the limit of thought was reached but not crossed (out/over)—*la différance*, the crossing out of the logic of identity. (F 162)

The epistemological and ontological change championed by Leahy in the thinking now occurring rests on the assumption that time is construed as the absolute now of creation, the “inalienable body itself transcending the form itself of past and future” (F 47). Consider the

christological and apocalyptic formulation in the following passage from the third appendix of *Novitas Mundi*:

What now occurs is not the elemental reconstruction of the world in the image of a mere man (as was the case with modern thought from its very inception), not the perception of the world as a mere appearance. What now occurs for the first time in history is the elemental reconstruction of the world essentially in the image of God. It is the perception of the world itself of its being the intelligible appearance itself of the essence of existence. What is celebrated in the missa jubilaea is not simply the human resurrection of the dead one (Jesus the Nazarene), but the divine resurrection of the dead messiah (Christ Jesus). The essential element in the reconstruction of the world now occurring is the Christ-element, the essential element of history. This thinking now occurring is the unreservedly pathetic form of an absolutely passionate essence. (NM 350–51)

It lies beyond the scope of this analysis to unpack all the threads woven together in this text, but suffice it to note that Leahy has applied the scholastic understanding of God—in the Avicennian language that impacted Maimonides and Aquinas³—as the necessary of existence, that is, the being whose essence it is to exist, to the material body that is the world at large. This is the intent of the statement that what has occurred for the first time is the reconstruction of the world in the image of God and hence the world is perceived as the intelligible appearance of the essence of existence. As Leahy put it elsewhere, “The thinking now occurring is *ex nihilo*, is nothing but the known necessity of itself, where existence is the necessity of itself absolutely and essentially, the perpetual existence of itself in the midst of itself, itself separating itself in

essence for the first time” (F 176). In the new thinking, the essence of the world, which is the created Godhead, enters existence continually but always in the now *ex abysso*; that is, the historically existent essence of thought is without any fixed essence beyond its own necessity, which is to be distinguished from the necessity of itself (F 162). Moreover, corporeity is understood as substantially identical to thought, the *transcendental essence of existence in existence itself*. For Leahy, this is the philosophical import of the historical event of the resurrection and its consummation in the eucharistic rite of the *missa jubilaea*, the sacrament wherein the “intelligibility of appearance” is conceived “as the unleavened bread of existence itself in the form of man. . . . In the celebration of the infinite passover the appearance of the eucharist, *qua* appearance, is now seen for the first time in history to be itself the eucharist in essence: to transcend appearance, to be appearance itself. . . . In this thinking now occurring there is nothing beside the unleavened bread of existence itself, nothing beside the wine new in essence” (NM 344–45).⁴ The transcendental essence of existence, which is the God who enters the world, is not some otherworldly reality but the appearance of existence itself.

The apocalypse bespeaks the transition from the exclusivity of the *missa solemnis* to the inclusivity of the *missa jubilaea*, that is, a shift from the substantial appearance of the transcendent passion of faith in essence to the essential appearance of the transcendental essence of existence in the form of thought construed corporeally (NM 347). The consciousness apposite to the apocalyptic unveiling, consequently, is the discernment that there is nothing but the unleavened bread of existence. The longstanding schism between reality and appearance is overcome through the recognition that *to transcend appearance is to exist as appearance itself*. In a slightly varied terminological register, Leahy writes: “What now occurs in thought for the first time in history (transcending in fact the end of the world in essence) is *the perception itself*

of the body—God in God in essence—the Temple of the New Jerusalem—effected now in essence inclusively in the *missa jubilaea*, the center of an essentially new consciousness in the conversion of the universe into an entirely new stuff” (NM 348).⁵

Hyperbolically, in my judgment, Leahy insists that the reconstruction of the world in the image of God transpires *for the first time in history*, a rhetorical trope frequently deployed in his writings. What this means concretely is that in the thinking now occurring the disparity between spirit and matter is reconciled, albeit without having to resolve the dyadic difference between them dialectically by positing a synthetic unity. Positively expressed, the binary is foreclosed by the identification of the universe as the Godhead *ex nihilo*, an identification articulated as well as the unicity of the trinitarian God made flesh.

Now the end of the world created in essence is confirmed with the appearance of the substantial form of the body itself. Now nothing remains to be effected but the absolute conception of the Spirit of Christ. The restriction on that thinking now occurring, while essentially not the self-restriction of that thinking belonging in essence to the past, is, nevertheless, the restriction of *the other* remaining in the form of matter, that is, in the form of the transcendental difference. The transformation of transcendental to essentially absolute difference is to be the appearance itself of the transcendental essence of existence *in existence itself*. Then there is to be no distinction whatsoever of matter from form, not simply in essence . . . but in essence identically substance. In this thinking now occurring there exists in essence an identity of substance and function in the form of transcendence, in the utter finality of the fact itself the substantial identity of the transcendental essence. . . . This is what reflection is to be in the substantial identity of the transcendental essence: the resurrection of the dead. That universe now coming into

existence for the first time in history in the form of thought itself is to be in its perfection essentially the conception of creation itself wherein nothing is to be known of an essence distinguished substantially from that of existence itself. (NM 352–53)

The new creation of the essence that occurs in every now propagates the absolute novelty of matter in the form of the absolute transcendence of the absolute the identity of thought (F 140). Matter, rendered new by the absolutely novel essence, is cast notionally as “the meta-identical transcendence of a meta-identity,” and hence “for the first time the *meta* meta-identically exists in essence. Existence for the first time is conceived essentially as itself absolute novelty. This existence is the matter of thought itself” (F 177).

For the first time, in the thinking now occurring, “logic coincides with existence in the known necessity of the absolute identity of matter itself with the essence of thought, in the knowledge/essential experience of the identity of the essence of matter with the actual existence of thought, with the knowledge that knowledge is the knowledge of existence itself” (F 177). The matter of the law of identity apposite to this beginning is “motion itself, absolute temporality, the very Being of magnitude. In this beginning the transcendence of time itself, now itself, is thought in essence in the form of thought itself absolute” (F 141). I take issue with the understanding of the temporal interval that bolsters Leahy’s categorical conviction that *existence is for first time conceived essentially as absolute novelty* or his equally far-reaching assertion that in the center of the new consciousness there is the *conversion of the universe into an entirely new stuff*. Juxtaposing these two statements allows us to interpret the latter in terms of the former, and hence we surmise that, despite the effort of the new thinking to get beyond both the dualism of mind and matter and the idealistic monism that would reduce the latter to

the former, the conversion of which Leahy speaks is a transformation in consciousness; that is, the new stuff is not an alteration in the molecular structure or the quantum field of being but a shift in the manner that matter is configured in mind.⁶ Listen carefully to Leahy's language: "In this conversion of thought itself to being formally transcendent, now, for the first time, the universe is transformed essentially from being *something new* to being *what is now new*, its *appearance itself*. The universe, in essence, *its very appearance* (it being of the essence of that thinking now occurring that *everything is now itself*, that is, *its appearance*, nothing is hidden in essence, the merely apparent essence of things is reduced to nothing whatsoever, or to the recollection of Being upon itself). ... That is, thought is identified with *its appearance itself* In this thinking now occurring *it is the same as an essentially new identity: to be conceived in essence, to appear in existence*. The form of thought's comprehension of its identity with the transcendent energy if the universe is *time itself*, through which thought comprehends the appearance itself of what has occurred, a complete change in essence now appearing" (NM 324-25).

Admittedly, Leahy labored to find the words to communicate the aspect of the thinking now occurring that seeks to transcend the age-old polarity of reality and appearance, but it does seem that the transfiguration of the cosmos that he envisions in the form of thought's comprehension of its identity with the transcendent energy of the universe, which is time, entails an altered state of mindfulness rather than a quantifiable physical modification:

This is the transcendent identity of an essentially transcendental thinking in which transcendence itself is essentially transitive, that is, thought's new object. This object is the essential unity of indivisibles, the form of an essentially new universe now existing for the first time in thought. The realization of this form is now but a matter of time

itself in thought. This realization, in turn, is but the preparation in essence for the termination of history itself. In this thinking now occurring there are no elements in essence apart from the elements of Christ. The appearance itself of the eucharist is transformed in essence into the form of man, into Yahweh's flesh and blood, into his essential property, thereby obviating in essence the thought itself of appropriation, rendering it essentially unnecessary (appropriation itself) in every one of its forms, holy or unholy. . . . *What is essentially new about the form of thought now occurring is that it is form in essence not thought in essence: there is no essence beyond the formality of thought itself now seen to be transitive in essence, that is, the form itself of transcendence.* (NM 345–46)

Insofar as the universe is conceived absolutely differently in the form of thought in essence not thought in essence for the first time, it is witnessed as essentially new. Leahy adds that this newness itself produces a crucial change in the nature of temporality: the realization of a new universe, a new world consciousness, and a new humanity (F 232), heralds the termination of history, which is to say, the thinking of time is thought for the first time as a matter that is thought in the time of thinking. The reciprocal temporalization of the noetic and the noetization of the temporal are embodied fully in the incarnation of Christ, the event that renders appropriation itself inappropriate, insofar as the distinction between holy and unholy becomes inoperative in the face of *the absolute nullification of the possible* wherein *everything now comes to exist actually in the form of the body itself* (NM 360). Contrasting his perspective on the new thinking with Kierkegaard's idea of the embodiment of omnipotence on the interiority of *den Enkelte*, the single/particular, Leahy argues that the thinking occurring now turns *den Enkelte* absolutely outside, for the first time the absolute exteriority is conceived as the

embodiment of the singular/particular. To grasp this dimension of the new thinking, let us consider Leahy's account of the identification of the interior and the exterior in Altizer:

This is the self-circling actuality of that which wills its own oblivion in the form of the body, in the form of the forgiveness of sin, in the form of an absolute inner outer/absolute outer inner: the self-embodiment of sin: the sin of self in the form of the forgiveness of sin, sin in the form of the self-forgiveness of sin: that circle of which the total self-embodiment of God is the oblivion, the circle of its own willing not-willing its own other, the circle of its own body not its own: the actual and real transformation of what before now was old into something actually new: *the divine metamorphosis of self into other: the circling from its own beginning into the body of the other . . .* the absolute self circling itself in the form of another within, in the form of the new form of the absolute self/the absolutely new form of self, in the form of the absolute self-extension of the point within itself to another. This is the exterior actuality of the body the interior identity of the exterior: the interior the exterior of another form of self-consciousness: the new form of interior self-consciousness, the exterior: historical self-consciousness now visible ending in the exterior of consciousness, in the anonymous, objective form, circling, but not returning to its own beginning: the single, solitary turn infinitely multiplied in the form of the other, in the form of objectivity/anonymity: the divine metamorphosis of self into other multiplied in the form of the anonymity of an absolute identity, in the form of an absolute anonymity: the metamorphosis of self itself in the form of the infinite multiplication/division of the other, in the pure form of the body, in the form of the addition-subtraction identity, in the pure form of the exterior identity of

the interior, in the form of an absolute purity, the purity of form itself (the pure form of the forgiveness of sin). (F 222–23)

The absolute metamorphosis of the inwardness of self into the outwardness of the other, the dissipation of absolute identity into the form of absolute anonymity, logically necessitates that the pure form of the exterior identity of the interior coalesces with the interior identity of the exterior, the self-circling of the willing not-willing, that is, the kenotic potency of the will to not will. The thinking now occurring purports to move beyond the lingering dichotomies of the exterior and interior even in their dialectical overcoming as proposed by Altizer. Not to appreciate this, of course, is to miss the crucial turn initiated by Leahy. But the latter is still indebted to a circularity, albeit an absolute circularity that undermines the notion of cyclical repetition insofar as the permanency of the circle bespeaks the radical differentiation of *the absolute novelty of the world (novitas mundi) in the world as the novitas mentis* (NM 14). Thus, as Leahy puts it, “What is known for the first time is that the circle itself is nothing but the confirmation of the fact that there is no generic circle, but that the absolute circle is perpetuity itself, that the absolute identity of terms is the absolutely integral relation to measure, that the ‘itself’ (the identity of the existing thing) is absolutely unconditioned transcendent identity, the actual/negative of the contra-actual, the proof/position of existence *itself*, there being nothing but the transcendental difference of the thing from the *thing itself*, the existence of the thing itself, the existence of existence itself. There is nothing but the absolute existence of existence for the first time, the absolutely complex absolute existence of very simplicity” (F158). We can discern in this depiction of the contra-actual negativity, the absolute lack of the absolute itself (F159), a foreshadowing of what Leahy eventually called the “absolutely polyontological reality” in conjunction with his positing of the “absolute discontinuity of the continuum.”⁷ What

is noteworthy for our purposes is that the immanent form of the transcendence of the circle is transformed through the intermediation of the absolute measure into the circle itself, which is differentiated from the circle as time itself, insofar as the perpetuity of existence as existence is always to be ascertained from the potency of the essential difference that is time, *the now for the first time that is the time absolutely* (F 355). The now is the *nihil* that transcends the bifurcation of eternity and time and, as such, in the thinking now occurring, there is “no alternative to existence itself absolutely unconditioned” (F 101). Seemingly, it would follow that this thinking should dispense with the language of willing as not willing, as we encountered in the aforementioned exposition of Altizer, but even Leahy avers a sense of omnipotence envisaged as “absolutely nonexisting in its existing” (BS 44). Extrapolating the dialectic logic⁸ of the paradox further—something is both A and not-A and therefore neither A nor not-A—the form of the essentially transcendental objectivity is labeled a state “without being God & without being without God I am God’s new beginning” (BS 13). The I assumes the role as God’s new beginning but it is a beginning that is both without being God and without being without God. Alternatively expressed, the beginning of the transcendental unity of transcendence is absolutely manifest as *nihil ex nihilo* (F 353), the nothing of the absolute actuality that comes from nothing, that is, the absolute that does not belong to some otherworldly realm but which is fully present in the here and now, the *ruah elohim* hovering over the abyss of the abyss that is the beginning of existence:

The being atoning in every now: the Name Itself of God. This name is the identity of nothing *ex nihilo*. This is the absolute *epoché* of the mystical without reference to an other world: the One for the first time absolutely itself here & now: everything essentially existing, absolutely nothing extant: the thought of the extant reduced to

Nothing: the transcendence-to-Nothing of the being of the *Dasein* reduced to Nothing:
Nothing absolutely extant: the abyss of the extant/the extant Abyss/existence *ex abysso*.
This *epoché* of mystical existence, this *epoché* of the mystical name, is the Spirit of God
hovering over the absolutely-nothing-at-hand. . . . This is the thought of existence for
the first time the *epoché* of extant thought, the abyss of the thought of existence *ex*
abysso . . . the abyss not itself the matter of a beginning not the abyss of the abyss at
once not not the abyss of the abyss itself, not the abyss of the abyss not not the abyss of
the abyss, not the (metanoetic) abyss of the abyss of the abyss, but the beginning of
existence the revolutionary metanoësis of the abyss of the abyss. (F 353–54)

Translated christologically, the beginning of actual existence is Jesus, “which is I AM NOT,
where I AM NOT is not I AM denominated NOT/NOT denominated IAM/denominational I
AM NOT, but I AM immediately NOT/NOT immediately I AM/immediate I AM NOT” (F
412).

The supersessionist bias is conspicuous in Leahy’s avowal that in the thinking now
occurring *there are no elements in essence apart from the elements of Christ*. Needless to say,
this approach has deep roots in Christian dogma, epitomized scripturally by the baptismal
formula, “For in Christ Jesus you are sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were
baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave
nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26–
28). What is conveniently ignored by many interpreters of this seminal passage is that the
pledge that we are one in Christ is an inclusivity that excludes its own exclusivity; that is, the
capacity for alterity attested in this text, and the ritual of baptism implied thereby, disregards
those who might not desire to be incorporated into the body of Christ. For those baptized in

Christ it may be reassuring to know there is an eradication of ethnic, socio-economic, and gender difference, but what is the fate of those who resist assimilation?

We would do well to recall the verse that immediately succeeds the liturgical pronouncement, “And if you are of Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). The universal—to be of Christ—is presented here as the fulfillment of the particular—the covenantal promise to Abraham’s seed. Contrary to Badiou, who surmised that Paul’s reasoning exemplified the syllogism, “if it is true that every truth erupts as singular, its singularity is immediately universalizable,” and thus universalizable singularity necessarily breaks with identitarian singularity,⁹ I would contend that Paul does not escape the dilemma that lies at the heart of Jewish messianism: by including the excluded in the claim to exclusivity, the exclusivity is rendered even more inclusive. The aforementioned language of Badiou presents a false dichotomy and, as a consequence, he fails to ascertain that the Pauline universalism—already at the scriptural level—is expressed through the prism of the singular that is embroiled in the friction between the identity of difference and the difference of identity. On this measure, Leahy’s philosophical translation of the Christian soteriology is wanting. The *missa jubiliaea* may announce the now wherein “*the appearance itself of faith itself in essence is effected in a transcendently differentiated substance, that is, without being other than itself in essence,*” but, in the end, it is not clear that this mass is as all-encompassing as Leahy supposes it to be. At the very least, the claim concerning the new apocalyptic actuality exhibits an unresolved tension between the universal and the particular.

What is even more troubling is that the temporal disjointedness of a dramatically new commencement cannot be justified epistemically, ontically, or ontologically; both philosophically and scientifically the operative notion of newness endorsed by Leahy is not

tenable or defensible. Restating Leahy's conjecture does not constitute proof; like any philosophical worldview, the thinking now occurring is subject to critical examination. I readily admit that one must be mindful of imposing a modernist logic on a mode of speculation purportedly transpiring for the first time in history, but this should not serve as an excuse to deflect all disagreement. Indeed, it is precisely the temporal basis of the assertion regarding unparalleled novelty that must be interrogated. The radically diremptive nature of the absolute time as the absolute now transcending past and future may be questioned on grounds that discontinuity of the present—which follows *ipso facto* from the postulation of an absolutely novel moment—can be discerned only to the extent that we grasp that the present is not only continuous with but, in its deepest valence, the reverberation of the past that remains open as the future that is to come.¹⁰ In contradistinction to Leahy, I would hypothesize that the absolute actuality of the now is neither past nor future because within it the past is always future and the future is already past. Consider Leahy's description of the *missa jubilaea*:

What is in fact happening in essence is the transcendental repetition of the creation itself. This is the appearance itself in the world in essence of the repetition of existence itself in the form of man, of what, before now, even in its appearance in essence remained itself absolutely, or remained essentially intelligible, but which only now, in this thinking occurring for the first time in history in material consequence of the truth occurring in the Mass (*solemnis et jubilaea*), is actually intelligible, that is, absolutely nothing but itself in its appearance in essence without remainder. (NM 350)¹¹

That the mass celebrating the infinite passover is the *transcendental repetition of creation* (NM 365, 374) implies to my ear that the end is a return to the beginning even though I concede that

the thinking now occurring precludes the possibility of envisioning the beginning whither one returns as being the same as the beginning whence one departed. There is, technically speaking, no return in time if we understand by return a retrieval to where one has been since the only temporal mode that is accorded actuality is marked as *for the first time time absolutely now* (FP 123). I grant, moreover, that creation is not an evocation of a primordial or an historical origin but the perception of the body of the world as the foundation of matter as difference conceived *ex nihilo* (F 49-50). This is what is intended by *the transcendental repetition of the creation*. “There is neither nothing nor something prior to foundation itself to serve as the foundation: there is foundation itself for the first time *ex nihilo*, for the first time *existere ipsum ex nihilo*” (F 139). Minimally, this sense of *ex nihilo* entails reiteration of what is novel inasmuch as each incomparable now is a recurrence of the “first integral repetition of being itself” (F 50), the “absolute repetition” of “the new itself, of the body itself existing, of the quantum absolute” (F 112). Implied in this quantum absolute—the *absolute becoming itself absolute objectivity itself*—is the presumption regarding the “identity itself for the first time the memory of the absolute repetition of the absolute, the catholicity itself of existence, absolute perpetuity. There is no non-identity arising out of the repetition of perpetuity (while the original absolute non-identity was a perpetual non-existence): there is the absolute repetition of absolute existence, the perpetuity of existence itself” (F 145). Existence, on this score, is the “unnecessary repetition of creation itself: creation itself absolutely unconditioned” (F 388). Creation is absolutely unconditioned but nonetheless recurring, albeit unnecessarily so.

Leahy avers that the now in which the end is experienced occurs in the thinking for the first time in history. How can something be both retrievable and unprecedented? To make sense of this we must presume that the property of newness concretizes sameness in the replication of

difference—the absolute repetition of the new, the perpetual return to where one never was; the timeline is thus open at both ends of the circle. Lest one object that the image of the circle is inapplicable to the thinking now occurring, it would be useful to recall the densely mathematical account of creation, the beginning, and the abyss offered by Leahy in his reflections on how thought has moved beyond Galileo’s conclusion that an infinite circle cannot exist because the circumference of such a circle would be a straight line:

But now for the first time in history just such a line, just such a center exists, indeed, is existence. Existence is the line/the center/the time/the text the elements of which form a rational unity: the unconditionally absolute expansion of absolute unity: the absolute opening time itself for the first time the circle itself the fourfold proportionality identically the indivisible point: the absolute existence of dead center measuring the circumference of the circle. Insofar as the truth of THE PLACE identical with creation is the measure of an infinite order of squares ... or cubes ... each one of which, in the absolute exteriority of the within now actually existing for the first time, here in the form of the foundational segments of the exploded central square (cube) of any square (cube), measures the diameter of a circle (sphere), there exists for the first time in thought, not ‘a single sphere which expands in size without limit’, but an infinite number of infinitely transparent absolute actualities: the sphere of absolute objectivity now existing: the sphere of spheres infinitely newly beginning, the sphere of infinitely new, infinitely separate spheres: the sphere the surface of which is the beginning of an absolutely transparent depth. ... This is the beginning of the circumference of the infinite circle. This is the line for the first time. This is the time of beginning. This is creation displacing the abyss itself: the body of the Living God in the form of the beginning,

depth absolutely surface, the infinite identical with the finite: the absolute
incompatibility of the infinitely numbered points of the circumference of the circle: the
absolutely transparent circle. (F 533-34)

By the metric of the center of the circle that is the line of the beginning of the circumference,
the depth that is absolute surface, time is the continually discontinuous reappearance of what is
yet to become apparent, the congruence of the incongruent.

In *Foundation: Matter the Body Itself*, Leahy elaborates on the paradox of the essentially
new in language that pushes to the edge of intelligibility:

But now for the first time the new itself transcends the necessity of itself. Now the
beginning of the circle itself itself exists. For the first time order itself the beginning
even the end. *Novus ordo seclorum existit*. This is the absolute repetition of time itself:
the circle itself (the itself-transcendence of time itself/being itself) circles itself within
itself: without division, within identity, the absolute clarity of thought itself
(remembering that there is no without within which division might be, that there is no
outside of the text where thought itself might be nothing with a name, where thought
itself with a name might be nothing, where nothing might be itself, remembering that
there is no outside of the absolute plaintext, that there is not itself outside of itself: the
itself-transcendence of itself is nothing but the circle of existence, nothing but
time/being itself existing). The existence for the first time of foundation itself: the
absolutely substantial existence of time. Not the *eternal* recurrence of all things, not
being beginning in every now, but the *temporal* occurrence of all things, the absolute
itself now existing beginning and end (the itself-transcendence of time not “eternity” but

being itself absolute temporality), not freedom itself existing itself now for the first time in the form of personality which is itself new, to wit, *one is free to say and think identically that being is*, which is to say *that one is free to exist in time*, that the Incarnation itself absolutely exists in the form of thought itself absolute. (F 164–65)

The circle, which signifies the absolute repetition of time—the itself-transcendence of time/being—is unremittingly interrupted by time as absolutely now. The characteristic of perpetuity replaces the reflexivity of the circle circling itself inasmuch as what is constant is inconstancy, what is enduring is the evanescence of the now that is at all times the same in virtue of being different. The absolute repetition of the new world order is identified as well as the absolute clarity of thought, which is compared figuratively to the plaintext in which there is no exteriority that is not interior and no interiority that is not exterior, the experience of the singularity of the “abyss of infinite non-existence, the Body Abysmal” (F 191). The apocalypse is thus depicted as the moment when the “absolute exteriority of time-consciousness is the resurrection itself of the Body of the Finite God absolutely at the disposal of another. . . . Time itself for the first time is המקום, The Place, in which we live and move and exist, in which we have not ‘our being’, but the being of the other being at the disposal of another” (F 593). In the essentially new world, the temporality of time has become place—the use of the Hebrew term *ha-maqom*, one of the traditional rabbinic epithets for God, suggests that what Leahy has in mind is the divinization of time in the breakdown of the distinction between spatial and temporal dimensions. The divine status is also expressed by the image of the perpetuity and repetition of the circle. However, instead of Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence, Leahy—in what strikes me as acquiescent with his interpretation of Kierkegaard (FP 70–74)—speaks of the temporal occurrence, the absolute now that is concurrently beginning and end, not an eternity

beyond time but an eternality instantiated in time, indeed the absolute temporality, immediately manifest as the freedom to exist in time, an ethical freedom secured theologically by the incarnation of the word that exists absolutely in the form of absolute thought.¹²

Within the parameters of the *linear circularity* of time, a locution that I have employed in my own thinking, the advance to the future is naught but a reversion to the past that is, paradoxically, a return to where one has never been. In this respect, there is affinity with Leahy's insistence that the repetition of creation—the word being spoken in essence in the time of the beginning that is the constantly renewed beginning of time—is creation thought for the first time in history (NM 341). The duplication of the novel—the return of the same that is different—undergirds the movement of the circle of existence and renders ineffectual the distinction between actuality and possibility insofar as the moment at hand can be considered actual only in virtue of being possible and possible only in virtue of being actual; in the thinking now occurring, time is thought materializing as the obfuscation of thought : “*But it is precisely this possibility itself that is annulled in the absolute clarification of the absolute now occurring in reality in the form of the transcendental repetition of creation itself* (the essential repetition of history in thought), *in substance the absolute nullification of everything including thought itself* (in which, therefore, the history of thought is for the first time actually thought in essence), *transcendentally distinguished as now occurring in essence*” (NM 360). Reiterating the point in slightly different terminology, Leahy writes: “The change of essence from potentiality, not to actuality, but to existence/existence itself, to actual/absolutely unconditioned actuality, the change of the law of identity itself from non-existence, not to existence, but to identity itself/the transcendence of the law of identity itself, to absolute existence/the absolutely unconditioned identity, the change of the circle to time/the absolutely unconditioned explosion of the circle,

the specific transcendence of the circle/the explosion of the circle perpetuity, the time-transcendent change of time, measures the essence of existence, measures the essence of absolute balance, which essence, the species of the absolute measure, is, as such, itself the absolute balance: *the absolute balance, having no essence of its own, nevertheless absolutely exists*” (F 160).

For our purposes what is most significant in this typically intricate passage is the thematic nexus between temporality and circularity. In particular, it is worth noting Leahy’s remark that the circle changes into time, a variation he designates as *the time-transcendent change of time*, once more anchoring the thinking now occurring in the language of paradox—the change in time is transcendent of time. Time in its circuitousness is the measure of the essence of existence of the absolutely unconditioned explosion of the circle, the measure of the absolute balance. Diverging from the more traditional metaphysical idea of the absolute balance of the absolute form, Leahy introduces the counter-concept of the imbalance of the breach as a critical factor in understanding the absolute balance point and the time of the beginning (F 521). Leahy’s intent can be gleaned from the following passage:

But the absolute complexity of the breach (at once the absolute transcendence of the merely essential complexity of the simple, of the absolute breach in its simplicity), the absolute repetition of the absolute breach absolutely without the division-within, is itself *the absolute breaching of balance itself with absolute identity*, such that the absolute transcendence of absolute imbalance is not in fact the restoration of absolute balance, rather the transcendence of the balance itself that is the absolute breach in its simplicity, the transcendence, even, of that balance itself an absolute balance only in the precise

form of identifying the breach itself as the unsettling prop of philosophy in the form of the contra-actual conditional, viz., there is no absolute transcendence of the philosophical essence. (F 157)

In a postmodern revision of the classical metaphysical understanding of identity as self-identity—that is, the determination of the identity of self from the standpoint of the coincidence of the self with itself—and its relation to the ideal of harmonization conjured by the image of the balance, Leahy proffers that, in the thinking now occurring, absolute identity is understood for the first time as the absolute explosion of balance, the “absolute complexity of the breach in the circle, such that where the circle was, indeed, even where the point of the circle was included in the midst of the logic of supplementarity so as to bend the circle beyond the point of recognition . . . there is now perpetuity itself. Where the circle was, indeed, where the noncircular violator of the circle was, there is now the transcendental imagination of change itself transcending in essence the absolute balance, itself an absolute balance only in the precise form of the absolute measure, only in the form of absolute coincidence itself, only in the precise form of that identity which is the absolute transcendence itself of the point of departure, only in the form of that absolute measure of the magnitude of being which is the form of the *absolute* separation of absolute difference from the point itself” (F 157). Leahy’s insistence that time emerges out of, and therefore is distinct from, the circle is consonant with his assumption that the perpetuity of identity is constituted by the explosion of identity; perpetuity ensues from the breach in the circle, that is, the permanence of the now consists of its impermanence and its impermanence of its permanence. Time is the other-than-self that engenders the absolute identity of the nonidentity of the other vis-à-vis the nonidentity of the identity of the self (F 155).¹³

The depiction of the temporal interval as that which persists in passing and passes in persisting yields the proposition that genuine innovation consists of the repetition of the same that in each occurrence is altogether otherwise.¹⁴ We can further presume that the nature of the beginning must always be *in medias res*; this paradox, argues Leahy, is fully ascertained in the thinking occurring now from the fact that the absolutely existent beginning is manifest as the center that is absolutely existent for the first time (F 406).¹⁵ As Leahy deduced from Augustine's discussion of the truth of faith and the relationship between things temporal and things eternal, "And, indeed, 'our beginning' is the middle of the middle, the very middle of the Incarnation by which [*per ortum nostrum*] we are united eternally to the eternity of the divine" (FP 59).¹⁶ The absolutely existent beginning thus assumes the nature of the middle; this middle is always existent for the first time, but it still occupies the position of the middle and therefore cannot be first unconditionally. Elaborating his belief in the beginning of a completely new existence, troped in the apocalyptic terms of the end of the old world and the beginning of the new world (FP 158), Leahy avails himself once more of the image of the circle:

The midpoint of fully apocalyptic consciousness is not the midnight of self-consciousness but midday, high noon, not the midnight opposite the beginning & end of the circle, but the midday after the end and before the beginning of the circle: the absolute point of arrival & departure: the I the beginning immediately end. The midpoint of fully apocalyptic consciousness absolutely explodes the circle: the apocalyptic circle is the perfect discontinuity or independence of its constituent points. Indeed the perfect independence in being of each constituent point of this circle is the reciprocal of the apocalyptic I which is Alpha & Omega, the beginning & end of the beginning & end of the circle. (FP 162-63n43)

On balance, Leahy is far more emphatic about the unconditional nature of the beginning and the attendant novelty and uniqueness of his conception of the now, repeatedly contrasting the past with what is being thought in the present allegedly for the first time. In a tone that is almost kabbalistic in nature, Leahy writes about the experience of the absolute silence of the beginning, which is the experience of the actual quiescence of nothing:

This Nothing is the pure beginning of a new world: the absolute first nothing, God the Creator nothing. Beyond the abyss of beginning which is the essence of modernity, this post-modern consciousness is the abyss of the first: not the beginning of the abyss, but the first abyss: the realization of the beginning of the abyss: not merely the beginning not the beginning, but the first not the first: *the beginning not the beginning absolutely*, the beginning of the beginning of existence, the beginning of Nothing. . . . This beginning is the end of Nothing in the form of the infinitely minute opening, in the form of the absolutely unconditioned pure possibility of imagination. (F 600)

The new beginning that he envisions is the being beyond beyond being, that is, the being beyond the antinomy of being and nothing in which there is no thought of the triple negation of nothing: not nothing, not not nothing, not not not nothing (FP 116–17).¹⁷ As Leahy puts it in “Note to Faith and Philosophy Further to the Ontology of Real Trinary Logic” included as a backnote in *Beyond Sovereignty*: “In the thinking now occurring for the first time the beginning otherwise than the beginning of being not otherwise than being is the beginning of being and nothing otherwise than otherwise than x , or beyond beyond x Then the real trinary logic conception of existence absolutely differentiated for the first time is the beginning of absolute thisness, the beginning of the absolute here (and) now . . . THE NOT YET = BEYOND

BEYOND X” (BS 293–94).¹⁸ Explicating this passage, Leahy comments: “The thinking now occurring for the first time—beyond hither and thither the beginning of consciousness—is beyond beyond x , beyond hither x and thither x , beyond the hither the beginning of consciousness of Levinas’ absolute past and the thither the beginning of consciousness of Altizer’s absolute future” (BS 133). The thinking now occurring is the beginning of consciousness that is the absolute actuality thought essentially for the first time in the now that is beyond the historically specific forms of hither and thither attributed respectively to the absolute past of Levinas and the absolute future of Altizer. But the now, which is delineated as the beyond beyond x , is characterized as well as the not yet, a characterization that circumvents the law of noncontradiction insofar as the depiction of the now by the polar opposites of no more and not yet defies the principle that contradictory statements cannot both be true in the same sense and at the same time. Be that as it may, from Leahy’s evaluation of the nature of the now we can infer that the beginning is the actuality of the inception of the temporal minimum in the absolute wholeness of the being of the finite, the infinitesimal that is, at once, the maximal minimum and the minimal maximum. The existence of the minimum assumes the form of the beginning that is the fractal wholeness of the absolute relative being, the new beginning that betokens the infinitivity of finitude, the imperishable perishability (BS 13).

Each moment is steadfastly in the state of both “not having happened as of now” and “having ceased as of now,” or in the symbolic notation used by Leahy, $\tilde{p} (/) \tilde{q}$, “not yet (/) not still” (BS, backnote 4, 311). The philosophical import of the present so construed bears affinity to Aristotle’s conception of the now as the indivisible monad by which the mind measures the motion of bodies in time.¹⁹ Particularly germane is Heidegger’s account of the “double visage” (*eigentümliches Doppelgesicht*) of Aristotle’s understanding of the now:

Time is held together within itself by the now; time's specific continuity is rooted in the now. But conjointly, with respect to the now, time is divided. Articulated into the no-longer-now, the earlier, and the not-yet-now, the later. It is only with respect to the now that we can conceive of the then and at-the-time, the later and the earlier. The now that we count in following a motion is *in each instance a different now*. To de nun dia to kineisthai to pheromenon aiei heteron, on account of the transition of the moving thing the now is always another, an advance from one place to the other. In each now the now is a different one, but still each different now is, as now, always now. The ever different nows are, *as different*, nevertheless always exactly *the same*, namely, now. Aristotle summarizes the peculiar nature of the now and thus of time—when he interprets time purely by way of the now . . . that is, in each now it is now; its *essentia*, its what, is always *the same (tauto)*—and nevertheless every now is, by its nature, different in each now . . . nowness, being-now [*Jetztsein*], is always *otherness, being-other* [Anderssein] . . . the now is in a certain way always the same and in a certain way never the same. The now articulates and bounds time with respect to its earlier and later. On the one hand it is indeed always the same, but then it is never the same. . . . This constitutes its always being-now, its otherhood [*Andersheit*]. But what it always already was as that which it is, namely, now—that is the same.²⁰

The subversion of the mathematical understanding of a chronological series, and the implied interpretation of time as an objective being or an existing actuality, and the positing of an alternate chronology is elicited by Heidegger from Aristotle's own attentiveness to the quality of *Jetztsein*, the time of the now that personifies otherness in virtue of its being *in a certain way*

always the same and in a certain way never the same. This resonates with Leahy's assessment that the Aristotelian now, which is the measure of time, is depleted of temporal coordinates:

The Now, for Aristotle, is to time as the moving object is to motion: that by which consciousness counts the time of motion (or rest); nothing moves through, or rests in, this Now. The coincidence of two times in one Now is actually no time at all; in actuality there is no coincidence in time. If two things, or two times, exist together, this is in virtue of their being between two Nows; this is to say that their coincidence in time is not an actuality, but a potentiality, since the identity of the period of time between the two Nows exists only in consciousness.²¹

Intriguingly, the meaning of the *now* in the thinking now occurring is similar to what Leahy attributes to Aristotle. For the former, as for the latter, the only dimension of time that is real is the present, but the present exists only between two nows, since it is no more and not yet, indeed no more because not yet and not yet because no more.

One might counter that my suggestion fails to heed Leahy's insight regarding the transtemporal status of the "now" in the thinking now occurring. The matter is articulated with characteristic density in the following passage:

The absolute explosion of the complex absolute itself, in the form of the absolute perpetuity of an actually existing person, in the form of the essentially historical meta-matter of the *metanoēsis* which is *thought existing for the first time in the form of man*, which is man-thought/God-thought, species-thought/meta-thought, mid-thought/quantum thought (which *metanoēsis* is to *metanoia* as the transcendence of the *quantum* absolute is to the transcendence of the *unum* absolute, the proof of which

proportion is: *the identity of the quantum absolute the meta-identity of the unum/the meta-identity of the unum the absolute minimum*: the *unum* absolute existing *ex nihilo*, *unity ex abysso*, *qua* product of history, freely existing in time without the necessity even for the capacity of dividing itself in two, *an absolutely unconditioned unicity*, the meta-material existence of the meta-conception of identity, which proof itself is thought itself transcending the analogy of being: for the first time the absolute analogy of being), is the absolute transcendence of time. . . . The absolute perpetuity of an actually existing person/the *metanoēsis* of an essentially historically meta-matter is the form of *the unum absolutely transcending—unity ex abysso—the death of philosophy, the death of metaphor, the metaphor of death, the (now for the first time seen to be) absolutely pure nothing.* (F 179–81)

The christological underpinning of Leahy’s language should be clearly discernible to the attentive ear from his remark concerning the complex absolute that assumes the form of the absolute perpetuity of an actually existing person, the essentially historical meta-matter of the *metanoēsis*, an event that both materializes historically and is historically beyond the material, indeed, beyond thinking, the *thought existing for the first time in the form of man*, the Word become flesh in the person of Jesus, the “abyss of the Godhead conceived in the form of the God-man” (F 598).

It should come as no surprise that Leahy purports that reason conforms to faith for the first time in the thinking now occurring. Relating this shift in consciousness to the Aristotelian legacy that played such a dominant role in medieval theology and its aftermath, Leahy asserts confidently that “now for the first time occurs the *essential* clarification of the Aristotelian essence, the clarification of the essence of the Aristotelian essence. What now occurs for the

first time in history is *the clarification of the created godhead*. This clarification is the perfect perception of the absolute quality of metanomous being, such that being *is* person, being *is* itself, person *is* itself, *itself* is person (nor is being anything but person)” (F 161). The full repercussion of the incarnation—the appearance in time of the transcendental essence of existence—is the breakdown of the distinction between object and subject, being and person, quality and quantity. The final binary affords Leahy the opportunity to expand—again, I would add, in language so pristinely logical that it lurches toward the periphery of the illogical—on the convergence of the scientific and theological implications of the thinking now occurring:

The quantum identity of being *is* quality, *is* the freedom of personal identity, is the person’s actual *itself*, the person’s absolute existence. Just here in the midst of the absolute articulation itself of thought itself, in the absolute harmony itself of the absolute itself, in the midst itself of the perception of the absolute itself, in the absolute balance of personality itself, in the perception which is the discrimination of the midst of discrimination itself as voice itself itself articulating the absolute word, as the absolute in the midst of saying itself/the absolute saying itself in the midst of saying itself/the absolute absolutely interrupting itself, here in the midst absolutely without spatiality itself, in the identification of the interminable interruption itself, personality manifests itself, personality itself is manifest as the perception in essence of the voice of God saying itself ‘I am Christ’, *itself* (the absolutely unconditioned balance itself) *the absolute quality of quantum: the voice of number itself singing the song of the absolute word*. The absolute quality of quantum itself is personality. Quality identical with quantum is metanomy. The absolute quality of quantum itself is being-bound-existence,

existence itself, objectivity itself. Quality identical with quantum is existing thought, thought itself now very existence. (F 161–62)

The now of the thinking now occurring is this metanoetic and meta-material *unum* that incarnates the identity of the meta-identity, the absolutely unconditioned unicity, the *unum* that absolutely exists *ex nihilo*, the abysmal unity, the maximum of the absolute minimum that is simultaneously the actuality of thought and the actuality of being.²² This is a convergence that signals the death of philosophy as the death of the metaphor of death, a death that opens the possibility of the re-embodiment of the absolutely disembodied death, that is, the death of the disembodied Christ (F 194), the absolute passion of existence understood as *Christ without Christ*, the “I Am speaking for the first time without existing in time, the first absolute silence” (F 197),²³ a creation *ex abyssso* that is the form of the immanence of the passion, a creation that transcends the opposition of transcendence and immanence, the absolute integration of the absolute disintegration that portends the existence of nonexistence (F 195). Articulating the paradox in another passage, Leahy writes: “Occurring in time for the first time now, it is essentially historical, at once itself the transcendence of history. . . . The transcendental dichotomy is at once the transcendental dichotomy of time itself, the transcendental dichotomy of expectancy: the creation of an essentially practical existence, at once the beginning of an absolutely practical existence, in the form of the absolute now: an absolutely revolutionary consciousness transcending the difference between past & future in the form of the transcendence of expectancy, in the form of *time itself actually opening and expanding into a world*, in the form of time transcending temporality, in the form of time transcending the measure of time, in the form of time categorically the other, in the form of the end of time itself,

in the form of the absolute objectivity of time, of the world itself—in the form of the appearance meta-identically the window” (F 426).

The now of the thinking now occurring alludes to the timespace wherein the difference between potential and actual is dispelled, the absolutely new beginning of time expanding constrictively and opening up the window that is the world, the time of commencement that is the end of time, the time that transcends the measure of time, the time transcending temporality that is the absolute objectivity of time. But to the extent that the event to which Leahy refers is historical—a matter that is necessitated by his argument that his thinking for the first time discloses the phenomenological essence of the actually existing world (F 87)—then it is difficult to accept the idea of an absolute novum. This seems contradicted by Leahy’s own acceptance of the “essentially historical form of the death of God” as the “foundation of Christianity” (F 603). To be sure, this foundation is “the necessity to create the elimination of history, that is, the essentially new foundation of Christianity itself is the necessity to create the elimination of the actual death of the Godhead of God. The new Christianity is essentially the conception of the necessity to create the absolute elimination of nothingness. For the first time in history the very form of Christianity is the necessity of the elimination of nothing” (F 603–604). The thinking now occurring is grounded in this radically diremptive understanding of the present severed from any organic connection to past or future, a new actuality that is the elimination of the beginning of nothing, a beginning that is the nothingness of beginning, that is, the resurrection of God as the beginning in which nothing begins, a beginning that is “beginning and ending at once” (F 605). Leahy audaciously declares: “*What now occurs for the first time in history is the absolute penetration which is the absolute suspension of the process of beginning and ending/the absolute suspension of the beginning and ending of the process: the absolute*

unity of the absolute penetration is the midst itself absolutely existent for the first time, the absolutely existent beginning” (F 406).

It is credible to posit a sense of nowness that transcends the other two temporal modalities, but can we presume that the present has no link to what was or what will be? What meaning can we ascribe to Leahy’s repeated oratorical appeal to *the first time*? Can there be a time demarcated as first that is not outside of time? Is not *for the first time* veritably a signpost of the beginning of time that is not in time at all and therefore not a beginning? *Prima facie*, it would seem that Leahy himself struggled with this very question in the following comment that both upholds and subverts the possibility of a first time that is the beginning of the being that is itself not being for the first time:

The absolute species of being is for the first time *unum esse*. In the language of language itself *esse* is identical with *existere*. *Ipsum esse unum* identifies the absolute existence of being itself. For the first time very existence is the absolutely unconditioned transcendental identity. It is not as if existence itself were but a form, as if after the first there were no second itself, as if itself were not itself transcending itself for the first time, as if time itself were not the *existence* of the beginning, as if there were a being itself not being for the first time (in the absolute rupture from *metaphysics* of which contrary-to-fact condition consists *la différence*) but being in some mode (the generic essence of modernity being itself the not-being of something), being itself not being but being something: the merely formal predicament of existence: the non-categorical existence either absolute idea or absolute matter. (F 186–87)

Describing the intent of *Novitas Mundi*, Leahy writes that the “book sets out for the first time the transcendental limits of the essentially new form of thought which is what the new world’s new thinking really is if it be really new” (NM xi). In somewhat more pedantic language, Leahy elaborates:

The appearance of the transcendental essence of existence itself is, in its being identically what has occurred to it during the course of its worldly being or being in time, that which makes that time *to be* what it is, identifying it through its transcendental essence with existence itself. . . . What we now see is truly seen for the first time. What we now see occurs through no necessity whatsoever. It is the manifest freedom of the fact of creation in history at this time. This critical occurrence of the transcendental essence of existence itself in thought is the essence of its history, manifested in the historical essence it is the *templative authority* of the history in essence of thought. In the essential history of thought, this world’s *existence* is contemplated for the first time (a fact made possible by history’s *essential indifference* to time); for the first time, what has occurred presents itself in absolute evidence. (NM 6)

Moving beyond the more conventional options of an apotheosis of the particular into the universal or the corporealization of the universal within the particular, the thinking that is now occurring is the thinking of the transcendental essence of existence itself, a thinking keenly attuned to the contingency of the factual in the present liberated from the constraints of being determined by the past:

In its faithful attention to the essence of what occurred to being in time, this thinking now existing brings each object into existence on its own terms without making those

terms in themselves its object but only the appearance in them of the transcendental essence of existence itself. It is in the historical essence, through which each object in perpetuity is at once made wholly itself within that existence accounting for this world's existence, that everything comes into existence on its own terms. . . . This is the absolute evidence of purely *factual* contingency. This absolute evidence is in the thinking now occurring radically discontinuous in essence with every point of view that encumbers existence with its own perspective, imposing upon it a *logos* of its own, that is, a purely *logical* contingency, essentially unhistorical, by which the past is bound to its thinking, the essence of which is termination in itself, or *world-determination*. . . . But the termination of the transcendental essence of existence itself is the termination of essence in existence; its *appearance*, or *the essence of history*, terminates in existence itself, not in its *determination*. (NM 7–8)

I assent to Leahy's call for the need to uphold a new logic—*the logic of faith that is beyond modernity*—that will demonstrate the paradox of being “without meaning but not meaningless,” transmitting the sense of “*being for the first time*. The logical category would be *being beginning*. Nothing other than being for the first time would be thought. . . . The essence beyond essence—the exception to essence that *is* essence—of a categorically new logic would be the essence of the new. For the first time the essence of logic would be novelty” (FP 115).

Moreover, this new logic will reclaim the beginning as the middle excluded by the logic of the excluded middle; that is, a beginning that is not the beginning of the end and therefore not a foreshadowing of the end of the beginning, but the beginning of the beginning that is always also the end of the end, albeit in a distinctly nontautological way.

The mean proportionally this thing & that thing would be the excluded middle, the beginning. If this beginning is the excluded middle then this mean proportional is not the end of the beginning and the beginning of the end, but is the beginning of this thing, the beginning of the first term and the end of that thing, the end of the last term, the beginning of the beginning and the end of the end. ... But then the thinking now occurring for the first time *is* the actual transcendence of the beginning of the thinking of modernity, the transcendence of the thought of the beginning as essentially the included middle, the transcendence of the beginning of modern consciousness ... The thinking now occurring is otherwise than being not at the expense of beginning: the excluded middle is essentially and categorically the beginning of being. ... The excluded middle is not able to be thought without being without beginning. But what is now thought for the first time is the transcendence of Kierkegaard's notion of the thoughtlessness of faith, thinking on the *far* side of thinking the included middle: thinking the excluded middle otherwise than thinking the included middle: thinking the excluded middle without thinking without the included middle (without thinking the thoughtlessness of faith) & without thinking together with the included middle (without thinking the transcendence of being before the beginning): thinking the excluded middle categorically the beginning of the beginning and the end of the end. Thought is now thinking the beginning of being otherwise than thinking the beginning of thought: thinking coming into essence without thoughtless faith & without beginningless transcendence of life. (FP 115–16)

Two critical questions beg to be asked. First, has Leahy articulated the most felicitous understanding of newness, and second, is it possible to speak of a beginning that exists for the

first time in history without presuming that there is a concatenation of successive nows, each coexisting in the absolute relativity of its own spatial-temporal dimensionality? Can there be an absolute now that breaks absolutely with the continuum of time, an absolute newness of an absolute creation,²⁴ the transcendence of being before the beginning that is the absolute transcendence of time? The presumption regarding such a possibility is what leads Leahy to relate the thinking now occurring in the third millennium—the *looking without a looking glass* (FP 143)—to speculation about the apocalypse. Against the commonplace understanding, Leahy maintains that just as creation is not the demarcation of the beginning of the world as an event in the past but rather the beginning of the beginning, that is, the beginning that always begins anew, so the apocalypse is not just about the end of the old world or the beginning of a new world, but rather about the end of the end and the beginning of the beginning. “We are dealing not with the beginning now of the world, not with the creation of the world, but with the beginning of the beginning now of the world, not merely with the beginning, but with the beginning of the beginning. We are dealing not with the final now of the world, not with the end of the world, but with the end of the final now of the world, not merely with the end, but with the end of the end” (FP 146). The now of the apocalypse is deemed “the first now of the world. Then the beginning of the new heaven and the new earth is the beginning of the universe now beginning. . . . For the first time the I now speaking is apocalyptic” (FP 146–47). Implicit in this turn is the collapse of the temporal divide for the “not-yet is absolutely now” (BS 232). To heed the imperative of the urgency of the apocalypse, consequently, is to discern that *tomorrow is now because now is tomorrow*. An absolutely new beginning logically necessitates an absolute ending of the beginning that is now ending. Leahy is attentive to this possibility and thus he theorizes that the “beginning of fully apocalyptic thinking is anticipated in previous conceptions

of mind in the history of thought. But precisely because previous thought *anticipated* this beginning of an essentially new form of mind its actuality before now is precluded” (FP 147).

With all due deference to Leahy, I would suggest that the pure immediacy of now occasions the reiteration of the new that renders the supposition of an absolute novum untenable. This plainspoken wisdom is deftly and succinctly expressed by Emmanuel Falque: “The new, in philosophy as in theology, cannot be formulated except insofar as it arises from what was there before.”²⁵ Expressing the point more technically, Charles S. Peirce wrote:

It does not, therefore, follow, because a new constituent of thought gets the uppermost that the train of thought which it displaces is broken off altogether. On the contrary, from our second principle, that there is no intuition or cognition not determined by previous cognitions, it follows that the striking in of a new experience is never an instantaneous affair, but is an *event* occupying time, and coming to pass by a continuous process. Its prominence in consciousness, therefore, must probably be the consummation of a growing process; and if so, there is no sufficient cause for the thought which has been the leading one just before, to cease abruptly and instantaneously. . . . There is no exception, therefore, to the law that every thought-sign is translated or interpreted in a subsequent one, unless it be that all thought comes to an abrupt and final end in death.²⁶

One might demur that my criticism is too dependent on the modern logic that the thought now occurring for the first time seeks to depose. I would counter, however, that this overly-historicized view of thinking has the capacity to obscure difficulties in the new logic of faith. Nuancing and further complicating the dispute with Leahy, I would submit that what was before can never be retrieved except as what has not yet taken place. Hence, rather than speaking of the

thinking now occurring as existing for the first time historically, it is more accurate to speak of the present in which that thinking transpires as the reprise of what has always been what is to become. Utilizing a distinction made by Edward Said, we can say that the point of departure is inaccessible because it is not a transitive property determined by an anticipated end or an expected continuity; it is rather a radical and intransitive starting point that has no object other than its own relentless clarification. The beginning is thus “*making or producing difference*; but—and here is the great fascination in the subject—difference which is the result of combining the already-familiar with the fertile novelty of human work in language.”²⁷ By his own admission, Said’s conception is indebted to the Husserlian phenomenological reduction whereby the search for the absolute beginning leads to its own undermining inasmuch as the beginning shows itself sensuously only as the beginning constructed intentionally in the constitution of the intuitive object that “attains original givenness in and with the *form of a temporal duration*, rendering an encompassing and objective unity possible.”²⁸ Even in its immanent essence as an absolute givenness, the beginning is always noetically at a distance from being the beginning of the beginning of being.²⁹

The logic of this argument can be adduced further from Husserl’s remark in the lectures on the internal time consciousness of 1905, “But this *question of origin* is directed towards the *primitive* formations of time-consciousness, in which the primitive differences of the temporal become constituted intuitively and properly as the original sources of all the evidences relating to time.”³⁰ Phenomenological apperception is not concerned with the empirical genesis whence the intuitions of objective space and objective time evolve, but only in the immanent sense and descriptive content of the experiences (*Erlebnisse*) bracketed from the natural standpoint and the ensuing epistemological inquiry into the presumed existence or nonexistence transcendent to

consciousness. As Husserl boldly states, “We do not fit experiences into any reality. We are concerned with reality only insofar as it is reality meant, objectivated, intuited, or conceptually thought. With respect to the problem of time, this means that we are interested in the *experiences* of time. . . . We seek to bring *the a priori of time to clarity* by exploring the *consciousness of time*, by bringing its essential constitution to light, and by exhibiting the apprehension-contents and act-characters that pertain—perhaps specifically—to time and to which the *a priori* temporal laws essentially belong.”³¹

The origin, then, is not an objective time that can be calculated instrumentally by the ego in the world of physical things and psychic subjects, but it is rather the interior time of the eidetic experiences accessible phenomenologically and not psychologically.³² When gauged from this vantagepoint, the origin of time can never be something that originates in time, and thus the essence of the *arche* inessentially is *an-archic*. Husserl himself, it is worth recalling, defined philosophy more generally—although obviously phenomenology is privileged—as “a science of true beginnings, or origins, of *rizōmata pantōn*.”³³ But the true beginning is the beginning that cannot begin. The constant quest for origin, which is the watchword of phenomenology as the science of pure phenomena, to go back to the things themselves (*zur Sache selbst*), is perforce a recoiling to the domain where the very question of origin is interrogated as the origin of the question. At the beginning stands the impasse of the beginning. In lieu of a unitary point whence all things originate, we find a fold, duplicity, contravention, the doubling of infringement that marks the way of the beginning in the beginning of the way.

A similar account, albeit betraying the influence of both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, is offered by John Sallis:

Radical philosophy is a peculiar *return to beginnings*, a turning towards what already determines it. It is a circling which sets out from the beginnings so as to return to them, which it can do only if in its circling it never really leaves them. . . . Radical philosophy, as return to beginnings, is thus simultaneously a turning towards its own beginnings, towards those beginnings with which the return to beginnings is initiated.³⁴

I would add, by way of amplification and not dissension, that the return to the beginning is a return to where one has never been because the very notion of beginning, as Sallis himself wrote elsewhere, is always a “redoubling—which is to say no beginning at all.”³⁵ The beginning bears the paradox of existing only “after the fact,” that is, it “has always already been the beginning,” but if this is so, then there is no beginning that has not begun prior to beginning and therefore destabilizing the very possibility of beginning.³⁶ In Derridean parlance, the onset can never be anything but second, an echo, a trace, the “originary iterability.”³⁷ Only that which is distinct can be duplicated, since what recurs is invariably the same difference that is indifferently the same.

No one can deny the pioneering and far-reaching ramifications of the thinking now occurring. The contributions of Leahy, if they will be properly considered by future generations, are enormous and consequential. Nevertheless, the entire edifice, in my opinion, rests on an unstable foundation. The conception of time that buttresses his philosophical project, the assumption that something utterly new can appear in history for the first time, is problematic, as is his hypothesis regarding an absolute now that summons “the beginning of the end of the world in essence, the beginning of the end of time itself” (F 423). I concur with Leahy that the beginning of existence is the beginning of consciousness, which comprises the consciousness of the beginning, and hence every now begins the transcendence of consciousness that is the body

(F 422). This is a major evolution of thinking that has the capacity to promote a new universal consciousness as Leahy sincerely believed. However, the question is what semiotic valence do we accord to the notion of newness, and this, in turn, very much depends how we assess continuity and discontinuity across the temporal divide. Leahy is committed to the notion of the embodiment of the body/consciousness in an omnipotence that is *an infinitely open infinite particularity beginning* (BS 121). But can the possibility of a beginning that is infinitely open and therefore infinitely indeterminate, on the one hand, and infinitely particular and therefore infinitely determinate, on the other hand, be sustained ontologically, ontically, or phenomenologically? Let us consider Leahy's fuller elucidation of this possibility, which enters into more detail regarding the nature of identity and nonidentity, perception and memory, repetition and becoming:

In the delicate factuality of transparent identity complementarity itself is absolutely transcended: memory itself absolutely coincides with perception, absolutely exists in the delicate transparency of perception, the simulacrum which is no simulacrum, the product of an absolute repetition, identity itself. The repetition of absolute self-identity, the absolutely impossible repetition, actually now occurs as the existence of absolute difference, the absolute difference of existence. . . . Indeed, memory itself for the first time is the absolute transcendence of the negation within actuality by actuality itself. In memory itself for the first time there is absolutely no trace, no repetition of the becoming itself of absolute subjectivity, no repetition of repetition itself, no actual trace of trace itself. The absolute indifference of memory itself to becoming itself is identity itself absolute. Identity is the absolutely unconditioned indifference of memory itself to becoming. Memory absolutely unconditioned indifference is identity to becoming: the

actual repetition of repetition the absolutely unconditioned trace of the trace is identity itself, the transcendent identity of the simulacrum of the simulacrum (of the simulacrum which is no simulacrum) is the transcendence of non-becoming itself absolute: the absolute becoming itself of identity is identity itself. . . . There is no non-identity arising out of the repetition of perpetuity . . . there is the absolute repetition of absolute existence, the perpetuity of existence itself. There is absolutely no alternative to actual identity. The absolute other of identity itself is not other-than it, because absolute identity itself is not other-than. (F 144–45)³⁸

Self-identity, as we might expect, is correlated with repetition, which is dependent on memory that itself coincides with perception, but Leahy qualifies this ostensibly innocuous premise as absolutely impossible. He states nonetheless that this impossibility is actually now occurring as the existence of absolute difference, which is the absolute difference of existence. Again, we confront the dialethic drift of the thinking now occurring: repetition is what fosters difference.

Presumably, the possibility of the absolutely impossible repetition alters the nature of memory as it assumes the quality of the absolute transcendence of the negation within actuality by actuality itself, which I further suppose is the import of the reference to the absolute indifference of memory to becoming itself, an unconditional indifference that is the ground for absolute identity. Even more astonishingly, Leahy proclaims that for the first time there is absolutely no trace in memory, no repetition of the becoming of absolute subjectivity, no repetition of repetition, no actual trace of the trace. The absolute becoming of identity is still linked to the absolute repetition of absolute existence, the perpetuity of existence in relation to which there is no other-than, but in the absence of any trace or repetition, then we must presume the nonidentity of subjective identity is constituted by a monadic sense of time. In the flow of

the divine stream of existence consequent to the “absolute elimination of the death of God,” imagined as the apocalyptic vision of the new beginning at the end, “every notion of self is completely dissolved. . . . There remains neither the ‘almost nothing’ enveloped in the pure ‘nothing’, nor the pure ‘nothing’ enveloped in the ‘almost nothing.’ . . . What now actually occurs is the perfect envelopment of the beginning of which the Torah speaks essentially. The *totality* of being *after* nothing, the *totality not* after (either) being (or) nothing (the *totality of being not* after ‘either nothing or . . .’), i.e., no *from/out of* nothing, is the absolutely existing edge, the edge every part of which is identical with the edge itself. . . . To create the absolute edge is to begin to operate *essentially* without reference to self: time *after* nothing is neither not ‘our’ now, nor ‘our’ place” (F 592–93). In somewhat less technical terms, Leahy explicates the interface between the experience of the absolute manifestation of God’s presence vis-à-vis the alterity of the cosmos and the augmentation of self through its diminution that is characteristic of the new conception of essence that is integral to the essentially new world proffered by the thinking now occurring:

Being & nothing, whose truth I am not & whose truth is not the truth of the I that I now am, being & nothing, neither left to nothingness by God, now, as such, for the first time constitute the complete matter of the body’s unmirrored consciousness. The object of a completely objective consciousness beyond presence is the core of the created world.

The something wasted by God is the objective I whose entire content is the created world whose truth is absolute otherness & whose form is absolute gift. . . . Everything I am is not mine; yet I am it completely. Everything I have is not mine; yet I have it completely. Everything I make is not mine; yet I make it completely. The infinitely

transparent I is the surface identifying body and world absolutely. . . . Every I that I meet objectively is not me; yet I meet it completely in differentiating it. (FP 159)

One can reasonably protest this dissolution of self on the grounds that it is based on the conception of a now that can be atomistically severed from other points of the timeline—indeed, the very notion of the timeline disappears—such that we can speak cogently of the event at the terminus of history emerging disjunctively *ab initio*. It is not, however, clear that this is a feasible or justifiable position. I would argue to the contrary that there can be no first time that is not a repetition of the past, no last time that is not an anticipation of the future, no novelty that is not a genuine iteration of the present. Hermeneutically, what is brought forth each moment is a renewal of what has been, albeit always from a different vantage point. To speak of redemption as the act of creation now beginning, therefore, is to discern that what is new is new precisely because it is old, that what is disclosed in the guise of the unprecedented is a concealment of what was formerly revealed. Closer to the mark are Leahy's own statements to the effect that the beginning is the opening that is the nucleus of the circle, expanding into a world by bending back on itself, the dead center measured *ex abyssso*, the void absolutely eliminating nothing/ eliminating absolutely nothing (F 429–30), the measure of the substantial nothingness, the not nothing, lacking measure (F 434), the middle of the middle through which eternity is temporalized and temporality eternalized.

The following abbreviations are used for the works of David G. Leahy:

BS: *Beyond Sovereignty: A New Global Ethics and Morality*. Aurora: Davies Group Publishers, 2010.

F: *Foundation: Matter the Body Itself*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.

FP: *Faith and Philosophy: The Historical Impact*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2003.

NM: *Novitas Mundi: Perception of the History of Being*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

Notes

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, rev. and with a foreword by Dennis J. Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), §36, 165 (*Sein und Zeit* [Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1993], 171): “This Greek interpretation of the existential genesis of science is not a matter of chance. It brings to explicit understanding what was prefigured in the statement of Parmenides: τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ εἶναι. Being is what shows itself in pure, intuitive perception, and only this seeing discovers being. Primordial and genuine truth lies in pure intuition. This thesis henceforth remains the foundation of Western philosophy. The Hegelian dialectic has its motivation in it, and only on its basis is that dialectic possible” (§36, 165).

² Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, translated and edited by George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 25; *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Band: Die objective Logik. Erstes Buch: Die Lehre vom Sein (1832). Zweites Buch: Die Lehre vom Wesen (1813)* [Hauptwerke 3] (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2015), 29.

³ Elliot R. Wolfson, “*Via Negativa* in Maimonides and Its Impact on Thirteenth-Century Kabbalah,” *Maimonidean Studies* 5 (2008), 404–5nn32–34; Rollen E. Houser, “Avicenna and Aquinas: Essence, Existence, and the *Esse* of Christ,” *The Saint Anselm Journal* 9 (2013): 1–21; John F. Wippel, “The Latin Avicenna as a Source for Thomas Aquinas’s Metaphysics,” *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 37 (1990): 51–90, esp. 57–59, 67–72 (reprinted in John F. Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes on Thomas Aquinas II* [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007], 31–64). See also John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2000), 134–37, 405–406, and references to other studies on the influence of the Latin translation of Avicenna’s *Metaphysics* on Aquinas, 230n114.

⁴ For discussion of Leahy’s exposition of the *missa jubilaea*, see Thomas J. J. Altizer, *History as Apocalypse* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 244–48. Altizer’s own rumination on the eucharistic festival of the *missa jubilaea*, the “all-inclusive Mass that encompasses the entire cosmos,” is discussed by Mark C. Taylor, *Tears* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 64–65.

⁵ From a scientific perspective, how can we intelligibly construe the idea of the conversion of the universe into an entirely new stuff? It is more viable to assume that the transformation is a matter of how one perceives the nature of matter vis-à-vis the mind. Thus, commenting on Leahy’s passage, Altizer, *History as Apocalypse*, 245, writes: “The universe is converted into an entirely new stuff when the universal body of humanity finally appears and is real as the Lamb of God, and therefore in and as that Eucharistic table wherein and whereby the matter of the universe becomes the apocalyptic and sacrificial body of God. Nothing is more fundamental to

this cosmic and apocalyptic metamorphosis than a radically new integration of mind and matter, of body and soul, as body or matter finally becomes indistinguishable from both the center and the depths of mind and consciousness. Accordingly, a real presence that once was real in the moment of consecration and thereafter now becomes real in a cosmic and universal epiphany.”

⁶ See previous note. And compare the description of the apocalyptic vision in *Foundation* that the world will be revealed “to be such a novelty that man cannot stand even so much apart to be a participant, so as to (merely) *take* part in the creation of the world, avoiding thereby the absolute responsibility of creating a new world” (F 592).

⁷ David G. Leahy, “The Epidermal Surface,” <http://dgleahy.net/p40.html>. See Lissa McCulloch, “D. G. Leahy,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Radical Theology*, edited by Christopher D. Rodkey and Jordan E. Miller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 271: “Revelation occurs not in this or that selective event or moment; rather, the history of thinking reveals in due time that existence itself is universally and essentially revelatory. Matter, the Body itself—this absolutely particular, absolutely differentiated, infinitely finite poly-ontological existence—is holiness itself.” On poly-ontology, see also Alina N. Feld, “Teilhard de Chardin and D. G. Leahy: Philosophical Foundations for Sustainable Living,” *Knowledge and Enchantment: A World without Mystery? The Twenty-fourth Ecumenical Theological and Interdisciplinary Symposium, December 3, 2016* (New York: The Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality, 2017), pp. 40-41.

⁸ In contrast to the Hegelian dialectic, which entails a sublation of the difference between antinomies and their resolution in a higher synthesis, the neologism *dialetheia*, in defiance of the logical principle of noncontradiction and the law of the excluded middle, signifies that there are true contradictions and thus a statement can be both true and false at the same time and in

the same relation, the contradictory nature of which is syllogistically diagrammed in the form of ‘ α and it is not the case that α .’ See Graham Priest, *Beyond the Limits of Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3; idem, *In Contradiction: A Study of the Transconsistent*, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3–6. For an extended discussion of dialetheism and the problem of truth and falsity, see *ibid.*, 53–72. Leahy repeatedly makes use of this logic. To mention one example, instead of saying that the absolutely now is a beginning that transcends the dyad of beginning and end, he will speak of the beginning and end of the beginning and end, which implies that we posit and negate the beginning and the end. Another useful path of inquiry would be to compare the symbolic logic of the thinking now occurring and the tetralemic logic of the path of the middle way (*madhyamaka*) of the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition, which can be diagrammed as S is P; S is \sim P; S is both P and \sim P; S is neither P nor \sim P. Both of these possibilities would force one to reconsider the accuracy of Leahy’s constant insistence that the consciousness of the thinking now occurring is occurring for the first time in history.

⁹ Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, translated by Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 11. For an analysis of this passage and Badiou’s portrayal of Pauline universalism, see BS 50–51, and compare the comments of Leahy, BS 70, on the relation of sameness and equality in the universal promulgated by Paul as discussed in Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 109. See also Audronė Žukauskaitė, “Ethics between Particularity and Universality,” in *Deleuze and Ethics*, ed. Nathan Jun and Daniel W. Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 188–206.

¹⁰ For a related critique of Leahy, see Thomas J. J. Altizer, *The Apocalyptic Trinity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 164. After noting that the total realization of the *novitas mundi* only

occurs in Leahy's "thinking now occurring for the first time," Altizer qualifies his statement: "Nevertheless, this radically new thinking is in deep continuity with a purely Catholic thinking, and is even in continuity with the radically Protestant thinking of Kierkegaard, for Leahy's is unquestionably a Christian thinking, and the first Christian thinking since Hegel's which is a universal thinking" (164). This is not to say that Altizer does not acknowledge the novelty of the new thinking promulgated by Leahy; he extols that newness by emphasizing that Leahy is "a truly postmodern thinker even as Hegel is a truly modern thinker." I agree with Altizer's observation, however, that the radically new thinking is in continuity with older Christian sources. My own attenuation of Leahy's recurrent claim to innovation—most often marked by the expression *for the first time*—is based on a varied approach to the nature and cadence of temporality.

¹¹ See also Altizer, *History as Apocalypse*, 245–46.

¹² A less christological presentation may be elicited from the comparison of Nietzsche and Levinas in *Faith and Philosophy*: "Caught up in the inversion of the entire framework of consciousness, the conversion of the eternal recurrence of all things to the immemorial temporality of the recurrence of oneself to the other on the hither side of self is the conversion beyond being alike of the evil & the good, of the one willing & the one not willing to sacrifice oneself for the future, the conversion indifferently of each to the futuration of the future, both the 'last man' & *le surhomme* indifferently converted to the self, despite itself, immemorially sacrificed for the other. The inversion of consciousness in Levinas is the recurrence of oneself to an irrecoverable past which is at once the *imperative* signification of the future (beyond being & nothing), in which the future (beyond present & future) & the truth (beyond falsehood &

truth) prevail (beyond good & evil) at the expense of the will, in which irrecuperable past the self, despite itself, is devoted to the Other” (FP 108).

¹³ In Heideggerian terms, time gives itself and refuses itself simultaneously; in the giving that gives time, the bestowal is commensurate to the withholding; indeed, the givenness can be given only as ungiven. See Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?* trans. Fred W. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 77; *Was Heißt Denken?* [GA 8] (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002), 83; Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 15–16; *Zur Sache des Denkens* [GA 14] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2007), 20. Leahy contrasts his conception of time as it relates to the beginning and the end with Heidegger’s view of the authentic classification of the three modalities of time as expectancy (*Gewärtigen*), retention (*Behalten*), and making-present (*Gegenwärtigen*), as opposed to the vulgar understanding of time as a sequence of nows—now (*jetzt*), not yet now (*jetzt noch nicht*), and now no longer (*jetzt nicht mehr*) (F 423–24). The text that Leahy cites is Martin Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 202–203; *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz* [GA 26] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), 261–62. In my assessment, Leahy’s position is closer to Heidegger than he acknowledges, but this is a matter that needs to be pursued separately.

¹⁴ My formulation is indebted to Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), §33, 58; *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* [GA 65] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), 73. Heidegger writes that the wish to navigate the course of the question of being, in the hope of recuperating the lineage of antiquity, can be fulfilled if one comprehends

that the matter of repetition means “to *let the same*, the uniqueness of being, become a plight *again and thereby out of a more original truth*. ‘Again’ means here precisely ‘altogether otherwise’ [»*Wieder*« *besagt hier gerade: ganz anders*]” (§33, 58). Regarding this aphorism, see Elliot R. Wolfson, *Giving Beyond the Gift: Apophasis and Overcoming Theomania* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 243–244, and “Retroactive Not Yet: Linear Circularity and Kabbalistic Temporality,” in *Time and Eternity in Jewish Mysticism: That Which Is Before and That Which Is After*, ed. Brian Ogren (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 33–34.

¹⁵ See also F 160–161: “The intelligible absolute exists in the form of existence itself, neither its own form nor that of another, but in the form of absolute existence, in the form of the essentially new reality, in the form of the absolute transcendence, of the absolute existence, of the middle term which *is* reality, of the reality which *is* the middle term.”

¹⁶ On the importance of Augustine to Leahy, see FP 116: “The new thinking now beginning is the return to Augustine after Levinas.”

¹⁷ Concerning *being beyond beyond being*, see BS 298: “It is precisely here that the thinking now occurring for the time qua beyond beyond *x* is clearly able to be seen to be not only beyond origin, beyond the God, beyond cause, but to be consequently the nonbeing of Heidegger’s originary sovereignty, the nonbeing of own-dom, the nonbeing of avoidance of the Good: thinking for the first time actuality absolutely now. Beyond beyond being (beyond the Good, not the Good and not not the Good, beyond the God, beyond the One) thought essentially the act of world-creating, the absolute simplicity of act of existence for the first time.”

¹⁸ See BS 71: “For Badiou what there is is nothing else than differences, what there is is infinite alterity. Infinite alterity *is*, the situation *is*, the world *is*. In the thinking now occurring this infinite alterity that is the essence of the world is otherwise than being—neither being nor not

being: infinite alterity/what there is the essence of the world begins absolutely now: infinite alterity otherwise than being—essence the exception to essence beginning absolutely now.” Leahy attempts to contrast his affirmation of the radical particularity of being implied in the universality of divine omnipotence from Badiou’s view that “the world remains as the nonsublatale substrate of infinite differences: differences are subsumed by sameness but not thereby sublated: difference are not contradicted but supplanted by the universal, but therefore supplanted in the form of an infinite procedure, the conception of whose completion is the creative fiction that forces the transformation of the situation.” It seems that, in his mind, Leahy proffered an even more radical sense of the infinite alterity for which is the no sameness that would level out the differences of each particular embodied manifestation of the eventfulness being. See BS 85, where Leahy explains that the claim “same for all” implies a “circulation of sense” that is “infinitely interrupted” and hence “infinitely open to the newness of existence,” the “existence of truth as *singularity absolutely particularized*—singularity actually embodied in existing omnipotence.” And compare BS 89: “It follows from the omnipotent unconditioned embodiment of every-thing for the first time that nothing is not contained in nothing. Every-thing except nothing contained in nothing is embodied in omnipotence—every-thing embodied in omnipotence is the actual annulment of the void. There is then nothing but infinite alterity. There is no Same to which the infinity of differences might be compared. There is nothing but the infinitely eventual being of existence itself—being-here infinitely that identifies the readiness of consciousness whose readiness for being is the form of faith.” I find Leahy’s depiction of the omnipotent embodiment of polyontological difference as the annulment of the void to be compatible with Heidegger’s reflections on the nothingness of beyng, bracketing the obvious disparity generated by Leahy’s commitment to his Christian heritage. I detect a similarity to

Heidegger as well in the rejection of an idealist resolution to the problem of sameness and difference in BS 104: “The disorganization that *is* organization, the disorder that *is* order, is a not a breaking in two of a One. Nor is unity, unbroken by the infinite alterity of existence itself, a Same. The unity beyond the One—the unity beginning absolutely now—is the absolute otherness of omnipotence itself now embodying that which embodied omnipotence when hitherto omnipotence compared itself to the creature. As such the unity beyond the One, unity *ex abysso*, is the simplicity that is existence itself: the simplicity of omnipotence the embodiment of infinite & unconditional difference(s).”

¹⁹ See the extensive discussion of the Aristotelian perspective in NM 157–161.

²⁰ Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans., introduction, and lexicon by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 247–48; *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* [GA 24] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1997), 349–51.

²¹ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 160.

²² See F 88: “The absolute is actuality itself for the first time. This minimum itself is knowledge, the actuality of thought itself, being itself, to which in the new state of the world there corresponds no essentially unrealized potentiality, but which, itself, is an actually new saying.”

²³ Compare what Leahy writes in *Beyond Sovereignty*: “God without Christ for the first time is God beyond the God—not the God and not not the God: the very existence of God without the very existence of God: not passionless God without Christ but Christ without Christ, very existence the passion of Christ, the very Christ embodied in very Omnipotence. In the thinking now occurring what is essentially conceived for the first time is not the essentially unhistorical

God who does not take place but is the taking place of whatever takes place, but, rather, God the taking place of all things the very essence of history the perfect simplicity of being who takes place not taking place. This is precisely the exteriority of everything the very passion of Christ” (BS 184). Leahy’s paradoxical depiction of God as the simplicity of being that *takes place not taking place* can be fruitfully compared to Heidegger’s idea of the fullness of the bestowal of being in the refusal of being to bestow, that is, the nihilating ground of the nothingness that withdraws from all beings in the giving of the gift of being. This, too, is matter that requires a separate treatment.

²⁴ See BS 243n70, where the author adduces a mathematical proof to support his idea concerning the ninefold nature of the beginning by utilizing the Hebrew expression *hiddush gamur*, “Absolute Newness”/“Absolute Creation.” See also BS 296n11. I will not reproduce the details of the argument, but those familiar with Leahy’s thinking are well aware that he developed his own form of an alphanumeric code to reinforce many of his abstract ideas by calculating the mathematical value of Hebrew expressions. See, for example, the impressive list of Hebrew terms in *Foundation*, 692–96. In the preface to *Foundation*, Leahy contrasts the meta-identity of language and number conceptualized in his approach in Section III.5 of his treatise and the traditional *gematriya*: “The methodology for the mathematical reading of language there employed is essentially distinguished from the *gematria* of the ancients and the kabbalah by virtue of the fact that letters are treated in an essentially mathematical way, viz., as elements in a proportion or members of a series of ratios, and no substitutions are allowed” (F xv). The contrast is then repeated: “The reader is, by the way, cautioned to bear in mind that the methodology for the mathematical reading of language employed here and below in the text is essentially distinguished from the *gematria* of the ancients and the kabbalah by virtue of the fact

that the number-values of letters in the ancient languages are for the first time in history treated in an *essentially* mathematical way, viz., *as elements in a proportion or members of a series of ratios*, and no substitutions are allowed, and that these and other related significant technical differences distinguish this methodology from earlier and, in *some* respects, similar practice, thereby reflecting the essential novelty of the new world consciousness set forth in this work as a whole” (F 357n13). There is no question that the complexity of Leahy’s mathematical reading of language is to be distinguished from the traditional numerology, but it seems to me that here, too, he exaggerated the sense of novelty with regard to the claim that this is the first time in history that letters are treated in an essentially mathematical way. Moreover, there seems to be some confusion on his part with regard to the matter of substitution. I assume what he means is that the traditional practice of *gematriya* assigns a numerical value to a word or a phrase, and at times that word or phrase is linked to another word or phrase that has the same numerical value. This does not detract from the fact that the assumption underlying this technique is that there is an intrinsic relation between the word or phrase and the number itself, and that the purpose is to anchor an independent idea to that word or phrase through the numeric association. To my mind, this is precisely what underlies Leahy’s practice as well even though his mathematics is far more intricate. Bear in mind that Leahy described the thinking now occurring for the first time as the cracking of a code; see F 428n147. The quasi-kabbalistic method of Leahy merits a separate treatment. To return to the aforementioned note from *Beyond Sovereignty*, Leahy refers to Moses Cordovero’s use of the expression *hiddush gamur* based on the discussion in Elliot R. Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau: Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth, and Death* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 75. A close scrutiny of my analysis, however, actually proves the very opposite of the conclusion Leahy attempted to elicit in support of his notion of

the absolute novelty of an absolute beginning. Cordovero does refer to creation as *hiddush gamur*, since there was nothing prior to it; but he also speaks of the time-that-was-no-time (*zeman she-eino zeman*) and the moment-that-was-no-moment (*et she-eino et*) in which the infinite brings forth everything into being. From this we may deduce that an absolute creation does not mean there is an absolute newness in the manner that Leahy construes it, that is, an absolute beginning that begins absolutely. For Cordovero, as for other kabbalists, the beginning is not absolute in this manner; on the contrary, the beginning—conveyed by the word *bere'shit*, the opening of the Torah—is the first that is second. The newness of creation, therefore, is a renewal, an iteration of the origin that is always veiled in the disclosure of the beginning. See Wolfson, *Alef*, 119–126. Compare the Christological reading of the first verse in Genesis, *bere'shit bara elohim et ha-shamayim we-et ha-areṣ*, to elicit the idea of the beginning of the absolutely unconditioned body, the dead center or the point zero of energy, the absolute transparency of consciousness, in Leahy, *Foundations*, 505. In that context as well, Leahy combines the exegetical method of *gematriyah* and the mathematical method of integral calculus (see F 522, 528, 584).

²⁵ Emmanuel Falque, *The Metamorphosis of Finitude: An Essay on Birth and Resurrection*, trans. George Hughes (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), ix.

²⁶ Charles S. Peirce, “Some Consequences of Four Incapacities,” in *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), sec. 284, 170.

²⁷ Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic, 1975), 72–73, xvii.

²⁸ Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment: Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*, rev. and ed. Ludwig Landgrebe, trans. James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks, introduction by James S. Churchill, afterword by Lothar Eley (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 157.

²⁹ Said, *Beginnings*, 48–49.

³⁰ Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, trans. John Barnett Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1990), 9. For an alternative version, see Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, ed. Martin Heidegger, trans. James S. Churchill, introduction by Calvin O. Schrag (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), 28.

³¹ Husserl, *On the Phenomenology*, 9–10; compare the alternative translation in Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 28–29.

³² Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. Lee Hardy (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1999), 33, 35.

³³ Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. with an introduction by Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 146.

³⁴ John Sallis, *Phenomenology and the Return to Beginnings* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2003), 17.

³⁵ John Sallis, “Doublings,” in *Derrida: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 120. The position I have articulated regarding the circle opened at both termini is to be contrasted with the “closed temporal lines” implied in the scientific assumption (traceable to Kurt Gödel) that the structure of the light cones—the oblique lines that delimit the discrete phenomena that fill the gravitational field of spacetime—displays a continuous trajectory in the present toward the future that returns to the originating event of the past. See

Carlo Rovelli, *The Order of Time*, trans. Erica Segre and Simon Carnell (New York: Riverhead, 2018), 52–53. On the illusory nature of the present and, by extension, of time more generally, see Carlo Rovelli, *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*, trans. Simon Carnell and Erica Segre (New York: Riverhead, 2016), 59–60; idem, *Reality Is Not What It Seems: The Journey to Quantum Gravity*, trans. Simon Carnell and Erica Segre (New York: Riverhead, 2017), 175–83. Consider the summation offered by Rovelli in *Reality*: “We must learn to think of the world not as something that changes in time. . . . Things change only in relation to one another. At a fundamental level, there is no time. Our sense of the common passage of time is only an approximation that is valid for our macroscopic scale. It derives from the fact that we perceive the world in a coarse-grained fashion. Thus, the world described by the theory is far from the one we are familiar with. There is no longer space that ‘contains’ the world, and no longer time ‘during the course of which’ events occur. There are elementary processes in which the quanta of space and matter continuously interact with one another. Just as a calm and clear Alpine lake is made up of a rapid dance of a myriad of minuscule water molecules, the illusion of being surrounded by continuous space and time is a product of a farsighted vision of a dense swarming of elementary processes” (182–83). And see the stark evaluation later in the book, which underscores the gap separating our ordinary perception and the scientific perspective: “We are too used to thinking of reality as existing in time. We are beings who live in time: we dwell in time, and are nourished by it. We are an effect of this temporality, produced by average values of microscopic variables. But the limitations of our intuitions should not mislead us. . . . Time is an effect of our overlooking the physical microstates of things. Time is information we don’t have. Time is our ignorance” (252).

³⁶ Hans-Jost Frey, *Interruptions*, trans. with an introduction by Georgia Albert (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 23. For a similar formulation of the paradox of the temporality of the beginning, see Wolfson, *Alef*, xiii, 131–32.

³⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, introduction by Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg (New York: Routledge, 1994), 163. See citation and discussion of some other Derridean sources on the nature of the beginning in Wolfson, *Giving*, 184–85, and the analysis of the circle and the trace in John Protevi, *Time and Exteriority: Aristotle, Heidegger, Derrida* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1994), 76–110.

³⁸ Leahy cites and analyzes part of this passage in BS 121–22.