



## Unintended Reformations?

*David Aers*

Duke University  
Durham, North Carolina

*Russ Leo*

Princeton University  
Princeton, New Jersey

As soon as it was published, we recognized Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation: How A Religious Revolution Secularized Society* as a book whose aspirations are very congruent with the aims of this journal.<sup>1</sup> As the statement of purpose at the front of each volume says, *JMEMS* seeks to encourage inquiries that cross current disciplines and their periodization of western history. Furthermore, it welcomes work that is both committed to historical research and attentive to the theoretical models shaping such research. *JMEMS*, says the statement of purpose, wants to foster "rigorous investigation of past cultural forms" while paying attention to their lives in the present. The journal should provide a home for empirical studies alert to disputes in theory and for "theoretical debates that are illuminated by an understanding of medieval and early modern culture." Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation* fulfills many of the criteria gestured toward in this statement of purpose. And it goes beyond them in unfolding an immensely erudite narrative of modernity and its sources. It is a work on the ideological and historical origins of the contemporary western world, particularly of the United States. In its ambitious scope and its monumentality (574 pages), *The Unintended Reformation* joins a cluster of outstanding grand narratives of modernity published in recent years.<sup>2</sup> But what makes it especially and most specifically relevant to *JMEMS* is that it puts the Reformation at the center of its story. Gregory sets out with questions posed and answered in Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*: how has it come about that contemporary western people are no longer capable of rational deliberation, capable of resolving substantial moral disagreements? But while Gregory's vision of the contemporary western world is akin to MacIntyre's, his account of how we became what we are, unlike MacIntyre's, centers its genealogical answer on the European Reformation of the sixteenth century and on the influences and

*Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 46:3, September 2016  
DOI 10.1215/10829636-3643990 © 2016 by Duke University Press

“unintended” consequences of this Reformation. Also relevant to *JMEMS*, his concentration on the world historical significance of the Reformation entails continual glances at that which the agents of this Reformation sought to reform: the Christian church and culture of the Middle Ages. Or what Gregory himself habitually refers to as an “institutionalized worldview that influenced all domains of human life” (3, 82–83, 133, 260, and *passim*). He also refers to this “institutionalized worldview” as “medieval Christendom” (366). So it is a book written by an early modern historian which aims to encompass western history from the eleventh century to the twenty-first in a story of origins which compels us to dissolve conventional periodization in a way that has often been advocated in *JMEMS* (see, for example, the special issue “Medieval/Renaissance: After Periodization” in 2007).<sup>3</sup>

Given the scope, learning, and lucidity of *The Unintended Reformation*, it should not be surprising that we decided to devote a special issue to the book. Only once before have we made such a decision. That was in 2005 when *JMEMS* concentrated an issue on a book written by one of the contributors to the present volume: James Simpson’s *Reform and Cultural Revolution*.<sup>4</sup> Although that book did not address medieval, early modern, modern, and contemporary western histories, it brought together medieval English culture (reformist, pluralistic, decentralized) with the sixteenth-century English Reformation (revolutionary, iconoclastic centralism, absolutizing) in an innovative, ambitious study replete with nuanced and challenging readings of a wonderful range of writings from the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries.

When the editors of *JMEMS* decided, in 2012, to make *The Unintended Reformation* the subject of a special issue, *JMEMS*, the Duke University Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, the Duke Divinity School, the Duke English Department, and the Duke History Department invited Brad Gregory to speak on this book, its reception, and his responses to its reception. We were sure that the book’s extraordinary reach with its polemical, moral historiography would elicit wide attention across the disciplines and possibly beyond the corridors of academe. Two years later it was clear that this had indeed happened. But what we had not anticipated was that by the time Gregory came to Duke in February 2014 *The Unintended Reformation* had received around seventy reviews and that five journals would have held fora on it (*Historically Speaking*, *Church History*, *Catholic Historical Review*, *Pro Ecclesia*, and *Immanent Frame*). Such unusual levels of interest in a book written by an early modern historian is a sign of how its cultural analysis and grand narrative had addressed serious concerns of

diverse groups in our universities, themselves part of Gregory's story (chapter six, "Secularizing Knowledge"). Not surprisingly, this work by a historian who is also a moralist elicited both enthusiastic affirmation and passionate opposition. Our own special issue shows traces of such divisions among readers. Indeed, in our very effort to frame the debate and pose new questions apropos of *The Unintended Reformation*, we proceed in distinct voices in our editorial introduction: part I belongs to David Aers and part II to Russ Leo.

## I

*The Unintended Reformation* is shaped by one big question: how did the contemporary western world come to be as it is? The way the question identifies the present is itself shaped by a version of Christian Aristotelian moral theology. I am quite aware that Gregory himself denies this, presenting himself as a simple historian rather than as a Christian moralist or philosopher. As he writes in his response to the "Forum Essay" in *Catholic Historical Review*, "To be clear: *The Unintended Reformation* is a history book . . . the book's approach presupposes no substantive religious commitments, Catholic or otherwise. An atheist careful not to impose personal views on those studied could have written it. If all religious truth claims turn out to be nonsense, nothing in the book's analysis or conclusion would change."<sup>5</sup> To me, this is a surprisingly uncritical adherence to an ideology of positivist knowledge and historicism which is itself a product of "secularizing knowledge" and its modern universities, analyzed and criticized in chapter six of *The Unintended Reformation*. It assumes a kind of knowledge which is separable from the intellectual, moral, and metaphysical traditions which enabled the inquiry. It posits *The Unintended Reformation* as a product of tradition-independent inquiry. But this has been shown by Alasdair MacIntyre, a major force in Gregory's intellectual formation, to be one of the errors bequeathed to us by the Enlightenment. This is the myth that we are capable of forms of rational justification for what Gregory calls the "Life Questions" quite independently of tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive inquiry. MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* and his *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* are the relevant and decisive works here.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, one of the features that Gregory (like MacIntyre) takes as symptomatic of contemporary moral conflicts, the inability to resolve disagreements rationally, is a consequence of the ideology of tradition-free reason. MacIntyre traces this to the Enlightenment, while Gregory himself locates it in the fantasy of *sol*

*scriptura* as the authoritative source of truthful doctrine in the Reformation (see chaps. 2 and 4). But why would Brad Gregory, such a committed critic of “secularizing knowledge” and its outcomes, one writing from a Catholic university, seek to present himself as just a good historian whose hermeneutic paradigms are those of atheists as much as Catholics? Is this a mark of the assimilation of his own professionalism to the processes of secularism?

Be that as it may, this preface should give a brief account of the chapters composing *The Unintended Reformation*. As Gregory says, the book is a genealogical history which aims to describe and explain the genesis of the contemporary western world. And, as already observed, the Reformation is the determining process in the story. The book is organized in six chapters. Each chapter contributes to the argument that the Reformation both made the conditions of modernity and continues to shape ideological and institutional realities of the present. So while each chapter addresses different historical and ideological materials, they are all designed to disclose different aspects of the central argument about the genesis of modernity. The chapters are very closely bound together, despite their breathtaking range, so the book cannot be read seriously if its chapters are isolated from the totality to which they belong. As Gregory himself maintains, it is a “relentlessly argument-driven book.”<sup>7</sup> Chapter one, “Excluding God,” seeks to ground the book’s argument in a medieval antecedent. Gregory asserts that certain arguments in metaphysics emerging around 1300, arguments concerning the nature of our language about God, were of world historical significance. They, so Gregory believes, actually open a path through the Reformation to Richard Dawkins’s atheist apologetics about the “God delusion.” Chapter two, “Relativizing Doctrines,” is an account of the “unintended” hyperpluralism produced by Reformation assaults on Catholic doctrine, reformers’ assaults on the doctrine of other reformers, and the anarchic exegetical consequences of *sola scriptura* combined with the pneumatology that accompanied battles over this putative principle. Here are the roots of modern hyperpluralism around what Gregory calls “Life Questions.” A world of woe was hidden in the print of *sola scriptura*. Chapter three is entitled “Controlling the Churches.” This addresses the lay control of churches (plural) in the Reformation together with medieval antecedents in which “secular authorities” were “gaining public power” at the expense of “ecclesiastic authorities” (131). Despite these medieval antecedents, Gregory sees the Reformation as the harbinger of the ideological and institutional subjection of the church to secular power in modernity. In this process the “poisoned legacy” (160)

of wars between Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed Protestants, and violence against various forms of Anabaptists played a major part.

The pathologies addressed in chapter three are closely linked to the topic of chapter four, “Subjectivizing Morality.” Here Gregory deploys a fascinating range of materials in arguing that “Western hyperpluralism” becomes “the central social virtue of Western modernity, within the institutions of the liberal state.” This virtue is “*toleration*” (232, Gregory’s emphasis). As this process unintentionally generated doctrinal and exegetical anarchy, so the reformers produced not the “*obedience*” they valued but rather “the subjectivization of morality,” pluralism, and, rather ironically, toleration (232, 220). At the core of this revolution is the alleged abandonment of Aristotelian virtue ethics together with the promotion of the Protestant doctrines of justification by faith alone and Calvinist teaching on double predestination. According to Gregory, Protestants split off the virtues from salvation and split off human will from salvation. He is sure that a new anthropology emerges in this process together with a rejection of traditional “teleological Christian morality” (see, e.g., 206–9).

Chapter five is wittily entitled “Manufacturing the Goods Life.” This concentrates on the genesis and outcomes of capitalism and consumerism. As the great history of R. H. Tawney (*Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*) long ago showed, capitalist social formations demanded a model of virtues and vices inimical to traditional Christian ethics. Gregory draws heavily on Albert Hirschman (*The Passions and the Interests*) in describing this process, one which has recently been beautifully explored in Jennifer Herdt’s *Putting on Virtue*.<sup>8</sup> Here, too, according to Brad Gregory, it is the Reformation which is the source of modern woes. It was responsible for disjoining “economics” and “ethics” as its leaders “condemned avarice,” like their Catholic adversaries, but presided over societies which created modern capitalism and consumption practices (see, e.g., 288). But this chapter contains a nuanced account of *medieval* theory and practice in “the advent of the European profit economy” (250, and see especially 244–62). This account of the ways in which *medieval* Christians accommodated their traditions to “a monetized, profit economy” (252) discusses an “economy more profit-seeking than ever, one marked by innovative credit mechanisms, new banking institutions, and time-tested accounting procedures” (257). Against this well warranted medieval story, Gregory acknowledges that the Reformation’s leaders wanted *not* to liberate but to *restrict* the greedy accumulation of wealth: “the notion of any direct connection between Protestantism

and modern capitalism is mistaken” (263). Quite so. But Gregory does not intend to write a book on *The Unintended Middle Ages*. His thesis demands that in this domain (“the Goods Life”) the Reformation must be both determinate and identifiable at the origins of modernity, not any *medieval* “profit economy” or *medieval* “innovative credit mechanisms” and widespread “profit-seeking” (257). So Gregory is left asserting only a very *indirect* relationship between the Reformation and the capitalist formations emerging from the later Middle Ages to the modern world. Does this undermine some central claims in Gregory’s thesis about the determining and identifiable role of the Reformation in the making of twentieth- and twenty-first-century western polities and economies? Of course the author would deny this (in none of the fora I have read does he concede anywhere that he might have erred and that a critic may have discerned an error). He could remind us of the book’s title: the *unintended* Reformation. Human intention and intelligent agency are not necessarily of interest to Gregory any more than to Marx or Engels. He is happy to reiterate that the ideological shifts associated with capitalist social formations were *not* a *direct* consequence or intention of Protestants and their Reformation. All is indirect, unintentional: “indirect influence” (271, 260–61). These formulations, which Gregory does not see as undermining his genealogical history in the slightest, are important and I shall return to them after summarizing the directions of the book’s final chapter, “Secularizing Knowledge.” This completes the book’s argument by maintaining that the doctrinal battles of the Reformation with their ideological and institutional consequences (chaps. 2–4) led to the modern secularization of knowledge and the modern university within which Gregory plies his trade. By rejecting the authority of the Roman Church, “the Reformation eliminated any shared framework for the integration of knowledge” and this “led to the secularization of knowledge” (326–29, 335). The book’s conclusion seeks to anticipate and ward off a certain kind of predictable, lazy, and quite unwarranted response—namely, that Gregory is driven by “nostalgia” for the Middle Ages (contrast, e.g., 136–44, 253–60).

Having given an outline of Gregory’s argument and its distribution into chapters, I return to an issue raised above in relation to the summary of chapter five (“Manufacturing the Goods Life”). This issue emerges as Gregory describes “the [medieval] European profit economy,” “a European economy more profit-seeking than ever” (250, 257), while the Reformation is acknowledged as attempting to restrict such practices and their justifications. I would like to probe how this characterization might undermine Gregory’s central thesis concerning the identifiable and determinate role of

“a religious revolution” in making modern capitalist cultures, ideologies, and institutions. As mentioned before, Gregory would likely see no problem here because he has emphasized the *unintended* and *indirect* “influence” of the Reformation. A brief preface to a collection of essays on a major book the editors admire and consider important enough to make the subject of a special issue is hardly the place for sustained critical commentary; there is enough of that in the following essays. But the issue that emerges here, in the summary of chapter five, is of sufficient historiographical significance to warrant some attention. My reflections focus on Gregory’s own term to describe what he is tracking and, so he thinks, displaying: “indirect influence.”

It turns out that the concept of “indirect influence” and its terminology is not restricted to a tricky moment in chapter five. On the contrary, it pervades the book’s introduction, although it never becomes a topic of investigation. Gregory typically deploys the term “influence” in contexts such as the following: the Reformation “transpired five centuries ago” but “continues today profoundly to influence the lives of everyone not only in Europe and North America but all around the world” (1). Here we note that “influence” is not qualified by the adjective “indirect” as it is in his discussion of the “influence” of the Reformation on capitalism and consumerism (271). Another typical example: “the Reformation’s influence on the eventual secularization of society” (2). The whole book, Gregory says, aims to show how the sixteenth-century Reformation remains “influential today” (3). It demonstrates “the continuing influence of the distant past in the present” (6; see also 7, 14, 15). Furthermore, as observed in his assertions about the “indirect influence” of the Reformation on capitalism and consumerism, his claims about “influence” often include untroubled qualifications such as “largely indirect,” “profoundly unintended,” “transformative and unintended influence” (2, 22). In fact, Gregory’s convictions about the “influence” of the Reformation on modernity shape the entire book. They are intrinsic both to its methodology and its rhetorical force.

Yet these terms are fraught with unacknowledged problems. How does one distinguish “indirect” and “unintended influence” between complex events and processes separated by five hundred years of history from arbitrary conjunction? Indeed, how does one demonstrate that the “influence” or “connection” (another frequently used term) between, say, the Franciscan John Duns Scotus (d. 1308), Thomas Hobbes, and contemporary atheism are not merely subjective associations? Perhaps alongside the chapter “Subjectivizing Morality” (chapter five) we need one entitled “Subjectivizing Historical Influence.” How does one show that the linking of processes from

the sixteenth century with those in the twenty-first century is not simply determined by one's ignorance of other processes in other periods that may be more "influential" and less "indirect" in their "influence"? Compare a much simpler case than those which concern Gregory. In the great medieval poem *Piers Plowman*, William Langland composes an allegorical narrative in which Wille (the dreamer, the visionary, the faculty of the will, the figure of the poet) meets Christ as the Samaritan who rescues the half-alive Semyvief in a wilderness where this person has been assaulted by thieves and left to die. Someone new to the poem and its cultures of discourse, but who has read the Gospel of St. Luke, may discern the "influence" of Luke 10:25–37. Perhaps this new reader may then be surprised that Langland allegorizes details of Christ's parable that are not in Luke's rendering. Puzzled, he may wonder if Langland invented such allegories of scripture. Perhaps his teacher tells him that Langland did not invent such allegorizing of the parable and directs him to the *Glossa Ordinaria*. There the student finds numerous similarities to Langland's allegorizing of Luke 10. So he writes an essay on the "influence" of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Langland's poem. But as he later reads more and more in Christian traditions, he finds such allegorizations of Christ's parables in St. Augustine, in Bede, in Dionysius the Carthusian, and in many, many other commentators. So what he had first excitedly and confidently identified as a determinate "influence" on Langland he now has to acknowledge was rather a manifestation of his ignorance of the culture's discourses than an identification of "influence," direct or "indirect."<sup>9</sup>

Claims about "influence," especially when given the added license of "indirect" and "unintended," encourage the confident projection of one's own ignorance as the discernment of historically determinate connections. Furthermore, ornamented with "indirect" and "unintended," such claims of "influence" will be as hard to falsify as to verify. To the orator and rhetorician this may be a great advantage for maintaining a thesis. But, building on equivocation, it is not a good model for overcoming the "subjectivism" and "hyperpluralism" which Gregory sees as among the disastrous intellectual and moral consequences of the "unintended Reformation."

Perhaps the dangers of the model are exacerbated in *The Unintended Reformation* by its fusion with claims that it also yields historical *explanations*. That is, it not only purports to describe "influences" but also to discover the causation of modern institutions, ethics, and ideology in sixteenth-century history. As Gregory says, "the book's aim is not originality per se, but *explanation* of the historical formation of dominant contemporary Western institutions and hyperpluralism."<sup>10</sup> In another place, he similarly affirms

that the goal of his book is “to explain.”<sup>11</sup> This confirms statements in *The Unintended Reformation* that he aims to offer a “historical explanation of the present” (11) and to do so through his “genealogical” methods (12, 3–5). Each chapter “is intended as a single explanatory account,” explaining modernity as “the unintended influence” of the Reformation (20, 22). His study of “subjectivizing morality” (chapter four) seeks “to explain how current Western hyperpluralism pertaining to the Life Questions came about” (82, my emphasis). His chapter on the political control of the churches in the Reformation and modern liberal states displays historical changes from the Middle Ages “that enable us to explain the situation in which we find ourselves today” (131, my emphasis). Indeed, all six chapters “explain much about how the contemporary Western world came about, and how the Reformation era continues to influence it” (365, my emphasis). But such formulations should have alerted their author to the problems here. He is addressing extraordinarily complex multi-causal processes across five hundred years of history. Even a description of such processes and the alleged “influences” across them is necessarily contingent on a particular hermeneutic paradigm and its ordering of traditions (metaphysical, ethical). But the very claim that one can offer determinate *explanations* of a process in the early twenty-first century by describing some processes in the sixteenth century calls for sustained conceptual analysis. As it stands in *The Unintended Reformation*, the concept of “explanation” is replete with unexamined equivocation. Claims about historical causation and explanation need to explore the formation and intelligibility of their key concepts.<sup>12</sup> Readers should not be left with unexamined equivocations here, for even theologians committed to apophatic language about God are very keen to deny that their discourse is a tissue of equivocations. Hence St. Thomas Aquinas’s attempts to distinguish analogy from equivocation. If all our discourse about God is based in equivocation, we will not be able to distinguish God’s existence from nonbeing. Indeed, if we do not overcome the fallacies of equivocation, theological argument as pursued throughout Christian tradition could not even begin.<sup>13</sup> And so it is with discourse and disputation over historical processes, over influences and explanations in grand narratives of western modernity and its putative origins.

Finally, it is worth drawing attention to one further difficulty with Brad Gregory’s approach. His grand story concerning the origins of the contemporary western world and the role of the Reformation is remorselessly unidirectional. Forceful as this may be, it occludes something quite central to the very Christian traditions that engage Gregory, namely: ideas, arguments, positions, and texts that seem to have been overcome, sidelined, and

forgotten may, and often do, return. And in their return, in very different cultures, they may once again become historical agents. So, for example, patristic writers are carefully reread in the Reformation, reread in modern editions and applied to current struggles in theology, ecclesiology, and politics. One can think of the role of Augustine (so massively prominent in Calvin's *Institutes*) or of the Greek theologians who offered positions from the heart of Christian tradition with which a dominant Augustinianism could be challenged, over, for example, the Fall, original sin, and the mystery of God (as in the powerful work of the seventeenth-century theologian Jeremy Taylor). The Christian tradition to which the Reformation belonged is profoundly heterogeneous, always in a process of making and remaking with historically diverse resources. But there is one striking absence from Gregory's engagement with the Reformation: careful attention to the specific theological arguments and warrants which led theologians as diverse as Calvin and Donne to reject central strands of late medieval Catholicism. For example: the doctrine of transubstantiation (recalling that the late medieval church had been prepared to burn to death Christians who found this doctrine totally erroneous); the doctrine of purgatory (with its massive presence in the late medieval economy of salvation); the role of Latin in liturgy and scripture; papal power, sustained with arms and the authority to depose; the mandatory sacrament of penance with its theology of satisfaction and its contrast with doctrines of justification and sanctification composed by the theologians of the Reformation. Does Brad Gregory assume that the arguments of the reformers over such central strands of the late medieval church were simply, obviously wrong? If they were not, then might the problem to address be not so much "the Reformation" as the forms of authority, dominion, and power in the late medieval church which anathematized these arguments and sought to destroy their advocates? The point being gestured toward here was put with deceptive simplicity and characteristic power by T. S. Eliot in *Four Quartets*: "There is only the fight to recover what has been lost / And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions / That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss" ("East Coker," V).

## II

Perhaps Brad Gregory's claims belong to a genre of writing other than academic history, one that is consistent with his penetrating critique of (instrumental) reason and secular university discourse across *The Unintended Reformation*.<sup>14</sup> The shape and scope of Gregory's arguments, together with his

tacit theses about historical “influence” and “explanation,” give us pause to contemplate the genre of *The Unintended Reformation*, and to consider whether he has in fact given us something closer to a utopia than a work of academic history. Each discrete chapter follows a recognizable pattern, as Gregory begins with a broad narrative account of medieval Christianity as an “institutionalized worldview” (21) that endured “a thousand years . . . as a framework for shared intellectual life in the Latin West” (45) before the disruption of the Reformation. These descriptions of medieval Christianity are not primarily *historical*; they are culled, rather, from scripture—the *caritas* informing medieval politics and economic life (133–45, 244–62), for instance, or the moral order of the church (189–201) depicted in the New Testament—and although they are corroborated by academic studies and archives, they are not dependent on any specific research. On the contrary, Gregory’s are admittedly idealized depictions of medieval ideas and institutions: “Over the course of more than a millennium the church had gradually and unsystematically institutionalized throughout Latin Europe a comprehensive, sacramental worldview based on truth claims about God’s actions in history, centered on the incarnation, life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth,” its failure only the “pervasive, long-standing, and undeniable failure of so many Christians . . . to live by the church’s own prescriptions and exhortations” (366). Here the medieval church is measured against scripture, and the inadequacies of medieval Christianity lie in believers’ failures to live up to the divine mandates legible in scripture, tradition, and the *imitatio Christi*.

But after each successive description of medieval Christianity comes a structural “turn” in which Gregory marshals academic evidence to expose the Reformation departures from Catholic tradition, turning first to the turbulent events of the 1520s and 30s before rounding out the emergence of secular modernity in more detail. In his assessment of the Middle Ages, we see the degree to which the ideal medieval Christianity described by Gregory is of a different order than the later accounts of the Reformation and its consequences. His treatment of medieval mendicancy in chapter five, for instance, is closer to Roberto Rossellini’s cinematic vision of the first Franciscans in *Francesco, Giullare di Dio* (1950) than to any modern study of mendicant orders, a stylized meditation on piety at odds with history. And his description of monastic life and the medieval origins of the university in chapter six (309–17), however accurate, paints a sublime picture of the unity of knowledge and devotional practice in a period before “theology.” Gregory’s depictions of medieval Christianity are more inflected by (and faithful to)

Christ's own words than any "academic" sources. This is not to say that *The Unintended Reformation* lacks credibility or rigor—the notes, after all comprise a quarter of the book—but rather that Gregory's Middle Ages does not take shape, strictly speaking, in a secular academic idiom. Depending upon where one stands with respect to the book and its aims, this may be a matter of great intellectual virtue or grave error. But either way, Gregory invites us to locate *The Unintended Reformation* in a tradition of critical utopian writing quite averse to the secular positivisms and naturalisms that inform the academic division of labor so integral to the modern university.

Thus Gregory weighs a *historical* modernity inaugurated by the Reformation against a *timeless* and *ideal* medieval church modeled in scripture. In this way he can insist on the Reformation's departure from the "institutionalized worldview" of the Middle Ages *despite* prodigious continuities that draw the pre- and post-Reformation worlds together. This may be the utopian secret of *The Unintended Reformation*, in which the "Utopian idea" of a unified medieval Christianity "keeps alive the possibility of a world qualitatively distinct from this one," even if this ideal vision of piety and *caritas* is difficult (nigh impossible) to conceive or imagine in our own inherited history.<sup>15</sup> In other words, Gregory's indictment of secular modernity might not depend upon the "truth" of his depiction of medieval Christianity at all, any more than Raphael Hythloday's indictment of Tudor politics at the outset of the sixteenth century depends upon the "truth" of his account of life among the Utopians. In the gesture to an ideal medieval Christianity, even in his efforts to corroborate this vision with academic evidence, the book explores ways of explaining the present without recourse to "history" alone. Gregory stands in the company of Thomas More here (whose absence from *The Unintended Reformation* is quite conspicuous), not only in the vindication of Catholic tradition against William Tyndale's "felynge faith" but also in the utopian invention of the argument.<sup>16</sup>

If this is indeed an accurate reflection of Gregory's method, it might serve to silence many of his critics who cite (secular) academic history against his explanation of modernity. Theirs is not merely a disagreement concerning historical facts but rather a more fundamental disagreement about the constitution of academic history itself, leading Gregory to explore new imaginative avenues for the explanation of the present. If my characterization of Gregory's method is correct, this also places him in the strange company of other twentieth- and twenty-first-century critics of the Reformation, Enlightenment, and secular modernity, fellow travelers who hardly share his comportment to Christianity—for instance, Max Hork-

heimer and Theodor W. Adorno, who trace the “pure immanence of positivism” from Protestantism and the Enlightenment to abiding reifications and the catastrophes of modernity in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (*Dialektik der Aufklärung*, 1944, rev. 1947).<sup>17</sup> Or Ernst Bloch, who delivers a striking account of Christ’s historicity and the utopian dimensions of Christian love and community in *The Principle of Hope* (*Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, 1954–59), affirming the ancient affiliations between mysticism and praxis in a language quite remote from academic philosophy or theology.<sup>18</sup> This is not to say that Gregory shares much with Horkheimer, Adorno, or Bloch, but that his determination of medieval Christianity places him in a diverse cohort of thinkers for whom capitalism, instrumental reason, and the institutions of secular modernity are alienating and inimical.

The utopian ambiance of *The Unintended Reformation* might help skeptical readers understand how to square some of the claims about *caritas* and consensus in medieval Christianity against the appalling treatment of Jews by the same church. Judaism occupies a precarious place in Gregory’s narrative. The Jews have their own orthodoxy and heterodoxy (55) but are nevertheless subject to a medieval church that treats them like heretics (85). Many foundational works of scholarship demonstrate in great detail how Jews were integral to Christian orthodoxy—where the Jew was “the very model of an outsider, a paradigm of the excluded” among Peter the Venerable and the monks at Cluny in the twelfth century; where Jews, “condemned to a life as ever-present reminders of the inception of Christianity,” allegedly desecrated the Host in vain repetition of their initial role in Christ’s execution, a scene reimagined and restaged in myriad narratives across Europe after the first “documented” case in Paris in 1290; where communities of Jews were often both protected and restricted, allowed to participate in larger communal structures even as they reluctantly performed “their singular task in the salvific history of the world” affirmed by diverse Christians from Augustine to Bernard of Clairvaux.<sup>19</sup> Jews were active members of European communities—indeed, Kenneth Stow illustrates how Jews were defended, tolerated, persecuted, or expelled depending upon their place in local political struggles during the early medieval period, just as R. I. Moore traces the emergence of a “persecuting society” and what he calls “popular anti-semitism” to the transformation of political and juridical forms between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries amid massacres and crusades.<sup>20</sup> As medieval Judaism is as integral to doctrine as to political practice, then, Gregory’s references to “the comparatively small numbers of Jews” (85) do not address the violence administered against Jew-

ish communities and its challenge to the moral identity and “shared common good” (183) of medieval Christianity.<sup>21</sup> Gregory’s account of “coercive expulsion” is particularly significant—that is, “what ecclesiastical and secular authorities had been doing with considerable success since the twelfth century, with late-antique precedents rooted in the Old Testament books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy” (159)—given the expulsions of Jews across the medieval and early modern periods. Luther’s attitudes toward the Jews thus seem continuous with medieval Christianity, even as he draws from an eschatological tradition that asserts the importance of Jewish witnesses (read *martyrs*) to the Crucifixion and the imminent return of the Messiah.<sup>22</sup> As for Judaism itself, to what extent might discrete traditions, communities, and varieties of early modern Judaism offer a different perspective on the Reformation, Enlightenment, or modernity? What about the Jewish contributions to modernity? Crises of authority within Judaism, for instance, as well as kabbalism, the Sabbatean movement, and Christian philosemitism are inextricable from Reformation thought.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, millenarians, advocates of Radical Enlightenment, and members of market societies like Amsterdam and Venice conceived of their communities in more inclusive terms—a departure from medieval Christianity, indeed, but one that recognized a pluralism that existed in the Middle Ages and persisted into early modernity, perhaps despite the best efforts of the medieval church based on *caritas* and teleological morality. Gregory avoids these issues entirely, giving the reader the distinct impression that it is once again the ideal—even utopian—medieval church that interests him, not the historical church in its humanity or facticity.

But if Gregory tarries with utopia he nonetheless resists the utopian impulse with equal intensity. Medieval Christianity may point to the possibility of other arrangements of power, knowledge, and virtue, but Gregory is reluctant to look to the future or imagine drastic departures from liberalism and secularism. Gregory quietly distances his project from modernity’s other discontents, from related or competing attempts to think otherwise than capitalism and secularism. Marx, for instance, is credited only with a failed “Revolutionary violence [which] was supposed to usher in the communist utopia and the goods life for all,” just as the legacies of Marxism and Communism are reduced across *The Unintended Reformation* to the oppressive socialist governments which “led in the nightmarish twentieth century to the deaths of many millions of people” (290). This is not the place to question Gregory’s reduction of Communism or Marxism to Stalinism and German National Socialism, but one does wonder about the diverse

“*marxisant*” (291) critics of secular, capitalist modernity who imagine themselves in conversation with, if not themselves a part of, the tradition of *caritas* that Gregory celebrates and mourns: say, Emmanuel Mounier, or Gustavo Gutiérrez, or Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri.<sup>24</sup> Or Pope Francis himself, who in May 2014 affirmed in a “*marxisant*” idiom that “equitable economic and social progress can only be attained by joining scientific and technical abilities with an unflinching commitment to solidarity accompanied by a generous and disinterested spirit of gratuitousness at every level,” accomplished through “the integral human development of all the world’s peoples and by the legitimate redistribution of economic benefits by the State.”<sup>25</sup> For Gregory, the origins of the “Goods Life” and capitalism alike lie in the transformation of virtue coming to a head in the Reformation. Capitalism, in other words, rises from the bare ruined choirs of medieval Christianity, exploiting, it seems, the rift between the “market” and “inherited Christian morality” (272). Gregory has no truck with the systematic histories of capitalism (Marxist or otherwise) that grant primary agency to market forces and shifts in modes of production. Capitalism, rather, is the historical result of a crisis in virtue; the egg is the collapse of the shared morality of medieval Christianity that, in turn, hatches the chicken, capitalism—not the other way around.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, despite his late, understated reference to “some intellectually sophisticated postmodern critics who are religious believers” (385), Gregory does not share the Radical Orthodox proclivity for dialogue with Marxism and psychoanalysis (for instance, John Milbank’s collaborations with Slavoj Žižek), or the theoretical efforts to mine theology and philosophy alike for concepts and histories that rally against secular modernity (John D. Caputo, Hent de Vries, Jean-Luc Marion, Jean-Luc Nancy, among many others).<sup>27</sup> These are not avenues where Gregory treads (save perhaps for key references to Zygmunt Baumann who, he notes, proceeds “in a Levinasian vein” [236]).

Instead, Gregory employs a version of intellectual history, eschewing “highly targeted analyses” (5) in an effort to track heretofore unrecognized continuities and discontinuities across periods, languages, and diverse contexts; abjuring alienating academic preoccupations with local or particular institutional history in an effort to account for the “West”; telling a compelling and accurate story, without—and often, *despite*—corroborating research in specific (partial) contexts. The method proves an easy target for humanists and social scientists alike, who approach from the standpoint of the secular academy Gregory indicts in chapters one and six. But perhaps, as Gregory suggests, the yield is worth the risk. *The Unintended Ref*

*ormation* explores new and exciting periodizations that challenge regnant assumptions about the intellectual world of the Reformation. In the most comprehensive and influential study of the Enlightenment in recent years, for instance, Jonathan Israel insists that the true “radical” Enlightenment began with Baruch Spinoza, whose work marks a break from an earlier scene of faith and superstition across Europe and the Atlantic World.<sup>28</sup> In Israel’s account, the Reformation (together with Baconian Experimental Philosophy and Cartesianism) is relegated to the prehistory of the Enlightenment, liberalism, and secularism triumphant in modernity. Gregory, however, urges readers to see the material and intellectual continuities linking the Reformation and the Enlightenment that in due course shape the present, giving new depth and urgency to Hugh Trevor-Roper’s claims in “The Religious Origins of the Enlightenment.”<sup>29</sup> Gregory’s provocative intellectual history is one of the few studies in recent years to take “early modernity” seriously, beginning with the Reformation and encompassing the Enlightenment. He points, moreover, to material and institutional contexts which do indeed deserve scholarly attention beyond local histories and antiquarian interest—the history of the modern secular university, for instance, and what has recently been called the “death of scripture and the rise of biblical studies” (which Gregory traces back to the Reformation).<sup>30</sup> *The Unintended Reformation* duly revisits and reframes the early modern republics of sacred letters: from the initial humanist attention to Hebrew to later seventeenth-century philosemitic projects, from Protestant irenicism to the comparative study of religion across confessions in early modernity.<sup>31</sup>

Gregory also recalibrates an early modern canon which, shaped by later secular and confessional interests, proliferates the distinctions between types of Protestantism, sects, heresies, and local varieties. “Unless radical and magisterial Protestants are studied together, historically and comparatively,” he claims, the “significance of the principle of *sola scriptura*” across the varieties of Protestantism remains obscure (94); in other words, Gregory challenges historians and historical readers in general to seek the shared operative assumptions and common interests held by otherwise diverse Protestant communities. But what keeps Gregory from lapsing into otherwise banal generalizations about the “Protestant Ethic” is the unsettling insistence that Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, Martin Bucer, John of Leiden, Fausto Sozzini, Théodore de Bèze, Thomas Cranmer, Sebastian Castellio, Hendrik Niclaes, Miguel Servet, William Laud, and Gerard Winstanley are more alike in their faith than they are different, and moreover, the unsettling insistence that Jean Calvin and Jean-Jacques Rousseau

have more in common than Genevan citizenship. One wonders, however, about the varieties of Catholicism after the Reformation and the Council of Trent, and it is difficult to discern what was shared among as diverse a crew as Roberto Bellarmino, Reginald Pole, Richard Crashaw, Francisco Suárez, Cornelius Janssen, Athanasius Kircher, Matteo Ricci, and Joost van den Vondel, to say nothing of converts to Catholicism in early modern China, New Spain, or New France. Granted, *sola scriptura* might not apply across these determinations of Catholicism, but did they share institutions, moral languages, or a worldview? How long did (or *does*) medieval Christianity survive? Does early modern Catholicism display the “historically long-standing combination of unity and diversity” that defined medieval doctrine and tradition (94)?

In what is perhaps the most important claim of *The Unintended Reformation* for readers of *JMEMS*, Gregory challenges us to examine the relevance of the Reformation beyond the sixteenth century. His implicit questions are sharp: When, precisely, *was* the Reformation? When did it *end*, if ever? At times, we readers are led to believe that reformers are in our midst, that *sola scriptura* and the distinction between the two kingdoms remain the principles animating Christian fundamentalism and “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism” today (170–76, 355–56). And at times Gregory refers to the “Reformation era” (1) and its afterlives, marking the real successive distinctions between the early reformers and their secular heirs (for instance, in chapter five, as he rightly affirms that the magisterial reformers “remained markedly traditional in the content of their economic thought” [269], a far cry from modern “prosperity theology” espoused by preachers, televangelists, and megachurch moguls in the Protestant vein). This is a productive tension, one that upsets any easy attempts to circumscribe the relevance or influence of the Reformation, and scholars do well to follow Gregory’s lead, seeing the Reformation as an ongoing project or process with both deliberate and unintended results. This is indeed how many early modern Christians understood the Reformation: the lay piety of the Dutch *Nadere Reformatie* (that is, Further or Second Reformation) advocated by Willem Teellinck and Gijsbertus Voetius; or the 1643 Solemn League and Covenant between Scottish and English Presbyterians, established “for reformation and defence of religion.”<sup>32</sup> The ongoing project of Reformation gives shape to the geography of George Herbert’s poem “The Church Militant,” as the Church and Sin alike proceed around the globe, making their way westward until they arrive again in “their first and ancient sound,” precisely the “time and place, where judgement shall appear.”<sup>33</sup> Gregory

is correct. Many early modern Protestants perceived the Reformation as ongoing, unfinished.

Despite this claim, however, when Gregory does focus on the Reformation, he gives disproportionate attention to the Reformation world of Central Europe during the 1520s and 1530s. In chapter two, for instance, Gregory looks carefully at Luther, Zwingli, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, and Thomas Müntzer (87–91) before moving to a broad survey of the afterlives of *sola scriptura* among a staggering cohort that includes the English Quaker George Fox, the Mormon Joseph Smith, Jim Jones, and David Koresh. In chapter three, the argument about the Reformation once again takes shape between Wittenberg and Münster (145–52) before moving to the consequences of the Reformation. The same can be said of chapters four (201–9) and six (326–31). This is not necessarily a critique, as Gregory's sources are understandably extensive and the book requires a relatively succinct account of the Reformation proper. Moreover, there is a strong case to be made for the 1520s and 1530s as the crucible of the Reformation; perhaps Luther's influential German tracts, the controversies over sacraments, the emergence of Anabaptism, the institutionalization of Protestantism at Wittenberg, and the political crises of the German Peasants' War and the Münster Rebellion afford historians a representative range of ideas, impasses, and conflicts from which to wrest a definitive treatment of the Reformation. But what does it mean that Gregory musters a version of the Reformation, its intended and unintended consequences, based on events and figures before the 1541 Colloquy of Regensburg, before Calvin's ascendancy in Geneva, before the Roman Inquisition and *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*?<sup>34</sup> What about the reformers and Reformation movements that retreat into the background in *The Unintended Reformation*—for instance, major figures like Philipp Melancthon who challenge or complicate Gregory's historical and conceptual account of the Reformation?<sup>35</sup> This question is particularly salient for students of the English Reformation. What of the English 1520s and 30s, for instance, particularly the quarrel between Thomas More and William Tyndale over tradition, scripture, and authority—precisely the matters at stake in *The Unintended Reformation*? Gregory knows much about these debates, as More's reflections on tradition and death feature prominently in his excellent study *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (1999).<sup>36</sup> And if we map the vicissitudes of the English Reformation after 1550, how might Marian Catholicism, Elizabethan Puritanism, and Robert Parsons and Edmund Campion's Jesuit mission to England in 1580 change the terms of Gregory's Reformation? Are the local struggles

over doctrine described in such detail by Eamon Duffy, Kenneth Fincham, and Nicholas Tyacke representative of the narrative in *The Unintended Reformation*—that is, do they complicate or confirm Gregory’s accounts of change, community, or the Reformation itself?<sup>37</sup>

The present issue of *JMEMS* takes shape in an effort to test Gregory’s theses apropos of secularism and modernity, and to resituate the broad claims of *The Unintended Reformation* in medieval and early modern contexts. Such a capacious and ambitious book warrants attention across disciplines and specializations. The contributors to this special issue, in turn, include two authors who have themselves recently written grand narratives (Jennifer Herdt and Thomas Pfau), a medievalist whose publications include three books that engage with the Reformation (James Simpson), an early modernist who has written a cultural and literary history that moves from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century (Joanna Picciotto), and an early modernist who has concentrated on seventeenth-century religion (Paul Lim). As for the editors, one is a medievalist located in both a Divinity school and an English department (Aers) and one an early modernist based in an English department (Leo). We think the range, erudition, and writings of our contributors are an extraordinarily good match for the scope and argument of Brad Gregory’s *The Unintended Reformation*.



## Notes

- 1 Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012). Further references are given parenthetically in the text.
- 2 We think especially of the following in relation to Gregory’s *The Unintended Reformation*: most recently the extraordinary learned and philosophic work of Thomas Pfau, *Minding the Modern: Human Agency, Intellectual Traditions, and Responsible Knowledge* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013); and most influential on Brad Gregory’s own work, Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 1985). Also in this genre and of great distinction: Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Louis K. Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993); Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon, 1957). Also immensely influential on aspects of Gregory’s work: Amos Funkenstein, *The-*

- ology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986); Michael Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); Jennifer A. Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
- 3 “Medieval/Renaissance: After Periodization,” ed. Jennifer Summit and David Wallace, special issue, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37, no. 3 (2007).
  - 4 “Reform and Cultural Revolution: Writing English Literary History, 1350–1547,” ed. David Aers and Sarah Beckwith, special issue, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 35, no. 1 (2005). The full title of Simpson’s book is *The Oxford English Literary History, Volume 2, 1350–1547: Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
  - 5 “Response of Brad Gregory (University of Notre Dame),” *Catholic Historical Review* 98, no. 3 (2012): 513–16, at 514–15.
  - 6 Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (London: Duckworth, 1988) and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (London: Duckworth, 1990).
  - 7 Brad S. Gregory, “The Intentions of *The Unintended Reformation*,” in the forum on *The Unintended Reformation* in *Historically Speaking* 13, no. 3 (2012): 2–5, at 3.
  - 8 Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, especially chap. 9, “Emancipating Worldly Virtue: Nicole, La Rochefoucauld, and Mandeville.”
  - 9 See the final version of the poem, edited by Derek Pearsall, *Piers Plowman: A New Annotated Edition of the C-Text* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2008), XIX.48–95. On this passage and Langland’s characteristically brilliant engagement with traditions of Christian exegesis and theology, see David Aers, *Salvation and Sin: Augustine, Langland, and Fourteenth-Century Theology* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), chap. 4. My reflections on the historiographical issues I identify in the text here are akin to some which Quentin Skinner articulated in some early work of his. See especially, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): 3–53, reprinted in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, ed. James Tully (Cambridge: Polity, 1988), 29–67; this volume contains Skinner’s characteristically cogent responses to criticism of his own historiographic and hermeneutic principles, “A Reply to My Critics,” 232–88.
  - 10 Brad S. Gregory, “*The Unintended Reformation*: Historical Arguments and Omissions,” *The Immanent Frame: Secularism, Religion, and the Public Sphere*, Feb. 7, 2014, at <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2014/02/07/historical-arguments-and-omissions/>, my emphasis. Gregory, “*The Unintended Reformation*: Genre, Method, and Assumptions,” *The Immanent Frame: Secularism, Religion, and the Public Sphere*, Jan. 21, 2014, at <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2014/01/21/genre-method-and-assumptions/>.
  - 11 Brad S. Gregory, “Responses to the Reviewers,” in *Pro Ecclesia* 22, no. 4 (2013): 432.
  - 12 Perhaps it might have been wise for Gregory at least to have recalled and discussed some of Wittgenstein’s ruminations in the *Philosophical Investigations*: “We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place” (*Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, 3rd ed. [Oxford: Blackwell, 1968], I, 109). While I realize the incompatibility between Gregory’s procedures and those encour-

aged by Wittgenstein, attention to Wittgenstein's reasoning here might have given Gregory pause in making the claims he does about "explanation" and "influence." Such attention might also encourage some sustained reflections on the implications of Gregory's long story about manifold unintended consequences for any account of the intelligibility of human action. Indeed, a return to Alasdair MacIntyre might prove very fruitful here: on "explanation," see *After Virtue*, 95, and on human action and its intelligibility, chap. 15, together with MacIntyre's later study, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, chaps. 1, 8, 18–20.

- 13 I am alluding here to what I consider the most disappointing and most unwarranted assertions in *The Unintended Reformation*, those regarding the Franciscan theologian John Duns Scotus, beatified in Gregory's own church. In chapter one, "Excluding God," a medieval villain allegedly opens a path to early modern materialism (such as Hobbes's) and the "new" atheists so vociferous in the contemporary world, such as Richard Dawkins (in *The God Delusion*, for example). This villain is John Duns Scotus. Or rather he is the misrepresentation of Scotus whom Gregory has uncritically taken from some modern commentaries, especially from the grand narratives of Catherine Pickstock and John Milbank, the most prolific apologists of "Radical Orthodoxy." See especially Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 121–40. In Pickstock's book, Scotus's theories about how we talk about God and especially his questioning of St. Thomas's apophatic approach as either a form of equivocation or as grounded in univocal concepts had an astounding range of world historical significances. Scotus's differences from Aquinas (differences of course between Trinitarian theologians who both accepted the authority of their common church) allegedly led to the establishment of new ideas about "contractual relations between the creature and God" (123), the "de-eroticized" will (135), "the rise of the nation state" (136), the path to a "Kantian conception of the State" (137), and a cluster of "historical transformations" (137–40) which are Gregory's modernity, our own world's baneful abandonment of the "liturgical ordering of society" in the "late Middle Ages" (139). The whole chapter and the part of the book to which it belongs, "Transition," is an example of the brazenly arbitrary imposition of the origins of modernity, with its postmodern philosophies and social forms, onto a medieval theologian. It is, in a way, an ecstatic hymn to the "subjectivization" (in Gregory's language) of intellectual and cultural history. So it is particularly surprising that Brad Gregory turns out to be a fellow traveler with Catherine Pickstock when his own book is entitled *The Unintended Reformation*. But perhaps it could as well be called *The Unintended Middle Ages*. Gregory himself makes his case against Scotus and his malign "influence" around his version of Scotus's account of univocal concepts in our talk about God, what Gregory calls a doctrine of "metaphysical univocity." This account, so Gregory believes, justifies him in connecting Scotus with the "New Atheists" (26–33, 36–37). Not surprisingly, Gregory *never reads one text* by Scotus, never pauses over just what vulnerabilities the Franciscan may have found in the semantic theories of Aquinas and Henry of Ghent as he took part in a *living tradition* constituted by ongoing inquiry and disputation. Gregory asserts that Scotus undermined the traditional Christian doctrine of creation by developing a theory in which God became part of the world's furniture, allegedly a consequence of his

semantic theory concerning the univocal concept of being. In that theory, Scotus argued that if we are to do metaphysics and theology we need to posit a concept of being we can affirm of God and creatures, a common concept which will allow us to distinguish what exists from what doesn't exist without equivocation. He did *not* at any point argue that finite being (creatures) or finite wisdom (creaturely) is univocal with infinite being (God) or infinite wisdom (God's). This is explicit enough in Scotus: see, for example, *Reportatio I-A: The Examined Report of the Paris Lecture*, ed. and trans. Allan B. Wolter and Oleg V. Bychkov, 2 vols. (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute, 2004–8), I-A, d. 3, q. 1, n. 46. Nowhere does Scotus think the Trinity or the Incarnation can be demonstrated by deploying univocal concepts shared between God and creatures. Many concepts we deploy as proper to God simply do not pertain to creatures—a common perception but see, for example, *Ordinatio* I.3.1.1–2, n. 58, in vol. 3 of *Doctoris subtilis et Mariani Ioannis Duns Scoti Ordinis Fratrum Minorum Opera Omnia*, ed. Carolo Balić, 21 vols. (Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–2013). God, Brad Gregory should be reassured to hear, is, according to the Blessed John Duns Scotus, infinite and incomprehensible to finite creatures. But he can, out of his incomprehensible love and generosity, disclose himself to the blessed, making the latter capable of the vision of God. Although one would not gather this from Gregory, Scotus offers numerous and often thoroughly technical logical arguments for his positions on cognition and language. As Richard Cross, the most thorough contemporary scholar of Scotus, has shown, “The univocity theory is fundamentally a cognitive theory. It makes important semantic assumptions but—contrary to the rather simple-minded way it is sometimes presented in modern theological literature—it does not make any metaphysical assumptions. The semantic assumptions are about the theory of concepts—that Scotus accepts” (*Duns Scotus on God* [Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007], 254–55). Gregory errs egregiously when he asserts that for Scotus (as later for Hobbes and other materialists and later atheists) “God’s being does not differ from that of everything else that exists”; God is “mappable on the same set of coordinates as creatures” (37). Unlike Pickstock, Gregory admits that the “social, political, wider cultural, and economic impact of Scotus’s idea . . . was nil” (37). Nevertheless, Gregory’s diachronic narrative does not pause over this acknowledgment. Why should it? For Scotus’s “univocal conception of being” had “unforeseen, long-term influences.” Indeed, Gregory confidently asserts that these so-called influences “have been enormous, as will become clear not only in this but also in later chapters” (37). One notes the role of “influence” in this claim, “influence” across centuries and diverse cultural domains despite having “nil” impact on medieval culture and politics. Scotus has made “the first step toward the eventual domestication of God’s transcendence” (37–38). What was the second step the Franciscan sponsored? It was “the seventeenth-century revolutions in philosophy and science,” a step taken on “a stage that had been unexpectedly transformed by the doctrinal disagreements among Christians in the Reformation era” (38). With unintended humor, Gregory concedes that these seventeenth-century revolutionaries “were shaped, not only by Scotus” (38). Indeed! But writing a grand narrative in Gregorian mode, one doesn’t even have to examine the intellectual relations between the extraordinarily eclectic philosophy of the Reformation and Scotus. Would it matter to

Gregory's story whether Lutheran or Reformed theologians were sympathetic readers of Scotus or hostile readers of Scotus, whether they had sympathy for Aquinas's apophatic theology or whether they were all simply ignorant of medieval theologians? No, it would make no difference. But this is a symptom of the problem of grand narrative in this mode and its transcendental doctrines of "influence" and "explanation." It licenses an author of such big stories to misconstrue arguments by a brilliant and difficult theologian such as Scotus, to ride roughshod over minute particulars, distinctions, and contexts. Having invented the figure as a major scapegoat in the narrative, he can then be given important "influence" and used as an "explanation" for world historical transformations with which he has nothing to do. Interestingly enough, one very brief review did challenge Gregory's invention of Scotus. Joshua Benson made the following observation: "Scotus does not believe, contrary to Gregory's reading, that his claim in a semantic field necessitates a claim about an ontological similarity between God and creatures in reality, such that '[God] belongs to a more encompassing reality with creatures' (Gregory, 37)." He then recalls that Scotus himself is quite clear about this, quoting from *Ordinatio* I.8.1.3 (in vol. 4 of *Opera Omnia*, ed. Balić): "God and creatures are nevertheless totally distinct in reality, because they share in no reality." Similarly, in his *Treatise on God as First Principle* he addresses God as "the first efficient cause, you the ultimate end, you supreme in perfection transcend all things" (Joshua Benson et al., "Forum Essay," *Catholic Historical Review* 98, no. 3 [2012]: 503–16, at 508). How did Gregory respond to this correction? He first made a stunning acknowledgment: "My interpretation of Duns Scotus and his metaphysical univocity is based entirely on secondary sources, beginning with Amos Funkensten [*Theology and the Scientific Imagination* (1986)] and including the other scholars of medieval philosophy and theology mentioned in the notes." Does this cause him to modify or suspend his claims until he has begun to study Scotus himself? No. Predictably enough, for the grand narratologist the minute particulars of a thinker's arguments and texts are not very important. Gregory asserts that "whatever the particulars of the history" he relates in chapter one ("Excluding God"), "it seems clear" that it is correct *in toto* and that any revisions to meet Benson's points about what Scotus actually said (as opposed to Pickstock or other "scholars") "would not affect my argument in chapter 1" ("Forum Essay," *Catholic Historical Review* 98, no. 3 [2012]: 513–14). Well, for the record let me conclude by citing some major scholarship relevant to Gregory's version of Scotus but conspicuously absent from his notes (of which the book has 145 pages). Most striking is the total absence of an outstanding contemporary reader of Scotus, Gregory's colleague at the University of Notre Dame, Richard Cross. Let me begin with a few of Cross's major and most relevant works: *Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); *Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); a brilliant, illuminating critique of some of Gregory's sources in "'Where Angels Fear to Tread': Duns Scotus and Radical Orthodoxy," *Antonianum* 76, no. 1 (2001): 7–41; and *Duns Scotus on God*, which should have been essential to Gregory with his commitment to base his account of Scotus "entirely on secondary sources." He might also have found some interesting quotations and arguments in Mary B. Ingham, "Re-situating Scotist Thought," *Modern Theology* 21, no. 4 (2005): 609–18; also in

Thomas Williams, "The Doctrine of Univocity Is True and Salutory," *Modern Theology* 21, no. 4 (2005): 575–85; as well as in Allan B. Wolter, "The Unshredded Scotus: A Response to Thomas Williams," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (2003): 315–56; and in Antonie Vos, *Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), especially chaps. 7 and 12; and in Allan B. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus* (Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute, 1946), especially chap. 3. Given the grand role of the Reformation in Gregory's book and its story of God's exclusion from the world (chapter one), it would now be salutary to consult a response to Gregory by a prolific writer on Reformed traditions, Richard A. Muller, "Not Scotist: Understandings of Being, Univocity, and Analogy in Early-Modern Reformed Thought," *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 14, no. 2 (2012): 127–50. Finally, a few words from John Duns Scotus himself in his *Treatise on God as First Principle*, trans. Allan Wolter, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966; repr. Whitefish, Mon.: Kessinger Publishing, 2010): "O Lord, our God, Catholics can infer most of the perfections which philosophers know of you from what has been said. You are the first efficient cause, the ultimate end, supreme in perfection, transcending all things. You are uncaused in any way and therefore incapable of becoming or perishing; indeed it is simply impossible that you should not exist for of yourself you are necessary being. You are therefore eternal, because the span of your existence is without limit and you experience it all at once. . . . You are the clear vision of yourself and the most joyful love. . . . You are incomprehensible, infinite. . . . You alone are simply perfect. . . . Communicating the rays of your goodness most liberally, you are boundless good, to whom as the most lovable thing of all every single being in its own way comes back to you as to its ultimate end" (IV.84). A major contribution to a history of "Excluding God"? Hardly! Of course, nothing I write in this little excursus denies the possibility of critical engagement with Scotus's theology, metaphysics, and semantics, including his arguments about being as a univocal notion. But such critical engagement should read Scotus's own writing, in its complexity, with the kind of attention offered by Richard Cross. It should also seek some understanding of the discursive contexts in which Scotus wrote, some attempt to explore why he said whatever he did say in the ways in which he said it. For an example of such an approach leading to a critical account of Scotus in relation to St. Thomas in a particular and important area of Christian theology, see Denys Turner, *Faith, Reason, and the Existence of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), chap. 7. See also, for a very different but equally critical reading of Scotus, Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God according to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters*, 2nd ed. (Naples, Fla.: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2010), chap. 4. The issue of Gregory's Scotus is also addressed in passing in Paul Lim's essay in this volume. After writing this response to Gregory's version of Scotus, I read a work which subsumes all these issues very effectively: Daniel P. Horn, OFM, *Postmodernity and Univocity: A Critical Account of Radical Orthodoxy and John Duns Scotus* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2014).

- 14 Gregory's claims about reason after the Reformation are central to *The Unintended Reformation* (see, for instance, 35–49). Nevertheless, he is not critical of reason per se, so integral to medieval and early modern religious thought and practice but rather

- instrumental rationality of a peculiarly modern (secular) type—the instrumental reason at stake in works by Martin Heidegger and Max Horkheimer. See Martin Heidegger, “The Question concerning Technology,” in *The Question concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 3–35; and Max Horkheimer, *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew O’Connell (London: Verso, 2012). For an elegant account of the important distinction between forms of reason, see Phillip J. Donnelly, *Milton’s Scriptural Reasoning: Narrative and Protestant Toleration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1–72.
- 15 I quote Fredric Jameson’s definition of utopia here in *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 111; and see Jameson, “Of Islands and Trenches: Neutralization and the Production of Utopian Discourse” [1977], in *The Ideologies of Theory* (London: Verso, 2008), 412–13.
  - 16 Perhaps Gregory eschews any substantial references to Thomas More because other recent studies have made similar cases in his name, for instance James Simpson, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and Its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007). Gregory quotes Tyndale in *The Unintended Reformation*, 97. Or perhaps More offers far too relentless a critique of medieval economic practices (from enclosure to the courtly austerity measures in response to European inflation), sidelining any substantial treatment of the virtues and thus complicating Gregory’s account of the medieval world. Fredric Jameson’s work on More is again signal, from “Of Islands and Trenches” to the more recent *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2005), 1–41.
  - 17 Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), 11, 70, 86; Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), 32.
  - 18 Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), 3:1256–74.
  - 19 Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam (1000–1150)*, trans. Graham Robert Edwards (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002), 276; Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), 7, 40–48; Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations, 1000–1300: Jews in the Service of Medieval Christendom* (London: Routledge, 2011), 19–31; Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 240–42.
  - 20 Kenneth R. Stow, *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 41–64; and R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 27, 110–13.
  - 21 David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*

- (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); Jeremy Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God: Jewish Martyrs and Jewish Memories of the First Crusade* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). See also Leonard B. Glick, *Abraham's Heirs: Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1999); and B. Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain* (New York: Random House, 1995), 3–27.
- 22 Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 272–97.
  - 23 David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), 133–58; Yaacob Dweck, *The Scandal of Kabbalah: Leon Modena, Jewish Mysticism, Early Modern Venice* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011); David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England, 1603–1655* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); and Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah*, trans. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973).
  - 24 John Hellman, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left, 1930–1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); Denys Turner, “Marxism, Liberation Theology, and the Way of Negation,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, ed. Christopher Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 229–47; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 393–414.
  - 25 Pope Francis, “Address of Pope Francis to the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination: Consistory Hall—Friday, May 9, 2014,” *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, at [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco\\_20140509\\_consiglio-nazioni-unite.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco_20140509_consiglio-nazioni-unite.html).
  - 26 Gregory repeatedly turns to Hirschman’s influential theses in *The Passions and the Interests* regarding the capitalist revaluation of medieval *avarice* as a laudable *self-interest*—an argument that illuminates the transformation of a moral term across a crucial period and which, depending upon one’s critical perspective, reveals or obscures the abiding differences across the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. See Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 7–66.
  - 27 See John Milbank and Slavoj Žižek, *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic*, ed. Creston Davis (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009); John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Hent de Vries, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Hent de Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002); Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Jean-Luc Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, trans. Bettina Bergo, Gabriel Malenfant, and Michael B. Smith (New

- York: Fordham University Press, 2008); Jean-Luc Nancy, *Adoration: The Deconstruction of Christianity II*, trans. John McKeane (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).
- 28 Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 29 Hugh Trevor-Roper, “The Religious Origins of Enlightenment,” in *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Fund, 2001), 179–218.
- 30 Gregory extends the terms of Michael C. Legaspi’s recent account of the inauguration and institutionalization of secular religious study. See Michael C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- 31 Debora Kuller Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 11–127; Mark Somos, *Secularisation and the Leiden Circle* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Anthony Grafton and Joanna Weinberg, *“I have always loved the Holy Tongue”: Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).
- 32 *A Solemn League and Covenant* (London, 1643), 1 (ESTC R208807).
- 33 George Herbert, “The Church Militant,” *The Complete English Works*, ed. Ann Pasternak Slater (New York: Knopf, 1995), 186–93.
- 34 Emperor Charles V convened a colloquy at Regensburg [Ratisbone] in 1541, bringing together eminent Catholics and Lutherans (Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Bucer, Johann Pistorius, Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, Johann Eck, and the controversial bishop of Modena, Giovanni Morone, among others) in an attempt to restore theological and political unity to the Holy Roman Empire. The participants nevertheless failed to come to agreement on transubstantiation and matters of church government, and in the aftermath of Regensburg Protestantism took a more formal, deliberate, and institutional shape. In other words, if rapprochement with Rome seemed less and less likely across the 1520s and 30s, the break now seemed definitive, especially after the beginning of the Council of Trent in 1545 and the foundation of the Roman Inquisition in 1542. While it would be an exaggeration to claim that Regensburg defined the second generation of reformers, or that it marked a new era of more pronounced and explicit tension among confessions rather than between adversarial positions within a confession, Gregory’s narrative eschews events like this and largely assumes that “Protestantism” as we know it is at work as early as Luther, if not before (as with Scotus in chap. 1). See Marie F. Viallon, *Italie 1541 ou l’unité perdue de l’Église* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2005); Peter Matheson, *Cardinal Contarini at Regensburg* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); Elisabeth G. Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome, and Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Massimo Firpo, *Inquisizione Romana e Controriforma: Studi sul Cardinal Giovanni Morone (1509–1580) e il suo processo d’eresia*, new ed. (Brescia, It.: Morcelliana, 2005).
- 35 Gregory describes Melanchthon as the “young humanist” author of the “frequently reprinted handbook of Luther’s theology” (87)—that is, Melanchthon’s 1521 *Loci Communes*—as well as a reformer and *praeceptor Germaniae* at Wittenberg who “found that [he] could not do without scholasticism’s analytical tools—or without

Aristotle” (331). But Gregory’s employment of *litotes* here (“could not do without”) is misleading; Melanchthon was arguably as invested in dialectic and rhetoric as in the-ology, and his relationship with Aristotle and Aristotelian philosophy was more com-plex than a simple matter of rejection. In a notable 1537 oration, for instance, Mel-anchthon exhorted graduates at Wittenberg not only to “love Aristotle more . . . but also that you ponder why he is to be loved, and to be held in your hands. I certainly think that a great turmoil of doctrines would follow if Aristotle were neglected, who is the one and only master of method.” See Philipp Melanchthon, “On Aristotle,” trans. Christine F. Salazar, *Orations on Philosophy and Education*, ed. Sachiko Kusukawa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 211. This is hardly a reluctant admission of Aristotle’s utility but rather a celebration of his life and thought. Indeed Melanchthon, like Erasmus, instructed diverse readers in matters of dialectic, rhetor-ic, and ancient letters. His *De Rhetorica libri tres* (1519), *De dialecticae libri quatuor* (1528), as well his contributions to the *literae humaniores* (important editions of Ter-ence and Euripides, for instance, as well as lecture courses and commentaries) circu-lated widely and were revised and reprinted often across a long career. Moreover, even Melanchthon’s incredibly influential textbook the *Erotemata dialectices* (1547), pub-lished relatively late in his career, is best read in a tradition of medieval theological writing; as Christopher Ocker claims in his magnificent work *Biblical Poetics before Humanism and Reformation*, here Melanchthon “outlined . . . a process of abstrac-tion that is more deliberately associated with narrative, the product of which is gener-ally the same as the product of late medieval Bible reading.” See Christopher Ocker, *Biblical Poetics before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univer-sity Press, 2002), 191. Granted, Melanchthon’s interest in dialectic produced a differ-ent form of theological writing than the medieval schoolmen, but it is perhaps more instructive to place his work in conversation with his scholastic predecessors than to affirm his break with them. Additionally, Melanchthon’s methods (more Aristotelian and Ciceronian than Ramist) look forward to the varieties of Reformed Scholasticism that emerge toward the end of the sixteenth century, when Protestant theologians renewed old scholastic commitments to Aristotle and his medieval readers (Gregory describes this as “the variegated appropriation of Aristotelian ideas” in a slight end-note reference to Richard Muller’s work [518]). Gregory adroitly builds on Sachiko Kusukawa’s claim in *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy: The Case of Philip Melanchthon*, that Melanchthon pioneered and institutionalized a new form of natu-ral philosophy at Wittenberg, an Aristotelianism suited to Lutheran readers: God’s providence was apprehensible in the world, and the faithful needed a natural philoso-phy attuned to this. This seems, at first, to confirm Gregory’s thesis insofar as Mel-anchthon sets the stage in his natural philosophy for natural theology—where, by the end of the seventeenth century, “all theology that sought to avoid confessional contro-versy had to be natural theology, based on reason alone” (49). Perhaps this is the case. But Melanchthon does not divide natural philosophy (informed by Aristotle) from the knowledge of God. Rather, he marks the important distinctions between the Gospel and philosophy, between what these distinct sources can tell the faithful and unfaithful alike about God. In a 1527 oration on Colossians 2:8 (“See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy”), for instance, Melanchthon affirms that

philosophy is “not all the beliefs of everyone, but only that teaching which has demonstrations”—still integral to the knowledge of God. See Philipp Melanchthon, “On the Distinction between the Gospel and Philosophy,” in *Orations on Philosophy and Education*, 25. And Aristotle’s moral thought remains salient, “at least if it is understood as being about civic life and civic virtues” as these political elements are under the purview of “the law of nature itself.” But the Gospels are irreducible to Aristotle’s moral thought: “The Gospel is not a philosophy or a law, but it is the forgiveness of sins and the promise of reconciliation and eternal life for the sake of Christ, and human reason by itself cannot apprehend any of these things” (Melanchthon, “On the Distinction between the Gospel and Philosophy,” 25, 24 respectively). Moreover, Melanchthon does not offer a vision of natural philosophy that occludes miracles. His approach to Providence is not analogous to the natural theologies of the seventeenth century and beyond. Here nature exhibits God’s laws in a manner that is more continuous with Thomistic claims concerning Providence than with the natural philosophies that follow in the seventeenth century. At the very least, Melanchthon’s own account complicates Gregory’s strong claim, that “because Law and Gospel were radically distinct, Melanchthon could entirely separate morality from theology” (208). Law is more diffuse, not merely apprehensible in scripture but also in nature. And it would be too hasty to describe them as “radically distinct” for Melanchthon. It is more accurate to describe the Gospels as exceeding nature and the Law. Additionally, Melanchthon’s approach to the Gospels is *not* indicative of the *sola scriptura* described by Gregory. Melanchthon relies on philosophy as well as a tradition to render God intelligible in nature—indeed, he essentially *defends* philosophy against naïve biblicist attempts to cite Paul against philosophy and point to the dangers of scholasticism and Scholasticism. Is Melanchthon representative of the Reformation? Perhaps not. After all, Lutheranism as a “confession” takes shape in part against Melanchthon’s “Philippist” influence, particularly after the 1577 Formula of Concord. But at the very least even a brief survey of Melanchthon’s thought and work might challenge or complicate the claims about Reformation in *The Unintended Reformation*.

- 36 Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 105–38, 315–41.
- 37 Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001); Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547–c. 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

